

Ishida Multihead Weighers at Zotter: Premium Accuracy for Premium Chocolates!



Case Study / **Zotter**

Bars, pralines, chocolates, dragées and so much more: Zotter Schokolade produces more than 500 different chocolate products in Riegersburg, Austria. All chocolates are fair trade and organic, designed to create a truly exceptional taste experience. This is why the company is known among chocolate connoisseurs. In its modern factory, Zotter uses two Ishida multihead weighers to ensure perfect pack weights.

Facts and figures



Zotter invested in two Ishida multihead weighers to weigh a wide variety of chocolate confectionery, one for packing into bags and one into boxes



The standard deviation from the target weight per pack is less than 0.5%, with target weights of 20g-130g and weighing speeds of 20-30 packs per minute



The fast set-up, easy cleaning and simple operation of the Ishida weighers allow the customer to make fast changeovers to maintain a high level of flexibility



Pumpkin seed oil and Schilcher rosé wine is often what comes to mind when people think of food from the Styrian region of Austria. However, another culinary specialty, increasingly being associated with Styria, is Zotter Schokolade. Based in Riegersburg, 50km east of Graz, the celebrated chocolate maker has been voted "one of the world's best chocolatiers".

Up to 60,000 chocolate bars are produced and packed each day in Riegersburg. Products include numerous filled, handmade chocolates, single-origin chocolates such as "Labooko" and exotic flavours such as mango-chilli, sage marzipan, or cardamom, all demonstrating that Zotter does not really do 'ordinary chocolate'. The company also produces pralines, drinking chocolate, chocolate popcorn, and Ballero dragées (chocolate-covered fruits and nuts). All ingredients come from certified organic farms and are processed according to fair trade principles. The "bean-to-bar" concept applies to all products. Production manager Gerald Prasch explains: "We are among very few quality chocolatiers globally who handle all chocolate production processes in-house – from roasting the cocoa beans to rolling and conching, to shaping and packaging."

This wide chocolate portfolio demands a high degree of flexibility. Each machine must be able to process, weigh, and pack many different products. The 14-head Ishida multihead weigher in one production area illustrates this. This 14-head model is used for packing chocolate-filled popcorn, as well as coffee and "light bulbs" (chocolate coatings in easily portioned, miniature "light bulb" shapes).

The 14-head weigher is installed above a Kopas VFFS bagmaker and is fed by hand, purely because of the large number of daily product changeovers.

Zotter must abide by the EU's e-Mark Prepackaged Goods Directive which stipulates that packaged goods must meet an average pack weight, but individual packs are permitted to contain less than the declared pack weight, as long as this is compensated for by other packs.

However, the directive does not fully align with Zotter's quality standards, as Gerald Prasch explains: "If the packaging says 100 grams, we guarantee at least 100 grams." On the other hand, chocolate is a valuable product so the pack weight should be precise. The 14-head Ishida weigher meets Zotter's requirements, producing accurately, consistently and efficiently at typically 20 to 30 weighments per minute and with a standard deviation of less than 0.5% from the target weight.

When selecting the multihead weigher, Zotter's team also paid close attention to ease of setup and cleaning, since all contact parts must be thoroughly cleaned after each product changeover. According to Zotter's operation team, the two installed Ishida weighers are ideally suited for this requirement.

The second Ishida multihead weigher handles mainly Balleros, which are dried fruit and roasted nuts (for example cherry, ginger, physalis, or pistachio), rolled in chocolate, nougat, or colourful fruit coatings, and filled into 100g boxes.

Because Balleros and similar chocolates are high in demand, Zotter packs them on a fully automated line. First, the carton is erected and lined with a parchment paper, which is inserted by a robot. The second Ishida multihead weigher, a 10-head model, weighs the Balleros into typically 6,000 to 7,000 boxes per day, including two or three product changeovers.

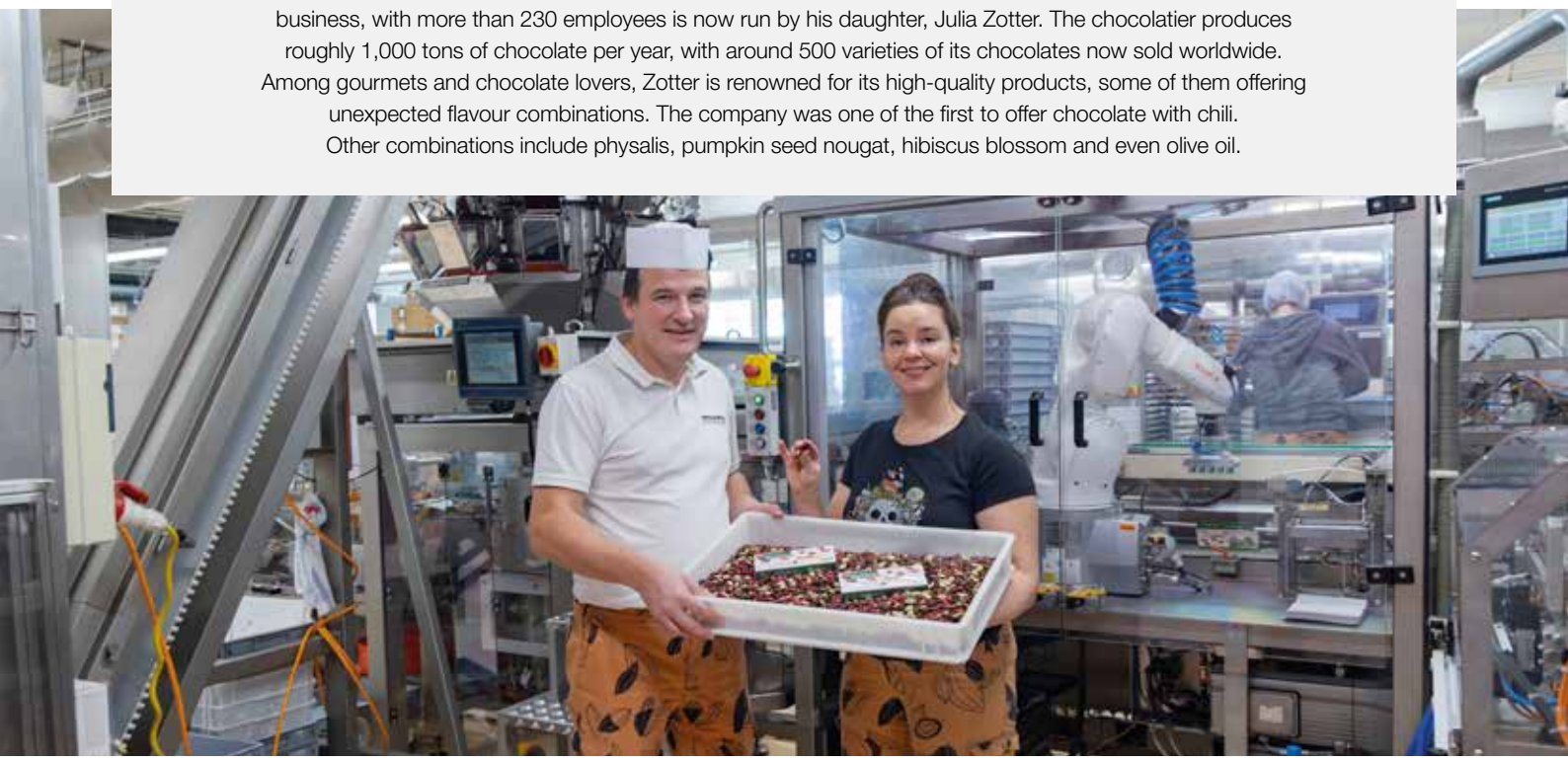
Despite the differences in the level of automation between the two production areas, both Ishida multihead weighers perform well and are meeting Zotter's demands.

Gerald Prasch concludes: "We are very satisfied. The service requirements are minimal, and the weighing results are precise. Therefore, both Ishida multihead weighers are meeting our high-quality standards."



The customer

Zotter Schokolade in Riegersburg (Austria) is an innovative chocolate maker, celebrated for its bean-to-bar craft, bold flavours, and its commitment to fair trade. Established in 1999 by founder Josef Zotter, the business, with more than 230 employees is now run by his daughter, Julia Zotter. The chocolatier produces roughly 1,000 tons of chocolate per year, with around 500 varieties of its chocolates now sold worldwide. Among gourmets and chocolate lovers, Zotter is renowned for its high-quality products, some of them offering unexpected flavour combinations. The company was one of the first to offer chocolate with chili. Other combinations include physalis, pumpkin seed nougat, hibiscus blossom and even olive oil.



The overview



Established in 1999 in Riegersburg (Austria) by founder and innovative chocolate maker Josef Zotter



Up to 60,000 chocolate bars are produced per day. Around 1,000 tons of chocolate annually



Strict EU guidelines demand accurate and consistent target weights



Zotter are very satisfied that Ishida meet their high-quality standards



The two new weighers handle weights from 20g to 130g



Produces around 500 varieties of chocolate, sold worldwide



Increased weighing speed to 20-30 packs per minute



Celebrated for their bold flavours Zotter, are committed to fair trade



User-friendly with fast set-up and simple operation



With a wide range of chocolate products Zotter demands a high degree of flexibility



Easy clean construction enables contact parts to be cleaned quickly after each product change



Zotter, now run by his daughter Julia Zotter, employs over 230 employees

Speak to an Ishida expert

Every business has its own challenges; ours is to help you overcome yours. Working smarter, faster, together, we can help you achieve higher standards and get your products retail ready quicker.

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