

## Report – Flexible Controls

# Open to new ideas

From the outset, futronic has taken an open approach which leaves room for new ideas from users with its electronic control systems. The company has made a name for itself as an OEM and supplier – a moderniser and systems integrator across technology boundaries. Yet it is the development of customised solutions transcending all the usual standards to meet the highly specific requirements of the glass container industry that underlines just how flexible and powerful futronic controls and drives are. Projects for Ta Hsiang, the Taiwanese glass manufacturer or – only recently – Heinz Glas are proof that there are virtually no limits, no matter how unconventional the customer's needs.



Over the last 40 years, the automation specialists from Tettngang, a small town not far from Lake Constance on Germany's southern border, have designed whole generations of electronic control systems that can be flexibly tailored to machines from different manufacturers and to different specifications. „We work on a meta level, as it were, and we've always been very careful to keep our eye on the big picture“, explains Wolfgang Lachmann, Managing Director Development & Technology at futronic. „Making sure our

controls are compatible with various types of machinery and plant is traditionally a key priority. It's never been our policy to restrict ourselves to just a single manufacturer.“

### OEM and supplier with flexibility

It wasn't long before futronic made a name for itself with this open source strategy as an OEM and supplier. Engineering companies like GPS fit their IS machines with futronic control systems as standard. Many end users



Michael Preuß  
Wolfgang Lachmann

### Dear readers,

futronic has pursued an open source strategy with its electronic control systems from the outset. We cross technology boundaries – and refurbishing projects are only one example. futronic controls and drives facilitate open interfaces and customisable parameters that leave room for unusual ideas and non-standard requirements. Our title story illustrates what this can look like in practice and describes a few solutions that have already been realised, for example for Heinz Glas and Ta Hsiang.

Marc Meersschant introduces you to Mavsá, our partner in Argentina, while Stephan Pies explains the role our automation technology is increasingly playing in other areas outside the container glass industry. The Journal also includes reports on training activities as well as other events of interest at futronic.

On this note, we wish you plenty of exciting reading with the new Journal.

Sincerely,

**Michael Preuß**  
**Wolfgang Lachmann**

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elements in order to reach our goal." The programming, implementation and preliminary tests which followed were completed in just 15 person-days. The whole thing was commissioned in the spring of this year.

Since April, the servo take-outs on a 10-section GPS IS machine have been executing eight motion phases instead of the usual six. All the mechanisms are controlled by an FMT24S. All sequences are mapped in detail on the user interface, enabling the machine operator to keep permanent track. The customer is definitely impressed and very happy with the results. „What we were planning to do didn't sound all that spectacular to begin with", reports Willi Jungkunz, Head of Glass Production at the Heinz Glas headquarters in Kleintettau. „However, we all know that the devil is in the details." What appeared at first sight to be perfectly simple turned out in the end to be highly complex. „Despite this, futronic implemented all the requirements to our satisfaction at the first attempt", Jungkunz adds. His conclusion: „futronic controls offer a high degree of freedom and a lot of flexibility for customised solutions".

#### Open to new challenges

The two examples described here demonstrate the enormous flexibility of futronic controls and drives. They can be extended in a variety of ways, making them open to new challenges. Lachmann is categorical that the potential is still far from exhausted: „We've already translated several ideas and concepts into practice, some of them the outcome of decidedly unconventional requests. And I'm in no doubt at all that there's more to come."

Customer Profile: Mavsá, Argentina

## Mavsá dances a tango

Every industry has its giants and glassmaking is no exception. Heye, GPS and Emhart are well-known examples that instantly spring to mind. Then there are the smaller workshops which make up for in quality and creativity what they lack in size. Máquinas Argentinas del Vitrio SA (Mavsá) of Buenos Aires is a case in point. This firm has been a valued business partner of futronic for almost ten years now. When Marc Meersschaut travelled to South America last April, he also visited Mavsá.

The South American summer is just about coming to an end when Marc Meersschaut climbs out of a taxi in Barracas, a suburb in south-east Buenos Aires, the Argentine capital. He finds himself surrounded by warehouses and factory buildings, with the occasional lorry thundering by. He stops in front of a two-storey building with a flat roof which bears the number 1119. Through the half-open, blue sliding gate he can hear the noise of machinery – sometimes louder, sometimes quieter – and the sound of metal on metal with a high-pitched his-

sing every now and then. Meersschaut is aware of voices and the bustle of activity. Then another, smaller blue door opens to the left of the gate.

Diego Fuentes smiles through his rimless glasses, greets the visitor from Germany with a hearty „¡Hola!" and a firm handshake and leads him into a tiny office, where his younger brother Gustavo and father Manuel, the company founder, are waiting for him. The four men know each other and they hold one another in



A friendly reception: Marc Meersschaut (2nd from right), the visitor from Germany, is welcomed by Diego, Manuel and Gustavo Fuentes (from left).





high regard: they laugh and chat good-humouredly. Meersschaut speaks Spanish, which makes communication much easier.

#### A ten-year partnership

It was back in 2006 when Mavsa and futronic's paths crossed for the first time – at a Saint Gobain-Oberland glassworks in Brazil. A machine there needed modernizing: the people from Mavsa took care of the moulds and the mechanical components while futronic was in charge of the control and drive equipment. The cooperation functioned smoothly and the two sides have stayed in contact ever since, not least through many joint projects for customers all over the world. Yet this visit to Buenos Aires by a futronic engineer is a novelty and the Fuentes obviously want to take advantage of the opportunity to finally show and tell him everything in person.

Manuel Fuentes, the founder, used to work for SARIC, an SME manufacturing tableware in the Argentine capital. As workshop manager there, he was responsible for moulds and spare parts as well as for maintenance and repairs to machinery and plant. In 1971, with the blessing of – and financial support from – his boss, he started offering these same products and

All from a single source: 25 specialized staff make virtually all the parts for presses and IS machines themselves here on ultra-modern CNC equipment.

services to other glass producers too. Three years later, he opened a workshop of his own in the Berazategui district under the name Metalurgica Buenos Aires (MBA). It was ideally situated at the heart of the Argentine glass industry, just a stone's throw away from Rigolleau, the country's oldest glassworks. Amongst other things, MBA's portfolio comprised moulds, feeders and pneumatic presses, to which whole lines were later added. It wasn't long before glass manufacturers throughout the South American continent, and even from as far away as Cuba, featured in the list of customers.

#### Compact solutions from a single source

Manuel's son Diego, an electronics engineer, joined the family business in 1990, followed three years after by his brother Gustavo, a trained technician. In the spring of 2001, the Fuentes decided to launch another company: Mavsa. Whereas MBA continues to focus on the production of moulds and spares, Mavsa specialises in the design and manufacture of rotary blowing machines as well as, since 2006, IS machines with between two and eight

sections. „Our customers are mainly small-to-medium sized makers of tableware and container glass“, Diego explains. „We offer them compact machinery and plant, in other words cost efficient solutions from a single source.“ The Fuentes also had their sights set on the global glass market with Mavsa: following their successful entry into North Africa and the Middle East, they turned their attention to Europe and India.

Two windows provide a view into what is a surprisingly large workshop. Mavsa employs a total of 25 staff here in research and development, design and production. „We make virtually all the parts for our machines ourselves“, says Gustavo proudly during the obligatory tour of the premises. Only a few components come from exclusive suppliers, of which futronic is one. „To date, we've fabricated wiring harnesses for the IS and press machines on behalf of Mavsa, for instance“, Meersschaut comments. „However, we're planning to extend the partnership between our two companies significantly in the future.“ After bidding goodbye to his three friends, he disappears by taxi again into the black of the Argentine night.