

Royal Crown Cola

As a grocery wholesaler, Claud A. Hatcher purchased a large volume of Coca-Cola syrup from the local company salesman. Hatcher felt that the company deserved a special reduced price since it purchased such large volumes. A bitter conflict between the two erupted. Hatcher said he would win the battle by never purchasing any more Coca-Cola, and he determined to develop his own soft drink formula. He started developing products in the basement of the store with a recipe for ginger ale.

Hatcher launched the Union Bottling Works in his family's grocery store. The first product in the Royal Crown line was Royal Crown Ginger Ale in 1905, followed by Royal Crown Strawberry, and Royal Crown Root Beer. The company was renamed Chero-Cola in 1910, and in 1925 renamed Nehi Corporation after its colored and flavored drinks. In 1934, Chero-Cola was reformulated by Rufus Kamm, a chemist (and my hero!), and re-released as Royal Crown Cola.

In the 1950s, Royal Crown Cola and moon pies were a popular "working man's lunch" in the American South. In 1954, Royal Crown was the first company to sell soft drinks in a can, and later the first company to sell a soft drink in an aluminum can.

In 1958, the company introduced the first diet cola, Diet Rite, and in 1980, a caffeine-free cola, RC 100. In the mid-1990s, RC released Royal Crown Draft Cola, billed as a "premium" cola using pure cane sugar as a sweetener, rather than high fructose corn syrup. Offered only in 12-ounce bottles, sales were disappointing, due largely to the inability of the RC bottling network to get distribution for the product in single-

drink channels, and it was discontinued with the exceptions of Australia, New Zealand and France. It was later available only in New Zealand, parts of Australia, Thailand, and Tajikistan. The company also released Cherry RC to compete with Cherry Coke and Wild Cherry Pepsi.

In 1984, RC Cola accounted for approximately 4-5% of soft drink sales in the United States, behind only Coke, Pepsi, Dr. Pepper, and Seven Up.

In October 2000, Royal Crown was acquired by Cadbury (then Cadbury Schweppes) through its acquisition of Snapple. Royal Crown operations were subsequently folded into Dr Pepper Snapple Group, which was spun off from Cadbury in 2008. DPSG merged with Keurig Green Mountain in 2018 as Keurig Dr Pepper, the current owners of the RC Cola brand.

In 2001, all non-US RC-branded businesses were sold to Cott Beverages of Mississauga, Ontario, Canada, and are operated as Royal Crown Cola International, which handles RC Cola products outside the United States. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RC_Cola]

