

## → Aluminium Beverage Can - History

### How it all began.

The beverage can was invented at the beginning of the 30s in the USA. It was there that the Krueger brewery marketed the world's first beer can in October 1933 (Fig. 1). It was a three-piece can made of tinfoil that was awkward to handle – the consumer had to use a pointed instrument to open it and get at the contents. Thus, in the ensuing years, all the breweries that wanted to share in the success of the can had to change their designs. A new shape was introduced in the mid-30s/early 40s that had a cone-shaped top and crown cork closure, and still clearly resembled a bottle. It was called a cone top can (Fig. 2).



Fig. 1: The birth of the beer can [Source: Beer Can Collectors of America (BCCA)].

### The can takes hold in Europe.

The first beverage cans in Europe came in the wake of units of the American armed forces stationed on the continent. The first beer cans appeared there at the beginning of the 50s. Although these three-piece tin-plate cans already had the classical cylindrical shape of the present-day beverage can, they still needed a separate opener (Fig. 3).

### The aluminium beverage can comes on the scene.

The first two-piece aluminium beverage can was produced in 1958. Since it was first introduced, the aluminium beverage can has undergone considerable changes and has been continually developed as a high-tech product capable of innovation. Innovative developments in the manufacture of the aluminium beverage can:



Fig. 3: US GIs bring the can to Germany [Source: Collecting and Dump Digging Old Beercans].

- 1958: the first impact-extruded aluminium beverage can
- 1961: the first easy-open lid (ring-pull closure)
- 1966: the first deep-drawn two-piece beverage can
- 1987: the first "206" lid
- 1989: the first "stay-on-tab" lid
- 1993: the first "202" lid (USA)
- 1994: the first "202" lid (Europe)
- 1997: the first shaped can

### The development is continuing.

An end to the technical development of the beverage can in terms of production process, weight and shape is not yet in sight. It is already possible to shape aluminium in a way that was previously the domain of plastic bottles (Fig. 4).

The beverage can of the future could be even lighter, shaped, embossed and re-sealable.

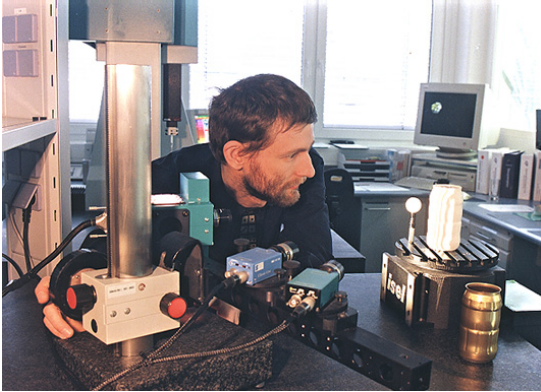


Fig. 4: During optical digitisation, complex surfaces are measured precisely with the help of sensors. The digital data thus obtained is used for design purposes and for fault analysis (Source: Schmalbach-Lubeca).

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February 2006