

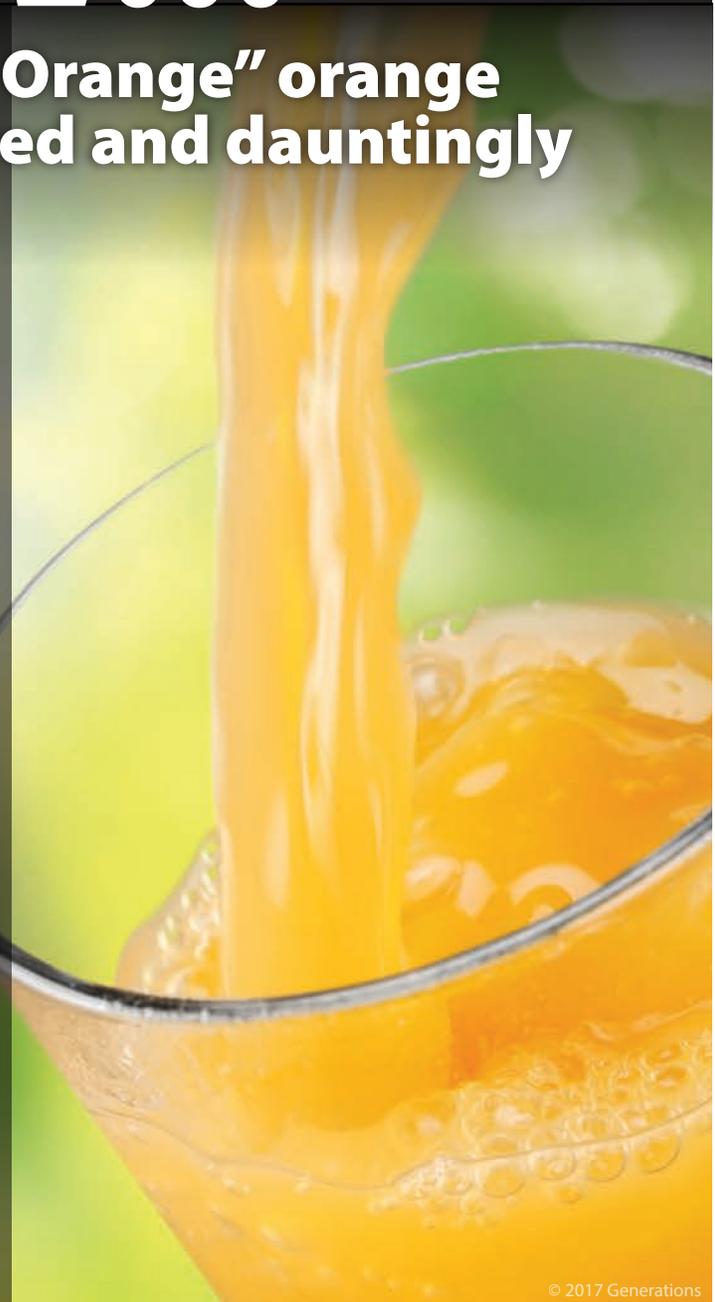
DID YOU KNOW...

that Coca-Cola's "Simply Orange" orange juice is a hyper-engineered and dauntingly industrial product?

Coca-Cola won't say how it makes its best-selling Simply Orange orange juice, but one thing is for sure: It's not so simple. A new investigation by Bloomberg Businessweek shows that the Coke-owned orange juice brand that's billed as less processed version of Tropicana is in fact a hyper-engineered and dauntingly industrial product. The factory in Florida where the bulk of Coke's orange juice products are made sounds less like a bucolic grove where natural things grow than an oil refinery where natural things go to die. And yes, that includes the "Grove Made" variety.

The explanation behind Coke's complicated new orange juice scheme is nothing short of ironic. Basically, all of their customers are realizing the soda is really bad for you, so demand is shifting to healthy -- or at least healthy-seeming -- alternatives like juice. Coke also figured out that people are willing to pay 25 percent more for juice that's not processed, that is, not made from concentrate. Enter Simply Orange. It is indeed just oranges, but boy have those oranges been through hell and back. Coke calls the process Black Book, because it won't tell anyone how it works. The consultant that designed the Black Book formula will, however.

Bob Cross of Revenue Analytics explained to Bloomberg Businessweek that Coke relies on a deeply complex algorithm for every step of the juice-making process. The algorithm is designed to accept any contingency that might affect manufacturing, from weather patterns to shifts in the global economy, and make adjustments to the manufacturing process accordingly. Built into the model is a breakdown of the 600-plus flavors that are in orange juice that are tweaked throughout the year to keep flavor consistent and in line with consumer tastes. Coke even sucks the oxygen out of the juice when they send it to be mixed so that they can keep it around for a year or more to balance out other batches. Doug Bippert, Coke's vice president of business acceleration, calls it "a flight simulator for [Coke's] juice business." (Funnily enough Delta uses the same algorithm to balance its books.) "If we have a hurricane or a freeze," Bippert added, "we can quickly replan the business in 5 or 10 minutes just because we've mathematically modeled it." We call it deceitfully industrial, especially for a product called Simply Orange.



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www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2013/01/who-wants-nice-tall-glass-coca-colas-algorithmic-orange-juice/318760/