

**Gaspace 2 at Vleeswarenfabriek
Scheemda BV**

Scheemda brand carpaccio now appearing on delicatessen and supermarket shelves is the result of five years work to produce an authentic product. The final stage was the development of packaging to maintain the fresh sliced colour of the beef for an acceptable shelf life.



After six months of testing, a controlled atmosphere pack (CAP), using a secret mixture of gases, was developed to give a reliable shelf life of, initially, 10 days, later extended to 22 days. With such a premium brand to protect, Scheemda test the gas mix in production samples using a Systech Instruments Gaspace 2 headspace gas analyser. Although many thinly sliced meats and fish are often described as "carpaccio", only sliced raw beef truly merits the name. Invented in 1950 by Guiseppe Cipriani, owner of the famous Harry's Bar in Venice, and named after the Venetian painter, Vittore Carpaccio, carpaccio has proved to be very difficult to produce to a high standard for the consumer market. Many pre-packed products described as "carpaccio" are slices of nitrite preserved beef two or three millimetres thick, rather than fresh prime beef, without preservatives, sliced wafer thin. Even when a method of slicing the beef thinly enough has been developed, there is the problem of the rapid colour change from natural, blood red to dark brown making the product unattractive on the shelf and the plate. Scheemda's aim was to produce pre-packed carpaccio as close as possible to Guiseppe Cipriani's original recipe, which could be served straight from the pack onto the plate. After five years development work, Scheemda launched its beef carpaccio in 100 gm packs each containing two interleaved rosettes of six 120 mm diameter slices of top quality, wafer thin sliced beef complete with a sachet of dressing and a small packet of cheese; a complete first course for two. The final part of the development process was the design of the packaging to ensure that the sliced beef maintained its attractive natural red colour for an acceptable shelf life period.

The solution was a controlled atmosphere package (CAP) using a gas mix that took six months of trials and tests to develop. The gas mix used, a commercial secret, initially provided a shelf life of 10 days but this has subsequently been extended to 22 days. The key to reliability of the shelf life of the product is ensuring that the gas mix is always within specification under full speed production conditions. With the success of the new carpaccio product depending on maintaining the attractive natural red colour of the beef for the whole of the shelf life, Scheemda takes sample packs from every production batch for checking that the CAP gas mix is within specification. The instrument used for testing is the Systech Instruments Gaspace 2 headspace gas analyser, which is rapidly becoming the standard CAP/MAP quality assurance tester in the food industry. Simple and quick to use, the Gaspace 2 gives readout of headspace gas composition within 5 seconds.

Systech Instruments Ltd
17 Thame Park Business Centre,
Thame
OXON
UK
OX9 3XA

www.systech.co.uk
email advice@systech.co.uk
Fax +44 1844 217 220
Tel +44 1844 216 838