

Media release

Tube of the Year 2020: the dominating themes are sustainability, consumer-friendly solutions and innovative product ideas

Despite the COVID-19 crisis, the european tube manufacturers association (etma) held its Tube of the Year competition again in 2020. The winners are usually chosen by a jury comprising people from etma's member companies during the association's annual general meeting, but this had to be cancelled due to the corona epidemic. So in this exceptional year the tubes submitted for the award were evaluated instead at the offices of GDA/etma in Düsseldorf by an expert jury made up of well-known representatives from the fields of brand owners, the tube and flexible packaging industry, packaging design, market research and packaging trade fairs. They selected winners in categories for aluminium, laminate, plastic, prototypes and sustainability.

Gregor Spengler, etma's Secretary General, expressed his satisfaction with the quality and the results of the competition: "I'm pleased first of all, of course, with the spontaneous support we received from the external jury and that we could once again carry out our globally acclaimed and traditional Tube of the Year competition successfully this year despite all the adversities. Year after year, this award demonstrates impressively the efficiency and innovative strength of the European tube industry. At the same time, it's also a reliable reflection of developments and trends in the packaging markets and especially in the tube sector." He added that the 2020 competition had confirmed this yet again. The numerous consumer-friendly solutions and innovative product ideas submitted are evidence of a strong orientation towards consumer needs. As expected, however, the predominant theme of the competition this year was the sustainability of packaging solutions because this is essential for the market success of etma's members and the future competitiveness of the industry.

There were two winners in the Aluminium Tube category: the tubes for jam from German start-up company Marmetube GmbH, which were produced by Tubex of Austria, and those supplied by Alltub France for hand cream from the renowned supplier Miller Harris achieved exactly the same score.

The winning tube from Tubex is used for jam that has a remarkable fruit content of 66 per cent. It is produced completely from post-industrial recycled (PIR) aluminium for the young company Marmetube. This concept corresponds to Marmetube's self-image of resource conservation and sustainability. The use of PIR aluminium significantly improves the tube's life-cycle assessment by reducing CO₂ emissions by up to 40 per cent. All the well-known benefits of the aluminium tube are retained at the same time. It is lighter and unbreakable in comparison to a jam jar, which additionally becomes dirty quickly. The excellent protection means the product has a long shelf life and makes additional preservatives superfluous. Its practical means of application, with precise dosage of the jam, is ideal for food on the go. A product innovation that is in keeping with the spirit of the times.

The other winner in the Aluminium Tube category also made a very conscious decision in favour of using a tube made of the metal. As is the case with many other providers of luxury items, Miller Harris is once again placing greater emphasis on the use of materials that are classy and valuable but nevertheless recyclable and eco-friendly for its premium hand cream. The aluminium tube from Alltub France has a golden metallic sheen and is designed in a retro style with matching octagonal black caps. The challenges involved in printing the tube were mastered brilliantly. A metallic gold base lacquer was applied using a great deal of expertise and high precision. The printing of the thin and delicate black text elements was no less accurate. It is this perfect combination of golden sheen and fine black text that creates the elegant appearance and luxurious look of the aluminium tube for the Scherzo range from Miller Harris.

The Canesten® tube from Bayer, which is produced by the Swiss company Hoffmann Neopac AG, took first place among the laminate tubes. Up to now, the cream for treating athlete's foot was available in a tube with a conventional screw cap. However, a lot of patients found it uncomfortable to touch the area to be treated, especially since it is quite difficult to apply the cream with the fingers in the area between the toes, and this can also lead to additional irritation of the affected skin. The soft spatula applicator now allows athlete's foot to be treated without any finger contact whatsoever; this makes applying the cream much easier, gentler and more hygienic. The Polyfoil® laminate protects the product from light, air and water vapour diffusion and prevents migration. Consumers are obviously very pleased with this modern and innovative packaging: in a market test, 90 per cent of the test persons questioned rated the convenient and easy application positively.

The winner in the Plastic Tube category was also a tube from Hoffmann Neopac AG, namely the Farfalla hair care tube. Farfalla stands for an awareness of well-being and joie de vivre and its beauty products are exclusively natural and vegan. The award-winning tube therefore matches the product philosophy perfectly because the co-extruded tube contains 50 per cent post-industrial recycled (PIR) plastic material. This results in a reduced CO₂ footprint and a lower environmental impact over the entire life cycle of the tube. It is also certified for food contact and approved by the FDA. Last but not least, the tube from Farfalla demonstrates impressively that sustainability and an attractive look can go hand in hand: the successful design with its attractive appearance was achieved using 8-colour offset, 2-colour silkscreen printing and golden hot-foil stamping.

The jury chose the Green Tube from Alltub Italia as the winner from the prototype tubes. It contains 95 per cent post-consumer recycled (PCR) aluminium. The use of PCR in no way detracts from the tube's positive properties and outstanding performance: it retains all the benefits associated with product protection and meets all other consumer requirements and expectations perfectly, regardless of the product in question. This is because the closures, internal varnishes and combinations of different printing options that are used for virgin aluminium tubes can also be used for the Green Tube. A water-based transparent base lacquer was used for the Green Tube prototypes to emphasise the aluminium's natural appearance. This further underlines the green orientation of the tube. A green landscape nature print complements and rounds off this design concept and, as far as the design and layout are concerned, sums up the tube's philosophy in a visually appealing manner.

The winner in the sustainability category were the SUPERCOCO and SUPERGREEN tubes containing a vegan toothpaste of happybrush GmbH. Both tubes were produced by Essel Deutschland GmbH which is part of the Essel Propack Ltd. group. The laminate tubes have a post-consumer recycled (PCR) plastic content of 30 per cent. This is a very demanding and complex task because the barrier properties of the tube must be retained and every time it is used the tube must always return to its original shape. Even though the PCR content of classically extruded tubes containing PCR is usually around 50 per cent, the happybrush® tube's life-cycle assessment is still very good. This is because in addition to using 30 per cent PCR, the smaller wall thickness of the tube also reduces its weight by a further 30 per cent. The bottom line is a noteworthy overall saving of new resources of 60 per cent. Ecological aspects also influenced the design of the tubes, which were deliberately scaled down. The decision was made to use a combination of 3-colour flexo/screen printing and a matt varnish. The two product names and the round graphic elements in the upper part of the tube were finished with a silk-

screen printed relief varnish. In the interests of sustainability, the number of colours used was limited and the producer dispensed with other possible finishing options.

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