



# Top of the **packing order**

by Isabel Basson

In the heart of the juice valley, lies a packaging company for which juice plays a pivotal role in their business – an enterprise that operates on the principle of “not the biggest, but the best”. Wellington-based Pacmar began operating in February 1997. It can be best described as a contract packaging company.

Pacmar is currently packaging for some of the larger brands in the local and international markets. The various registered brands include products such as wine, fruit juice and other liquid beverages, packed in both aseptic and preserved forms.

Pacmar’s staff component has collectively spent many years in both the fruit and flavour industries and is more than able to offer support in a wide range of areas within the food industry. It is therefore not strange that their modus operandi revolves around their technical expertise. The combination of experience and technical expertise in both the fruit juice and flavour industries, enables Pacmar to offer a specialised service to the industry.

## **Fresh from the box**

The Pacmar fruit juice product range includes the Wilde, Crystal Falls Health and Zing ranges. These juice ranges are well-known to consumers and come in a wide variety of flavours, including the healthy options offered by the Crystal Falls range which also aids in weight loss.

The company also has a thriving export side to their business. Twelve of the Wilde range flavours are exported to Canada and six to the United States. There are also seven flavours of Bioes, an export range available in China, Taiwan, Japan and Singapore. The fruit is picked from selected orchards in the Western Cape, and in selected countries worldwide. The fruit is then sorted and taken through the pressed and/or squeezed process. All fruit is quality-checked in a laboratory.

## **Contract packaging**

Pacmar offers a comprehensive contract packaging service to suit the needs of both local and international clients alike. They are able to supply various packing options, tailored to suit individual needs. Some of their clients include Woolworths, Spar, Pick ‘n Pay, Tiger Brands, Coca-Cola, Infacare, Robertson Wine Cellar and Fruit & Veg City.

Pacmar has various facilities, including a plastic line, Elopak, Tetra Pak and bulk packaging. Each of these facilities serves the various needs of the Pacmar market:

- **Plastic line** – for preserved shelf-life, and pasteurised non-preserved short-life. These products are packed in bottles from 250 ml to 2 litres
- **Elopak** – is a first in South Africa. The product is pasteurised, unpreserved and packed in resealable gable-top cartons with an anti-tamper ring concealed within the closure. The wide mouth (21-22 mm), resealable screw-cap opening makes for easy pouring and resealing. Currently this unique packaging is used for the packaging of fruit and vegetable juices, and wine. Pacmar currently runs three Elopak lines, namely one Mini Cross, one Standard and one Maxiline
- **Tetra** – the latest in aseptic technology is being used on the one litre Tetra Pak line. The largest volumes of Pacmar's contract-packed products are aseptically packed, for example wine, fruit and vegetable juices. Three Tetra lines are currently operational, namely two one litre lines, as well as a 200 ml line
- **Bulk packaging** – Preserved fruit juice can be packed in a 20 litre 'bag in a box'. These products are only suitable for the domestic market and catering trade.

As a contract packer, all of the above facilities are available to Pacmar customers. A team of food technologists and experienced technicians who can assist with product development and packaging, backs Pacmar's service.

### Quality control

To develop a top quality product range, Pacmar puts strong emphasis on the role that quality control plays in their business. Pacmar continuously develops its own products, as well as contracted products, to ensure that all of those developed by Pacmar, are of the highest quality for both local and offshore markets.

Packaging materials used on the packaging line at Pacmar, are not only checked by their packaging suppliers' quality control, who are governed by the Printing Association of South Africa. Materials are also checked by Pacmar's own quality control department before any packaging can commence.

Pacmar's quality control department also performs random checks on all raw materials received. A certificate of analysis accompanies all new batches received. Regular audits of raw materials received, as well as the suppliers themselves, ensure that only the highest standards and quality raw materials are used in their fruit juices.

Quality control does not only apply to the raw materials. Where blended juices are developed, each is tested after mixing and only released if all specifications are met. All juices produced by Pacmar are produced under strict GMP (good manufacturing practices) and HACCP (hazard analysis critical control point) quality approved standards for safe and healthy fruit juices.

Hygiene and pest control also plays an important role and Pacmar makes use of out-sourced suppliers to ensure that its premises are continually monitored and maintained.

In the juice industry it is important to know that once your product leaves your hands to be packaged, it would remain of top quality and fresh, as if plucked from the tree. A company such as Pacmar ensures that this need is met. **M&J**

