



Packaging 100% in Cans & Bottles

Customer Spotlight

Burial Beer Company

Zach Hilyer, *Head of Packaging*

Zach Hilyer, head of packaging at Burial Beer Company, never envisioned what the year would bring when he planned Burial's canning and bottling expansion. In early 2020, Burial upgraded their Wild Goose canning system from four to five heads the same week they brought in a new Meheen M4 bottling line.

Within weeks, the coronavirus pandemic had shut down many of Burial's usual draft and keg channels. "The timing was more advantageous than I could have imagined, because the increased canning production and new bottling ability allowed us to easily pivot from 60% to almost 100% packaging-based production," said Hilyer.



Burial quickly shifted its packaging strategies to meet the challenges of the pandemic. When outside retail distribution dried up, Burial turned its focus internally. With limited outdoors-only seating at their primary taproom, Burial was able to keep front-of-house staff employed by establishing a new country-wide shipping program for cans and bottles, based entirely from their indoor taproom space. “We still offer a lot of our taproom releases for drive-up sales, but now a few days later we can open up online sales through our website.” Though they see draft and keg opportunities slowly reopening, Burial anticipates maintaining increased can and bottle sales.

Burial’s current production schedule keeps their packaging crew occupied. The brewery offers tiered beer releases nearly every weekend, with at least two canned products and often a bottled stout or mixed culture beer as well. As head of a busy packaging team, Hilyer is mindful of hours and workload. “Having that flexibility to meet growing demand and get that amount of beer packaged by mid-week, plus getting more things accomplished around the brewery – that was the driving force behind upgrading our Wild Goose and adding the Meheen.”

When completing their production facility years earlier, Burial had utilized mobile canning services while finalizing their packaging strategy. “We had experienced the mobile canner’s Goose



“When we bought our Goose, my only concern was the potential to eventually outgrow it and lead us to longer packaging days. The ability to add another fill head through the Evolution Series’ upgradeable platform took care of that worry. To add to that, the fact we have had our Goose for three-and-a-half years and didn’t have to make a single seamer correction is pretty impressive.”



system, and it was easy to operate. I researched a few other canning lines as part of our planning process, and Goose was the clear choice. We have a very compact space. I've seen the mobile canning guys throw the Goose in the back of the truck and haul it around, and knowing the machine worked well for them meant our own Goose would do well, too."

With both systems in place, Hilyer said his team can run more efficiently and get product packaged faster, freeing up staff to handle other responsibilities.



"Before we had the Meheen, we were doing our stout bottlings on a very rudimentary sort of homebrewer filling setup. But just this morning my team has already bottled and labeled 85 cases of an imperial stout on our Meheen. By 10:30 AM we were done, and with good quality numbers. That's efficiency."



Said Hilyer, "Quality is obviously important to a lot of breweries, and I feel like we at Burial hold ourselves to (at times almost ridiculously) high standards. Consumers can tell what is good and what is not, so the importance of shelf stability and how the beer looks and tastes by the time it gets to the customer is something we drive home. That is just part of the company culture at Burial Beer, and Wild Goose helps us reach those goals."



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