

RAFLATAALK

2/2002

- **Raflatac, Inc.**
– **What a difference
a year makes**
- **Filmic labelling grows
across the globe**
- **High-class labels
for fortified wines**





*Cover photo by Egidio Santos /
Flagships of the port wine trade
on Portugal's Douro river.*

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Greeting from the CEO

Rising to the challenges of a changing market

Raflatac's operations have expanded strongly this year. Business in the United States is growing well due to the new and modern factory. In China, Raflatac has recently launched a new production line in Shanghai. Despite sharing the common element of being on the other side of the world when viewed from Europe, these investments are entirely different in nature. The US factory is highly automated; the Chinese factory is a small unit that serves the varied needs of a developing market.

What these establishments do share is that their design and investment have been implemented by Raflatac's own personnel and with the company's own expertise. Both investments have required a lot of training for the new personnel, which is something that will continue in the future. We have risen well to these challenges.

However, the main challenges still lie ahead in the development of customer satisfaction. In its operations, Raflatac must take into consideration the continuous changes taking place in the market. We have improved our readiness for this on the global scale.

Modern information technology offers ever-new possibilities for the development of the self-adhesives business in collaboration with our customers. Such technology also helps us improve the competitiveness of self-adhesive labelling, which is of benefit to both parties. Raflatac has been investing in the development of IT for more than 15 years and will continue to do so in the future. It is sensible to carry out this work together. Through the development of IT, the whole value chain will serve end-users even better than before.

Juhani Strömberg
CEO and President, Raflatac Group



Photo: Kimmo Torkkeli

Raflatac has proved to be a primary player in the US

What a difference a year makes

Raflatac's new US-based manufacturing facility has now been in operation for one year. Though it has been a challenging time for the North American printing industry, for Raflatac it has been a time of continued growth and success.

Given the North American economic turmoil of late, some could argue that Raflatac's timing for investing in the North American market-place couldn't have been much worse. Even so, Raflatac's growth rates in North America for the past year have effectively proven otherwise.

Dan O'Connell, President of Raflatac, Inc. comments, "Once our North American customers witnessed our investment in this market they took us more seriously as a true global supplier of pressure sensitive materials. The result has been an increase in orders, and we have been able to achieve substantial growth in this market during a time when industrial growth has virtually come to a standstill."

"Other factors have also contributed to the growth and success of our new operation in the United States – shorter product lead times and a more expansive product range. According to the Tag and Label Manufacturers' Institute TLMI, pressure sensitive



market growth in the US has actually been negative. Raflatac's growth, however, has significantly increased."

Working in four shifts

When Raflatac's US facility first opened its doors, the coating operation was running 24 hours a day, five days a week. July marked the integration of a fourth shift, and the company's coater is now operating round the clock seven days a week. This, coupled with efficiency improvements, yields substantial additional capacity to meet the increasing market demand. The US facility is the collective result of decades of experience in the manufacture of pressure sensitive materials, bringing together Raflatac's renowned proprietary coating technology and a fully automated inventory and order tracking system.

Jouko Lähepelto, Vice-President and Area Director for Raflatac in the Americas, explains, "Our US factory gives us the opportunity to assemble Raflatac's most advanced worldwide manufacturing technology under one roof."

"All our manufacturing, slitting, inventory management and order tracking solutions in the North Carolina factory are proprietary. We have developed new order processing and logistic systems and have redesigned the IT system infrastructure to meet the unique demands of twenty-first century supply chain

"Raflatac's proprietary manufacturing technology has been assembled under one roof in the US factory," points out Jouko Lähepelto, Vice-President and Area Director, Americas.

logistics. From the receipt of raw material to the shipment of a customer's order, quality and consistency are assured as we have removed all manual material handling from our process."

Since the new factory began production, Raflatac's market share in the US has nearly doubled. The company has been able to build upon its already well-known brands of pressure sensitive labelstock for variable information printing applications. Raflatac is also strengthening its position in high-quality prime label materials, including filmics.



Product consistency is essential

As a global player, Raflatac has taken product consistency very seriously. End-users increasingly insist on the same standards in print quality and performance for their product labels worldwide.

Raflatac is committed to placing global expertise in all major markets to achieve high-standard product consistency. Close partnership with UPM-Kymmene's label papers division and ongoing research and development efforts support the company in this goal.



Photo: Audrey Goforth Photography

“Our staff has increased from 45 to 275 employees in recent years,” says Dan O’Connell, President of Raflatac, Inc.

“Raflatac takes its global brand, quality, consistency and product performance very seriously,” Jouko Lähepelto says.

“Global experts were brought to the US to start up the new facility and to ensure that all systems were up to Raflatac’s high standards. We’re able to achieve consistently high product quality because of our technological expertise and the integration of UPM’s range of paper products and release liners.”

Raflatac’s growth objectives for the future echo those that have brought the company to its present-day position as a primary player in the North American marketplace: to continue to expand product lines with material grades that are manufactured in the US, and to deliver a unique and personal approach to customers, an approach that has been a cornerstone of the company’s global success.

Raflatac will be introducing a range of filmics at Labelexpo Americas this September, reinforcing its commitment to the high-quality prime labelling sector. Future initiatives in the US include e-business plans to create a link between the company’s own IT system and its customers to enable streamlined, faster and more efficient communication.

As Dan O’Connell comments, “Before we broke ground for the new facility we had 45 employees in the US. Today, we have around 275.”

“Our customers have witnessed the enormous commitment we have made to this market in the shape of the technology and services we have delivered this past year. As we continue to grow and expand, our customers will reward us with success in the years to come.” ■



Clear-cut commitment with an eye to the future

The opportunity to produce quality products in the USA has brought Raflatac tremendous success. Raflatac's enhanced ability to respond to customers immediately and have direct control over a range of quality Raflatac products as they expand into the marketplace has been rewarding for both employees and customers alike.

A Marketing Manager Malcolm Collins puts it, "Before July 2001, Raflatac was known in the USA as a competitive supplier of consistently high quality and dependable VIP products for the laser, ink jet and roll-to-sheet markets, along with a range of EDP and thermal transfer products."

"Since the opening of Raflatac's first manufacturing centre in the USA, we've been working hard to further expand our customers' perception of the Raflatac brand and to enter markets where we are already experienced because of our global organization."

One important area where Raflatac has been able to increase its range of product constructions is the "prime label" or product labelling market.

"Raflatac's range of semi-gloss products is already highly regarded by printers worldwide for on-press print performance and convertibility," Collins says, with reference to 54# and 60# Raflacoat and 57# Raflasilk.

New products for the USA

Having a manufacturing centre in the USA has also made it possible for Raflatac to take



advantage of local raw materials that are not always readily available in the European market. Kromekote® Extra-gloss is a prime example of this and a

recent introduction to the Raflatac product range. Kromekote®'s bright white, high-gloss finish and exceptional printing performance have made it an ideal choice for Raflatac's prime label range. 56# Raflagloss' – a high-gloss face material for applications requiring a little more class – has also been added to further complement the prime label paper range. The move into prime labelling materials has also meant addressing the filmic products available to converters. Raflatac has introduced several new liners (44# Polycoated Kraft, 1.5 mil and 1.2 mil PET) to complement the already successful HD white (2.5 mil) with Polypropylene Gloss Clear TC and Polypropylene Gloss White TC filmic faces. Additionally, a new shelf-edge

marking product has been developed specifically for the USA in the form of 4 mil PVC vinyl with the VR 75 adhesive on the 78# White Kraft liner.

More for variable information printing

National Sales Manager **Philip Coates** points out that while the recent focus has been on the prime label market, Raflatac has not lost sight of the VIP sector of its business.

“We have expanded our direct thermal range to include Near IR and full 900 IR grades. The range also includes Raflatac's most economical thermal product, Direct Thermal Eco. This non-barrier grade material is suitable for dry, short-term applica-

“Prime labelling is one area where Raflatac has increased its product range significantly,” Marketing Manager Malcolm Collins says.

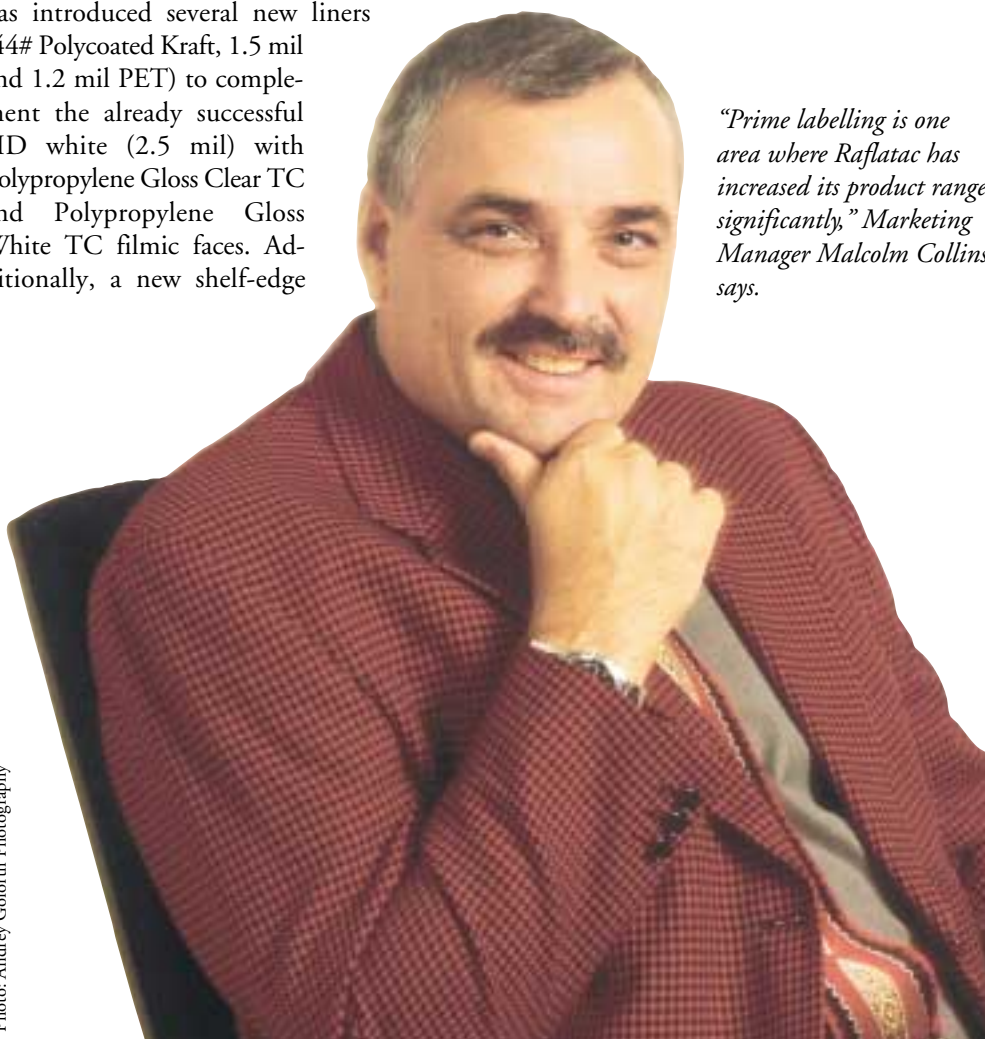


Photo: Andrey Goforth Photography

tions in close POS as well as transport and distribution applications. The introduction of a new high lens true grade, Direct Thermal Top HS, also meets the increasing demand for higher printing speeds with laser energy and increased application ability.”

“To further add to the increasing number of materials that Raflatac now offers in the USA, we've also developed our splice-free and trimless product ranges. These lines are continually monitored and analysed to ensure that customers' needs are met.”

“New introductions have also been made to the Thermal Transfer product range,” Coates continues.

“Syntransfer Plus, a matt-coated film with an aggressive adhesive is suitable for outdoor drum label applications. Transfer Standard, an uncoated thermal transfer sheet, continues to be successful in less demanding TTR applications, particularly those applications where



Photo: Audrey Goforth Photography

the printer and ribbon have been pre-selected and matched with the face material.”

A pledge to the very best

With Raflatac’s successful completion of its first full year of production on US soil, Malcolm Collins encapsulates the inspiration behind the company’s achievements thus far.

“All these developments are part of the Raflatac pledge to become an integral part of the American pressure sensitives market while being able to call upon our global partners and colleagues to ensure that we have the latest information and are able to offer our very best.”

“Raflatac USA is continuously developing new products for the future and is looking to introduce products into more diverse areas of application,” Philip Coates says.

“Prime labelling is one area where Raflatac has increased its product range significantly.

We’ve developed our splice-free, trimless and thermal transfer product ranges, to give just a few examples.”

“As always, consistency, reliability and quality will remain key features of any and all new developments.” ■

“We’ve developed for example our splice-free, trimless and Thermal Transfer product ranges,” says National Sales Manager Philip Coates.

World-class customer service through supply chain management

Photo: Andrey Goforth Photography

“End-users demand cost-effective solutions that call for lean and agile supply chain management. From raw material suppliers to converters, we are only as strong as our weakest link,” says Raflatac’s US Supply Chain Manager Mark Pollard.

According to Pollard, the pressure sensitive industry has a dynamic and complex supply chain that is increasingly demand driven.

“It’s important that everyone in the chain recognizes that we are in this together and that competition against direct competitors is no longer an issue.”

“A supply chain with high added value – one that provides customer-focused solutions – will be a key competitive advantage and an essential defence against global competition.”

Standardization and consistency at speed

Raflatac has developed a Supply Chain Strategy incorporating the latest logistical thinking, modern technological solutions and the Raflatouch philosophy of openness, honesty and trust. The result is a powerful combination of six key business goals: Standardization, Consistency at Speed, Agile Manufacturing, Value Chain Partners, E-Collaboration and Innovation.

Supply Chain Manager Mark Pollard



“Standard business processes allow us to offer global service combined with world-class quality,” Pollard says.

“As a means to standardization, Raflatac’s facilities are highly automated, driven by IT systems that have been designed and developed by Raflatac’s own experts. At Raflatac, the order fulfilment process is standardized. This ensures that customers get consistent product and service quality regardless of the delivery site.”

“Furthermore, the consistency of Raflatac’s products and services provides added value to our customers. Doing this at high speed removes costs from the supply chain. Fast and reliable delivery – consistency at speed – is the cornerstone of Raflatac’s service.”

Agility with value

Raflatac has a global network of factories and slitting terminals, each operating with standard IT and business processes. Stocks

and capacities are analysed and balanced on a daily basis to ensure that the variation between supply and demand is as smooth as possible.

“Agile manufacturing on this level facilitates back-end production batching. This ensures production efficiency as well as front-end customization, our trimless programme being one example,” Pollard says.

When choosing its own suppliers, Raflatac ensures that they bring significant value to the supply chain and don’t burden it with cost. These carefully selected and experienced “value chain partners” range from raw material suppliers working together with Raflatac to offer splice-free products, to distribution companies that tailor their networks to meet Raflatac’s next-day delivery demands.

Integration through collaboration

“Historically, the emphasis in supply chain management has been on the physical movement of goods, which is why the term logistics is associated with transport,” Mark Pollard continues, “and although transport is certainly important, not enough emphasis is placed on the movement of information through the supply chain.”

According to Pollard, e-collaboration is not descriptive of a self-service e-ordering system that provides additional speed and flexi-

bility. Rather, e-collaboration is the synchronization of business-critical planning information such as forecasts, market trends, stock levels, production schedules and lead-times.

“Raflatac has been at the forefront of internet ordering in the pressure sensitive industry in Europe. However, with simple internet ordering, the competitive advantage can be short lived and does not necessarily maximize the added value for the customer. All parties in the supply chain must work together as a team, sharing business-critical information that creates a long-term competitive advantage and adds significant value,” Pollard says.

“The latest internet technology incorporating XML messaging and virtual private networks will ensure a fast and reliable information exchange. These advances will bring true supply chain integration.”

But what of the innovation in Raflatac’s Supply Chain Strategy?

“With each of these facets set in an environment of continuous learning and improvement, we can create an innovative approach to supply chain management,” Pollard concludes.

“For each partner in the supply chain, working together to add value and eliminate costs through integration and collaboration will create a flourishing environment for long-term growth and profitability.” ■

Raflatac’s order fulfilment process is standardized, which means that customers get consistent product and service quality regardless of the delivery site, whether it be Raflatac’s factory in North Carolina (below) or the company’s California terminal (top).



Label him Entrepreneur

Over two decades a label converter grows with Raflatac USA

Like many small label company owners in our industry, the entrepreneurial bug bit Jim Harris as he was rising through the ranks of the big-company culture.

Harris's entry into the printing industry began in 1976 when he joined Dennison's Gastonia, North Carolina plant as a production manager.

During his tenure at Dennison, Harris recognized the vast opportunities presented by flexo-printed pressure sensitive labels and began formulating a plan to eventually strike out on his own. The opportunity presented itself in 1983 when Harris noticed a four-colour Webtron 650 for sale in the classified section of a trade publication.

"I went to Dennison knowing nothing about printing," Harris reflects. "After being a production manager for eight years, I knew that I wanted to start my own label printing business given everything I had learnt. I've always had an entrepreneurial spirit because with the exception of my time at Dennison I've always been in business for myself. I kept the Webtron 650 in storage for a year due to a non-compete agreement with my employer, and then decided to purchase some land in Mt. Holly, North Carolina and build a plant from scratch."

Once his first press was up and running, Harris did what most label company founders start out doing – everything. He was the press operator, salesman, label inspector, and

shipping department. The first job on press for the new company, Mt. Holly Tag & Label, was an order for supermarket labels from the meatpacking sector.

The crucial role of the material supplier

Throughout the 1970s and 80s, as pressure sensitive label decoration presented itself as a formidable quality force against wet-glue and other labelling techniques in North America, the role of the pressure sensitive laminate supplier was a critical one. Laminate manufacturers had to be educators. They had to

take risks, betting their own companies' success on the inevitable long-term growth and expansion of companies like Mt. Holly Tag & Label.

More than anything else, suppliers of pressure sensitive laminate had to excel in service. They had to support their own label printing customers in the task of convincing North American end-users that pressure sensitive decoration was a winning cost equation while also promoting the quality potential of flexography – a printing process that was rising from the bottom of the quality hierarchy.



Photos: Andrey Goforth Photography

The market share of pressure sensitives in the United States increased with that of flexo. Unlike their European counterparts, North American label converters were bypassing processes like letterpress and gravure, focusing their research and development efforts on the promise of flexo. Their efforts paid off, as flexo swept the North American printing industry and pressure sensitives grew right along with it.

Mt. Holly grows with Raflatac

A few years after Jim Harris founded his company, a young technical salesman was sent to the United States from Finland to found another North American entity of industry – Raflatac, Inc. In 1986, **Jouko Resla** established a Raflatac sales and service office in Fletcher, North Carolina. Raflatac’s mission was to bring the company’s outstanding reputation for quality and service to the American market.

Harris comments on the beginnings of his relationship with Raflatac, “When Raflatac arrived in the United States, it came as an alternative material supplier. However, we soon realized that Raflatac had brought in excellent products and very strong technical support, which we needed at the time. We built up our relationship from there, and to this day Raflatac is our primary pressure sensitive material supplier. Seventy-five per cent of the material we run through our presses is Raflatac labelstock.”

▶ *Press operator Kenny Shuford makes sure the labels turn out fine.*

▶ *“I’ve always had an entrepreneurial spirit because I’ve almost always been in business for myself,” says founder and owner of Mt. Holly Tag and Label Jim Harris, pictured with his wife Kay and son Scott.*

Mt. Holly’s diverse range of flexo applications includes textile, automotive, electronics, corrugated box, pharmaceutical and thermal transfer labels. The company needed a consistent and flexible material supplier.

“We’re currently printing on a lot of polypropylenes and other synthetic substrates like brushed polyesters and foils,” Harris says.

“We buy some of our films from Raflatac as they’re expanding in the film sector in the United States. If I have a technical issue and need someone on the phone or at my company quickly, I know I can count on Raflatac. Their response time is excellent.”

The small company nemesis: end-user consolidation

Like their small-company counterparts, Mt. Holly Tag & Label rode the growth curve of North American industry in the late 1980s and well into the 90s – the Golden Age of the label printing industry, during which small and medium-sized converters were able to pull in annual growth rates exceeding 25 and 30 per cent. Market maturation, coupled with economic downturn, has currently forced these same companies onto zero-growth plateaus.





Four weeks, five days, twenty-four hours – Mt. Holly is working within increasingly short delivery times.

According to Jim Harris, the biggest single challenge for the North American small to medium-sized converter is the increasing consolidation taking place at the end-user level.

“I’ve had major acquisitions happen with six of my customers during the past three years. These companies have either been acquired or are merging with another facility, taking their business elsewhere. One of my oldest customers here in North Carolina is currently going through such a consolidation, moving all operations to Florida. They’ll still buy our product, but

eventually we’ll be phased out because the Florida plant is already having labels supplied from local sources.”

Selling labels is still a regional affair, and consolidation activity makes it even more so. “Products change in printing, and they can change quickly,” Harris continues.

“Our business is just in time, and our customers want their labels today. It all comes down to regional supply sources. Lead times used to be three to four weeks for us, but those days are over. Now we’re working with delivery times of five to ten working days, and that’s going to be shortened even further in the near future. We have a contract with one of our customers for a new application working on a 24-hour delivery time.”

Harris admits that there is new business coming in, however it rarely replaces a lost customer given the pricing pressures that arise when bidding on a new job. Tightening margins place even greater pressure on label printers as the cost of doing business rises rapidly. Increases in the rates for health insurance, workmen’s compensation insurance, transportation costs and liability insurance eat away at existing profit margins.

Entrepreneurs like Jim Harris have ridden the ebbs and tides of the printing industry over the past few decades and find themselves fine-tuning their sales and production strategies in order to persevere in today’s challenging marketplace. However, these self-starters know exactly what it takes – hard work and relationships with key suppliers like Raflatac. People like Jim Harris laid the foundation for the North American label printing industry – printers who began with a used press and their own hands. They’re not afraid of a challenge, and there’s little room for risk aversion when it comes to the survival of the label-printing fittest. ■

With a total area of nearly 10 million square kilometres, sparsely populated by some 30 million people, Canada still evokes images of open spaces, adventure and freedom, attracting tourists and immigrants alike from all over the world.

This also holds true for business people. An educated and skilled workforce, competitive operating costs, generous investment incentives and a strategic access to North American markets are among the major assets Canada has to offer. Such benefits attract both up-and-coming entrepreneurs and multinational corporations from all sectors of industrial activity, whether traditional pulp and paper production or high-tech bioengineering.

A lingering perception

Despite these unique features, however, a lingering perception still haunts Canadians in general and Canadian business people in particular: that their country and its economy are virtually dependent on its big brother to the south, the United States of America.

“While it is certainly true that the United States is Canada’s largest trading partner, international trade with the European Union,

Canada – A land of opportunity

Japan, China, Africa and South America is expanding rapidly. This attests to the strength of the Canadian economy as a whole and to the dynamism of Canadian business people,” asserts **Jean-Marc Borel**, Managing Director of Raflatac Canada, Inc.

“Perhaps more importantly, business people who believe that Canada revolves around the USA miss out on what Canadians can give their business partners in terms of outlook and innovation. These can be invaluable.”

A Canadian perspective

This analysis actually accounts for the very implementation of Raflatac in Canada. Starting from the mid 1980s, Canadian customers had to do business with field agents in order to access Raflatac’s sales and service operations in the United States and Europe. In 1997, however, Raflatac set up a sales office in Toronto, Ontario, to better serve its Canadian customers as well as explore and develop a promising market in a more efficient and sustainable manner.

The commercial printing industry is actually the fourth largest manufacturing employer in Canada, boasting 3 500 establishments through-out the country, from St. Johns, Newfoundland on the Atlantic to Victoria, British Columbia on the Pacific. In 2001, this industry produced over CAD \$10 billion worth of shipments, \$1.2 billion of which was exported.

“Looking forward, our goal is for Raflatac to become a major force in the Canadian pressure sensitives industry,” says Jean-Marc Borel, Managing Director of Raflatac Canada, Inc.



Photos: Paul Ducharme Photographie



Antonella Ricciuto (left) and Annick Borel serve customers from Raflatac's Montreal office.

Considering that 75 per cent of that output originates from the English-speaking Ontario and French-speaking Quebec, the distinctive Raflatouch called for a bilingual team to manage sales and service throughout Canada. Jean-Marc Borel, a Raflatac sales manager in Lyon, France, suited the profile and picked up the challenge.

Considerable legwork, coupled with the timely opening of Raflatac's US manufacturing facility in Fletcher, helped underline the potential as well as the actual scale of the Canadian market for Raflatac's quality products and service.

Raflatac Canada, Inc. officially began operations on 1 January 2002. From their new offices located in downtown Montreal, Quebec, Jean-Marc Borel, Sales Coordinator Annick Borel and Sales Assistant Antonella Ricciuto are now overseeing the expansion of the Canadian market, providing customers with the entire range of pressure sensitive

paper and filmic labelling materials now available from Raflatac's Fletcher plant as well as with special products from Europe.

A sophisticated clientele

An emphasis on quality products and services and a commitment to advanced R&D are also among the distinctive traits of the Canadian business environment, particularly in the central regions of Toronto and Montreal. Montreal actually ranks fourth in North America in terms of the number of high-tech jobs per capita, just after San Francisco, Seattle and Boston. Montreal also ranks fifteenth for the size of its population. In its entirety, the province of Quebec is an international leader in aerospace, biopharmaceutical products, information technology and telecommunications, hydroelectricity and metallurgy.

As Jean-Marc Borel explains, "For historical or cultural reasons, Canadians are clear-

ly more outward looking than their American neighbours, and the same holds true for Canadian business people. Even as we made our first tentative steps in this market, potential customers were already aware of Raflatac's leading position in Europe and were eager to avail themselves of our products."

"Today, thanks to our new Canadian base, we have the privilege of working with very sophisticated customers such as Imprimerie Ste-Julie, a printing plant that is acknowledged as a world leader in digital technologies." ■

Montreal: In two languages, for safety's sake

“Bonjour, hello.” In most shops and restaurants in Montreal the customers are for safety's sake greeted in two languages. In Canada's French-speaking province of Quebec one can never be sure of the language in which a customer wishes to be served.

As a city that has for a long time been a valued centre for the trading of fur and leather products, Montreal has a myriad of shops and more than 3 000 restaurants that cater for all tastes regardless of language. It is possible to try meals from all corners of the world in Montreal, whether French, Italian, Indian or Mexican, and a reservation is certainly recommended for Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights. The city has received the title of the dining capital of Canada and has also been classified as the second best restaurant city on the American continent after New York. The locals enjoy food and eating out – almost as much as shopping and sports.

It is usually difficult to find a meal that represents typical Quebec cuisine in a restaurant. Local delicacies are enjoyed at home and restaurants are the place to try different tastes. From May till October, locations such as Crescent Street, rue de la Montagne, St. Laurent Boulevard, the Latin quarters and the old town are splendid places to eat al-fresco and let the food pamper the taste buds.

In summer Montreal shows its sunny and warm face, but the winter frost and snow can freeze both visitors and the locals. However, shoppers don't need to shiver with cold when



Photos: Varpu Sihvonen

Notre Dame is one of the highlights of Montreal's old town.



Canadians love ice hockey. Arun Srivastava runs a shop that specializes in ice hockey souvenirs in Montreal.

moving from one shopping centre to another because tunnels below the streets provide easy transportation whatever the weather. From Monday to Wednesday and on Saturdays, the shops are usually open from nine to five, on Thursdays and Fridays till nine and on Sundays from noon to five.

Laurier Street is known for shops concentrating on stylish dress, as are St. Denis Street and rue de la Montagne. Antiques and art can be found from Sherbrooke Street and Greene Street. Visitors can utilize tax refunds when making purchases that exceed 50 Canadian dollars, hotel rooms included. The US dollar is also an acceptable means of payment.

The old town of Montreal is a world of its own and undoubtedly worth seeing, particularly the magnificent Notre Dame basilica whose grand towers were completed in 1841

Montreal's Chinatown is a popular tourist destination.



and 1843. This popular tourist attraction is perhaps currently best remembered for the wedding of singer Celine Dion in 1994.

"Few people remember that the ice hockey superstar Mario Lemieux also got married in Notre Dame," mentions Arun Srivastava, who keeps a souvenir shop next to the church.

He knows the deeds of ice hockey players to the tiniest detail and is proud of his club, the Montreal Canadiens, and particularly of its Finnish captain Saku Koivu.

"Ice hockey is a religion in Montreal and I dare claim that nine out of ten people follow the sport closely," he says.

Srivastava is often asked which places in Montreal are worth a visit. He has two tips: the old town and the mountains around the city.

In addition to Notre Dame, the highlights of the old town include outdoor cafes, narrow streets, Canada's first skyscraper, the city hall and the city's 'birthplace' Pointe-a-Calliere, where Sieur de Maisonneuve and Jeanne Mance came ashore in 1642. Today this place is the home of Montreal's Museum of Archaeology and History.

The city hall is still perhaps best remembered for the visit of the French president Charles de Gaulle in 1967. Standing on the balcony he caused quite a stir when he uttered the words "Vive le Quebec libre!" – Long live free Quebec.

The old town is not just a tourist attraction. 3 000 people live there and more than 40 000 work in its fashion shops, museums, galleries, restaurants and cafes. ■



Photo: Kari Koskelainen

Labelexpo Asia attracts more than 4 000 visitors

Labelexpo Asia 2002 was held in Singapore on 4-6 June. Although smaller than Labelexpo Asia 2000, the show attracted more than 4 000 visitors from across Asia and Oceania.

The show included live demonstrations of the latest machinery and technology as well as conference sessions. Labelexpo Asia also provided networking opportunities for suppliers and partners from over 50 countries.

Raflatac's stand attracted a good number of visitors on all three days, with personnel present to inform visitors about Raflatac's offer in Asia.

Raflatac is fully prepared to satisfy the continuously growing demand for synthetic products, which are manufactured at the company's Asian factories. ■

THE RAFLA TIMES

Photo: Raflatac



Exhibition in China

Raflatac presented itself on its own stand at the International Printing Industry Show of Shanghai in June. The exhibition, which was organized in the new international exhibition centre of Shanghai, turned out to be highly successful. Numerous printers and end-users visited Raflatac's stand, and many new contacts were established. ■

UK Golf Day

Raflatac held its Corporate Golf and Activity Day on Wednesday 3 July at Breadsall Priory in Derby. Despite torrential rain in



Photo: Raflatac

the afternoon, everyone enjoyed the day. A putting competition was held in the morning, followed by lunch and then golf and other activities. Arranged by KDM Events, the activities included longbow archery, laser clay shooting and push-and-pull driving.

A presentation dinner was held in the pavilion room, and this year the prize-giving took a new turn. Customarily, a gift would be presented to the winners, but this year Raflatac set aside £1 000 for the winners to donate to their favourite charities. ■

Raflatac present at Labelexpo Americas

Raflatac will be emphasizing its strong local position at this year's Labelexpo Americas in Rosemont, Chicago on 10-12 September. The exhibition takes place at the Donald E. Stephens Convention Center. Raflatac will be located in booth 1439.

Representatives from Raflatac will be attending the event to present Raflatac's offer and answer visitors' questions.

The former Labelexpo USA has been rebranded "Labelexpo Americas" to mark its growing appeal and importance to the region's emerging markets. Nearly 500 exhibitors have

confirmed their presence at the event. Labelexpo Americas has an anticipated attendance of over 15 000 major label manufacturers, suppliers and buyers.

The show will incorporate at least half a million square feet of floor space, with premier label and narrow web industry exhibitors showcasing their services. ■

Honorary doctorate for Raflatac's CEO

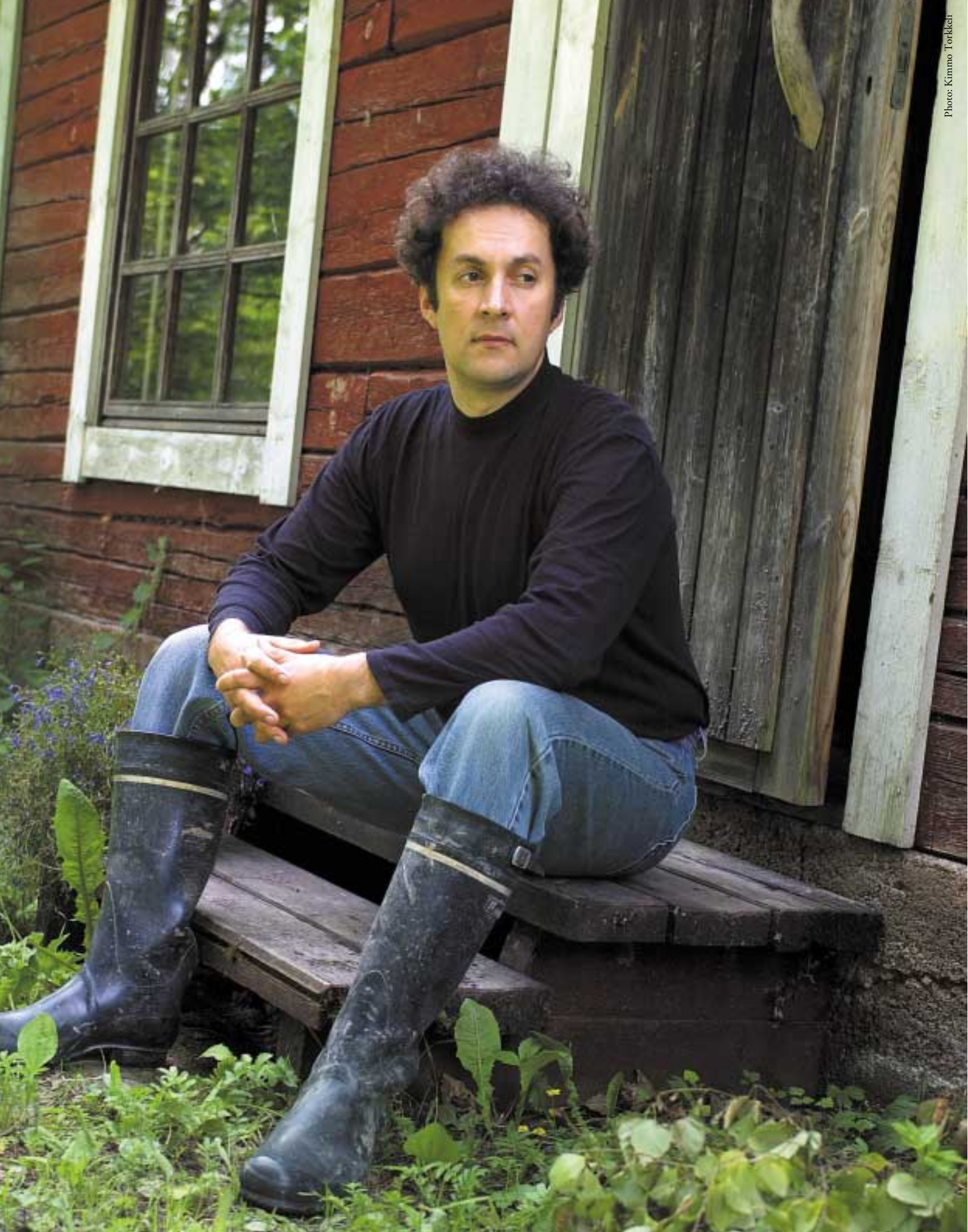


Photo: Merja Ojala

Prime Minister of Finland Paavo Lipponen (left) and CEO of the Raflatac Group Juhani Strömberg.

CEO of the Raflatac Group Juhani Strömberg has been awarded an honorary doctorate by Tampere University of Technology (TUT) in Finland. The Prime Minister of Finland Paavo Lipponen was also among those who received an honorary doctorate at the same event.

In the Conferment Ceremony that took place in Tampere in May, 112 doctors received the emblem of a doctor, the doctor's hat. TUT invited nine individuals to receive honorary doctorates for their significant contributions made to research fields represented at the university. ■



Science, philosophy and myth

Artist Osmo Rauhala unfolds the story of nature



Photo: Timo Lehtinen

Mirror 2, oil on canvas, 120 x 160 cm, 2000

“Humans must reform their relationship with their environment, over and over again. There are no ready answers,” says Finnish-born Osmo Rauhala. Among the principle themes of his art is the study of the possibilities for people to understand their place in nature. The artist divides his time between his family estate in Finland and Manhattan, New York. Some of his works can be found at Raflatac’s Fletcher facility.

“Humans have always striven to uncover the mystery of existence,” Osmo Rauhala says.

“The means have varied, from art to religion and science. Hardly any answers have been found. Nevertheless, the continuous formulation of questions has been essential in the development of our species.”

Mythical animal forms such as deer, wolves and swans, animals that have a universal symbolic significance, are woven into the stories of Rauhala’s works. Scientific knowledge and philosophy are combined with this mythological dimension. The works are not easy for their viewers: they raise big questions without offering ready answers – but they do provide comforting knowledge of the endless cycle of life and the undeniable power of nature.

In Rauhala’s own words, art functions as a tentacle: it makes it possible to study matters in an all-embracing manner. Art observes, senses and remembers, it mediates experience and knowledge. Unlike a scientist who has to work relying on a strictly approved language, an artist has the privilege of combining sense and intuition.

“Art is older than agriculture – this already tells the significance of art to human life. Even though evolution has eliminated all that has proven needless, it has not eliminated art. One would have thought that people who lived in the harsh conditions of the north would have been fully occupied by acquiring their scant livelihood. But despite this they have found time for cave painting. Art provides an answer to a question that is important to our lives, otherwise it wouldn’t exist,” Rauhala contemplates.

Artist and farmer

Born in 1957, Osmo Rauhala’s personal history is extraordinary. After completing a university-level business degree, he graduated with a degree in art from the Academy of

Fine Arts in Helsinki in 1986 and took his MFA in the School of Visual Arts, New York, in 1990. Since 1988, he has spent a part of each year in New York and a part in Finland.

In New York his reference point is So Ho in the heart of Manhattan. In Finland he lives in Siuro, Nokia on his family estate, which he has farmed since he was 18.

When asked about this dichotomy, Rau-

“A human can exploit the forest, but on nature’s terms. A forest is more than a store of raw material; it is a growing entity.”

hala responds with a counter question: Why break from a functional system?

“I don’t have two occupations. Instead I have one life’s work which comprises both farming and art. I don’t even try to draw a line between the two.”

“If I didn’t live in Siuro I wouldn’t acquire the insight I get by observing changes in nature, watching what is happening in the fields, the forest and the environment,” Rauhala says.

Rauhala’s farm produces organic grain. The forests, too, have been managed on nature’s terms for generations.

“The need for nutrition in the world is rising in parallel with the population. At the same time there is an increasing need for pure water and farming land. Food must be produced without polluting the environment. It’s possible to solve the equation by studying soil biology and overall ecology. Land can be made productive from one generation to the next.”

“In any case, people have to give up using artificial fertilizers in the future because their fringe phenomena are so immense. The remaining alternatives are gene technology and organic farming. Gene technology is a high risk because its effects are not known. Organic

production is a good alternative from the perspectives of environment and health, but it raises the question of whether there will be enough food, which poses a significant challenge to researchers and agriculture. The solution has to be sought from means such as the development of crop varieties, soil improvement and technology.”

“In this field it is now possible to make innovations that are equally successful globally as those made in information technology,” Rauhala says.

The secret of the forest

“When I go to the forest I feel like I’m going home, not into a great unknown. Just to observe the rhythm of forest plants and the wind is in some way very pacifying,” Rauhala says.

The home forest has a specific meaning for him. Moving around there tangibly shows how a human’s genetic memory transfers knowledge from one generation to another.

“Even though I have wandered in many forests in Europe and the United States, I haven’t had the experience anywhere else that someone else has been in this place before me. At such times I am no longer sure whether I look at the place with the eyes of my father or grandfather. A good example of this is the search for a Christmas tree, which is a ritual repeated every Christmas eve. In a walk that almost seems to have no purpose I feel like I am finding nothing. Then I suddenly know that the ‘right tree’ grows in a particular place.”

“A human can exploit the forest, but on nature’s terms. A forest is more than a store of raw material; it is a growing entity. It is also impossible to define a forest. A human’s touch can be visible but it should not cover its natural rhythm. I once participated in a conversation in New York concerning whether Central Park is a forest. Even though it is magnificent, it is not a forest but a park whose form has been fashioned by a human,” Rauhala says.

“A human lives in an interactive relation-

ship with his or her environment in a metropolis, too. In New York it is possible to predict the weather based on the wind in the same way as in the countryside. You can hear the approaching of a storm from people's voices. In the beginning I myself experienced New York as a large forest where the stream of people was like a giant biomass. But when familiar faces – people who greeted me – gradually appeared, my impression changed. A forest became a village with the role of a community.

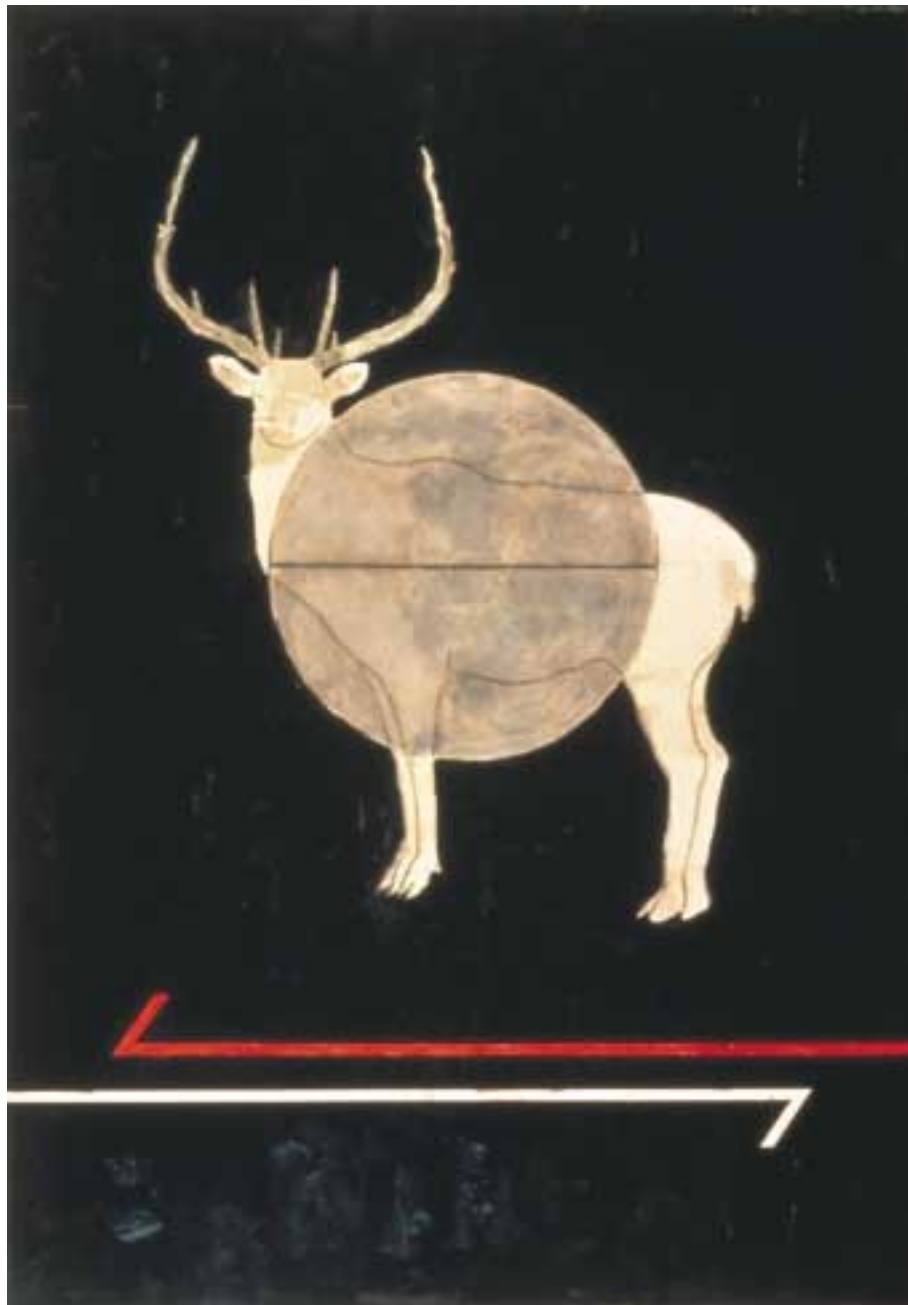
Back to large fabrics

Rauhala's first solo exhibition in New York was arranged in 1989. Since then his works have been exhibited in numerous exhibitions in New York and elsewhere in the United States. The next exhibition in New York will take place in 2004. Before then, the focus will be on Europe. This year, Rauhala's works are displayed in Tampere, Paris and Amsterdam.

Over the last ten years, Rauhala has worked with all media. In addition to paintings and graphic art (monotypes) he has composed video works.

"I want to work with large fabrics again," he says. Large paintings will be on display in his forthcoming exhibitions. ■

Science, philosophy and myth



The secret of the forest-Fertilization, oil and bees'vax on canvas, 244 x 166 cm, 1990

Photo: Kimmo Toikkeli

In South America, every country is a world of its own

Films are winning popularity

The South American label market has grown steadily in recent years.

The average annual growth rate has been around ten per cent per year, and is expected to stay at the same level. The per capita consumption of labels is still far behind that of North America and Europe. Assuming positive future economic development, there is great potential for growth in the region's labelling business.

For films, the annual growth rate has been even higher than the overall market growth rate at an average of about 20 per cent. However, over 80 per cent of the region's pressure sensitive laminates are still paper based.

"The increasing use of film-based materials is the result of end-user demand and the narrowing difference between the price of film and paper-based materials. Paper-based materials are increasingly being used for variable information labels. Hot melt and UV-type adhesives are also gaining more ground," explains **Javier Palomares**, Raflatac's Area Sales Manager in South America since 1999.

Expanding areas for paper-based labels include product identification, thermals, laser and ink-jet printing and graphics. Of the filmics, PP and PE have seen the fastest growth, with PVC and PET following closely behind.

"White film is used as a replacement for paper, and clear film is increasing its popularity. The no-label look is showing consistent growth. With both paper and film labelstock there's increasing demand for high quality," Palomares says.

Over 90 per cent of pressure sensitive label converting machinery and materials are imported, but the large majority of paper-based labels are manufactured in South America. Film-based labels are for the most part imported. Imports are strong, particularly in the specialty market.

Global trends can be seen in South America. More and more well-known global end-users are locating in the region.

New labelling applications are being taken into use in cosmetics and personal care.



Another growing segment is wine labelling, an important end-use area in Chile, Argentina, Uruguay and more recently in southern Brazil.

Raflatac is known for its quality

"Raflatac is perceived by the market as a supplier of top-class quality products. Our technical literature, brochures and sample books have been very well received by our customers. Raflatac's free internet-based service tool, the Service Line, is also highly appreciated. People clearly welcome the support we give them," Palomares says.



"Raflatac is perceived by the South American market as a reliable supplier of consistent, high-quality products," says Sales Area Manager Javier Palomares.

When doing business in South America, it has to be kept in mind that the region is by no means homogeneous.

"In South America, there's wide cultural and behavioural diversity. One can say without exaggeration that every country is like a world of its own. It's essential that companies operating in the region provide the necessary language skills and are able to interact

Raflatac Mexico provides local slitting service



Photo: Raflatac

Operations at Raflatac's Mexico sales office were launched at the beginning of 2001. Located in Mexico City, the office is responsible for the local sales and slitting service as well as direct full container load (FCL) customer deliveries and deliveries of specialty materials to Mexico and Central America. Sales Manager of



Photo: Pasi Kemmo

Raflatac's office in Mexico is located in the bustling Mexico City.

Raflatac Mexico, **Laura Riihimäki**, says, "We're on hand to answer any questions our customers may have, and we're ready to expand our in-stock product range in Mexico and Central America according to demand."

"Our key values are finding the best solutions for the needs of each customer, reliable customer service, punctual delivery and consistent product quality of the highest standard – all the things familiar to Raflatac customers elsewhere in the world. In other words, we do our best to add the Raflatouch to everything we do." ■

according to the culture's way of doing business," Palomares points out.

Long-lasting personal relationships are even more important to South American customers than they are in the US or Europe. That's why South American customers truly appreciate the Raflataouch, Raflatac's professional but personal way of dealing with its customers. ■

Raflatac gears up to keep pace with the GLOBAL GROWTH OF FILMICS

“Raflatac is strengthening its role as a global player, in all product areas and all markets,” says Paavo Sillanpää, Business Area Director, Product Labelling.

“Although the European growth role for filmics has slowed compared to recent years, there’s still room for growth, and considerable untapped potential still exists particularly in eastern regions of Europe. There are also very good possibilities for Raflatac to increase its market share with filmics in the USA.”

In Europe, Raflatac supplies filmic materials to converters supplying major brand owners, especially those operating in the home and personal care segment. About half of Raflatac’s filmic volume in Europe is supplied to this market. In the beverage industry, with the UK as the biggest single market in Europe, filmic labelling on beers, ciders and “alcopops” is replacing direct printing.

Filmic growth is at its highest in new and developing markets such as Asia. Here, demand is particularly driven by multinational companies arriving on new territory. Supermarkets demand packaging and labelling of the same standard and quality as they use elsewhere in the world – food and drinks have to be packed and labelled in exactly the same way in all markets. Multinationals achieve this homogeneity by obtaining materials from globally operating suppliers for use with locally based printing companies.

Raflatac produces filmics at its factories in Malaysia, Australia and China as well as at the Tampere factory in Finland, which is now dedicated to filmics and special products. In addition, the latest laminating mill in the USA has recently completed a successful first year of production.

“Across the globe, the growth of filmic labelling is still outpacing papers,” says Paavo Sillanpää.

“This production is in line with Raflatac’s growth strategy. Local presence is a means to provide better logistics for better service, and local staff provide a positive cultural balance,” Sillanpää says.

“We intend to grow faster than the market. Our existing production facilities are already sufficient to supply the increasing demand and strengthen our position in the global market for filmics.”

Immense potential in new markets

“The Asian markets are becoming increasingly similar to the US and European markets because the big brand sellers are the

same. Procter & Gamble, Beiersdorf, L’Oreal, Nestlé, Unilever, Carrefour, Johnson&Johnson, for example, are all present here,” reports Kari Pälli, Managing Director of Raflatac Singapore.

These multinationals have brought change to the market, specifying PE or PP rather than PVC, which is still largely used throughout Asia. The printing method used in the region is mainly solvent-based letterpress, though UV inks are now up and coming and flexo printing is also gradually gaining ground. At the same time, glassine backings and polyester liners are also being adopted as automatic dispensing becomes more prominent.

“For use on the various kinds of electro-



Photo: Jouko Järvinen



Photo: Jouko Järvinen

“The Asian markets are becoming increasingly similar to the US and European markets,” says Kari Pälli, Managing Director of Raflatac Singapore.

tics produced in the region, Raflatac’s Asian specialties are Polyester White, metallized silver and holograms. These faces are mostly delivered with the yellow PE Coated Kraft backing for manual application. Raflatac’s Polyprint is also widely used, and for outdoor applications we supply Polyprint 90 with the RH 1 adhesive,” Pälli says.

In the Asia-Pacific region, only Australia and New Zealand give packaging and labelling any environmental consideration.

“Recycling or waste management systems are not yet prevalent in the region, but perhaps China would be the first to act on environmental concerns due to the size of its population,” speculates Pälli. “So at present, and with the exception of the multinational brand sellers present in the region, environmental

friendliness through a reduction in packaging waste is not a big sales argument for filmic labelstock in Asia.”

“Here, filmics find their competitive edge in terms of increasingly favourable price and their tolerance to tropical conditions. Filmic labels keep their good looks despite the moisture and heat. In the future it’s certain that synthetics will grow more strongly than papers and also replace them in various end-use applications. I’d estimate that the market share of filmics will rise from 15 % to 30 % or more.”

“It’s certainly true to say that the Asian labelling markets are very much in favour of

filmic labels, and a new generation of PP and PE films will be gaining a greater share of the market. One can estimate that in China this development will be stronger than anywhere else in the world,” adds Pälli, “and with growth potential like that, films are certain to continue to rise as a powerful force in labelling.”

Making an impact in the USA

“Raflatac is now strengthening its presence in the USA with an increasingly expansive product portfolio, including new and innovative materials,” says **Kari Virtanen**, Business Development Manager, Films.

“Targeting the health and beauty, household and beverage labelling segments, Raflatac is introducing a range of films to the USA – polypropylene, squeezable film and thermal transfer film – with a range of liners, including glassine, polycoated kraft and films. Raflatac’s US product range will continue to expand to fulfil a wider range of end-uses.”

Raflatac is bringing expertise from around the globe onto North American soil. The company has accumulated vast experience in films in Europe, and strong ties with UPM-Kymmene



Raflatac’s PE labelstock is ideal for Nivea’s personal care products.

Raflatac’s Raflaclear provides just the right clear-on-clear labelling solution for Doetsch Grether’s Fenjal.

provide good possibilities to develop excellent liners for films.

“Raflatac is determined to make a big impact in the USA and expand its market share by transferring its expertise from Europe and strengthening its US organization. Raflatac therefore provides expertise, support, a wide product portfolio and some new and innovative products,” Virtanen says.

“Naturally, Raflatac aims to be a big player in films in the USA and also have multinational end-users consider the Raflatac brand an excellent global option.”

A world of difference

“Filmic labels provide an excellent way to attain differentiation. They provide the flexibility to label bottles and packages with more complex shapes where paper-based materials would be inadequate. They are soft to the touch and maintain their good looks throughout the lifecycle of the labelled product. Per-

haps it goes without saying that, apart from resorting to direct printing, filmics are the only way to achieve a no-label look,” Paavo Sillanpää says.

Today’s packaging trends are very much a driving force behind the rise of filmic labelling. Flexible packaging and squeezable, recyclable plastic containers are gaining increased acceptance over the glass or metal containers traditionally used to hold juice, beer, food and spirits. Unique, contoured bottle and packaging shapes that require flexible labels are used as a part of product differentiation.

Labels are now seen as an integral part of brand strategy, and how they look is more important than ever in their role as a “3-second commercial”. The no-label look is still very much in fashion, gaining more and more ground. Stylish printing is used, sometimes combining iridescent colours, metallic inks and hot foils for a more exclusive image.

“Raflatac’s US product range will continue to expand to fulfill a wider range of end-uses,” says Raflatac Inc.’s Kari Virtanen, Business Development Manager, Films.

Materials from market impulses

“Raflatac’s operation is highly customer-oriented, which is why so much importance is placed on understanding the needs of printers and end-users,” Paavo Sillanpää says.

“Our products grow from market impulses – trends such as thinner materials, the no-label look and soft-touch materials that feel pleasant to the hand. We also develop materials to keep up with the latest packaging technology.”

Thinner packaging and labelling materials mean cost savings where waste legislation is concerned and also help maintain an environmentally friendly company image.

“Down-gauging continues with both face and backing materials. Raflatac’s PE has been down-gauged from 100 to 85 microns, which seems to be the limit for PE to retain the necessary rigidity. However, larger gauges are still required for bigger labels. As for Raflatac’s backings, HD75 has been down-gauged to HD70 and PET36 to PET30. The PET backing allows higher line speeds, improving efficiency for end-users,” Sillanpää adds.

When materials have been down-gauged so far that nothing more can be shaved off the caliper, new materials are the next logical step.

Among Raflatac’s answers to the demand for fine-gauge materials and clear-on-clear labelling is Raflex. At only 50 microns, this modified polypropylene is the thinnest multi-layer available on today’s market that still provides enough stiffness to convert easily. Raflex has the squeezability of PE and the stiffness of PP, which gives it the required dimensional stability for good register control and die cutting. In addition to reducing packaging waste, this significantly down-gauged film is a big step forward in the invisibility of the no-label look.

“Raflatac is strengthening its role as a global player, in all product areas and in all markets,” Paavo Sillanpää finishes.

“Filmic labelling is certainly set to continue along the growth path, and Raflatac is strengthening its product development to bring new materials onto the market and maintain a leading-edge product portfolio.” ■



THE SALES SERVICE coordinates pre and after sales

Sales Coordinator Petra Bovensiepen at Raflatac's German sales office plays an important role in the cooperation between Raflatac, the printing house and the end-user. She handles various matters related to pre and after sales, managing time tables and making sure that things run smoothly and without delay. She also takes care of communicating order details to the production facility and makes sure that customer documents are fully up to date.

Sales service personnel like Petra Bovensiepen act as the link between the customer and different aspects of Raflatac's operation, from the company's product managers to its R&D and logistic systems. The Sales Service is the customer's gateway to Raflatac. If a customer has a question, the Sales Service will find the answer or call in suitable expert assistance.

Personal, tailored service

All customers have a designated sales service person to take care of their business with Raflatac.

"The Sales Service welcomes people to Raflatac. The customer always knows who to turn to. This is important in today's fast-moving business environment, where the order fulfilment process may be completed in 24 hours," explains Process Manager, Sales Service **Tuula Konsala**.

"As automization continues to grow it's good to know that there's always a familiar, friendly voice to answer customers' questions," Konsala points out.

"Because Raflatac's sales service personnel take care of particular customers they get to know their key people. This way we gain a deep understanding of our customers' business, which leads to mutual trust. Raflatac's sales service is therefore able to provide customers with a personal, tailored service."

"The company's integrated information network facilitates our work to provide good customer care and is under continual development," Konsala adds.

Raflatac has a wide network of sales offices around the world. This means that customers receive service in their own language. The personnel working in Raflatac's sales offices are also experts of their own geographic area and its business culture.

Field and desk sales people work closely together. Keeping the lines of communication open is easy with the help of Raflatac's up-to-the-minute communications technology. ■

Sales Coordinator Petra Bovensiepen handles the practicalities of pre and after sales and is also a contact person for Raflatac customers. She is located in Ratingen, Germany, one of Raflatac's biggest European sales offices.



Photos: Pasi Kemmo







High-class labels for fortified wines

Self-adhesive labels have solved a variety of problems for Portuguese port wine manufacturers. When bottles are transported from one country to another, the labels should not lift, tear or smear. A self-adhesive label tolerates very harsh conditions, and the return of an unlabelled bottle is no longer a cause of headache to wine houses, restaurants or shopkeepers.

Vox – Organização da Industria Grafica, SA., located in Vila Nova da Gaia, northern Portugal, is undoubtedly the world's most significant producer of port wine labels for very natural reasons. Real port wine is only produced in Portugal, and in most cases in Vila Nova de Gaia near the Vox printing house. Cooperation between Vox and its customers runs seamlessly, and mutual trust has developed over a period of two decades. Nearly all

port wine houses trust Vox to supply their labels. Alongside the synthetic labels the company supplies to a variety of industries, Vox specializes in paper-based self-adhesive wine labels.

Times change in the strictest tradition

A reel of self-adhesive laminate rolls at the forward end of the printing house's Gallus



Paper-based self-adhesive laminates are transformed into prestige labels for dispensing onto bottles of port wine.

◀ *Vox's old printing moulds are an impressive sight.*

Raflatac's Carla Duarte and Victor Santos as well as Vox's Marisa Ribeiro are happy with the seamless cooperation between Raflatac and Vox, a significant producer of port wine labels.

TCS 250. At the tail end, finished labels roll onto a new reel. Paper-based self-adhesive laminates are transformed into colourful, magnificently gilded labels as they feed through the machine. The self-adhesive laminate already contains the adhesive, so the printed reels are ready to roll in a winemaker's label dispenser.

When self-adhesive laminates came onto the wine market four years ago, Vox had been printing traditional labels for two decades. The traditional labels required wet glue for bonding onto wine bottles.

"Some of our customers were interested immediately because the new labels meant a more efficient process for a wine house – adhesives were no longer needed, machines worked better and productivity increased," says the printing house's second-generation Administrative Director **Marisa Ribeiro**. Together with her father, Manuel da Hora, she shares the management of the production process and the 73 employees of two facilities in good family spirit.

"Our port wine producing customers, large wine cellars, are very old companies which maintain the strictest tradition. Major changes don't usually happen overnight, but this time they managed to surprise us. These old wine houses adopted the new labels much faster than we could believe," Ribeiro explains.

The means to realize ambition

In many wine houses the process of change is still underway, however, because the new labels require different machinery and, for its own part, Vox wasn't able to anticipate such a rapid rise in demand for the new product. The company's existing machines often run around the clock to bridge the arrival of additional equipment.



The new machines to be acquired are the latest Gallus printing machines, which enable offset and flexo as well as silkscreen printing. Currently Vox has two Gallus TCS 250 printing machines, a Malbat 5 Typo and an Onda 4 Typo. An extension to the printing building is about to be built. The company's management doesn't hesitate to tell about their ambitious strategic plan: to become one of southern Europe's principle label printing houses as early as 2003. Realizing this ambition requires a large investment that could rise to 2.5 million euros.

"Self-adhesive laminates yield a better print quality and make it possible for a printing house to implement its best graphic expertise. This is why Vox will increasingly focus on the highly precise silk screen method to deliver the most impressive visual result," explains Marisa Ribeiro.

She continues proudly, "All parties in the process must cherish the image of the time-honoured and distinctive port wine, including label printers."

An integrated printing process, in which the same machine requires only one operator and performs all tasks, signifies the financial benefit in the changeover to self-adhesive laminates.

An affirmation of quality and prestige

"Compared to traditional labelling papers there's a far greater selection to choose from with self-adhesive laminates," Ribeiro says.

She is particularly pleased about the high quality of Raflatac's products. One of Vox's choices has been Raflamatt WSA.

"This matt-surfaced laminate really does justice to a label's prestige," Ribeiro says.

Vox's graphic design department has eight artists to implement customers' wishes. A label for such a fine socializing drink like port wine, one of Portugal's most valued exports, must display and affirm the quality of the beverage to the customer.

Administrative Director Marisa Ribeiro is a real expert in the field of printing. Despite



label dispensing is part or fully automated, the addition of a small decorative label doesn't significantly increase the costs.

In Jorge Luis's view, one significant benefit of using self-adhesive labels has been the different shapes they make possible.

"We can have a self-adhesive label made into any shape. With the traditional labels the shapes were limited, usually to just squares or rectangles."

Symington's wine house was founded by Englishman Andrew James Symington, who came to Portugal to make port wine in 1882. Symington's is nowadays the leading port wine maker on the market. Eight male descendants of the founder continue the tradition of high-quality port wines such as Graham's, Dow's, Warren's, Quinta do Vesuvio, Smith Woodhouse, Gould Campbell and many others.

As each brand of port wine has several different qualities, the house needs more than 2 000 different kinds of labels. The transfer to self-adhesive labels began in the wine

house one year ago. Now they represent 30 per cent of all labelling, the rest is for the time being implemented with the traditional method of adhesion. However, Jorge Luis assures that the ratio will very soon swing to the other direction on the grounds of usability.

"Exceptional," sums up Symington's department head when describing the qualities of self-adhesive labels.

This is the reason why the wine house first took self-adhesive labels into use with wines of the higher quality category, all of which are now labelled this way.

"Self-adhesive labels have smoother surfaces and for this reason their contact is more secure and the adhesion better. When dispensed they find their position with no trouble, and they don't leave marks on the bottle," Jorge Luis explains.

Jorge Luis, from the Symington Family Companies wine house has been won over by self-adhesive labelling.

all her responsibilities she still likes to choose the right paper-based laminate herself. She has studied printing in all its finesse since she was small.

"If needed I can fill in for any of the printing house's employees. I have grown up next to my father in the printing house, it has been my playground. I can even clean the printing machines," Ribeiro says with amusement.

Labels in new shapes

In the very same city of Vila Nova da Gaia, a reel of labels printed by Vox rolls in the dispensing machine at the English Symington wine house. The line of bottles moves at its own speed, and the machine swipes labels to the side and back of each bottle in an instant.

"Not just one label but two, for example. We emphasize a vintage with an additional small label which gives the bottle a more impressive appearance," explains **Jorge Luis**, Head of Department at The Symington Family Port Companies wine house. When





Port wine from the Douro

The labels don't blister, wrinkle or otherwise change their appearance even though the wine bottles may be stored in cold, damp cellars. If required, labels with a purpose-designed adhesive can be washed off.

Six of the nine labelling lines at The Symington Family Port Companies winehouse will be refurbished in the near future. Depending on their output capacity, the price of dispensing machines varies between 40 000 and 350 000 euros. ■



Raflatac opened its own sales office in Lisbon in September 2001. Sales Manager Vitor Santos and Sales Assistant Carla Duarte can look on their results with satisfaction.

The Lisbon office mainly supplies synthetic laminates, but the proportion of paper-based laminates is clearly rising.

“Raflamatt WSA and Raflagloss WSA are popular among companies that print labels for wine houses,” Santos specifies.

“Besides the labelstock itself and full technical support from Raflatac, our best sales asset lies in the close personal relations we develop with our customers.” ■



Port wine takes its name from the city of Oporto, which is situated near the mouth of the Rio Douro or River of Gold in northern Portugal.

Although many port-style wines are produced around the world, the terms Port or Porto, the Portuguese name for Oporto, refer only to wines produced in Portugal. Even though the Portuguese had been making wine since Roman times, the history of port wine begins much later. Its origins

lie in the late 17th century, a time of fierce competition between north-European naval countries.

French wines were in short supply following Britain's declaration of war on France in 1678 and the subsequent blockading of French ports. British, Dutch

The Douro Valley is the home of port wine.





These ships carry a valuable load.

and German merchants turned to Portugal to find alternative wines and also began to supervise their production to obtain the desired quality.

Though it was customary to add brandy to the barrels to stabilize the wine for transport, this was not yet the port wine of today. It is not known exactly when the first port wines appeared or who was responsible for their advent, but somewhere close to the turn of the 18th century it became the practice to add brandy to the wines while they were still fermenting. Stopping the fermentation process in this way produced sweeter, fruitier wines closer to the contemporary port-wine style.

The port wine trade continued to expand rapidly during the first half of the 18th century. Following the Treaty of Methuen, signed in 1703, British textiles received a privilege on the Portuguese market in return for Britain's import of port wine in increasingly large quantities. Almost inevitably, problems were encountered with inferior wines that were the result of overproduction and fraudulent activity.

It was Portugal's Marquis of Pombal who in 1757 introduced steps to prevent fraudulent activity and regulate the qualities produced. Each of the best wine-producing areas of the Douro vineyards was delimited and clearly marked, and regulations were defined to control prices, transportation and the way in which the vineyards were cultivated. Accordingly it was Portugal that created what was probably the first Controlled Denomination of Origin in the World, the Douro, the home of port wine.

Fortified with cultural heritage

Throughout history, grapes have been brought by boat from the river valley vineyards of the Douro to the city of Vila Nova da Gaia. However, the British named the sweet, strong wine of the Douro valley after the seaport city of Oporto, of which Vila Nova da Gaia was once a part. A marvellous view over the historic parts of Oporto – which has been listed by Unesco in the world cultural heritage – opens from the terraces of Gaia's wine houses. Last year, the magnificent vineyard slopes of the Douro received the same recognition.

The numerous and enormous wine cellars of Vila Nova da Gaia are also a tourist attraction. During a cellar tour, tourists are given an insight into how different qualities are produced before finishing their visit with a taste of the wine.

But what are the principle stages of making port wine? Harvesting is followed by grape pressing, which is nowadays carried out with machinery within the wine cellars of Gaia or at the few Douro vineyards that have been granted permission to make their wines on location. A second pressing follows after a couple of hours' rest. After the wine has fermented and reached a certain alcohol percentage by volume, fermentation is interrupted by adding brandy. This is the main difference in production between the fortified port wine and other wines.

What's in a name?

Labels on the very best and most expensive port wine qualities display the word *vintage*. This term refers to a vintage port wine made from a single harvest in an exceptional crop year. This classification can be granted only by the Instituto do Vinho do Porto. Vintage port wines are bottled after two to three years of cask-aging and mature for a further 10 to 30 years in the bottle. Vintage port wine must be decanted before drinking because it throws a heavy sediment.

LBV (late-bottled vintage) is a somewhat less expensive but very good port wine with a ruby colour. It is produced in the same way as the vintage but bottled later after four to

six years in wooden casks. It is ready to drink sooner than the vintage.

The most inexpensive port wine is the cask-matured dessert wine *ruby*, a blend made from several grape harvests which can be enjoyed after three years' maturation in casks. The yellow-brown *tawny* qualities, on the other hand, are also a blend but are matured for between 10-40 years in the bottle after more than six years in the cask, which imparts a sophisticated taste and a tawny colour from the wood. *Tawny* is suitable as an aperitif or welcomed at social occasions together with cheese, for example.

White port wine makes an excellent aperitif. One can choose from sweet *doce* and dry *seco* qualities. White port wine can accompany dishes such as cold-smoked salmon. Port wine is served in aperitif glasses: white port very cold, other port wines preferably at around 18 °C though often a little warmer.

Port wine has never been as popular as it is today. The qualities are excellent as the manufacture is strictly controlled by the Instituto do Vinho do Porto. When deciding on new labelling regulations in May 2002, the European Union reserved the terms "ruby", "tawny" and "vintage" solely for Portuguese port wines. ■

Raflatac Academy 2002 assembles merchants in Tampere

The fifth Raflatac Academy took place in Tampere, Finland on 5-7 June. Held every second year, the training seminar is intended for the product, marketing and sales personnel of paper merchants specializing in Raflatac's products.

The programme included workshops and presentations on topics such as Raflatac's products and e-business solutions, logistics and market development as well as merchants' campaigns and success stories. The event drew around 90 people from all over Europe.

"Everything went exceptionally well and we received highly positive feedback from the participants," says Markus Karlsson, Marketing Manager of Raflatac's merchant business.



Good to meet colleagues

Vilholm Jensen from ScrammPapirgros AS in Denmark attended the Raflatac Academy for the first time and found it to be a satisfying experience.

"It's good to meet people in our industry from different countries and exchange information and ideas. Getting product information first-hand is naturally advantageous, too," he says.

The Russian paper merchant Komus sent several representatives to Raflatac Academy from various regional offices. Alexander Geraskin, Tatjana Korovanova, Elena Ljovkina and Elena Kovalj emphasize the importance of customer service.

"It's essential that we can trust our suppliers and rely on the high quality of their products. It's also important that we get support when we need it," sums up Kovalj. ■

E-commerce on the way

Hennie de Man from Antalis Holland and Bruno Barbé from Antalis Belgium found the content of the seminar interesting and beneficial.

"We learned quite a lot about Raflatac – the company and its products – as well as different printing techniques. One subject that is of great importance is e-commerce, something that will definitely be widely used in the future," Barbé says.

Photos: Jouko Järvinen



new releases

from Raflatac



■ **Setting New Standards with Raflatac's Splice-Free Service** introduces the range of splice-free products offered in North America. Customers can now further improve the productivity of their operations by taking advantage of the splice-free service.



■ **The Adhesive Book** is your guide to making the right choice of adhesive for a range of end-use applications. This booklet is intended for the North American market.



■ **The Polypropylene Gloss Clear TC & Polypropylene Gloss White TC** product cards outline the filmic face materials available in the North American market, with a choice of three liners.



■ Raflatac continues its series of leaflets for the North American market outlining the benefits of the Raflatouch: **Add the Raflatouch to your business.**



■ **Pressure Sensitive Labelstock** is a useful booklet that contains detachable label samples of the most popular and frequently requested products in Raflatac's North American product range.



■ **Read between the lines** presents Transfer Standard, a thermal transfer product available in the North American market. It contains information regarding thermal transfer technology and Raflatac's Transfer Standard ribbon recommendations.



■ **The Roll-to-Sheet VIP** brochure introduces Raflatac's wide range of roll-to-sheet paper-based and synthetic products for the North American market. It also provides technical information, different printing technologies and special end-use applications.



■ The **Direct Thermal Eco** product card outlines the technical values for a new-generation Direct Thermal Eco that provides improved print resolution for high-speed printers, even at low energy. This product card is available in the North American market.



■ The updated **Thermals by Raflatac** brochure introduces Raflatac's thermal product range. It's available in English, German, French, Spanish and Italian.



■ The updated version of Raflatac's **Self-Adhesive Laminates, Standard Products in Reels – Sample Swatch** is now available in English.



■ The **Polylaser and Polyjet** product cards present Raflatac's expanded range of Polylaser and Polyjet products. The product cards are available in English, German, French, Spanish and Italian.



■ The revised **Raflatac in brief** brochure contains general information about Raflatac, its products and services. The brochure is available in English, German, French, Spanish, Italian, Chinese, Russian and Turkish.

It is also available for the North America market.



■ The updated **Ribbon Recommendations – Thermal Transfer Directory** is a handbook for thermal transfer users. It's available in English, German, French, Spanish and Italian.



■ The **Raflatac Turkey** brochure introduces Raflatac's operations and personnel in Turkey.



■ The **PE Matt Wine** product card introduces Raflatac's new synthetic film dedicated to permanent bottle labelling applications. The product card is available in English, German, French, Spanish and Italian.

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