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HOT TIME IN OLD LATROBE



By Gerry Khermouch

LABATT USA this summer will host the ultimate "Rock" festival: a Town Fair in Latrobe, Pa., that will play upon Rolling Rock beer's quirky, homespun appeal with a Saturn Homecoming-style event headlined by the Red Hot Chili Peppers, Filter, Moby and Fuel. The plan: to flag Rolling Rock's authenticity and heritage among younger consumers by affirming its relationship with the small town at the center of its brewing and marketing for decades. (Continued on page 88)

Exclusives

SKU-FRIENDLY

Abandoning resistance to in-and-out entries, **Burger King** is revving up the new-product machine and flagging its greater variety in ads via agency Lowe Lintas. Exiting the ad message: "Have it your way." See page 4.

FILA PUMPS UP WITH STARS

Fila grabs **Sammy Sosa**, **Carla Overbeck** and **Grant Hill** for new ads that showcase the "humanistic side" of sport. See page 6.

WELCOME TO POTTERVILLE

In unprecedented Hollywood move, **Warner Bros.** enlists G-Whiz! Entertainment to develop a brand strategy for its new **Harry Potter** property. See 'The Biz,' page 10.

READY TO RE-TIRE

Continental General Tire, building awareness as retail network expands, sets promo ties to **Taylor Made**, **Amazon.com** and **Eddie Bauer**. See page 18.

PLUS

Procter & Gamble plans heavy market activity behind revamped **Cascade Complete**. See page 6 . . . **Rob Vlosky**, co-developer of **Canandaigua's** hot **Arbor Mist** fruit wine, exits for imaging startup but leaves behind **K** cider. See page 8 . . . **Chase Manhattan** sets first leg of branding effort for **Global Investor Services**. See page 14 . . . **Listerine PocketPaks** and **Chupa Chups** roll new SKUs, seek exposure beyond candy aisle. See page 20.



LAUREN D'AMICO/STUDIO

The all-day event, unveiled to wholesalers last week at Labatt's national sales meeting in Las Vegas, "reinforces Rolling Rock's small-town values with the juxtaposition of cutting-edge bands like the Red Hot Chili Peppers," said marketing director Darin Wolf. It will be backed by an ad program in *Rolling Stone* (which will also produce a live Webcast of the event) plus radio in 45 markets. Involved are ad agency McCann-Erickson, NY, promo shop The Marketing Continuum, Dallas (since succeeded by DVC) and event producers EMCI, Stamford, Conn., and KKO Productions.

The event, expected to draw 30,000 - plus, including hundreds brought in gratis via consumer sweepstakes, trips organized by local radio partners and trade incentive programs, will occur Aug. 5 at the Westmoreland County Fair Grounds, and will feature such traditional country fair activities as pie-eating contests, dunk tanks, pony rides and ferris wheels. But to grab the peer "influencers" among entry-level beer drinkers, said marketing VP Tom Cardella. Town Fair also will feature major music acts the Peppers, Filter, Fuel, Moby Our Lady Peace and Marcy's Playground on the main stage and up-and-coming acts on a second stage. Attendees also will get a dose of the history of "Old Latrobe:" whose "glass-lined tanks" are described on the bottles and which has been good-naturedly ribbed in the ongoing TV ad campaign shot there. Among Latrobe's contributions to civilization to be heralded at the fair are Mr. Rogers, Arnold Palmer, the banana split and the first pro football game. Wolf said the program has four key aims: to strike an emotional chord with young-adult users, develop a property that offers loyal users a "360-degree relationship" with the brand, offer a national program that can be leveraged by wholesalers and retailers and give something back to Latrobe, still the sole production source for nationally distributed Rock.

The elements marshaled for the event match up nicely with what researcher Youth Intelligence indicates the target values, Wolf said: technology music and simple values such as integrity and hanging out with friends.

As reported, Rock has been growing again thanks to a cutover of all production to its trademark green longneck and a return to national TV (with the budget to rise another 12-14% this year, although '99 spending attained barely half of the budgeted \$16 million when Labatt cut back on spending late in the year).

Last year, the brand grew 4%, 1 million barrels in 1994, despite a price hike amounting to 7% over the two-year course of the restage effort. Town Fair should click in expanding newer markets like Seattle, Denver and Chicago, while helping recover on-premise visibility in Northeast markets where the brand is still flat, Cardella said.

The event, created from scratch in keeping with Rock's claimed authentic and independent stature, bears resemblance to GM Saturn homecomings, as well as to the Arctic "Polar Beach Parties" hosted by Molson in the 1990s (once headlined by the Peppers) and a Snapple user "convention" on Long Island. The promo starts with a ticket sale blitz backed by local radio *Rolling Stone* ads, and promotions on Labatt's beer.com site, and those of *Rolling Stone* and Ticketmaster. Wolf expects a sellout of 25,000 tickets within three weeks of the April 22 date. Tickets are priced at \$33, in reference to the mysterious "33" on Rock bottles. With demand seeded, key markets will launch on-premise events, with 300-400 winning couples to be flown in, and 1,000 more bused in from Philadelphia and Baltimore. Rock 12-packs will flag the sweeps to generate off-premise displays. Lesser prizes include a CD compilation of the up-and-coming bands. In July the focus switches to

those who couldn't get there, including via the live Webcast on rollingstone.com and beer.com, and a pay-per-view telecast on Showtime.