



NEWS

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Javier Gutiérrez Martínez de Compañón of Vidrala Receives the 2009 Phoenix Award.

BILBAO, SPAIN - Javier Gutiérrez Martínez de Compañón, Director General of the European glass maker Vidrala, has become the thirty ninth recipient of the Phoenix Award, which is given in recognition of outstanding individuals who have made noteworthy contributions in the field of glass.



Mr Gutiérrez received the glass industry's most prestigious award at a special banquet held in his honour at the Real Club Marítimo Del Abra y Real Sporting Club, Getxo-Vizcaya, Spain on the 2nd October, 2009. Mr Gutiérrez was unanimously selected for the award in recognition of his lifetime achievements in the glass industry. Mr Gutiérrez said in his acceptance speech that if anyone deserved the award it was Vidrala and he was happy to accept the award on behalf of Vidrala, which he described as a 'wonderful dream that day by day is becoming a reality'.

Mr Gutiérrez is unapologetic in his passion for life, for his family and for glass. In a wonderfully humble and charismatic acceptance speech, Mr Gutiérrez talked with great passion about creating an environment at Vidrala which allowed the phenomenal growth in the company and the mutual benefits shared in this growth with clients, shareholders, employees, suppliers and the wider community. Mr Gutiérrez also thanked his family and colleagues for their part in his and Vidrala's success story, which has culminated in this latest accolade.

During Mr Gutiérrez's tenure at Vidrala there has been tremendous growth. Vidrala has gone from a single facility container manufacturer to a leading European container group with six factories in four different countries. In 1968, the year before Mr Gutiérrez joined Vidrala, there were 168 employees working in the one factory producing 16,000 metric tons of glass per year. In 2008, Grupo Vidrala employed more than 1800 persons at their six factories producing 1,090,000 metric tons of glass per year.

Mr Gutiérrez characterised Vidrala in his speech as 'having a dream and pursuing it constantly'. He described this dream as being based on three solid pillars, which do not change even in times of crisis such as now. The first pillar, as in all companies, the creation of wealth – this wealth to be equitable between clients, suppliers, shareholders and employees.

The second pillar is creating a future – thinking in the long term. The third pillar is values and principles, he said that Vidrala's work is guided by ethical practice, teamwork and solidarity.

During his speech, Mr Gutiérrez also paid tribute to colleagues; Carlos Delclaux and Jose Angel Irazabal. He described them as 'giants who have lent their shoulders for me to raise myself up on and scan the horizon'. Mr Gutiérrez pointed to Carlos Delclaux's enthusiasm and leadership qualities at Vidrala, but it is lack of leadership that he feels has resulted in stagnation in terms of furnace and forming technology in the glass industry. Mr Gutiérrez said that we needed a technological revolution to deal with old technology, lack of process control, high energy consumption and unattractive working conditions.

Mr Gutiérrez did however thank suppliers for their innovation and support to glassmakers, which has helped glass last the course in the face of other packaging material alternatives and has made it possible for smaller companies, such as Vidrala, to be able to compete on an equal footing with the larger groups.

Javier Gutiérrez Martínez de Compañón joins a very distinguished list of recipients who have been recognized by the Phoenix Award Committee for their contributions to the areas of glass production, science, education and art.

THE PHOENIX AWARD

In May 1971, representatives of nineteen major suppliers to the glass industry met in New York City to form an association for the express purpose of recognizing outstanding individuals who have made noteworthy contributions to the glass industry. As a result of this meeting, the Phoenix Award Committee was born and soon adopted a code of by-laws with the following preamble:

“It is the purpose of the Phoenix Award Committee to select, each year, a person now living, who has been active in and has made contributions to any phase of the glass industry. This may be in the field of science, production, or education relating to glass, and shall include glass containers, fiber glass, scientific glass, flat glass, tableware and electronic glass. As a symbol of this Award the recipients shall be presented with a glass sculpture representing the mythological Phoenix Bird.”

Committee members serve for a period of four years and six new members are elected each year to replace those whose terms have expired. Membership is on an individual, not on a corporate basis. Members must be employed by a company which is a supplier to the glass manufacturing industry.