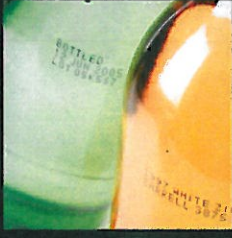
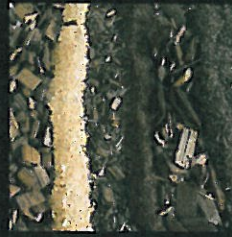
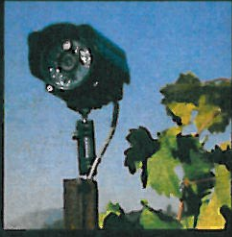


# WINE BUSINESS MONTHLY

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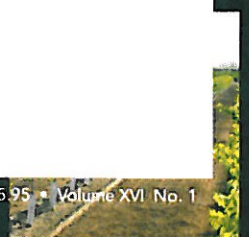
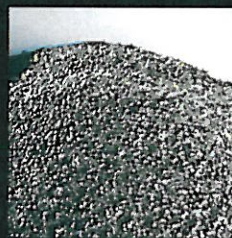
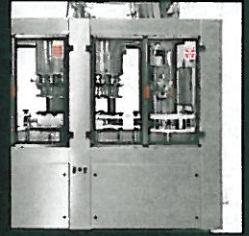


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Product Review: Weather Stations



# Make Your Own Packaging

Compact MINI-PAK'R™ inflates bubble wrap.

FP International of Redwood City, California, has been a major player in packaging for more than 40 years and is known for large industrial installations. A sizable portion of their business is in air cushions, loose fill and bubble wrapping materials.

A recent addition to their extensive product line is the **MINI-PAK'R™**, a machine designed specifically to produce bubble wrap for the small business market.

The MINI-PAK'R™ is a self-contained Packaging Materials On-Site (PMOS) unit. Simply, it is an inflation-machine that creates packaging materials right in your shipping department, and it is perfect for the small- to mid-sized winery.

Instead of inventorying multiple rolls of large, pre-fabricated, bulky bubble wrap, you feed film from rolls (like saran wrap) through the machine, which inflates the film to form the packaging.

What's cool is your shipping folks can select from six different films or "cushion" types, each producing a different "bubble" profile for the various goods to be shipped—from those smaller items sold in the gift shop to bottles of wine. Inflation patterns, such as double cushion, quilt or super tube, are available. The shipper simply chooses a pre-configured pattern for the application and quickly installs the appropriate roll.

The rolls of low-density polyethylene (LDPE) film are proprietary. Called Novus or Cell-O aircushions, they are space saving as each is only 15½" in width by 6½" in diameter. Each roll contains 656 feet of material and weighs only 12 pounds.

Films can be purchased directly through FP International, **Costco's** website or authorized MINI-PAK'R™ distributors. A roll of film costs about \$80 and represents an approximate 25 percent savings in material alone.

The rolls are perforated every six inches. The shipper will inflate only the amount of material required to accommodate the specific size and weight of each product being packaged, thereby eliminating waste and saving time.

Everything about this product is designed for ease of use, speed, space savings and versatility. And the machines are "smart," with inflation being programmable.

Each roll of film is printed with radio frequency identification (RFID) tags so the machine calculates the exact inflation pressure and sealing temperature needed for the job. The operator, however, can override and adjust the amount of inflation (PSI), changing internal pressure for different packaging requirements. The MINI-PAK'R™ can also be operated manually with start and stop buttons or via a continuous feed at the rate of 25 feet per minute.



This lightweight unit saves even more space when mounted on a wall.



This compact, lightweight unit is only 13 pounds; and with 14"x13"x11" dimensions, it will easily sit on the edge of a workbench. Better yet, for under \$100, the company offers a wall-mount option, which holds both machine and roll, saving even more space. No more negotiating bulky rolls of wrap that must be cut to length.

The mechanicals are about as simple as the operation, and maintenance is almost non-existent. Internal Teflon belts heat and seal the edge of the film, and two spare belts come with purchase. Additional replacement cost is nominal. The only other wear part is the cutting blade, which is long-life.

The units come with a one-year warranty. I was advised that most operational problems can be handled over the phone. In the event of a more serious problem, FP International will ship the winery a loaner unit until its machine can be repaired.

Finally, the film is Type 4 recyclable LDPE plastic, the same as bread bags at the grocery store. For the end-user, recycling can be done at any collection facility.

**What's Cool:** For the winery gift shop and tasting room, this unit is an easy buy. At about \$1,800 it will quickly pay for itself in materials, time and space savings alone.

A quality machine must cut costs, save time, be operator-friendly and dependable. The MINI-PAK'R™ definitely fits the bill.

For more information, call FP International at 888-646-4757  
or visit [www.minipakr.com](http://www.minipakr.com).

**Send new product information to Bill Pregler  
at [bpregler@winebusiness.com](mailto:bpregler@winebusiness.com)**