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Winners of the European Carton Excellence Award 2021 revealed

Europe's most prestigious carton award scheme celebrated 25 years of cartonboard excellence and announced the winning solutions of 2021

The judges of the European Carton Excellence Awards 2021 have crowned *Durero Packaging's* Bodegas Balsamic as the **Carton of the Year**.

This year's winner was announced during the virtual 2021 Carton Awards E-vent ceremony on 6 September, co-hosted by Pro Carton, the European Association of Carton and Cartonboard Manufacturers, and the European Carton Makers Association (ECMA).



Carton of the Year: Bodegas Balsamic

Bodegas Balsamic is a luxurious gift pack for Bodegas Toro Albalà's crystal bottle of aged Spanish balsamic vinegar, which was chosen as Carton of the Year for its aesthetic and unique structural design. The entry, made from *Holmen Iggesund* cartonboard, perfectly conveys the brand's roots as it opens in a way that resembles a Spanish fan. Additionally, the hot copper stamping inside the pack reflects the

carnation flowers native to Cordoba, where the brand is based. The effect of a blossoming flower is accentuated further by embossing on the outside of the pack which mirrors the opening of flower petals.

To mark the 25th anniversary of the Awards, a new **Champions' Trophy** was presented to WestRock. The carton converter was praised for winning the coveted Carton of the Year title the greatest number of times since 1997, with a total of **five** wins.



Innovation winner: Karlo Spoon

The Innovation Award went to *Cardbox Packaging's* Karlo Spoon with cartonboard from *Stora Enso*. The entry was manufactured in response to the EU's ban on disposable plastic cutlery, aiming to provide caterers with a sustainable, fully-recyclable solution. Its folded design is highly innovative, creating an extremely robust spoon which can be attached to a product or inserted in a lid.



Save the Planet winner: PaperSeal® MAP Tray Burger Solution

The **Save the Planet** award, for a product that significantly reduces or eliminates fossil-based materials, was presented to *Graphic Packaging International* and *BillerudKorsnäs* for the PaperSeal® MAP Tray Burger Solution. It reduces the use of single-use plastic by 80%, providing an environmentally-friendly alternative to traditional MAP trays. As well as being entirely recyclable, it is made from a renewable resource - cartonboard produced from sustainably managed Scandinavian forests. The worthy winner also maintains function, as the tray is sealed to reduce leaks and contamination, therefore ensuring product freshness.

The 2021 category winners were:



Food & Drink, Virgin Fibre winner: Mergulo Plant Based Butter Carton

Food & Drink – Virgin Fibre

Graphic Packaging International also scooped a category award, coming out on top in the Food & Drink Virgin Fibre category with its Mergulo Plant Based Butter Carton using *MM Board & Paper* material. The carton enables the brand to package its products in a way that reflects its natural, sustainable ethos. It is made from recyclable and biodegradable polyethylene-free board, using one-piece construction that optimises sheet usage, reduces waste and is supplied flat to cut CO₂ emissions in transit.



Food & Drink, Recycled Fibre winner: Fruit Basket

Food & Drink – Recycled Fibre

Fruit Basket by *MM Neupack* and *MM Board & Paper* won the Food & Drink Recycled Fibre category for its ability to effectively store and carry stoned fruits. The pack is made from flexible cartonboard meaning it can be adapted to fit different fruit sizes and the customer's individual requirements. It also features integrated round handles to give the appearance of a small basket, while the recyclable solution is creatively designed to allow consumers to see the product from the top of the pack, as well as through the air holes in each side.



General packaging, Virgin Fibre winner: GER Coffe

General Packaging – Virgin Fibre

Alzamora Group and *BillerudKorsnäs's* beautiful GER Coffe entry won the General Packaging Virgin Fibre category. It caught the eye of the jury thanks to its luxurious gold stamping, but the judges were particularly impressed by the unique unwrapping experience that differentiates it from its competitors. The two-piece hexagonal pack opens up to reveal high-end face creams, pushing the products inside forward for easy removal in the process.



General packaging, Recycled Fibre winner: Plastic-free toothbrush packaging

General Packaging – Recycled Fibre

Karl Knauer won the Food & Drink Recycled Fibre category for its plastic-free toothbrush packaging made with board manufactured by *Weig Karton*. The winning solution, made from sustainably sourced and recyclable materials, features an innovative plant-based GMO-free window, giving consumers a good view of the product. Separation of the film from the board is not needed as it decomposes naturally during the recycling process.

Public Award

The entry the public voted the best was Smarties Giant Hexatube by the Champions' Trophy winner *WestRock*. The Nestlé pack has a sustainability focus much like last year's Public Award winner


KeelClip™. The new design is made entirely from cartonboard, replacing the plastic cap and plastic shrink seal in the previous Smarties packaging to save the environment from over 100 tonnes of plastic per year. The pack is one of *WestRock's* most technically difficult to produce due to high levels of cutting and creasing accuracy, which ensure the product can be filled consistently at high speed in the factory and its tamper evidence function is not hindered.





Public Award: Smarties Giant Hexatube

Platinum and Gold Awards were given to a number of designs that the judges thought were particularly outstanding and deserved special recognition. They are:


Platinum winners –

Product	Carton Converter	Cartonboard Manufacturer	Image
Bonduelle Bundle	Van Genechten Meyzieu	RDM	
The Tomato Stall Punnet	Graphic Packaging International	BillerudKorsnäs	
Tērvete Beer	Van Genechten Kvadra Pak	BillerudKorsnäs	

Cluster-Wing™	WestRock	WestRock	
New Year Makeup Calendar	Durero Packaging	Metsä Board	

Gold winners –

Product	Carton Converter	Cartonboard Manufacturer	Image
Picard Frozen Creation	AR Packaging	Stora Enso	
Rose Gift Box	AR Packaging Swiss	BillerudKorsnäs	
Flying Orchids	Smurfit Kappa Zedek	MM Board & Paper	
Dental Sticks	AR Packaging Swiss	MM Board & Paper	
Exentrique Facial Cleanser	Essentra Packaging	Holmen Iggesund	

CURODONT Sensitive	AR Packaging Swiss	BillerudKorsnäs/Stora Enso	
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All the winners of the European Carton Excellence Awards 2021 can be found here:
<https://www.procarton.com/awards/carton-excellence-award/2021/>

Tony Hitchin, General Manager of Pro Carton said: “The quality of entries submitted this year was phenomenal. The European Carton Excellence Awards have exceeded expectations yet again and what better year to do so than on its 25th anniversary! All of the packs and solutions entered demonstrate why cartonboard is the material of the future and highlight the important role it will play in helping brands and retailers move towards a circular economy. The Awards make it clear that cartons protect and promote brands as well as the environment, thanks to the structural design and aesthetic finish that can be achieved coupled with the strong eco-credentials of fibre-based packaging.

“It was a pleasure to celebrate a quarter of a century of carton innovation, with live streamed interaction with the winners. Great to see so many happy people!”

Ends

Find hi-res images at: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/procarton/albums/72157719807978055>

For more information on the benefits of carton and cartonboard, visit www.procarton.com or join the discussion on social media:

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Notes to editors:

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About Pro Carton

Pro Carton is the European Association of Carton and Cartonboard manufacturers. Its main purpose is to promote the use of cartons and cartonboard as an economically and ecologically balanced packaging medium. www.procarton.com

What is cartonboard?

Cartonboard is a multilayer paper-based material with, usually, three or more layers of fibre derived from wood, or recycled materials such as paper or cartonboard. It is often used in packaging to make cartons for everyday products, such as breakfast cereals, frozen foods, luxury fragrances and pharmaceuticals.

EXAMPLES OF CARTONS MADE FROM CARTONBOARD:

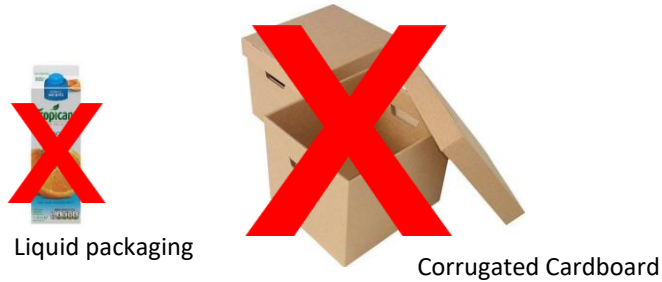


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Is cartonboard the same as cardboard?

Cardboard is a generic term and, whilst cartonboard is a type of cardboard, it is different from 'corrugated cardboard' which is a firmer, heavy-duty paper-based packaging commonly used for transport (like Amazon parcels). In contrast, Cartons are always printed often with high quality graphics and special varnishes and finishes. Liquid packaging board (e.g. Tetra Pak) used to hold milk and fruit juice is not categorised as cartonboard.

EXAMPLES OF PACKAGING THAT ARE NOT CARTONBOARD:



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