



Scaling smart with automation

As demand for Drunken Sailor's gourmet products grew, Packserv helped the business scale production with a modular automation solution tailored to its evolving needs.

BACK IN 2012, during a relaxed dinner with friends, Drunken Sailor founder Justin Arnoux found himself in deep conversation about jams, relishes and the bold flavours that connect people.

"That night sparked something. I wanted to capture the shared love of food, the laughter and the energy, and somehow distil it into a bottle," says Arnoux.

What began as a simple idea became the foundation of Drunken Sailor, a business built on creativity, passion and quality produce. Food had long been part of Arnoux's world. Raised in a family of food lovers, with a father who was both a chef and baker, he developed an early understanding of flavour, technique and balance.

The business operated out of Arnoux's home kitchen for the first six years while he balanced production with a full-time job. Evenings were spent producing small batches around the routines of housemates and limited bench space, but the setup allowed him to refine recipes and steadily build a loyal customer base.

That early-stage hustle is something Packserv managing director Nathan Wardell understands well.

"What's often overlooked is that many brands, including Packserv itself in the early days, started from very modest beginnings – mine was the garage," says Wardell. "Whether it's the home kitchen, a small workspace or a makeshift production setup, that stage teaches you resilience and creativity."

As demand for Drunken Sailor products grew, Arnoux moved into a dedicated production facility and began reinvesting in the business to improve processes and expand capacity. Automation soon became the next logical step to increase consistency and efficiency.

Arnoux discovered Packserv through a Google search and compared several manufacturers before making his decision.

"Being able to work with a local supplier was a major advantage," he says. "Having access to technical support nearby gave us confidence and helped minimise downtime risk. What also stood out was Packserv's willingness

to tailor a solution specifically to our operation instead of offering a standard off-the-shelf setup."

Arnoux also valued the modular nature of Packserv's machinery, which allowed the business to start with a setup suited to current production levels and expand incrementally as demand increased.

"It removed the need for heavy upfront investment, while still allowing a clear path to scale," he says.

Wardell says flexibility remains central to Packserv's approach.

"We understand that growing businesses need flexibility," he says. "The goal is to provide machinery solutions that can evolve alongside production demands."

Another advantage was the option to rent machinery, giving Drunken Sailor the ability to trial equipment before committing to purchase and take on additional contract manufacturing work without significant risk.

Since implementing the production line – incorporating Packserv's capping, labelling and printing equipment, along with tables and conveyors – the impact on production has been substantial. Automation has increased daily throughput and improved operational efficiency, allowing the business to focus more on product development and growth.

"Stories like Drunken Sailor are exactly why we do what we do," says Wardell. "There's something incredibly rewarding about supporting Australian businesses as they grow from small-scale production into established brands." ■

Above: Food in his DNA – Justin Arnoux, founder of Drunken Sailor.

Inset: Improving processes has allowed the business to expand capacity.

Below: Since implementing the production line the impact on production has been significant.

