



✦ Laser Marking Systems
Coppenrath &
Wiese Case Study

Videojet 3320 Laser provides high quality and virtually maintenance-free coding on torte boxes at Coppenrath & Wiese

Confectioner Coppenrath & Wiese is Europe's largest producer of frozen desserts. Two out of three frozen baked goods bought in this part of the world come from the modern production facility where up to 260,000 cream cakes are produced every day.

Quality and freshness are of the utmost importance for this family-run business. This is why they rely on high quality systems provided by Videojet Technologies, a leader in coding and printing solutions, for their marking requirements.

The revolutionary idea of simply taking an oven-fresh torte or an exquisite cake straight out of the freezer was the starting point for a success story that now spans almost 40 years. The original team of 35 people has become Europe's largest manufacturer of frozen tortes, cakes and baked goods, now employing more than 2,000 people.

Mettingen is a picture perfect medieval town halfway between Osnabrück and Rheine in Tecklenburger Land with around 12,000 inhabitants, lots of horses, greenery and agriculture. And a little distance away, you will find the production plant of a European market leader. The aroma of freshly baked goods greets visitors the moment they step through the door as the delicious smell of cinnamon and vanilla fills the air. It is here that confectioner Coppenrath & Wiese bakes over a quarter of a million cream desserts and cakes every day in addition to numerous small baked goods such as mini doughnuts, profiteroles and assorted bread rolls.

Werner Teeken is already waiting for us at the production facility. He is the Head of Technology and responsible for purchasing outside maintenance and spare parts. He is also responsible for a part of the plant's construction. He notices the look of amazement on the visitors' faces and says, "When you have been here for long enough, you can tell what is being baked at any given moment just by the smell." On this occasion, it is a Bohemian apple strudel, a specialty of Coppenrath & Wiese.

"Flexible, clean and fast traverse marking:
The handling is simply unique."

Werner Teeken, Head of Technology
Coppenrath & Wiese Confectioner



The traditional confectioner maintains the same reputation for high quality that it always has, despite the need to modernize operational processes and introduce innovation into the business. Even today, piping cream or laying the base for a cake is still completed by hand in keeping with the motto, "Where else can you find quality like this today?"

At the location in the plant where the tortes and cakes are packaged, it becomes clear that the exceedingly high demand for product quality continues through to packaging.

The patented polystyrene torte boxes are filled by Nordson Machines adhesion applicators and Meurer tray packers. Quite at home among all of this, one finds the Videojet 3320 Laser. A faint "Ssssst" is barely audible through the Plexiglas® casing as the best before date and batch codes are printed on the packaging in high resolution up to 24 hours a day, 300 days a year.

Confectioner Coppenrath & Wiese and Videojet is a growing success story

It was no accident that Coppenrath & Wiese decided to purchase a laser coder from Videojet, as the two companies have had a relationship for two decades. Werner Teeken recalls, "In 1992, we opened the production plant here in Mettingen. We took this as an opportunity to scour the market and find the best ink jet printer for our needs." Three renowned manufacturers were in the running and were put to the test, and in the end, they opted for Videojet Excel 170i.

The fact that the devices are still in use today is a testament to their reliability. Unrivaled even then, the sophisticated control concept makes working with the printer extremely easy.

Coppenrath & Wiese has also been using laser coders in addition to the ink jet printers for almost four years now. Another competition between renowned manufacturers led to yet another victor: Videojet's 3320 laser marking system. The reason for the decision was that the technology, reliability and handling of the Videojet system met the needs of the quality-oriented manufacturer of tortes and baked goods. Norbert Zabel is responsible for managing the data required for marking all of the company's products. Nobody in the firm knows the printers and coders better than he does. He is just as enthusiastic about the 3320s as he was on the first day. "You can find your way around the device so quickly. Anyone who can use a PC will have no problem with the laser," says Zabel.

This is all thanks to Videojet's Simple Operator Interface (SOI). The clear operator interface fits on every Videojet laser. Icons, buttons and clear text intuitively guide the user through the possible settings. The SOI is either installed on a touch screen, a hand-held terminal, or, as on this production line, on a PC tablet with WLAN.





The advantage of using the PC tablet is that this can help reduce the number of control units even further.

Change codes quickly across the direction of product movement

Confectioner Coppenrath & Wiese delivers their cakes and tortes throughout Europe, Russia, United States and Australia. These markets place very different demands on the best before date format, which is why the coding is altered two or three times within a cycle. The day, month and year sequence changes automatically and the month is specified as a letter combination. The coder receives the best before date value from a central system and the line managers only have to change the sequence of the dates during the cycle. All possible variations, abbreviations, orders and languages can be displayed.

"It is even possible to change the sequence of letters within the lists during operation – this is really great," explains Zabel. "We make it particularly easy for people," Werner Teeken adds. That's why the SOI only allows for the alteration of predetermined parameters. Norbert Zabel sums it up, "All it takes is three actions: select – upload – start." There are approximately 20 different layouts in use for the cakes and tortes. The diversity

of products with approximately 70 different cakes and tortes also means that it must be possible to quickly and flexibly change the position of the laser in both the X and Y direction. Only then will the code be placed in the correct position on the packaging. It is particularly important to be able to mark across the direction of product movement. "Previously, the conveyor created the distances between markings, but only in one direction," says Teeken. This is now a thing of the past. Thanks to the laser technology, the labels can be printed on the packaging at an angle independent of the direction of product movement and the speed of the conveyor.

With the 3320, the packaging gives the right overall impression.

Colorful illustrations on the packaging whet the appetite for the delicious specialty cakes and tortes. "We wouldn't want to spoil the overall image with a really conspicuous date field," says Teeken. This is where the laser demonstrates its particular strengths. Even if you prefer the lightest possible background to mark on, this is not a problem for the laser. "We can have high-contrast labels on virtually any colored background," says Werner Teeken. Illegible data is no longer a problem.

Another advantage is that even in small print, the coding remains crystal clear. "We can make the date field even smaller and position it perfectly with traverse marking," the Head of Technology explains.

They have experienced complete reliability with virtually no consumables.

Previously, the cost of ink and consumables was around EUR 25,000 a year. With the lasers, this cost has been entirely eliminated.

Blocked nozzles or thickened ink are no longer an issue either. "Before when a printer failed, we had to call the service team or quickly install a replacement device," Teeken recalls. Today, it's different. The laser optics are practically maintenance-free. "Sssst," and the next box has its code.

A glimpse into the future

Norbert Zabel predicts that laser and ink jet printers will continue to complement each other. "Every system has its strengths but the future clearly belongs to the lasers." And for the ink jet printers? A 2310 prints the curved logo and a bar code onto a box ready for shipping for Bohemian Apple Strudel at 6 boxes a minute. The cartridges have another day and 20 hours remaining, according to the display. And the 3320 Laser? "Ssssst."



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