

BEVERAGE

FANUC for Freixenet

Task Back in 1996, leading Spanish wine producer, Freixenet, had a ‘crazy idea’ – to automate its production processes, including bottling, storing, palletising and baling, using industrial robots. “Where other robot manufacturers saw only difficulties, FANUC saw opportunities and encouraged us with the project”, says Freixenet’s Pere Gibert Guasch

Solution Starting with two 410 series FANUC robots, dubbed “Zipi and Zape” by winery staff, Freixenet now has 36 robots integrated into the production of the 185 million bottles of wine and cava it produces each year. FANUC maintains the robots annually and provides an in-plant hot-line service for more critical operations

Result After a relationship that has lasted 18 years, Freixenet views its current fleet and prospects for expansion as proof of the collaborative relationship it has enjoyed with FANUC. FANUC robots, says Guasch, have “always adapted to our particular needs. In our customer-supplier relationship, we consider the treatment we receive from the FANUC team to be close, attentive and collaborative in helping us find the best solution to our challenges”

Wine producer turns ‘crazy idea’ into a productive reality using FANUC robots

The roots of Freixenet date back to 1861 with “Casa Sala”, one of the first wine-exporting companies in Sant Sadurní d’Anoia. Fate united the heiress of this family business, Dolores Sala Vivé, with Pere Ferrer Bosch, who at the same time was heir of “La Freixeneda”, a large agricultural plantation situated in the heart of the region of Alt Penedés dedicated to vine cultivation and winemaking since the 13th century. In the initial years, the business grew, although not without difficulties, and the first bottles labelled with the brand “Freixenet Casa Sala” began to appear. During the 1920s, the motivation of the founders and their confidence in the quality of their products had already gained the company fame. As a result, in the mid-1930s Freixenet already had a permanent commercial office in New Jersey, United States, as a prelude to Freixenet exporting vocation. In 1941, the “Carta Nevada” brand was launched, a cava that, in time, would become the company’s star product, and in 1974 the “Cordón Negro” brand was launched. Both products are currently leading exports. From the mid-1970s, Freixenet was already a fully consolidated brand, giving rise to an international expansion that has led the Freixenet Group to maintain a leading global position in the sector of sparkling wines produced according to the traditional method. Since a century ago in 1914, when sparkling wines were marketed for the first time with the “Freixenet” brand, the company has not stopped growing. This family enterprise of international scope continues to reinvent itself each day, supporting tradition, wine crafts and innovation. Moreover, Freixenet’s competitiveness is reinforced by its commitment towards the environment, given the close link that exists between the process of producing its products and the natural environment that they come from.

At present, the Freixenet Group markets 185 million bottles of wine and cava globally each year. More than 80% of production is exported. The group has 18 wineries spread across 7 different countries and its products are present in more than 150 international markets.

Pere Gibert Guasch- Maintenance Manager at FREIXENET

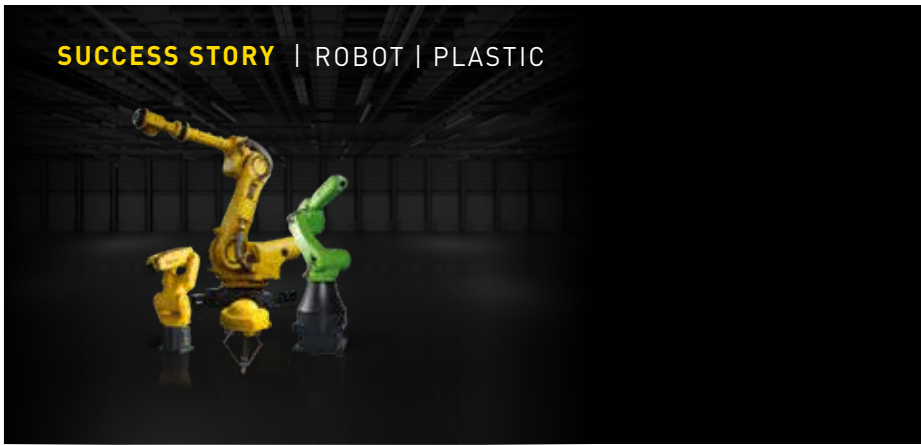
“In collaborating with the best brands, we strengthen our leading position in innovation and in the quality of our facilities, which contributes to increasing the value of our biggest asset: producing the world’s best cava, with maximum food quality and safety, in the most efficient and sustainable form”.

In what applications of your production process do you use FANUC robots?

The robots are used in all the operations of our production process, from when we start to fill the bottle, while the bottles are being stored in the cellars and up to their being palletised in boxes, or when the pallets are baled for shipment to the customers.

When did you start using FANUC robots?

The first contacts took place in 1996. It all began with the exposition of a desire, a “crazy” idea. Where other brands saw only difficulties, FANUC saw opportunities and it encouraged us with the project. We currently already



have 36 robots in production at our main branch and we hope to expand our fleet in the short term.

How do you assess the work and manner of the “yellow” technical team?

FANUC renders us a high-quality service. It possesses a very well-organised team with technicians with a high level of training and knowledge of their product. The problems that arise are resolved efficiently, always with a countermeasure and a tailored approach.

What FANUC services do you hire?

Annual maintenance of all the robots and in-plant hot-line service for more critical operations.

What opinion do you have of FANUC, as a company, as a product and in terms of personal treatment?

After a relationship that has lasted 18 years, our collaboration has been and is very valuable. The current fleet and our prospects of expansion are proof of this. As a company, we perceive FANUC’s solidity, its good organisation and its technological leadership.

As a product, in FANUC we have always found a robot that adapted to our particular needs.

In our customer-supplier relationship, we consider the treatment we receive from the FANUC team to be close, attentive and collaborative in helping us find the best solution to our challenges.

Is there any anecdote you would single out from during these years you have worked together?

An anecdote? When we started with industrial robotics, already 18 years ago, when we were carrying out pilot tests with a couple of FANUC robots of the 410 series in our cellars, someone from the Freixenet team gave

the two robots names: he named them “Zipi and Zape”



(names of Spanish comic characters). Since then, all the FANUC robots are christened by the Freixenet technicians when they are incorporated into our company. ...And by the way, it is an indispensable requirement that all the robots have the name of a comic character. We have “Asterix and Obelix”, the “Lone Ranger”, “Tintin”, “The Three Little Pigs”, and “Rompetchos” (the name of a Spanish comic character) in service, among others. Evidently, with this magical team of robots our success is guaranteed...and we are sure to have fun. Let’s drink a cava to our relationship with FANUC continuing to prosper in the future!... Let’s drink Freixenet, of course!

How would you define FANUC in one word?

Reliability.