

WorldStar Packaging Award

Category food packaging

Sustainability Award in silver

Presidential Award in bronze

My father Helmut Meininger founded the VPZ Verpackungszentrum – a company that sells food packaging – in Graz in 1982. Our portfolio is still traditional and includes paper bags, films, nets and trays. In 1989, I took over the reins from my father and began working with him to introduce a new environmental focus to product development.

This change of course was more the result of personal conviction than a financially driven business decision. From the outset, we have made it our mission to play an active role in shaping our future. We channel our creativity into new packaging concepts that contribute towards a better environment.

We turn seaweed into foam, plants into film and beechwood into netting – innovative concepts that result from our quest for high-quality, environmentally friendly solutions. A number of these innovative solutions have already made it onto the market. VPZ has an active research and development team, driven by passion and by the continual need to set new benchmarks in terms of quality.

Compostable Packnatur® cellulose nets made from Lenzing™ Modal – a by-product of forest thinning – have replaced plastic nets for organic fruit and vegetables in all leading Austrian supermarkets. This internationally awarded innovation is now poised to conquer the global market. The new Packnatur® Organic Wineglass Labels made from a new organic compound of cellulose paper and organic film using 100% renewable, biodegradable raw materials complement this revolutionary net packaging.

I am very proud – also on behalf of my company, the whole team at VPZ and our cooperation partners Lenzing AG, Borckenstein GmbH, EOM Erzeugerorganisation Marchfeldgemüse, IM Polymer and Lenzing Plastics – to receive the WorldStar Packaging Award in three categories for this product development. It really feels like receiving an Oscar and is a great source of motivation to move forward towards the vision of a sustainable packaging future.

Susanne Meininger

WorldStar Packaging Awards

Lifetime Achievement

Everyone knows that change is hard to achieve. However, we made it our mission to master this transformation when we handed over the reins of our firm to our daughter, Susanne, in 1989. This is when we turned our focus to biogenic packaging.

This led to the launch of 3 pilot projects

- Deriving foam from seaweed, as a replacement for polystyrene.
Australia has the highest number of different types of seaweed in the world, by the way.
- Obtaining biopolymers from organic waste, such as offcuts from sugar beet, or citrus fruits that have been over-produced, and whey, to name but a few.
- Net packaging from beechwood cellulose.
We have since managed to make a breakthrough with this.

After almost 30 years, we are finally seeing positive results. Now that the world is conscious of the environmental problems, the change we dreamed of will come automatically.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my faithful and visionary companions with whom I have travelled along this revolutionary path: my wife and daughters, as well as the employees who have built this company into what it is today; thanks to Professors Narodoslawsky and Braunegg from Graz University of Technology, who have enabled us to forge new directions in the field of research, and Dr. Crnoja-Cosic who established and leads the cellulose net packaging project at Lenzing AG. We have been faced with many hurdles along the way and have overcome many challenges together. We shall continue working towards the vision of an environmentally friendly packaging future and turning this vision into reality.

Helmut Meininger