

## MINI PAK'R™ Makes Packing Pottery A Pleasure, Packaging Problems A Thing Of The Past For Minnesota Potter Jeff Oestreich



After a decade of dealing with the good, the bad and the ugly of working with traditional packaging materials such as bubble wrap, crumpled paper and peanuts, potter Jeff Oestreich came to a simple conclusion: there had to be a better way to package his pottery. And he has found it in the desktop-size MINI PAK'R air cushion machine, from FP International.

The potter, known internationally for his wheel thrown functional ware has had his fair share of drama when it comes to dealing with loosefill peanuts, and other less than perfect packaging options. He literally stopped traffic on a Minnesota highway to chase packing materials blown out of the back of his truck during a trip back in St. Paul some 30 miles away. He was confronted with the cost of purchasing and shipping (which almost cost more than the product itself) multiple bundles/bags of Bubble Wrap® or loosefill peanuts and then faced the issues of storing them. He also tried various packaging combinations to secure his ceramic art during shipping. After all of this, he knew the time was ripe for change.

That's when Oestreich started his search for a better solution for packaging his valuable pottery for shipping to art galleries and customers around the globe. What he found – the MINI PAK'R packaging system from FP International – has fundamentally changed the way he approaches his work.

“ I am so pleased with the MINI PAK'R™ that I would grab my glaze book first, the MINI PAK'R™ second in the event of a fire. ”

### It's All In The Details

A potter for 43 years, Jeff Oestreich is recognized in ceramic art circles around the world for his soda-fired pottery. Its surface is an offshoot of a traditional 17th century German technique, and the art-deco inspired designs are 100 percent his own. He is considered an important part of the history of the studio pottery movement in the U.S. and is renowned for his fine eye for form, glaze, pattern and surface texturing.

At the heart of his enormous talent is his attention to detail, which extends to the way he runs the business of his studio, including the preparation of his pottery for shipping to each and every customer.

# MINI PAK'R™

Air Cushion Machine

Jeff Oestreich

CASE STUDY

## Finding A New Way To Package

When the Taylors Falls, Minnesota-based artist realized he was losing valuable time on the packaging part of his business he began to search in earnest for a totally different answer. And as an artist, time is what it takes to produce beautiful work – and to make money.



Oestreich went online and did days of research on air cushion machines. He found some six companies that sold industrial-strength packaging systems. He contacted each to try to set up a leasing arrangement

for a machine, to no avail. All of the companies required a higher volume of packaging materials than Oestreich used in his studio, or used by a consortium of area pottery studios, for the lease.

Then, he began talking to Larry Reimer of FP International. The FP International sales rep, after learning of Oestreich's unique needs, told him about the MINI PAK'R, which was still in the development phase but was slated for release in early 2007. Oestreich added the rep's number to his speed dial and checked back often on the status of the product release. When the first MINI PAK'R machines rolled off the assembly line in March of 2007, Oestreich was the first potter in the U.S. to purchase the MINI PAK'R, and the 41st customer overall.

## Easy Start Up, Small Footprint, Lots Of Options

20 minutes after opening the box, Oestreich was quickly off and running with his new packaging system. Having a dedicated area for shipping is not a problem for Oestreich, who has a relatively spacious 2,500 square-foot studio. Even so, the small footprint of the MINI PAK'R and the minimal space required for storage of the film is a real plus for the potter.



For Oestreich, the protection of his pottery comes first and foremost. His work, which sells for \$50 to \$1000 per piece and includes pitchers, tableware, drinking vessels and a variety of serving pieces, is one of a kind.



## On Demand Packaging Ideal For Studio or Gallery

**Saves Money:** Less expensive than bubble wrap or packing peanuts.

- One small roll of Novus Double Cushion® film makes the equivalent of seven 14 cubic foot bags of peanut
- One small roll of Quilt-Air® large film makes the equivalent of 1.33 rolls of 48" x 250' bubble wrap

**Convenient:** Make air cushions as needed.

**Fast ROI:** Can pay for itself in as little as 10 months, based on material savings with only 50 shipments per day.

**Protects Fragile Items:** Patented cushion design protects against shipping damage.



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With each piece being one-of-a-kind, guaranteeing against breakage is of utmost importance. To Oestreich, breakage means money lost and possibly his reputation damaged. Often, a claim has to be paid to the gallery owner or customer, and even more critical is having to repair a damaged relationship. So, in Oestreich's mind, the best approach is to avoid damage from the outset.

### A Perfect Record

Since the purchase of the MINI PAK'R in March of 2007, the Minnesota potter has shipped over 1000 pieces, with no breakage. The potter says the air cushions made by the MINI PAK'R are ideal for packaging ceramic art and other fragile items because the artwork does not shift when packed using the air cushions. Shifting pottery was a big issue when he packed his pottery in loosefill peanuts and bubble wrap.



Oestreich cites a recent experience with the Red Lodge Clay Center, a top-tier gallery located in Red Lodge, Montana as a perfect example of the power of the MINI PAK'R. For an exhibition of 100 of his carefully crafted tea bowls at the Montana gallery, Oestreich made air cushions with the MINI PAK'R and used them to package the one of a kind pieces

for shipping. Even with 40 tea bowls in each box there was absolutely no damage.

### Money-saving Packaging At Its Easiest

Oestreich is so pleased with the MINI PAK'R that he says he would grab his glaze book first, the MINI PAK'R second in the event of a fire. Now that's a strong loyalty statement. Another key selling point for Oestreich is the convenience. Now he can make the packaging product when he needs them, and in whatever quantity is required. Storage is also easier.

Because UPS, Oestreich's shipper of choice requires double boxing for the shipment of fragile items such as pottery, Oestreich says that the Novus Double Cushion® film and the Novus Supertube® Film works best for this application. The space filled by the air cushions is some two inches between the two boxes.

**Versatile:** Makes six different air cushions to provide protection for whatever you ship.

**Simple To Use:** Automatically sets the correct air pressure and sealing temperature

**Compact:** About the size of a fax machine or desktop printer, it can sit on table or is easily mounted on the wall.

**Reliable:** Practically maintenance free, with only two 'wear' parts.

**Eco-Friendly:** Better for the environment than traditional packaging and peanuts.

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For the inner packaging – the pottery itself – Oestreich wraps each piece with corrugated paperboard and a length of Double Cushion air cushions.

Also, the fact that the mess is eliminated makes packaging a real pleasure for Oestreich now. No more multiple rolls of bubble wrap to deal with. Instead, he can focus on providing a better customer experience with his packaging. He starts with brand new boxes, confidently wraps each piece in the corrugated board and the MINI PAK'R air pillow then places a high-quality postcard of his work, an invoice and a decadent chocolate on top to finish the presentation. For Oestreich, the MINI PAK'R has turned a miserable experience into something pleasurable for him and for the person who is opening the package.

### **Creative Uses For The MINI PAK'R**

Oestreich has found a number of creative ways to put his MINI PAK'R to good use. He brought his MINI PAK'R along when he moved his father (and his multitude of small items and pottery) in to a new home. With this arrangement, he was able to make air cushions whenever and wherever he needed. Also, each spring Oestreich opens his studio for the St. Croix Valley Potter's tour, which draws over 1000 pottery aficionados from across



the country. Many of these visitors arrive by plane and need a way to securely wrap their new pottery pieces for the trip home. Voila! The MINI PAK'R has provided the perfect solution for on-site packaging.

Potter Jeff Oestreich is sold on the benefits of owning the MINI PAK'R. It has made his life as a world-class potter easier. It has provided a new way to present his work, and to package it for safe delivery. In fact, Oestreich believes that the MINI PAK'R is the packaging product of the future for the entire art world. And he is working to convert them, one potter at a time.

The new MINI PAK'R™ air cushion machine is an important addition to any packaging center. It saves money and space, is simple to use and is a convenient packaging solution not only for potters and artists but also for small business, medical supply companies, OEM manufacturers, eBay shippers and others who need “on-demand” air cushion packaging capabilities.



### **To order:**

United States and Canada:  
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