

# Rishi Tea Sows the Seeds of Sustainability with an Eco Board

SUSTAINABILITY  
CASE STUDY

As the leading garden-direct importer of premium organic and Fair Trade artisan tea, it was a clear and natural progression for Rishi Tea to extend their efforts of environmental sustainability into their packaging. Rishi Tea's commitment to sustainability is a core company philosophy that stems from the organic tea gardens where their teas are harvested.

Rishi Tea was among the first to earn organic certification under the USDA's Natural Organic Program in November of 2002 and has been at the forefront in the development of Fair Trade tea production, becoming one of the highest payers of social premiums. The TransFair USA Certified Fair Trade projects with which Rishi partners directly support a better life for the tea farming families and communities involved through fair prices, fair wages, safe working conditions, environmental sustainability, education, and community development.

Rishi Tea's transition to environmentally friendly packaging was initiated in September of 2007 when art director Sean O'Leary began to look for sustainable solutions to Rishi's growing market. O'Leary contacted [www.recycledboard.com](http://www.recycledboard.com) in hopes of receiving suggestions on companies that could provide eco-friendly packaging for Rishi's line of Organic and Fair Trade Iced Teas.

Kim Price, manager of environmental business development for Lindenmeyr Munroe, made contact with O'Leary and sent samples of 18-pt. WindPower Recycled Board that contains 50% post-consumer waste (PCW), that is Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified, and that is made with 100%, non-polluting wind energy. The grade ensures that the PCW content is certified through third-party certifier Green Seal. In addition, the alternative energy source is third party certified by Green-e at the point of manufacture.

O'Leary and Jenny Kim, Rishi Tea's graphic designer, were impressed with the quality of the sample packaging, and in May 2008, the print job was awarded to a Milwaukee area printer, Imperial Litho. Because of Rishi's commitment

and the increased demand for FSC-certified paper, Imperial Litho agreed to begin the FSC certification process and now expects to receive the certification by the fourth quarter of 2008.

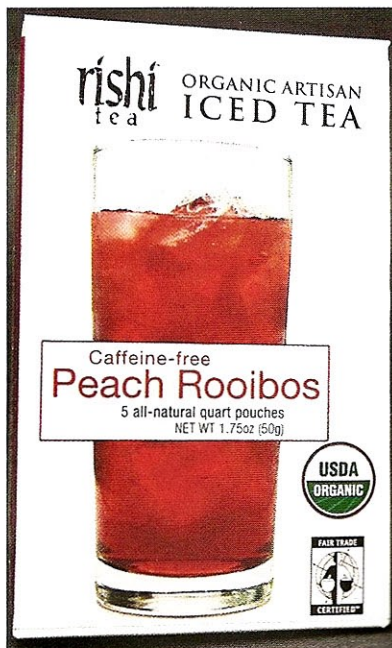
Prior to using the FSC-certified packaging, Rishi Tea's Iced Tea packaging developed in June of 2005 consisted of a four-color folding carton, gloss pressure sensitive label applied to a virgin fiber, 15-pt, C1S SBS board. The new environmentally friendly packaging is printed using soy ink with the message: "In our effort to minimize our environmental impact, we used a paper manufactured with 100% renewable wind energy and 50% post-consumer waste that is elemental chlorine-free, acid-free, and 100% recyclable."

Kim said the results on-press were "beyond our expectations." She was also pleased to report an overwhelmingly positive response from consumers on the change in graphics and eco-friendly packaging.

"In addition to the Organic and Fair Trade Certified logos we have now added a 'Recycled and Printed with Soy Ink' logo," says O'Leary. "When compared to our original iced tea packaging, the environmental gains have been huge." But Rishi Tea will not stop there; the next generation of Rishi's Iced Tea packaging will raise the bar even further by achieving a level of 80% PCW. Rishi Tea also

plans to expand its eco-friendly packaging across all packaging formats. ■

The redesigned carton saved the cost of the label and adhesive, and retained the shelf impact of the original while adding the freedom to print on all panels.



Old



New