



# TOAST FOR ALL SEASONS

Ongoing partnership with packaging equipment manufacturer helps propel Toronto area bakery straight up the ranks of the competitive food chain

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PHOTOGRAPHY: COLE GARSIDE

Contrary to the business practices of most new companies in North America looking for initial market success, one Toronto-based ethnic foods bakery opted to set itself up as a high-quality producer, rather than as a discount shop—achieving a stunning level of success in a relatively short period of time.

Opening its doors in 1997, **TWI Foods Inc.**, like many a new venture into the ethnic foods market, was a small business started up by a recent immigrant family to Canada.

Owing to their South-Asian background, the company opted to focus its efforts as a specialty food company catering its baked goods to the fairly large South-Asian populace spread across the country.

Producing high-quality baked delicious cake-rusks (a hard, crisp, lightly flavored bread—similar to biscotti), cookies and pound cakes, founder and company president Ali Kizilbash told *Canadian Packaging* during a visit to the west-end business that: “Our efforts to produce a high-quality product from our initial sales helped lay a solid foundation for TWI.

“The fact that our quality has remained unchanged over the years, is a key reason our products are highly sought after outside of Canada, as well.”

The company is currently situated within two state-of-the-art bakeries—one in nearby Mississauga at 36,000 square feet in size, and its new signature facility, a 181,000-square-foot plant that doubles as the TWI headquarters.

## Full Slate

“We produce full lines of packaged roti and naan products in Mississauga, and bake our cake rusk, tea toast, cakes, cookies and pastries in our Toronto plant,” explains TWI marketing manager Hyder Hasan.

TWI’s range of baked ethnic products are readily available at major grocery outlets, as well as the mom-and-pop’s, all over Canada, the U.K., U.S., Germany, Australia, Middle East and Singapore, with Hasan revealing an upcoming entrance into the Northeast Asian market is in the works as well.

“Our target market is mainly South Asians, but why limit ourselves,” notes Hasan. “We are rapidly expanding into mainstream markets, providing tasty and healthy food options for retailers, food services and private label firms.”

He says that although TWI and its 250-plus employees are very busy producing its own brands and providing contract baking and packaging for others, output and production capacity is dependent on individual production lines, noting that its cookie line has a production capacity up to 4.32 million packs of 200 grams each per month.

While indeed not all production lines are created equal, nor are they run at the same production speeds, Kizilbash states that combined at both of his plants, the company has “eight lines up and



As part of its expanding production capacity, TWI Foods in Toronto is setting up a brand new WeighPack PrimoCombi multi-head weigher and high-speed XPdius i-130 checkweigher system to help accurately weigh and package its popular and tasty toasted cake rusk products.

running, but we are in the process of installing more now, with a lot more production planned in the near future.”

The privately-owned company must be doing something right: as of August 2013, TWI’s revenues have exceeded \$24 million for the current year.

According to Kizilbash, TWI currently produces product under three of its brands, with **CRISPY** and **Sunrize** being its most recognized brands and **Crispy ST** its newly-launched premium brand.

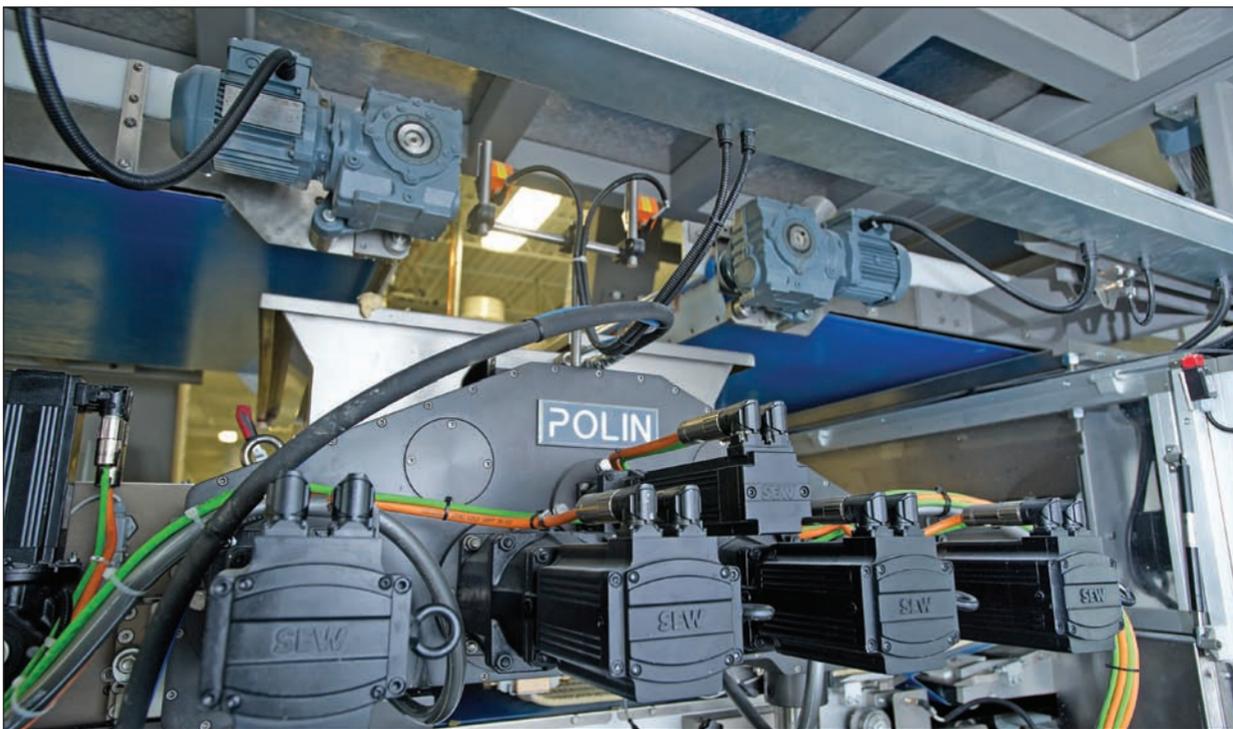
For TWI, both Hasan and Kizilbash agree that the way the company has marketed both itself and its products has been a key to its past and on-going success, and it has no plans to sit on its laurels.

“We are always looking to provide our customers with a new, exciting and delicious product, and our research and development team works endlessly to

develop and launch new and exciting products into the market,” says Kizilbash.

“One of our more recent additions is a range of more health-conscious products for a rapidly growing segment—like our Nann Thins, which is a double-baked snack that caters to those craving a savory flavor. We are also developing low-sugar and low-fat products for those who are more health-conscious,” continues Kizilbash.

Citing approximately 24 per cent of TWI’s business as being derived from contract packaging, Hasan notes that the company produces over 10 SKUs (stock-keeping units) for others, which along with its own heavy production schedule has it running three eight-hour shifts a day, five-days-a-week, though when demand spikes, it will run seven days a week.



TWI uses a complete biscuit-making system (above) from Italian manufacturer Polin, which optimally employs the smooth power of a plethora of SEW Eurodrive gearmotors (below) to move the dough along the process line.



TWI employs a vertical Vertex metal detection unit from Fortress Technology on its Vertek bagging system.



Standing behind a small sampling of TWI Foods' many products are (left) Marketing Manager Hyder Hasan and company founder and President Ali Kizilbash.



Harlund Industries supplied TWI with Hitachi inkjet coders to apply best-before and lot-code data onto all of its plastic film packages.

“Not quite a year ago, we fully-utilized two facilities of 32,000 square feet each,” says Hasan, “but we moved from there to our new headquarters here in this 181,000-square-foot building, and have installed additional new state-of-the-art equipment that will help us further improve and deliver on our promise to always deliver ‘quality’ to our customers.”

The most recent equipment upgrades at the new TWI facility are:

- a **Megart Systems TP07** depositer used to protrude batter into trays for baking;
- a **Polin** high-capacity depositer and band oven designed for the TWI cookie line;
- **Miwe R1** rack ovens to perform the initial bake of the cake and bread products;
- metal detection systems from **Bizerba**, as well as the **Genius** and **GLS** systems from **S+S** to detect and prevent metal contamination within the various products;
- various **Hitachi** inkjet printers supplied by **Harlund Industries** to print production information and best-before data onto packaging material;
- a **PFM Hurricane** horizontal film wrapper to create individually-wrapped packets of baked goodies;



- an **OMNI-SLRS** shrinkwrapper manufactured by **Shanklin** (now part of the **Sealed Air Corporation**) to wrap clamshell packaging to provide tamper-evidence and extended shelf life.
- an **Ostali** sheeter and former from Polin that creates layered or sheeted baked goodies.
- a **Domino C6000** and **C6000+** high-resolution inkjet printers used to print onto the exterior of corrugated cases and cartons to provide product identification and lot code information.
- corrugated cases and cartons converted by **Norampac**, a div. of **Cascades Inc.**
- and several weighing and bagging machines from **WeighPack Systems Inc.**, a Montreal-headquartered manufacturer with large facilities in Las Vegas and Miami.

The strong business relationship between TWI and WeighPack goes back 13 years to the **PACKE X Toronto** tradeshow, when the bakery was looking to become a more automated business, which would help it keep up with demands for more of its products.

### First Time Lucky

WeighPack vice-president of sales and marketing Nicholas Taraborelli says, “Back then, TWI was a first-time buyer of packaging machinery who performed the majority of its baked goods production by hand.

“Knowing that in order to not only keep up with orders for their product, and to better prepare for future growth, TWI put their trust in WeighPack to provide them with an affordable and easy-to-use V-9 single lane linear semi-automatic net weigher,” explains Taraborelli. “And the rest, as they say, is history.”

For TWI’s expectations of WeighPack, Kizilbash told the equipment manufacturer right from the get-go that, “Quality is the only product value that lasts.”

From that point on, Kizilbash says that TWI began to purchase more and more WeighPack machinery, looking to purchase complete packaging systems such as: the economical eight-head **CS-series** 1.5 liter multi-head weigher and **VerTek 1150** vertical form and seal machine in 2006 able to provide production rates up to 40 bags per minute; the 2010 addition of a **TigerScaleV-9** twin lane linear net weigher featuring a container indexing conveyor to fill clamshells, and the November 2012 addition of a leading edge 14-head **PrimoCombi** 1.5-liter multihead weigher and a slanted **VerTek 1150** for more delicate products.

A vertical **Vertex** metal detection unit designed and built by **Fortress Technology** has been added to the **VerTek 1150** as part of TWI’s product inspection system.

The most recent purchases from WeighPack include the December 2012 installation of a second 14-head **PrimoCombi** multihead weigher—this one with 2.5-liter buckets, and the May 2013 addition of a high-speed dual servo-driven **XPdius Elite i-130**



Exiting from a shrinkwrap heat tunnel, packaged cake rusks first move through a metal detection unit and then onto a CWD check-weigher, both manufactured by Bizerba.

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Utilizing a Schneider Electric Magelis control panel, workers at TWI easily maneuver heavy containers of freshly-mixed dough to be poured down into the Polin bakery system.



TWI uses a VerTek 1150 vertical form-seal bagger to package some of its baked products.

**PRESS RELEASE**

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vertical form-fill and seal machine able to pack at speeds of over 100 cycles per minute.

“The latest installation in May was most exciting,” exclaims Taraborelli, “as Ali Kizilbash literally purchased the system right off the 2013 PACKEX Toronto tradeshow floor.”

Taraborelli states that WeighPack has always been one of the few companies that manufactures finished inventory to offer its customers extremely quick lead times.

“This time was no different,” extols Taraborelli. “Although the PrimoCombi and the XPdius Elite i-130 were made specifically for the tradeshow, it was the perfect system for TWI and was literally delivered to their Toronto facility less than two hours after the show closed.

“We rented a Budget truck, loaded it in the parking lot and delivered it—that’s what makes WeighPack different—we get things done and serve our customers extremely well.”

According to Kizilbash, the new system offered TWI increased production rates and helped bring serviceability up to a whole new level, with dual access to mechanics, tool-less removable pull belts, lexan doors, forming collar and film roll, as well as a heavy-duty, stainless steel frame.

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NOT ENOUGH  
OPTIONS?



Delicate toasted cake rusks move into buckets of a WeighPack Systems weigher for precise weight verification before being deposited into a Vertek 1150 bagger.

WeighPack territory manager Mark Conforti adds: “The PrimoCombi multihead weigher is the first open-frame CAN-BUS wired combination scale that houses all electronics from one central electrical enclosure, offering serviceability advantages that no other manufacturer in the world offers. “Its world-class Windows PC controls with WIFI are embedded with Crystal Reports, Skype, LogMeIn.com to provide the user with free on-line support and more.

“These features coupled with the production speeds and high accuracy provided by the PrimoCombi have helped elevate WeighPack as one of the largest manufacturers of multihead weighers in the world,” explains Conforti.

### Value Proposition

He says that when delivering the latest system to TWI, the goal was a simple one: to install their highest speed system to date.

“With TWI’s business growing quickly, keeping up with product demand is crucial.

“The PrimoCombi and XPdius Elite i-130 provide them with the necessary throughput while including more features that make the operation, sanitation and product changeover even easier than before,” Conforti says.

Keeping its production levels up, with an eye for future growth was paramount for TWI, according to Hasan.

“We have grown every year since our inception. This year alone, our revenues have increased by 28 percent, as compared to last year,” he admits.

“The baked goods business is a very competitive one,” explains Kizilbash noting that with such a wide-ranging line of products, TWI has its fair share of competitors—though he notes his company isn’t afraid of a little heat in the kitchen.

“Because it’s a very price-sensitive industry, we

have been able to survive and thrive thanks to our efficient purchasing patterns,” Kizilbash explains.

“The biggest challenge in the food industry is to maintain affordable prices while maintaining high quality standards, which can only be done by efficient management of resources and achieving economies of scale.”

As for the future, Kizilbash says the tremendous growth in the food sector—especially with regards to ethnic foods—will continue its upward trend.

“Despite the heady growth we have already achieved with the industry, TWI has only just begun to make its mark,” sums up Kizilbash.

“It is my belief that we have a superior manufacturing facility filled with superior production line equipment, and we possess a superior line of delicious products.

“For us, we have only just scrapped the surface of global market penetration—and we are confident that whenever we are able get consumers to sample our tasty cookies, naan, roti, tea toast, cakes pastries and delicious cake rusks, we will have a customer for life.” 

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