

# COPAG CELEBRATES A CENTURY OF SUCCESS

According to Ignacio de Loyola Brandão, in his book *COPAG 100 years in Brazil*, "The history of playing cards in Brazil is the history of COPAG, a career immersed in the development of playing cards".

Last 16 October, to top off the festivities to celebrate its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary, COPAG held a big party for over 500 special guests, at the Hotel Tropical Manaus in Brazil.

Over the past 100 years, COPAG has become the market leader in playing cards in Brazil and one of the major companies in the world in the sector, based on investment in technology, maximum quality products and personalised service to its thousands of clients.

On 18 January 1908, Albino Gonçalves Dias founded the Companhia Paulista de Papéis e Artes Gráficas (COPAG) in São



COPAG factory and offices in Manaus, Brazil

ambitious modernisation plan, investing heavily in new machinery, high technology equipment and professional training. This was reflected in a notable increase in productivity and even higher quality playing cards.

In late 1987, COPAG began to export to many countries in Europe, America, Asia and Africa and in 2002, entered the US market, as the culmination of this first international expansion.

In 2005, COPAG joined Cartamundi, a Belgian group, with 200 years experience in the industry, and the biggest playing card manufacturer in the world. Joining forces with Cartamundi has significantly favoured COPAG'S efforts in the production process and technological development.

Cartamundi has its head offices in Turnhout, Belgium and factories in Belgium, Germany, the United Kingdom, Poland, the United States, Brazil and Mexico, and wholly-owned sales offices in the Netherlands, France, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Hungary, Austria, Chile and Singapore. The group had a turnover of €142 million in 2007, and employs more than 1,000 people.



State-of-the-art printing equipment at Copag



"COPAG 100 years in Brazil".  
Author Ignacio de Loyola Brandão dedicates his book on the company to Ana Carolina Gonçalves



COPAG stands for Companhia Paulista de Papeis e Artes Gráficas



João Carlos Gonçalves and Ricardo A. Gonçalves Filho with their children, future Copag executives

Paulo, Brazil. At first, the company operated as importers and general stationers. Ten years later they began to manufacture their now world-famous playing cards.

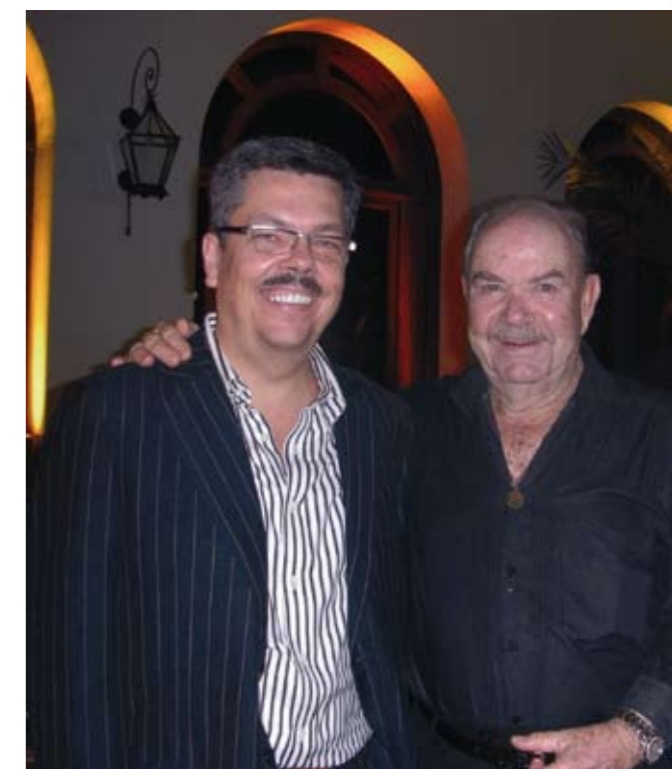
In 1923, COPAG created what would soon become its major product: The "139" card, which won its first award at the International Convention of Playing Card Manufacturers in London, 1954. At present, the "139" card is the company's leading product.

Constant development and expansion meant that in 1985 COPAG moved to the Amazon region, changing its name to the current one, Copag Da Amazônia.

At its new 7245m<sup>2</sup> industrial facility, COPAG undertook an



Chris Van Doorslaer, CEO of Cartamundi, and Ricardo A. Gonçalves Filho, COPAG Managing Director



Chris Van Doorslaer and Antonio Skorlich, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Cartamundi Mexico



Throughout its history, COPAG has always worked towards maximum quality in all its products, while striving to offer its employees a better quality of life. Its efforts in this field and compliance with the strictest standards in the material have been recognised and awarded on several occasions. At present, COPAG playing cards, which account for 80% of the company's production, are present on all five continents and in the most important Casinos worldwide. COPAG is currently run by brothers Ricardo Albino Gonçalves Filho, Managing Director, and João Carlos Gonçalves, Chairman of the Board of Directors. The Gonçalves family has a long history in the company and now, in its fifth generation (Ricardo Albino Gonçalves, Operations Manager; Ana Carolina Corte Real Gonçalves, first woman director in 100 years; and Luis Fernando Corte Real Gonçalves) aims to go even further. Before the party, COPAG organised a guided tour of the factory for its guests, who were greeted by the one of the company's mottos: *Our greatest asset is our workers*, underlining the commitment and involvement of managers and employees. Over 500 special guests, including clients, distributors, representatives, authorities and employees, from all over the world, including a large delegation from Cartamundi, met at the Vitória Régia area of the Tropical Manaus Hotel to celebrate the centenary of COPAG.



COPAG celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary in the beautiful gardens of Hotel Tropical Manaus



Table of honour. Standing: Ricardo A. Gonçalves Filho and João Carlos Gonçalves. Seated: Flavia Skrobot, superintendent of Manaus Free Trade Zone, Laerte Chixaro from the State Office for Economic Development, Daniel Jack Feder, Assistant Executive Secretary for Sector Policy, and Cartamundi executives Peter Warns, General Manager of the Germany plant, and Chris Van Doorslaer, CEO



Ricardo A. Gonçalves Filho, COPAG Managing Director



João Carlos Gonçalves, Chairman of the COPAG Board of Directors



Ricardo Gonçalves Filho gave the first speech, asserting that, *"COPAG is not merely a family business: it is a Brazilian asset that knows how to look around and go global."*

Chris Van Doorslaer, CEO of Cartamundi, which took advantage of the event to organise the group's annual sales convention in Brazil, congratulated COPAG on their dedication, history and excellence in their work. He then donated US\$2500 to the Apolo charity for children with cancer.

One of the most emotional moments of the evening was the special homage paid by the Gonçalves brothers to their father, Ricardo Albino Gonçalves, the third generation of COPAG and *"a visionary"*; to their mother, Maria Lúcia Bossisio, and to Ana Carolina Gonçalves, the daughter of Ricardo Gonçalves, who organised the party and who, as her father said, is *"the future of the company"*.

On behalf of the fifth generation of the Gonçalves family, Ana Carolina Gonçalves said, *"We will work with the same enthusiasm and dedication as the previous generations. We will continue to offer our clients top quality playing cards and they will continue to receive the same personalised service as they have for the past 100 years."*

The ladies were very much the stars of the show, at which homage was also paid to another seven women, six of whom have been working at COPAG for over 20 years, and one from Cartamundi.



Chris Van Doorslaer, CEO of Cartamundi



Ana Carolina Gonçalves



Chris Van Doorslaer gives Ricardo A. Gonçalves Filho a donation for children with cancer



The party was infused with the rhythms of Brazilian music

Commemorative plaques were also given to the company's oldest clients from the USA, Denmark, Holland, Germany, Austria, France, Brazil and other countries. João Carlos Gonçalves, Chairman of the COPAG Board of Directors, then addressed the guests as follows: *"I am convinced that people who do their best make history. This is obvious in the history of COPAG. Many of the people who worked here were committed to the company; they gave us their best. And that is why we are here celebrating 100 years of COPAG"*. After the speeches, the guests enjoyed dinner and a concert by two traditional Manaus groups, *Boi Garantido* and *Caprichoso*. The party continued afterwards with live music from well-known band *Os Embaixadores*. The agreeable temperature in Manaus and the characteristic music and laughter of the Brazilians were the perfect combination for an unforgettable night.



Music was provide by Latin Group *Boi Garantido*



The Cartamundi team toasts EUROPEAN CASINOS-The Elite



Cartamundi representatives: Winnie Kennis, Product Manager and Steven Schoenmaekers, Special Projects Manager



Marta Mateus, COPAG International Business Manager, Adriana Morales, special correspondent from EUROPEAN CASINOS-The Elite, and Eduardo de Olivera Soares, Manager of COPAG USA



Cartamundi executives: Ann Billiow, Marketing Manager and Martine Vermeiren, Executiv Assistant

**“It’s too good to be Real.”**

**COPAG PLASTIC CARDS**

Quality second to none.  
A WSOP choice supplier for two consecutive years.

The tradition of a 100 year old company.  
Product integrity guaranteed from production to delivery.

Security and cutting edge technology  
The world’s finest plastic playing cards.

**COPAG**  
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100 years