



laserlines

Press Release

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Laser Marking Printed Labels

In many packaging applications, the combination of a pre-printed label and laser marking is a perfect fit. In addition to the base label colour, the images on a label can include several spot colours or even a four-colour process print for realistic full-colour graphics. Laser marking adds the ability to add customised information including date codes or lot numbers on-the-fly at the time of actual product packaging.



A good example of this is this packaging for processed meats, which consists of a self-adhesive gold foil label that is overprinted with both spot and process colour. At the time the product is packaged and sealed, the manufacturer is required to mark a date code on the package. The CO2 laser makes a perfect non-contact marking tool and ablates the ink away from the gold foil, leaving an impressive gold-coloured mark that matches the packaging perfectly.

To create the mark, a FH Flyer marking head was set up with a 370 mm lens that provides a 540-micron (0.021") spot with a 20 mm (0.788") depth of focus over the extents of a 241 mm x 297 mm (9.5" x 11.7") mark field. In the Synrad WinMark Pro laser marking software, an eight-character date code was created using the European Standard (DD.MM.YY) format. Using WinMark Pro's automated *Date Code Text* property forces WinMark to read the computer's internal date/time clock prior to each mark so the date is always accurate. When FH Flyer is operated in stand-alone mode, Flyer's real-time clock accurately keeps track of date and time parameters, even when power to the head is cycled off.

The date code text measures 3.18 mm (0.125") tall with 0.46 mm (0.018") of *Extra Character Spacing* and was created using European, one of WinMark Pro's twelve built-in stroke fonts. A *Power* was then set, duty cycle percentage, equivalent to 25 watts and set a marking *Velocity* of 635 millimetres per second (25 inches/second). At these parameters, the ink was cleanly ablated away from the gold label in a cycle time of 0.13 seconds per label.

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