



▶ MAVERICK'S INNOVATIVE BARREL BAG

Since 1999, Maverick Engineering has been supplying bag-in-box making equipment into the international market. In 2005, sister company Maverick Flexible was established to provide the local market with blown film and high-barrier laminations to complement most forms of liquid packaging. In 2010, Maverick Engineering introduced speciality pouch making machinery into its range of products and in conjunction with Maverick Packaging now offers innovative pouch products for a multitude of industries. The locally-developed versatile, patented SUPer range lends itself to various fill options – wine, water, juice, sauces, oils and detergents.

Maverick Flexible uses a reverse-printed PET/MET PET/LLDPE thermal lamination. Taps, glands and handles are from Conro Precision in Cape Town. AstraPouch was started by long-time wine and spirits visionary Dave Moynihan who soon realised that these multilayered plastic barrels, with a one-way spigot to keep oxygen out, offered all the protective and eco-friendly advantages of bag-in-box – but without the box. The 1.5-litre pouch is about 7 inches wide by 10 inches tall and a slender 2 inches thick when filled with the equivalent of two standard 750ml bottles. Using AstraPouch and labelling on demand, fillers can switch between Merlot and Chardonnay without the risk of being 'stuck' with too many of one varietal. AstraPouch based in Penfield, New York, has exclusivity on the Barrel Bag in the North American market.



◀ CAPE HERB & SPICE'S EYE-CATCHING RANGE

As early as the 1400s, sailors began exploring the West Coast of Africa in search of a trade route to access the lucrative spice markets in Asia. Bartholomew Diaz and Vasco Da Gama were key figures in this quest, resulting in the establishment of settlement in the Cape by the Dutch East India Company. For some time now, the Cape Herb & Spice range has brightened the spice segment on our supermarket shelves. Based in Cape Town and founded in 1994, Cape Herb & Spice is now a recognised global player. Using a talented in-house design team, the company's variants capture the essence of 'magic carpet creativity' with eye-candy images.

My favourites are the imported Curry Originals tins with teaspoon accessible opening and the ubiquitous disposable grinders. Colourtone Aries supplies the cute printed cartons for the Exotic Spices while Pouch Dynamics (Constantia-Afripack) finishes off the range with a flotilla of delightful cream-coloured, labelled mini resealable stand-up pouches for the Freeze Dried Herbs. It's an example of South African creativity at its best!



▶ ROSE EN BOS ART NOUVEAU AND QUAIN RETRO LOOK

It all began when my wife Shirley was given a birthday gift of an elaborately-wrapped soap and jar of Shea Butter. Enchanted by the contents, she handed them to me and said words I love to hear, 'For your next article!'

Emily Pienaar and Rosalind Tolson make up the talented team behind Rose en Bos. They are inspired by South Africa's cultural and botanical wealth and influenced by the beauty and diversity of peoples and landscapes. Emily worked at a small perfumery in Bermuda and was inspired to start Rose en Bos and launch her first four fragrances in 2010, and to begin making small hand-blended batches of soap in 2012 when she moved back to South Africa. Early days saw Emily hand-cutting the cartons using a scrap booking electronic cutting machine. Today using Emily's quaint artwork, Regent Press (Paarden Eiland) provides the die-cuts. The petite Fragrance Library box containing Moco Cosmetics vials is another gem. The Rose en Bos Soap 'Cake' Slice printed carton supplied by Regent Press and brilliant depiction of a cake slice in soap epitomises everything you'd expect from quality-minded niche artisan perfumers and soap makers.



Colour & Copy Solutions (Rondebosch) prints the stickers for the Shea Butter tub ex Consol and small tin ex Nampak DivFood. Initially purchases were primarily via word-of-mouth; then Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens gift shop was the first retail outlet to stock the full range. Rose en Bos products can now be found at Kirstenbosch and Stellenbosch Botanical Gardens gift shops, Cape Town International airport, and believe it or not on Takealot! Local magic never ends. Africa's time is here!

▶ POLYSTAR BULK BALER BAGS

One of the most innovative developments I came across at Propak Africa was Polystar's bulk baler bags. The traditional wooden pallet has long been a trusted ally of supply chain and warehousing staff, but goods loaded on pallets often require pallet wrap to stabilise them and to retain their shape in transit. Sometimes strapping, adhesive additives, caps, angle boards and layer pads are included to counter the rigours of distribution.

Polystar Tape & Fabric boasts state-of-the-art extrusion and weaving equipment and in-house testing facilities to ensure cloth and bags conform to the stringent quality and safety standards required by law to ensure safe handling of bulk materials. The latest development showcased at Propak was the clear woven bulk baler bags developed to reduce the need for pallets and additional wrapping of product packed in small bags. They can be packed manually or by robot; and loading is via the top cross corner loops, with a top cover flap with attached buckled straps to keep the product enclosed. Printing is offered if required although the clear woven material allows for visibility of the bags inside. After being used for transportation to warehouses, retailers and distribution centres, the compact and lightweight empty bags can be returned for reuse.

And Polystar's innovation doesn't stop there. An exciting development is a 'conductive bag' that features carbon tapes woven into the material for connection to an earthed lug to ensure the removal of static electricity when packing and transporting combustible products.



Francois Terblanche (PPBags, marketing agent for Polystar) shows off 50kg bulk baler bags at Propak Africa.