

Press release

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Independent Brighton company a clear winner in Best Bottled Water Award

An independent Brighton-based firm has scooped a prestigious award in the United Arab Emirates for its unique 'bottled mineral water' in a paper carton.

Winners of the 2008 Qatrah Award, which recognises the Arab world's best beverage products, included Just Drinking Water Ltd (JDW), based at the University of Sussex within the Sussex Innovation Centre.

The firm's brand AQUAPAX, pure mineral water in a Tetra Pak paper carton, beat all entrants, including Al Ain Mineral Water-UAE and Evian Springs Water, to be named 'Best Bottled Water of the Year'.

Neil Tomlinson, Founder and Managing Director of AQUAPAX said "This Qatrah award is simply amazing for us. It's less than 12 months since we went into production with our very first batch of AQUAPAX, when we didn't even have our first customer. I really am so chuffed!"

Ta'aheel, the UAE's premier events management company and consultant for the beverage industry, announced on Tuesday the winners of the 2008 Qatrah Award, during a glittering award ceremony at the Madinat Jumeirah, Dubai.

Held as part of the 2nd Arab Beverages Forum at the Dubai World Trade Centre, the Qatrah Award recognized the Arab world's best brands in the categories: bottled water, carbonated and soft drinks, fruit juices, dairy beverages, and hot beverages.

Winners included Unilever Lipton Tea; Al Rawabi-UAE; Safi Danone-KSA; Red Bull and Brighton based AQUAPAX.

International beverage industry experts were among the panel of judges for the award, which evaluated package designs, marketing strategies, and ingredients of each participating product.

Sharaf Dabbagh, President of Ta'aheel, said: "We congratulate all the finalists and winners at this year's Qatrah Award, which was again a closely fought contest between over 200 leading beverage companies from across the world."

Mr Tomlinson added: "The Arab Beverage Industry has publicly recognised AQUAPAX superior mineral water quality and the need for sustainable packaging. They aren't only talking about the issues - and the UAE has the highest per capita consumption of bottled water in the world."

"Remember, we're not looking for new bottled water customers" stresses Neil, whose ecological commitment drove him to establish JDW in 2006. "It's customers who already spend good money on inferior quality bottled water that we want to convert to our innovative alternative."

"AQUAPAX retail presence in the UK is mainly supported by the independent minded health food, whole food and convenience trade across the UK and Ireland, where the fresh tasting water that stays cooler for longer is attracting a strong customer base."

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For more information and high resolution product images please contact: -
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Further Details: -

- JDW was founded in 2006. They are based at the University of Sussex within the Sussex Innovation Centre.
- 'Just' reflects the ideology the founders have chosen to live by and the business is a proud member of the 'ethical junction' business network.
- Their founder (Neil Tomlinson) grew up in the sun where the plastic bottles washing up on his beach raised his personal environmental awareness.
- Neil has over 20 years senior commercial experience and spent the 5 years prior to launching AQUAPAX as a Director of Sussex based water utility South East Water.
- He's committed to doing something about the growing plastic bottle pollution problem - JDW now produce market and sell AQUAPAX; the first 'planet and baby-friendly' mineral water on sale in the UK, packed in unique octagonal paper cartons which are >70% plastic free.

Ecological advantages of AQUAPAX

- An AQUAPAX carton (produced by Tetra Pak) is lighter than glass and takes less energy to produce and distribute. The life cycle analysis of the carton also makes ecological sense, as the 72% paper carton starts life as a tree rather than an oil well.
- AQUAPAX cartons have thermal properties so their water stays cooler longer – the cartons can be re-filled with tap water when empty, and recycled 'when they get tired'.
- JDW is a carbon balanced business, accounting for its ecological impact beyond any spurious 'local source' benchmark. NB. Plastic bottles are made from oil (not from the pretty valley down the road).
- Cartons are wholly recyclable, and over 85% of UK councils now give residents access to carton recycling facilities. The carton has a lower carbon footprint than both glass and the dreaded plastic bottles by factors of up to 300%
- Where cartons end up in landfill, they break down considerably faster than plastic bottles. If sent for recycling via incineration, a carton releases nearly as much energy as it takes to produce.
- Only 7% of plastic bottles are recycled in the UK. (source BBC / friends of the earth)
- An empty AQUAPAX carton crushes right down so can get dramatically more empty crushed packs into waste storage space, which is fantastic for recycling and lowering the end of life carbon footprint even more!
- The German Federal Government recognises the carton as the only 'ecologically advantageous non-returnable package' and exempts cartons from any deposit tax accordingly.

AQUAPAX pure mineral water

- AQUAPAX has a naturally low mineral balance, with a near perfect 7.1pH. AQUAPAX contains less than 0.3mg/l of nitrates and is even suitable for infants without the need for boiling it first.
- AQUAPAX pure natural mineral water is sourced from deep under a protected unfarmed nature reserve. This is better than 'organic' land, with no commercial contamination of the surrounding land area.
- AQUAPAX water has c.12 x lower nitrates (contaminants) than the best selling mineral water in the UK and c.21 x lower nitrates than the next best selling mineral water. Both of these globally successful (French) waters (packaged in oil based plastic) are chosen by consumers for their purity, which puts the greater purity of AQUAPAX water into perspective.

AQUAPAX market positioning

- AQUAPAX is premium quality, pure natural mineral water targeted at people who buy bottled water and who can distinguish fresh water from something with an unknown storage or handling history.
- AQUAPAX currently retails at 79p per 500ml carton and is available nationwide (UK and Ireland) through a network of independent-minded organic / whole food / health food and convenience retailers.
- AQUAPAX is targeted at the ecologically aware, and those who consciously buy organic / pesticide free produce. AQUAPAX has particular appeal for parents wanting their infants to drink 'pure water'.

UK bottled water market background – (source Zenith International UK bottled water market report February 2008 + BSDA Annual Report 2006/07 + AC Nielsen MAT April 2007 + NOP 2007)

- The bottled water market is one of the fastest growth sectors in the UK, rising by 5.8% in 2006 and accounting for 16% market share of the total UK soft drink sector by volume.
- Supermarkets sell 51.1% (8.4% growth) of all bottled water consumed in the UK.
- Bottled water is an integral part of the customer proposition in most market sectors, particularly 'Impulse'.
- UK bottled water consumption ranks 40th in the world, with average annual consumption of 38 litres per person. Mineral water represents 68.1% of the market and imported waters account for 28% share.
- UK bottled water market is worth c.£1.7Bn in retail value, with sales of over 2,275 million litres in 2006, up 60.7% on 2000 annual consumption.
- Organic sales will reach £3Bn by 2010 and 39% of consumers prefer to drink water sourced from organic land.
- Imported bottled waters, sourced from non-organic status land account for 5 of the UK top 10 best sellers.