

20 Years & Counting

HOOD RIVER DISTILLERS

For over 75 years, Hood River Distillers (HRD) has been producing spirits in the Pacific Northwest. Starting in 1934 in Hood River, Oregon, HRD started with making fruit wines and brandies from the local fruits. Today they are recognized as the largest and oldest importer, producer, bottler and marketer of spirits in the Northwest. Producing more than 1.25 million cases per year, Hood River Distillers produces over 35 spirits, some of which have recently received awards, such as Pendleton® Whisky and Yazi Ginger Vodka.

While many things have changed over the years, the tradition and dedication to the quality and to building long term relationships has not. One of the key relationships that helped Hood River Distillers achieve their reputation is the one with Columbia Machine and the local Sales Representative, George Bentz. This relationship started back in 1989 when HRD determined they had reached a point in volume where it made sense to automate the case stacking. HRD worked with George Bentz and Columbia Machine to determine the best solution and layout for the packaging line.

In 1989, Hood River Distillers purchased two of the first FL100's that Columbia Machine manufactured. Ted Webber, Plant Engineer, stated, "The Columbia FL100's have been extremely reliable and cost effective. Other than regular maintenance and a recent PLC platform upgrade, we have had little extra expenses associated with our palletizers in over the 20 years of operation! They have been very flexible as well, running over 20 different patterns on our machines."

With the increase in sales and production, Hood River Distillers is considering expanding their plant. When asked if they would purchase from Columbia again Ted responded with, "Yes. Convenience and service aside, I like the direction Columbia is going. Constant improvements to a solid design and greater safety and user interface features make the palletizers even better. Saving the end user money in future expenses by allowing

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them to add patterns and fine tuning them without needing a service tech on site."

Columbia

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