



## ■ Bopack Labels Stretches the Limits of Flexography with Gallus RCS 330

In a move described by its European Operations Director, Philippe Capoen as: “stretching the limits of flexography”, the Bopack Group has installed one of Gallus’ RCS 330 lines at its production plant in Rouen, France. The Gallus machine, which is fully servo driven and controlled, has eight print stations that can be used all flexo, or in combination with two interchangeable screen heads.

In the short time since coming on line commercially, the Gallus has proved its worth by allowing Bopack to produce jobs in UV flexo that could previously be handled only by letterpress, according to Mr Capoen.

Selling into such an internationally renowned Group as Bopack, which employs 700 people across eight production centres in France and the Benelux countries, proved a stern test for Gallus’ technical staff. The Gallus RCS 330 line was installed in April 2003. The integration phase into Bopack’s production environment was described by Mr Capoen as: “a valuable learning process” for manufacturer and customer alike, the design philosophy of the RCS series marks **a quantum leap in flexo thinking and production capacity** that inevitably required a lengthy period of acclimatisation.

Described by Bernard Beauchamp, Production Manager at the Rouen plant, as: “**a true operators’ machine with great ergonomics**”, the Gallus RCS is seen as the way ahead for Bopack, which currently has 70 narrow web presses from various manufacturers spread around its plants, serving more than 3000 customers. Already producing at **twice the average output of other flexo machines** in the Group, the Gallus offers both cost effective production of short runs involving frequent job changes, and also high efficiency on longer run work, where its outright speed is no barrier to top quality printing, according to Mr Beauchamp.



Guillaume Viel (Printer), Bernard Beauchamp (Production Manager), Nicolas Benoist (Printer), Philippe Capoen (European Operations Director)

Production at Bopack's Rouen plant centres on toiletries/cosmetics and food, with a dedicated and separate pharmaceutical section, using Gallus rotary letterpress machines. The widespread geographical locations of the plants is seen as an advantage by customers both for its back-up comfort factor and local supply opportunities, the latter being especially true for perishables like foodstuffs. The Group's strength comes from its diverse portfolio, in which its top ten customers, including **L'Oreal**, **Lilly**, **Estee Lauder**, **BP** and **Nestle**, account for less than 25% of total business by value.

Currently running 60:40 paper to filmic substrates at Rouen, the new Gallus is being targeted at 30-micron work where its ability to **hold tight register at high speed** is seen as a valuable market advantage. Typical work at present sees complex graphics with special colours being run in high volume. Use of the Gallus RCS' **flying imprint unit will improve efficiency on jobs where multi language production** involves changes to the black text plate. The press allows for the unit to be made ready offline and brought up to press speed before engaging. This significantly reduces downtime and waste.

Chosen for its ease of make ready and speed of changeover, the RCS is described by Mr Capoen as: "**the Ferrari of narrow web flexo presses** - what we have to ensure is that we have enough Michael Schumachers to push it to its limit, and that our pit stops are as slick as Ferrari's!" he added. Crucial to this is the control and flexibility given by the servo motors that reduce operator fatigue and keep substrate waste to a minimum. Rated at 160 m/min top speed, **Bopack regularly runs its Gallus RCS at 130 m/min production speed** without any loss of quality, which according to Mr Beauchamp is up to twice the average of other presses onsite.

Training is a key element if the full potential of the Gallus RCS is to be realised, according to Mr Capoen. "Gallus has been and continues to be very supportive with our crews. We estimate it takes four months to become fully conversant with the RCS and another two months of commercial production to reach top

performance. We run the press with two operators, both of who had no previous print experience, but were fully conversant with electronics and computers. **It's a new skill required to run today's sophisticated printing equipment,**" he said. Good web visibility makes for operator comfort, while set-up is less by feel than by computer program, which makes consistency on repeat work easy and profitable.

Another benefit of the Gallus RCS machine is its quietness during operation. Sturdy engineering wrapped around a design concept that embraces **low levels of noise and vibration** contribute not only to a more comfortable work environment, but also to sustained performance and reliability. For one of Bopack's customers the consistency of performance is vital because every job is 'signed off' on-press. The ability of the Gallus RCS to instantly recreate an earlier job with almost total accuracy reduces time, effort and material consumption. "It also highlights our level of professionalism in that we embrace state of the art technology - psychologically it's a real winner as far as customers are concerned," commented Mr Capoen.

Asked to quantify the Group's satisfaction with its first Gallus RCS 330, Mr Capoen stated that a second has been ordered for delivery to the Group's Strasbourg plant and installed in the meantime. The machine bound for Strasbourg is a 10-unit line, with eight flexo heads and two screen units, all of which are interchangeable. Combination printing is likely to be in great demand, according to Mr Capoen, who predicts that up to 50% of work on the second Gallus RCS will be flexo/screen combination, particularly of triple layer labels for the cosmetics industry, which will make use of the Gallus' turner bars, and die-cutting accuracy.



The Gallus RCS 330 at Bopack Rouen, France

Founded in 1969, the Bopack Group enjoys annual sales of Euro 110m worldwide, and has reached its present size through growth and acquisition of companies such as France Etiquette, TEA, Luck, and Correct Etiketten. Owned and run by CEO Marc Boehlen and three Directors, Gaby Brams, Bruno Bosch, and Philippe Capoen, the Group supplies **labelling systems as well as printed labels**, the former accounting for approximately 30% of turnover last year.

Leading market sectors served by the Group are, by value: food 34%, cosmetics 25%, pharmaceutical 18%, chemical 12%, with the remainder split across numerous industries. Product types include: book labels for occasions where more information needs to be printed than a single face can accommodate, duo labels for peel off and resealing, digitally labels for personalisation and variable data printing, dry peel labels for discount and reply coupons, and reseal labels for perishable foodstuffs.

Bopack operates a single group culture that embraces specialist sales and accounts teams, multi lingual staffing and strong technical support for customers. The Group's larger plants at Rouen, Strasbourg and Lorient are all ISO 9000 certified, while implementation for the smaller sites is underway. Bopack Luck is QS 9000 approved. **"These days we have to be a 'solutions provider' to our customers,** and this is where the diversity of the Group becomes a strength," concluded Mr Capoen. He added: "We expect our suppliers, like Gallus, to offer the same level of service that we deliver to our customers."