

## **A quality brand gets a brand new look**

### **History**

Located in the fertile Franschhoek valley in the Western Cape, Rhodes Food Group has a rich heritage dating back to the late 1800s. At that time, the majority of the farms in the area were under vines. However, all this was to change when the dreaded phylloxera epidemic swept through the vineyards and destroyed thousands of hectares of rootstock.

In 1897 Cecil John Rhodes started buying up these destitute farms located in the Stellenbosch, Wellington and Groot Drakenstein areas. Together with his partners, Alfred Beit and De Beers, Rhodes introduced modern farming methods and planted close to 200 000 deciduous trees in their newly formed orchards. In 1902 as Rhodes was dying, a new company, Rhodes Fruit Farms Ltd, was born.

For the next century the company enjoyed great success. In 1999 a privately owned food group acquired the company from the then-owners, Anglo American Farms, and the Rhodes Food Group (Pty) Ltd in its current form was established.

### **Portfolio**

Today, Rhodes Food Group is a diversified foods business that prides itself on delivering quality products and outstanding service. While its head office is still situated in the Franschhoek Valley, the Group has highly successful operations in the Western Cape, Gauteng, Limpopo and the Kingdom of Swaziland.

Rhodes Food Group's business can be broadly divided into two divisions, namely: Rhodes Foods and Fresh Foods. The Rhodes Foods' product range consists of canned deciduous fruit, citrus and pineapples; canned vegetables; tomato

products; jam and juice concentrates and purées. While Fresh Foods' products include: prepared meals, fresh pasta, pasta sauces, quiches, pies and a range of dairy products.

The Group distributes its products under the Rhodes, Hazeldene, Fruit to go, Magpie and Portobello brand names, including leading local and international private labels.

### **A new look**

After extensive market research, Rhodes felt that the time was right to introduce a modernised look across their canned foods ranges. The new packaging design is fresh, eye-catching on shelf, and focuses strongly on creating product and appetite appeal. Furthermore, the revised labels reflect Rhodes' inherent quality.

The Rhodes Country Kitchen value-add tomato range successfully started the image revolution, which has now spilled over into the balance of the canned ranges.

The new canned vegetable range is already rolling out with complete distribution anticipated for mid 2009, while the updated Rhodes fruits and jams will be fully distributed by August 2009. Early indicators show a positive response to this improved look from buyers and consumers alike.

Rhodes is also in the process of creating an eye-catching Above The Line consumer advertising campaign to refresh the company's position in the market place.

## **Country Kitchen range**

Another exciting move was the introduction of the Country Kitchen value-add tomato range. This wholesome offering boasts quality ingredients and fresh combinations - reinventing the canned tomato genre. Available in three delicious variants the Country Kitchen range is made using ripe plum tomatoes and the finest additional ingredients, namely: Onion & Garlic; Tomato, Basic & Origanum and Tomato & Chilli. Country Kitchen provides cooks with a convenient, quality alternative with the added feature of an easy open ring-pull lid.

## **A delicious jam**

Roughly two years ago, the Rhodes jam range enjoyed a change in bottle silhouette and label. This label sits well alongside our updated canned range imagery and the glass bottle continues to recreate the feel of old-fashioned goodness; which falls in line with the traditional steam cooking method of jam preparation that Rhodes follows.

## **A sense of place**

Rhodes has deliberately included a picture of the sweeping Franschhoek valley on to their new look labels to give the company a sense of place. It is from here, that the Rhodes Food Group has been delivering naturally delicious, down to earth quality foods for over 100 years.

## **From Nature to You**

With a new look comes the development of a new payoff line. Rhodes typically appeals to the quality conscious, yet down to earth consumer who isn't interested in "pretentious" goods. Rhodes offers premium quality foods at an affordable price. The ingredients are fresh, preservative-free and the line "From Nature to You" positions the company as a likeable friend, someone who is on your side and whom you can trust to have your best interests at heart.

## **New product developments:**

Rhodes Food Group is constantly innovating. In 2009, Rhodes launched their exciting Chakalaka range. Chakalaka is a rapidly growing segment in the South African market and Rhodes has identified this as an opportunity to keep abreast of the trends. The Chakalaka range comprises two delicious variants: Mild & Spicy and Hot & Spicy.

## **Commitment to quality**

In keeping with the Group's "Quality. From soil to shelf" maxim, Rhodes Food Group has a large agricultural base that provides, in many instances, its own core raw material requirements. It then harvests and produces the very best foods and packages them into quality brands that can be found on the shelves of top retailers around the world including Africa, North America, the UK, Europe, the Far East and Australia. It is this unwavering commitment to quality that ensures a loyal local and international customer base.

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