DOT.TOP HITS THE HEIGHTS

With a greater number of entries and more evidence of innovative ideas, The Cans of the Year Awards at Cannex offered exciting prospects. But the overall winner was a welcome surprise, reports John Nutting

Cannex visitors chose a food can as the Can of the Year for the first time. Designed by Metalgráfica Rojek, the Dot.top can is being marketed in the US by Silgan and had never entered the competition before. Below: The can by Europe's Impress Holdings which won Gold in the General Line category

Cannex visitors in Denver last month chose a food can as their Can of the Year for the first time.

But it was no ordinary food can that won the top honour in The Cans of the Year Awards, backed by *The Canmaker* magazine.

It's the Dot.top, an easy-open resealable can that was first used in the US last August by Ohio-based tomato products packer Hirzel Canning for its Dei Fratelli range of pizza sauces and dips.

Designed by Brazilian manufacturer Metalgráfica Rojek the Dot.top is being marketed in the US by Silgan Containers.

"We're thrilled and proud to be given this honour," said Jeff DeLiberty, marketing manager at Silgan Containers, who with Arnaldo Costa, representing Metalgráfica Rojek, received the Can of the Year trophy from the publisher of *The Canmaker* Allan Sayers. "It's the culmination of collaboration between Rojek and Silgan to make the Dot.top a commercial reality in North America."

What caught the imagination of visitors to the Cannex show who voted for the winner, was the Dot.top's use of a plastisol button on the lid. When pulled away it releases the vacuum in the can, enabling easy removal of the lid. A seal in the lid makes it suitable for resealing the can, unlike most other easy-open cans. It has a number of applications for products that are hot filled, closed with mechanical vacuum or retorted with over pressure.

The design has been used for retorted canned food products for about eight years in Brazil by manufacturers such as Heinz, Nestlé and Unilever, but has never before been entered for The Cans of the Year Awards.

Four years ago, Silgan's then marketing manager Bill Clancy saw the Dot.top's potential and a marketing deal was signed with Rojek. "It's thanks to the passion of Bill Clancy that we've been able to take this exciting technology forward," said DeLiberty at the Cans of the Year Awards dinner.

Dot.top was designed and patented in 1988 by Arnaldo Rojek, who had set up Metalgráfica Rojek in São Paulo 25 years earlier to put his ideas for food closures into practice. The recloseable lid was originally called Abre-Fácil and was commercialised in 1990 for use on glass jars. The version for metal cans came five years later, and was applied to a container with a beaded body and neck. Sadly, Arnaldo Rojek died last year aged 85 just before Hirzel Canning started using the idea. Until production facilities are set up in the US, the Hirzel cans will be made in Brazil.

More than 100 entries for The Cans of the Year Awards were received by *The Canmaker* magazine from the US, Europe, South America, Asia and the Pacific Rim.

Gold category winners, judged by an expert panel chaired by the editor of *The Canmaker*, included:

- An embossed aluminium aerosol can made for Adidas anti-perspirant by Exal Corporation in the US. This can feels better than it looks because its uses really sharp debossing features to provide a secure non-slip grip along with a stylish semi-matte finish. It

Arnaldo Costa, representing Metalgráfica Rojek, and Silgan's Jeff DeLiberty receive the Can of the Year trophy from the publisher of The Canmaker, Allan Sayers (right). Above: Category Gold winners include Brazil's CBL, the US's Crown Food Packaging, Europe's Impress Holdings and Germany's Klann Verpackungen

beat off a strong contender in CCL Containers' impressive Trimwave in the Aerosol can category.

• A 50cl embossed aluminium beer can made for the Bavaria Red brand by Ball Packaging Europe. Winner of the Beverage Can over 25cl category, it used what is described as an embossing process that gives a sharper effect that looks as if it was debossed. So impressed were the judges by this that it beat not only Rexam's 30cl slim can for the Rush energy drink, which also featured a laser engraved tab, but Crown's shaped Identity can for Heineken. This can, a development of a range of aluminium cans that was first to properly exploit shaping techniques as a marketing tool, will be part of Heineken's promotions at the 2004 Olympics in Greece this summer.

•A 20cl screw-top can for vending machine use in Japan for Coca-Cola's Georgia Vanilla coffee made by Toyo Seikan Kaisha, which calls it the Environmental Evolutional can because it uses polyester-laminated coatings. These have been around for about 12 years in Japan, but what makes this can special is that it's the first of its size to be offered on the domestic market, and is a first with a 38mm closure from TSK. It beat two strong contenders that feature retortable coatings from Rexam in Europe and KJM Aluminium Can in Malaysia.

• A shaped 25cl three-piece easy-open can for Caipi Veritas lime cocktail drink made in Brazil by Companhia Brasileira de Latas. It pipped a Heineken beer keg for home use made by Huber in Germany and Japan's Daiwa Can, which showed how far coffee cans using PET laminate-coated steels have developed on the domestic market.

• A decorative biscuit tin in Tiffany style ▸

The Cans of the Year Awards 2004

Can of the Year
Silgan Containers (USA) and Metalgráfica Rojek (Brazil). Dot.top food can with resealable lid using plastisol button for easy opening for Hirzel Canning (as voted by Cannex visitors)

Aerosol cans
Gold: Exal Corporation (USA). Impact-extruded aluminium anti-perspirant container with embossed and debossed design for Adidas
Silver: CCL Container (USA). Impact-extruded aluminium hair spray container featuring Trimwave design and transparent decorative inks for Funkifier brand
Bronze: Exal Corporation (USA). Impact extruded aluminium hair spray container featuring Sure Grip styling and satin finish for Eufora Elevate

Beverage cans, two-piece (over 25cl)
Gold: Ball Packaging Europe (Europe). 50cl aluminium beer can using debossing to give the impression of being embossed for Bavaria Red brand
Silver: Rexam BCE (Europe). 30cl aluminium slim can with laser-engraved tab for Rush brand
Bronze: Crown Bevcan Europe & Middle East (Europe). Identity 33cl aluminium can using blow-forming shaping technique developed with Heineken

Beverage cans, two-piece (up to 25cl)
Gold: Toyo Seikan Kaisha (Japan). 20cl can using polyester-coated TFS with 38mm-diameter screw top for vending-machine-supplied retorted drinks for Coca-Cola's Georgia Vanilla coffee
Silver: Rexam BCE (Europe). Aluminium 25cl can with retortable coatings for Cocio Ice Coffee
Bronze: KJM Aluminium Can (Malaysia). 25cl aluminium can with retortable coatings for Shark Energy drink

Beverage cans, three-piece
Gold: Companhia Brasileira de Latas (Brazil). Caipi Veritas 25cl shaped can featuring special varnishes to avoid oxidation
Joint Bronze: Huber Verpackungen (Germany). Five-litre beer keg offering 21-day fresh product and constant pressure for Heineken
Joint Bronze: Daiwa Can Co (Japan). Film-laminated and embossed 20cl can with PET internal coat for UCC Coffee

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Gold winners in the Two-piece Beverage can categories were Japan's Toyo Seikan (up to 25cl) and Ball Packaging Europe (over 25cl)

Decorative or promotional cans
Gold: Klann Verpackungen (Germany). 'Daffodils' biscuit tin in Tiffany style using embossing to imitate lead framing for Churchill's Confectionery plc
Silver: GM Metal Packaging (Hong Kong). Mint tin with sliding lid for Oral Fixation brand
Bronze: Glud & Marstrand (Denmark). Design registered lid on three-piece can with vignetted decoration that exploits the bright tinplate for Cadbury Roses

Ends, caps and closures
Gold: Impress Holdings (Europe). Easy Peel foil lid for Appel Venetia high-quality herring fillets
Silver: Brasilata (Brazil). Bat-Plus lid with plastics insert for Extra laundry powder detergent container
Bronze: Crown Holdings (USA). 75mm Plastisol Lined Deep Screw cap featuring vacuum button and resealability for Del Monte brand products

Food cans, two-piece
Gold: Crown Food Packaging (USA). Co-extruded polymer-coated tapered salmon can that is compliant with FDA and EU food contact requirements
Silver: Toyo Seikan Kaisha (Japan). 28cl container using PET film laminated TFS body and aluminium safety easy-open end for pasta sauce
Bronze: Impress Holdings (Europe). Aluminium rectangular drawn can with easy open end and all-over decoration for Green Giant asparagus brand in Spain

Food cans, three-piece
Gold: Silgan Containers (USA) and Metalgráfica Rojek (Brazil). Dot.top food can with resealable lid using plastisol button and tab giving easy opening for Hirzel Canning tomato products
Silver: Daiwa Can Co (Japan). Decorated can with easy-open foil lid for KitKat brand enabling 'cold and solid' chocolate from vending machines
Bronze: Shetron Ltd (India). Decorated 301-dia welded can with easy-open end for Zahle brand

General line cans
Gold: Impress Holdings (Europe). Three-fingers can with asymmetric shaping using new patented forming technology for ICI Hammerite anti-rust paint
Silver: Cerviflan Industrial e Comercial (Brazil). 3.6-litre with Open Top system and necked-in base for putty products for Sherwin Williams
Bronze: Brasilata (Brazil). Five litre UN spec Lucksnova thinners can without triple seaming offering higher-resistance to dropping

Prototypes
Gold: Exal Corporation (USA). Ice-cube shaped drawn-and-wall-ironed aluminium C2C bottle can
Silver: Amcor (Australia). Versatal co-extruded polymer-coated beverage can using DWT process technology
Bronze: Glud & Marstrand (Denmark). Snap Top paint pail for easy opening and closing without tools

made by Klann Verpackungen in Germany for Churchill's Confectionery that won the gold award in the Decorative Container category, which attracted the most entries. The judges thought this might win the Can of the Year award because it not only demonstrated stunning metal decorating skills but clever graphic design to provide perfect imitation of lead framing. Silver award winner was a clever embossed tin for mints from GM Metal Packaging in Hong Kong.

• An Easy Peel foil lid for Appel Venetia high-quality herring fillets made by Impress Group at its plant at Cuxhaven in Germany, won the Ends, Caps and Closures category. This beat off a host of excellent entries for its close attention to detail. Silver was Brasilata's novel Bat Plus lid with a plastics insert that has been used by the Extra detergent powder brand for the first time in a market dominated by plastics containers.

• A tapered salmon can using co-extruded polymer-coatings made by Crown Food Packaging in the US to satisfy European food-contact requirements. This drawn can won the Two-piece Food Can category and is first in North America to exploit the benefits of Corus's Protact material which has a highly polished finish on both the interior and exterior. These cans are being used by Peter Pan Seafoods and Icicle Seafoods in Alaska for packing wild salmon. Said Barry Collier, chief executive of Peter Pan: "Design opportunities are very attractive with this progressive packaging. The fact that Protact meets or exceeds food safety standards in all of our markets is a tremendous benefit for us logistically."

• Silgan's Dot.top can also won the Three-piece Food Can category. Few food cans are made in Japan but Daiwa's entry had a clever twist, featuring an aluminium foil membrane peel off lid on a decorated body for KitKat chocolate stored in coolers.

• A shaped can made for ICI's Hammerite anti-rust paint by Impress Holdings in Europe won the General Line category. This features novel asymmetric shaping developed at Impress's Crosmières research centre to match lithography produced at its Norwich, UK, plant.

• A lightweight 'ice-cube' shaped aluminium screw-top bottle developed in prototype form by Exal Corporation in the US that is expected to be used by soft drinks manufacturers this year. Expect much more from this development, along with the silver award winner, Amcor's Versatal two-piece beverage can under development using another version of Corus's Protact canstock. In this case the material makes the possibility of setting up canmaking lines with a lower capital cost more of a reality.

The Dot.top can (far left) was also chosen as the best Three-piece Food can by an expert panel of judges. Exal Corporation in the US won two Gold awards in the Aerosol and Prototype categories