

BLUE...

IT'S

THE

NEW

GREEN.



**WATER.** Nearly 70% of the Earth's surface is covered with it. The blue of our water mass is so expansive that Earth is known as the Blue Planet. Even now, NASA and others are searching the galaxy for signs of life. What are they looking for? Water. For life, there must be water.



## “Water water everywhere, nor any a drop to drink...”

Of all that water covering so much of the Earth’s surface, only 2.5 % of it is fresh... and only 1% of fresh water (that’s a whopping .025% of the water covering the Earth) is readily available for human consumption. For many of us, potable water is no further away than the nearest tap. Yet, still, we’ve experienced an explosive growth in “clean water” consumption, prompting us to reach for bottled water to quench our thirsts. This lust for bottled water has had a heavy impact on our environment. Beyond the petroleum needed to create the plastic bottles, water’s substantial weight means more oil is burned transporting the bottles. Worse still, only one in five of these bottles is recycled. And it’s not just landfills that these discarded bottles are clogging up. In 2007, marine biologists discovered the “Great Pacific Garbage Patch,” a massive flotilla of garbage in a no man’s land between San Francisco and Hawaii. Comprised of over 80% plastic, this toxic stew is currently twice the size of Texas... and it’s growing. So when we talk about Earth’s survival, it’s not just about the greening of our planet... it’s about preserving and caring for the blue – the waters of our world upon which the Blue Planet thrives.



## Water ReDesigned™

KOR Water, Inc. had a dream they called “Water ReDesigned™.” In truth, their goal was not to literally redesign water. There were already plenty of designer waters clogging up supermarket shelves and far too many discarded water bottles filling up landfills. What KOR sought to redesign was the experience of staying hydrated.

In 2005, when the dream first began, KOR realized there was a perfect storm brewing in the distance. This mounting wave was fed by three sources: the increasing need for design to differentiate product offerings; the building awareness the dangers of Bisphenol-A, a chemical found in bottles made with polycarbonate; and the growing backlash created by the massive waste from discarded water bottles. KOR envisioned a flagship product designed to ride this building wave of consumer demand by creating a reusable water bottle as cool and inspirational as it was healthy and environmentally sound. Indeed, the three pillars of KOR Water – Design, Health, and Sustainability – are perfectly matched to the sources of this growing need for a breakthrough product that would make using reusable bottles a rewarding and empowering experience.



## The Ritual of Hydration

KOR appreciated the use of high design as a market differentiator, so after considering several other top design firms, KOR hired RKS to make their vision a reality. KOR sought to satisfy customers' emotional needs by providing a hydration experience that made them feel better about themselves. This understanding of the power of the emotional connection between consumers and products dovetails perfectly with the RKS mantra, "It's not how you feel about the design or experience... it's how it makes you feel about yourself." With this guiding principle, RKS used the Psycho-Aesthetics® design strategy to uncover unmet emotional needs and to determine essential elements of the ritual of hydration. Insights developed through the Psycho-Aesthetics strategy set the stage for the development of a design that would make users feel like Heroes for discovering a better, purer way to rehydrate. These heroic evangelists, in turn, are the fire-starters that ignite the kind of viral demand that builds brands and creates category ownership.



## Setting the Bar High

One of the top priorities for the KOR ONE was durability – bottle materials and construction had to support a long product life to be in keeping with KOR’s pillar of sustainability. The bottle had to be made of materials that were as healthy for consumers as they were for the environment. The product had to be easy to drink from and have a “big gulp” feature to allow a high-volume, thirst-quenching flow. The bottle had to be easy to refill from a sink, a refrigerator, or a water cooler. The cap had to offer one-handed operation and be impossible to lose. All these features and more had to be delivered in an eye-catching package that appealed to consumers seeking a luxury product to elevate their lifestyle. Buying the final product should make consumers feel good on at least three levels... they’re doing something healthy for themselves, they’re doing the right thing for the planet, and they’re treating themselves to a premium product they can be proud to display in their homes, in their offices, and on the road.



# BPA-free

## The Tritan™ Connection

One of the biggest factors in making the KOR ONE a reality was the choice of materials. Materials used in the KOR bottle would have to be healthful, durable, and safe. The polycarbonates used in most reusable bottles contain Bisphenol-A (BPA). More and more studies are linking BPA to potentially harmful hormone disruptions. Glass doesn't carry the risk of BPA exposure, but it breaks easily. Aluminum doesn't break, but it's been linked to health problems including Alzheimer's.

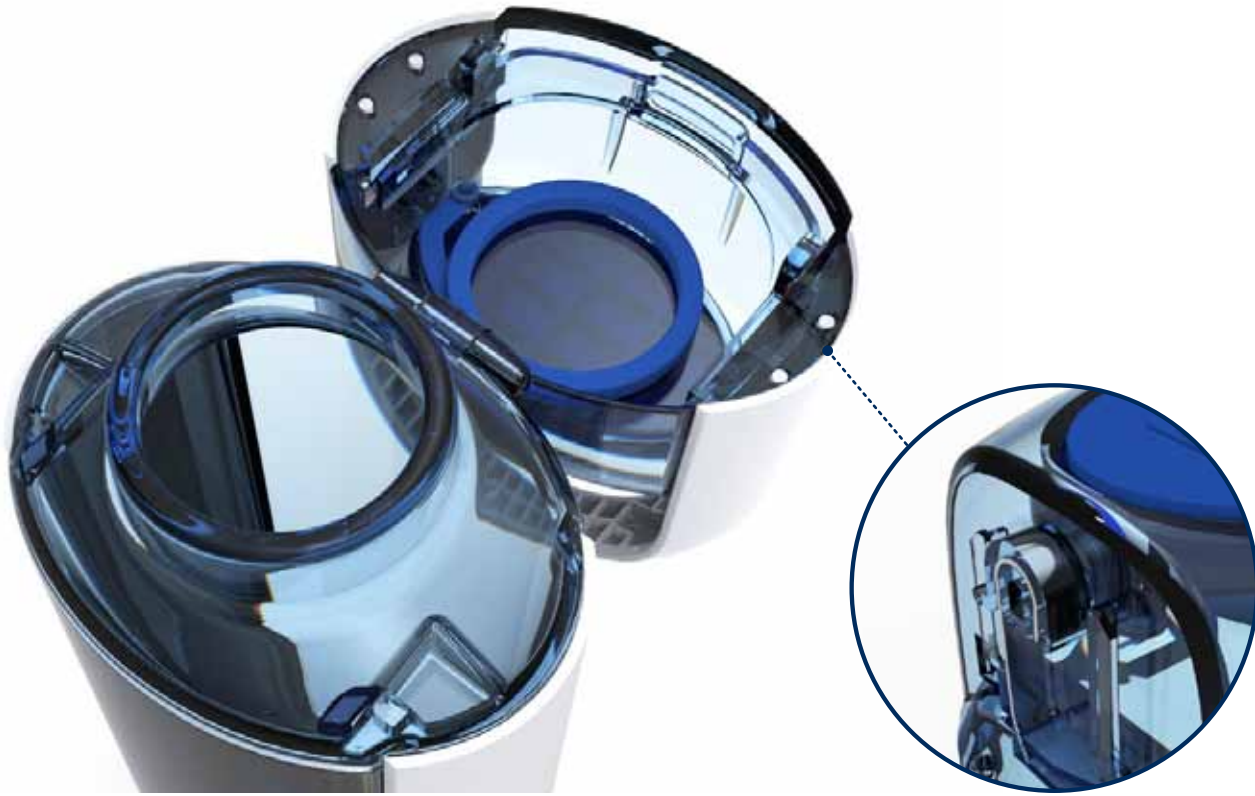
While creating the RKS Guitar series, RKS developed a relationship with Eastman Chemical Company. RKS contacted Eastman to see if they had any viable alternatives to polycarbonate. Instead of a definitive no, the answer was more of a, "Not yet." Eastman had been quietly developing a new plastic which had a rich feel, terrific clarity, and could handle variable wall thicknesses. This versatile, plastic was extremely impact resistant, could be used in molds designed for polycarbonate and would be dishwasher safe. Best of all, it was BPA-free. Eastman Tritan™ copolyester debuted in time to become a key part of the KOR ONE development. Tritan's feel and clarity promised to deliver the premium luxury perception KOR required. Combined with its other features and BPA-free quality, this meant Tritan was the ideal choice for KOR's new bottle.



## Engineering Ingenuity

KOR selected RKS for more than just their award-winning track record of creating beautiful designs. KOR knew RKS was also known for creating innovative, well-engineered solutions, enhancing functionality, and heightening consumer experiences. These results are achieved by RKS design and engineering teams working hand-in-hand from the inception of every project. A great design simply isn't great if it's not manufacturable. Beauty has little use without functionality, and, when compared to competitive offerings, KOR wanted to improve functionality across the board. Two of the biggest challenges were determining the ideal size of the mouthpiece and the operation of the cap.

The spout or mouthpiece of a water bottle is the single, most key point of user interaction. If it's too small, water must be sucked or squeezed from the bottle or a secondary vent must be used to allow the water to flow freely. If the mouthpiece is too large, it becomes more difficult to drink while moving... and, in the extreme, you end up with a "dribble glass." The challenge was to determine an ideal mouthpiece size that was easy to drink from, would allow venting to happen above the user's lip, and provided room for the addition of ice cubes. Through extensive testing, RKS determined the ideal size and shape for the mouthpiece.



## Intuitive, One-handed Operation

Most competitor bottles use a screw top, requiring one hand to hold the bottle while the other loosens the top. KOR wanted intuitive, one-handed operation and a worry-free cap that users wouldn't have to be concerned about losing. After extensive feasibility testing in their in-house model shop, RKS developed a lid with an innovative latch mechanism. With just the press of a thumb, the latch releases, freeing the lid to hinge back and stay put to give clear, unobstructed access to the mouthpiece. When the lid is flipped closed, the latch automatically resets. The soft, built-in gasket keeps the bottle securely sealed even when the KOR ONE is lying flat on a table or in a bag.

Today, a key element in raising perceived value is the elimination of any screws that detract from the design. To do this, the RKS engineering team designed the pieces of the KOR ONE to fit together like a Chinese puzzle. The body of the vessel is a single, molded piece of Tritan. The trim pieces snap securely onto the bottle, and are locked into place when the bottle top is fixed into place. RKS, KOR, and Eastman all worked closely with manufacturing partner Nypco to eliminate the "gate" or notch in the center of the vessel's bottom. Normally, the gate is located in the center to optimize the flow of plastic. "We moved the gate off to the side because they wanted the bottom to be clear and crystal-like," says Kurt Botsai, RKS Project Manager. This was just one of many ways that the partners worked together to ensure that the final product lived up to the design's promise.



## More than Just “A Bottle”

While the old adage, “beauty is in the eye of the beholder” certainly is grounded in truth, anyone would be hard-pressed to consider the competitive landscape for reusable water bottles and find they hold much beauty. As a group, they exhibit basic functionality and little more. While the KOR ONE design always keeps functionality and ease of use in mind, the obelisk shape was chosen to elevate the experience of drinking water. The KOR ONE is more than just “a bottle,” it’s a Hydration Vessel. Eastman Tritan’s rich tactile properties and glass-like clarity help to enhance the perceived value of the water, the bottle, and the experience. Ultimately, a translucent pure blue was chosen for the body of the vessel. With a subtle tint of clear blue beach glass, polished by years in the sea, the vessel has a luminous quality that celebrates the purity of water within. The trim of the KOR ONE frames the vessel, treating it like a piece of art the user can be proud to display on their kitchen counter or on their office desk. The final frame treatment is of a semi-translucent white that evokes a glacier like quality – liquid water surrounded by the most pure ice found in nature.

The frame extends above the cap to provide additional points of engagement. Having observed that people often carry water bottles by grasping them from the top, the designers created openings in the frame that provide finger holds, making the KOR ONE easy to handle even when your hands are full. Just loop a finger through the top, and you’re good to go.



»The KOR One is one of the few reusable water bottles that fits ice cubes.

## The KOR Stone™

A surprise feature is hidden within the cap of the KOR ONE. A clear window inside the lid is designed to hold a KOR Stone. Designed to be seen only by the user, KOR Stones are small, round pieces printed with an affirmation chosen by the user. The idea of this private affirmation is to empower users to shape their own hydration experience by using the rituals of hydration to remind them of their goals, their dreams, and their purpose in this world. To insert a KOR Stone, just lift the soft, flexible end cap and slip the KOR Stone into place. Several KOR Stone affirmations will come with each Hydration Vessel and personalized KOR Stones can be printed and shared through the KOR WATER website.



## The KOR ONE Hydration Vessel

The KOR name itself is a play on the word “core” – that which is essential. And little is more essential than water. For KOR and for all of us, water is the core of life.

RKS is proud to be part of the team to make the KOR ONE Hydration Vessel a reality.

According to KOR Water President and CEO, J. Eric Barnes, “We sought to create the perfect water bottle, one in which design inspires, personal health triumphs, and sustainability prevails... RKS took KOR’s concept to a new level, developing an iconic shape and functional enhancement that surpassed all expectations.”

The final result is a bottle designed to make a difference. It’s a bottle poised to help consumers make a positive change in their lives and our world. The KOR ONE Hydration Vessel not only allows consumers to embrace the idea of reuse, it elevates them through a premium, luxury experience of sustainable hydration.