

*News release*

## **HONORING EXCELLENCE IN SLEEVING:**

### **AWA Sleeve Label Awards 2018**

AWA Alexander Watson Associates launched their Sleeve Label Awards just four years ago now, to reward quality and originality in the design, production, and application of all types of sleeve label – one of labeling’s newest and fastest-growing technologies. Today, sleeve labels are right at the heart of several end-use markets, particularly bottled drinks, and continuing to grow. This year’s winners in the AWA Sleeve Label Awards once again prove how innovative and technically-superb this industry is today.

#### **Expert judging panel**

The expert judging panel consisted of Tom Hammer, Séamus Lafferty and Will Schretzman, from Siegwark, Accraply, and Verst Group respectively. It was a hard task to choose winners from the universally-high quality of the entries, across all the categories – in itself testimony to the industry’s achievements today. They therefore chose to make a limited number of awards -- all of which, they considered, represent a step forward for the sleeve labeling industry.

#### **Presentations**

The winners received their awards at a ceremony during the recent AWA International Sleeve Label Conference and Exhibition in Atlanta. Yolanda Simonsis, editor of *PFFC Online*, and Corey Reardon,

President and CEO of AWA Alexander Watson Associates, made the presentations, which were applauded by an audience that truly represented the entire sleeve labeling industry supply chain.

### **‘In a league of its own’**

Sleeved cans – one of the fastest-growing sectors for sleeve labeling – delivered two winners. Safety Seals Plastics, Canada, were rewarded for their labels on ‘One Love’ beer cans. The judges said: ‘Graphics that mimic the strokes of an artist’s brush on canvas, and the incorporation of technically-challenging holographic and tactile effects – coupled with the complex use of matte and gloss finishes – put this sleeved can in a league of its own... Flawless execution of a very creative and ambitious sleeve.’

### **‘Simple elegance’**

In the category devoted to heat TD shrink sleeves, Masterpress, Poland, took the award for limited edition Stock Carbon Prestige vodka bottle sleeve labels. The judges commented on its ‘simple elegance of this presentation on the shelf, which is not only eye-catching, it also exudes the “prestige” of this product,’ and added that it ‘has a depth of design and technical execution that is among the best we have ever seen.’

### **A step forward for recycling**

Next, it was time to applaud the winners of the category that recognizes a sleeving project that makes an environmental contribution. Once again, Safety Seal Plastics of Canada took the award, for another beer can label – ‘Big Spruce’ Tag! You’re It!’ sleeves. The judges celebrated this sleeve for its excellent use of perforation and tear tape to facilitate sleeve removal for recycling the can after use. They underlined the fact

that this technique could very usefully be used in a wider context for sleeve removal from PET containers. Coupled with consumer advice as promoted by the 'pull infographic', this approach would, the judges said, 'greatly reduce the recycling concerns associated with shrink sleeves.' They further applauded the graphics and overall execution of the sleeve: quality was not compromised to secure its environmental credentials.

### **A new Awards category**

When evaluating the entry from Phenix Label, USA – on Restless Spirits Distilling's 'Gully Town' whiskey bottles -- the judges said felt they were looking at a truly original combination of design and imaging. They therefore felt the need to institute a new Awards category: Innovation. They described the winning sleeve as 'a storybook label that calls us to know more about Gully Town!', and identified as a highlight 'the monochromatic copper colors, punctuated with vivid blue and white accents – and the clever use of the river as a window to the contents – which exude the historical significance of this product. The feeling of textured/hammered copper that is achieved through a reverse-printed tactile coating is not only creative, it is a first for the judges, and it solidifies this label as distinctive and innovative.'

### **Summing up**

The Innovation Award was the judges' last choice for recognition in this year's competition. As Corey Reardon explains: 'In the categories for roll-fed MD shrink sleeves, digitally-printed sleeves, and stretch sleeves, they could not identify any entry that stood out from the high quality of the others in the category. That just shows how high today's sleeve production standards are.'

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