

RieNU—Reusable Table Linens, Made From Recyclables!

Advances in textile technology have cleared the way for table linens made from recycled soda bottles



By Bill Josey

The hospitality industry understands that a sustainable supply chain is not just the right thing to do; it's the clear path to long-term success. Eco friendly cuisine has been in vogue since the high times of the '60s. Today, consumers are more concerned than ever about the poisonous pesticides, chemical fertilizers and growth hormones that corporate agribusiness has used to 'enhance' its products. What Americans want now is great food that's good for you.

Today's epicurean experience may start with a Flower Child martini made from organic vodka, hibiscus flower concentrate and fresh organic lemon juice. Then we have a choice of free-range chicken, organic vegetables and grass-fed beef. Afterwards, we can top it off with vegan chocolate chip cookies and a cup of Fair Trade coffee.

SUSTAINABLE TABLE LINEN

The latest innovation to the 'green' foodie experience is Riegel RieNU table linen made from recycled plastic bottles. RieNU is available from the Riegel Consumer Products Division of MountVernon Mills. Riegel/Mt Vernon Mills is a 165+ year old, privately held American textile manufacturing company that's committed to eco-excellence. The Riegel

brand is well known in the restaurant and hospitality trade for its Permalux, Premier, Monarch, Parnell, Beauti-Damask and DIRONA napery products.

Many companies claim to be eco-friendly, but Riegel/MountVernon Mills has established itself as an industry leader with product compliance from Scientific Certification Systems (SCS), SONG Sustainability Initiative, Worldwide Responsible Apparel Production® (WRAP) initiatives, Oeko-Tex®, CMA Responsible Care®, and The Environmental Stewardship Program. The company has also received numerous awards and recognition, including the Air and Waste Management Association Certificate of Achievement, Georgia Governor's Award for Pollution Prevention and the North Carolina Governor's Award for Water reduction.

HOW IT'S MADE

RieNU table linen products are made with EcoSure fiber from Poole And Co. It's 100% recycled PCR PET, which is SCS certified.

PCR is post-consumer recycled material. For RieNU, the recycled product is PET (polystyrene terephthalate). To produce PET for napery, bales of plastic bottles are collected, sorted and inspected to eliminate foreign materials. The bottles are sterilized, dried and crushed into small chips. The plastic chips are then melted



CHECK IT OUT:

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down and extruded into new fiber, which is spun on Murata Air jet spinning equipment. This process produces a polyester yarn that mimics the softness and absorbency of 100% cotton. Yet it has the same strength, color-retention, stain-release capabilities and other performance characteristics of Riegel's Premier products.

SCS is a global leader in third-party environmental sustainability and food-quality certification, auditing, testing and standards development. It's important that a company that certifies food products also certifies a table linen product.

The average U.S. home produces 45 lbs. of PET waste per year. It takes 18 12-ounce bottles, 14 16-ounce bottles or nine 2-liter bottles to produce one pound of PET. According to NAPCOR, The national Association for PET Container Resources, 1.45 billion lbs. of PET (like plastic water bottles) were collected and recycled in 2008, resulting in:

- 46 trillion Btu of energy saved, enough to power 486,000 U.S. homes for one year.
- 1.25 million tons of greenhouse gas emissions reduced from our atmosphere, equal to the removal of 190,000 vehicles from our highways.
- Reduced clean water use by 25%, compared to production of virgin fiber.
- 1.45 billion lbs. of waste eliminated that would further burden our landfills and diminish the earth's natural resources.
- The use of PCR vs. virgin polyester reduces energy consumption by 84% and greenhouse gas emissions by 71%.

It takes three 16-ounce PET bottles to make one Riegel RieNu napkin, which has the same performance characteristics as Riegel's Premier table linen. So get out your psychedelic tie-dyed organic cotton T-shirt, put a Grateful Dead album on the turntable, and let's celebrate another victory for Mother Earth. **TS**

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HOW THE PROCESS WORKS:



1. Bales of plastic bottles are collected, sorted and inspected to eliminate foreign materials.



2. PET bottles are sterilized, dried and crushed into small chips.



3. The plastic chips are melted down and then extruded into a new fiber.



4. The finished fiber can then be dyed and sewn into napkins and tablecloths in a variety of colors.