

Press release

etma presents the winners of the Tube of the Year 2024 Award

Sustainable solution concepts remain in focus - Big appearance of smaller tubes

The winners of the prestigious 'Tube of the Year 2024 Award' of the European Tube Manufacturers Association (etma) have been announced. The voting took place on 23 May 2024 at etma's annual conference in Warsaw. A seven-member jury from among the member companies selected the best tubes in the categories aluminium, plastic, laminate, prototypes and sustainability. Time and again etma's annual competition demonstrates the creativity, innovative strength and performance of the European tube industry. Beyond the borders of Europe, the award sets global standards for pioneering and sustainable packaging solutions of the highest quality.

Etma's Secretary General, Gregor Spengler, was extremely satisfied with the quality and results of this year's award: 'European tube manufacturers have once again demonstrated their strong innovative strength and creativity in this year's competition. This is demonstrated not least by the large number of tubes submitted for the competition in the prototypes category. I am particularly pleased about this, as I see it as an indicator of the wealth of ideas of our member companies, which is a guarantee for the future viability of tubes as a packaging material.'

This year's winner in the aluminium tube category was a Chanel tube produced by Tubex Aluminium Tubes. Building on the success of its popular Chance fragrances, Chanel has launched a limited-edition set of three Chance hand creams. The delicate, refreshing creams feature the familiar floral scents of Chance, Chance Eau Fraiche and Chance Eau Tendre. Each Tube is decorated in a soft pastel shade that matches its perfume counterpart and reflects the brand's sophisticated style. The design is rounded off with a pearlescent finish and an elegant octagonal closure. The creams come in a sleek box containing all three scents. Besides their chic aesthetics, the tubes are also highly sustainable: Chanel chose the manufacturer's Blue Tube Evo, which was the world's first tube to be made of 100% recycled aluminium. The innovative material uses 95% PCR content, is infinitely recyclable and significantly reduces carbon emissions. For a brand built on the notion of timeless beauty, it made perfect sense to choose stylish, eco-friendly packaging designed to close the packaging-to-packaging loop.

The jury chose a tube from L'Occitane, produced by Albéa, as the winner in the laminate tube category. L'Occitane was founded in Provence in 1976 and its cosmetic products are made in the south of France using essential oils and natural ingredients, combining tradition and innovation. Today, the company has more than 3,000 points of sale in more than 90 countries. L'Occitane has collaborated with Albéa to revamp the packaging of its 30 ml iconic hand cream collection, starting with the shea butter version. The transition involved shifting from an Aluminium Barrier Laminate (ABL) tube to a Greenleaf tube, an APR-certified solution with a multilayer sleeve in HDPE, thereby replacing the former ABL tube. For the cap, L'Occitane turned to Albéa's EcoTop technology featuring OctoTop, a 2-in-1 flip-top closure system with the iconic octagonal shape synonymous with L'Occitane, eliminating the need for a peel seal.

By using the OctoTop opening system and Greenleaf sleeve, the number of materials was reduced from 5 to 2 and the components from 3 to 2. This consequently decreased the overall tube weight by 23% compared to the current one, while enabling the entire tube to be recyclable in existing recycling streams in France, Europe and the United States.

First place in the plastic tube category went to the Decathlon Active Solaire Sun SPF50 sunscreen tube from Albéa. Decathlon is a sports brand that wants to enable as many people as possible to enjoy sport. Founded in 1976 by seven friends near Lille, the concept was a revolution at the time: a retail space dedicated solely to sporting goods, from clothing to equipment, at affordable prices. Today, with over 100,000 'teammates' in more than 1,700 stores and over 70 countries, the company offers sports equipment for over 80 sports. Decathlon has chosen Albéa to produce the tubes for its Active SolaireSun SPF50 sunscreen. The sports retailer has opted for a PCR Max tube which integrates 70% post-consumer recycled material (PCR) in the sleeve. This PCR sleeve is combined with the manufacturer's EcoFusion Top which represents a fusion of the head and cap for further weight reduction. The EcoFusion Top innovation is achieving an 80% weight reduction compared to a standard head and cap solution. The tube is monomaterial and ready for recycling in the HDPE recycling stream.

A tube from the Swiss manufacturer Hoffmann Neopac won in the prototype category. The innovative concept and its successful realisation convinced the jury. The company introduces the world's smallest child-resistant tube, marking a breakthrough in compact and secure packaging. The high-barrier tube eliminates the need for additional blisters. It comes in diameter 10 mm with 0.30 wall thickness for 0.4 – 2 ml content. The cap is a two-part composition PE/POM, the child resistance is tested in accordance to US 16 CFR § 1700.20 and EU ISO 8317. Additionally, the tube can be fitted with a dropper insert for precise dosing. Decoration options are a coloured tube body, low-migration offset print and varnishing. Lightweight and ergonomically designed, this tube meets the needs of pharmaceutical, consumer and animal health sectors, produced under ISO 8 cleanroom conditions for highest cleanliness in Switzerland and in the US. The result is a standout primary packaging solution offering the highest level of protection, maintaining a professional look and strong brand identity.

Finally, the EcoLittle Top Tube was the winner in the Sustainability category. It is produced by Albéa for Clarins, a French company that is recognised as the number one for premium skincare in Europe and stands for responsible beauty with its innovative and natural products in around 150 countries. Clarins and Albéa have been collaborating on the EcoLittle Top system. The new flip-top closure, adapted to the sample format, responds to the triple CSR challenge of recyclability, weight reduction and the use of recycled materials. Aligned with the CSR commitments of both brands, EcoLittle Top reinvents Clarins samples. Clarins will be upgrading the range of sample tubes with EcoLittle Top, the latest addition to Albéa's EcoTop range. Thanks to the removal of one component, the EcoLittle Top offers a 47% weight reduction on the complete tube. In line with Clarins' and Albéa's commitments to circular economy, the tube incorporates 45% recycled material, thanks to the manufacturer's PCR Max range. The PCR PE solution combined with EcoLittle Top in HDPE is therefore monomaterial, making it recyclable in HDPE streams. The incorporation of recycled plastic reduces the amount of virgin plastic used to produce the tubes.

„Our globally recognised “Tube of the Year” competition is always an internationally renowned benchmark and trend indicator for current and future developments in the tube industry,” said etma Secretary General Gregor Spengler in his concluding remarks. „Unsurprisingly, sustainable and resource-efficient packaging solutions are still at the centre of the competition.

In particular, improved recyclability, further material reductions and the increased use of recycled materials should be mentioned here. However, smaller tube formats are also in vogue, reflecting social developments such as rising mobility and the trend towards single households. And in view of all these aspects, the tube is increasingly proving to be the tailor-made and contemporary packaging of the future.“

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