

SmartLine 2 powers HEYE upgrade at Wiegand-Glas plant

Following a successful trial, Wiegand-Glas has installed six SmartLine 2 inspection machines equipped with Ranger 2 optical check devices for its Ernstthal plant in Thuringia, Germany. Wiegand-Glas has been established for more than 450 years and produces about 8 million bottles daily at four glass plants. Ernstthal manufactures approximately 1.3 million bottles a day, focusing on short runs and complex shapes for the spirits sector. As part of last year's furnace renovation, the company sought new hot and cold end equipment to optimise performance. The plant's high output of non-round containers was the primary motivation for testing Heye SmartLine 2 with Ranger 2 technology. With a colourant forehearth and extra flint containers. Such high-quality glass containers have very tight specifications and, therefore, require the most accurate

inspection equipment to remove all defects without over-rejecting and making the plant less productive than it should be.

Heye International has collaborated with the Ernstthal team for more than a decade, first installing equipment in 2012. Over time, Heye systems have demonstrated stability and robustness. A dedicated test line allowed Wiegand-Glas to assess Ranger 2. Heye engineers were confident the system would outperform competitors on non-round containers. Wiegand evaluated the equipment with multiple toolings and diverse container shapes and sizes. "Our glassmakers are highly skilled and know what good glassmaking looks like," says Dr. Thomas Struppert, CEO of Wiegand-Glas. "We soon realized the advantages of Heye's SmartLine 2. It handles complex containers in a fast and stable manner and provides excellent data to

help us rectify problems before they multiply."

TECHNICAL INNOVATION

At the hot end, Heye installed a new Multi-weight assortment feeder, part of its Industry 4.0 Smart Plant initiative.

The system uses servo drive control, in combination with a servo plunger and dual motor shears, to deliver gobs of different weights to the same IS machine, even in NNPB format. This enables Wiegand to produce varied containers simultaneously on one forming line. Heye overhauled and upgraded the line's existing servo plunger and dual motor shears. Working in tandem, the plunger and shears reduce energy consumption and eliminate gob waste. The solution is ideal for samplings and short runs, minimising downtime. The manufacturer needs fewer moulds for each low volume item and fewer machine-wide job changes, so longer jobs keep running alongside several shorter ones. At the cold end, Heye installed six SmartLine 2 machines, all fitted with Ranger 2 optical detection systems. The modular system captures five images simultaneously through one camera, assessing horizontal, vertical, bottom and shoulder features. The containers tested were largely heavy, premium designs.



Following a rigorous evaluation, Wiegand-Glas upgraded its Ernstthal plant with SmartLine 2 and Ranger 2 technology from HEYE, enhancing precision for complex containers and supporting high-quality, short-run production – all while improving process stability, defect detection accuracy and sustainable operational performance across all lines after furnace reconstruction.



Uwe Schitter, Head of Cold End at Heye International, notes, “Heye SmartLine 2 is just as comfortable in this complex environment as it is in a high-speed NNPB scenario.” Wiegand-Glas views lightweighting as essential to its sustainability strategy. The SmartLine 2 interface provides full control of job parameters, offering visibility and detailed feedback on check results. The SmartLine 2 can be tailored precisely to customer needs via an intuitive graphic interface. Its strength in non-round containers is especially valuable for the specialist, short-run mix at Ernstthal.

ABOUT WIEGAND-GLAS

The Wiegand-Glas group, with more than 2,100 employees, draws on over 450 years of history and expertise in container glass development and production. With four state-of-the-art plants in Bavaria and Thuringia, the company manufactures more than 8 million bottles and jars daily for global food and beverage customers. Its glass, PET, logistics and energy divisions provide comprehensive packaging solutions from a single source.

SPEED AND REPEATABILITY

SmartLine 2 with Ranger 2 addresses the key challenges of modern container inspection. It operates at speed with accuracy across varied bottle types and ensures repeatability, identifying the same defect consistently. Ranger 2 pinpoints defects and locates affected machine sections. Its fixed camera position provides higher accuracy than competing systems and performs reliably across diverse samples and inspection demands.

Uwe Schitter concludes, “A specialist glass plant like Wiegand Ernstthal is made for Ranger 2. We tested all its capabilities and it passed with flying colours. Now it is running on all six lines after furnace reconstruction last summer.”

Wiegand-Glas speaks of itself as a company where experience meets the latest technology and an innovative spirit. Its partnership with Heye International exemplifies this philosophy. ■

ABOUT HEYE INTERNATIONAL

Based in Obernkirchen, Germany, Heye International GmbH is a leading supplier of production technology, high-performance equipment and know-how for the container glass industry. For more than six decades, its mechanical engineering has set industry benchmarks. Through its HiPERFORM, HiSHIELD and HiTRUST sub-brands, Heye delivers Smart Plant solutions that support efficient, sustainable and safe glass production worldwide.

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