



Celebrating Sign & Seal Labels' first entry and first Gold Pack Awards win are production managers, Reuben Naidoo (left) and Enver Pillay (right), new business development manager, Christa Crous, and MD, Henk Crous.

The ultimate seal of quality

As a first-time Gold Pack Awards entrant, Sign & Seal Labels' management team is delighted with winning a silver medal in the Alcoholic Beverage Packaging category for La Vierge Winery's Anthelia Syrah label.

'This was a way for us to benchmark ourselves against the best, and we'll keep setting such objectives and new challenges,' comment production managers, Enver Pillay and Reuben Naidoo. They believe that the quality of the pressure-sensitive label's print stands

out because of the metallised and pearlescent finishes used. 'Additionally, registration was key on this label because achieving perfect small text with strong colours requires one to go heavier with the Mark Andy P3 Performance Series' anilox rollers, which increases the risk of mottling and defects,' Reuben comments.

'Entry criteria for the relevant category required printed label samples, as well as a finished product (wine bottle) in the very difficult lockdown regulations,' Enver comments. 'We were struggling to source the bottles and weren't allowed to transport the samples



From humble beginnings in 2007, Sign and Seal Labels has shown that organic growth through continuous improvement has formed a major part of their success story.

They have a lot to be proud of:

In 2018 Sign & Seal received three Silver- and one Achiever award at the prestigious GAPP Awards.

Furthermore, 2020 proved to be a year full of achievements:

- In September 2020, the company is proud to have been ISO 9001:2015 accredited;
- In October 2020, they achieved FSC accreditation; and to top it all,
- On the 28th October 2020 they achieved a silver award in the esteemed Gold Pack Awards.

After thirteen years in the industry, Sign & Seal is still innovating and keeping up with global trends and techniques.

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The judges remarked that although this Anthelia Syrah label for La Vierge Winery is only printed in black and blue, it creates the impression of many more colours. In addition to foiling, they noted that the silkscreen printing adds another dimension, resulting in a striking on-shelf presence.

during the alcohol ban. In the end, perseverance and patience paid off and are a testament to the way our team executes jobs.'

MD, Henk Crous, adds that as a small family-owned business with a lean, resilient and highly-experienced team, Sign & Seal Labels' biggest-selling points are flexibility and responsiveness. 'To stay relevant and differentiate ourselves from larger competitors, we subscribe to global quality management standards for producing labels that add value to products and satisfy customers' needs. We've also invested in a mix of technologies that cover the whole spectrum of the label industry. Although it may take a combination of four or five machines to achieve the same or better result as some of the bigger converters, we still achieve better lead times in most cases, which says a lot about the company's management and employees.'

'Sign & Seal also takes a collaborative approach to artwork by reviewing what we receive and advising the designer and customer about best practices and how we can improve on the label's functionality and aesthetics with enhancements and customisations, while at the same time advising them on sustainability principles,' Enver explains. 'Once the customer is happy with the look and feel of the paper, which sets the base and tone for the job, we can determine the best types of finishes and technologies to utilise in our facility, in order to achieve the best results on that specific type of paper.'

ISO 9001 accreditation

Henk points out that Sign & Seal Labels' management team stems from a corporate background, and knew that as the business grew exponentially and organically, it would need to implement manufacturing best practices and services.

Five years ago, the team employed a dedicated person to facilitate a review of the systems and structures, as well as a step-by-step analysis of each process to redesign it appropriately and to help instil a culture of living and demonstrating those best practices every day.

'We've spent the last two years refining these processes and systems and translating these best practices into behaviour and conduct within our facility,' Henk states. 'It has been an intensive process for our quality & risk manager, Henry Maans, to coach and train the staff and for the production managers to take ownership and help champion the process.'

The certification team started with the documentation and system scrutiny in July, undertook the audit at the end of August, and issued the certification in September.

Henk believes that the ISO 9001:2015 certification will open new doors for the company, and help to further solidify the year-on-year exponential growth, which it has experienced for the past 13 years.



After the first year, we've produced almost 1.5-million running metres on our digital label converting and finishing line, and grown throughput on this side of the business by 300%. Production manager, Reuben Naidoo's experience on digital presses and finishing equipment plus R&D work has helped shorten the learning curve for the operators. Additionally, we've benefited from the boom in online shopping during the pandemic and five brewers converting their alcohol production to sanitising products. Our digital technology was a convenient fit for turning around high-quality labels within 24 hours from receiving the order, even when staff capacity was just 30%."

- MD, Henk Crous

FSC certification

The global sustainability drive and growing brand owner demand for FSC-certified paper-based products encouraged the team to apply for FSC accreditation at the same time as the ISO 9001 certification. According to Henk, it wasn't difficult to achieve because of the procedural and process frameworks already in place for the ISO quality management system. Sign & Seal Labels received the certification during the first week of November and looks forward to capitalising on the new opportunities that it represents.