

Focus on technologies and materials for finishing

“Trendy” surface finishing, carried out with sophisticated and innovative technologies, is the key to success for “made in Italy” in order to conquer market shares despite the difficult situation stemmed from the crisis. A beauty to invent and to protect, with the right wrapping.

Surface finishing – for panels and not only – represents one of the most important challenges that companies have to face to increase their business and product competitiveness; the final quality you can feel and touch, resistant and long lasting, in line with design trends is the key factor that is increasingly making the difference in the “made in Italy” market, at national level as well as abroad. For this reason manufacturing companies, from small-medium businesses to big groups, continue to invest in the evolution of technologies and in the performance of the equipment – that have to ensure the maximum flexibility of use for smaller and smaller batches; and, above all, companies have to face a difficult economic and credit situation slowing down the pace of the Italian wood industry.

Problems concerning surfaces do not finish with painting and processing such as cleaning, smoothing, polishing and buffing, but they also include **packaging** systems and processes. Indeed, besides offering protection to the piece during handling and transportation, they are leveraged to rationalize the final stage of the machining process.

INNOVATION IN SYNERGY

With a portfolio of five industry-leading brands – **Cefla Finishing**, Delle Vedove, Düspohl, Falcioni and Sorbini – and a production and sales presence at global level, Cefla Finishing Group, based in Imola, near Bologna, can offer the widest range of plants and machines for painting, decorating and coating wood and other materials including glass, plastics, metals, fibre cement and composites. The starting point is finishing quality, ensuring perfect con-

FURNITURE MAKES UP TO COMPETE



Barbara Ricci Petitioni, communication manager of Cefla Finishing Group in Imola (Bologna), with Riccardo Quattrini, new general manager of Cefla Finishing Group.

sistency and repeatability, long-lasting features and resistance against foreign elements. The goal is the capacity to meet the requirements of an evolving market - strongly downsized in Europe and in the United States while growing in emerging Bric countries (Brazil, Russia, India and China).

And the manufacturer has clear ideas. *"Finishing and decoration are the most important processes for panel machining and they significantly influence purchase decisions carried out by the final user according to tactile feelings, colors and unlimited possibilities of final result. Today flexibility is the key word*



Views of the testing laboratory at Cefla Finishing used for painting tests on customer products.



for manufacturers, without forgetting the quality of the finished product; respecting the environment of course", said **Barbara Ricci Petitioni**, communication manager. *"Today the market has radically changed and our customer can produce in a very flexible way, with lower costs and less associated resources but, above all, obtaining a high quality finished product".*

Developing constant research activity on product improvement is vital. *"According to us innovation is an integrated business process, that we are implementing with the cooperation of universities and research centers. The combination of the different company specializations of Cefla Finishing Group and constant research allow us to constantly offer new products meeting customer requirements".*

A "GREEN" BRAND FOR PAINTING

Painting lines for doors and windows, chairs and tables equipped with spraying robots and electrostatic spraying units represent the specialization product range of **Finiture**, based in Saonara (Padua), a historical company founded in late Fifties with a customer target ranging from small manufacturers to organizations. The new frontier for 2012 is environmental sustainability, thanks to the renovation of all the production line in order to reduce energy consumption significantly, and the application of the "Green Impact" brand on all manufactured plants.



Matteo Baruzzo.

An evolution that has to face a strongly differentiated market between Italy and foreign countries, not only because of the crisis.

"Up to three, four years ago, Italian joiners equipped themselves exceedingly from a technological point of view, starting from doors and windows manufacturers, and today they can leverage systems ensuring performance higher than their needs", explained **Matteo Baruzzo**, marketing manager. *"The situation is different on a global scale; manufacturers are equipping themselves right now and they are investing also in years of economic difficulties".*



Finiture facility in Saonara (Padua).



Giardina production facility in Figino Serenza (Como).

In 2011 the export value of Finiture has represented 90-95 per cent, with a market including Germany, Northern Countries, France and United Kingdom; interesting also South-America, Eastern Asia and China, mainly for chair processing. Expectations for 2012 are similar.

“Demand is always looking for different products as to colors, thus painting lines must be very flexible and manage orders that are different one from the other. For this reason we need plants allowing a quick color change reducing drying times in order to ensure also the management of small batches”. Up to 6-8 years ago we were looking at productivity, today we focus on flexibility and speed. “In the past very quick products with several spraying units were requested; today the number of spraying guns has been reduced using multiple axis robots, slower but – as in electrostatic plants – ensuring higher painting saving and quick color change”.

PASSION BEATS CRISIS

Passion for work and winning intuitions boosting market expansion are the best recipe against the crisis according to **Mauri Macchine**, a company based in Cermenate (Como) that has been producing spraying painting lines for wood since 1972, operating in the furniture, profile and construction industries. With eighty percent of export, the solution range includes complete spraying and painting plants for profiles with standard paints and also with Uv and water-based paints, spraying and drying lines for panels, special plants for painting chairs, beams, windows, turned pieces and pressurized painting cabins.

In 2004 the company grasped the first big growth opportunity, that is the takeover of Ventilazione Italiana; in 2010, with other two partners, it also ac-



Mauri Macchine facility located in Cermenate (Como).

quired **Giardina**, into liquidation. *“Everybody was thinking we had gone crazy – said **Giampiero Mauri**, president – but this has been a turning point decision for Giardina is now recording good economic results in its market just one year after the relaunch”.* Mauri Macchine, 26 employees, is specializing in all the field of painting and automation for wood, from big plants for wooden components for the construction industry up to small robots for handicraft company; production to order accounts for 90 per cent. Giardina production, 30 employees, is based on plants for series production in the parquet and panel industries, leveraging also the huge professional experience of former employees rehired by the new management. The complementary approach between companies allows to meet – according to Mauri – all the requirements of the wood market, together with a wide-spectrum service to the customer. The next step is the strengthening of the work in synergy: *“We develop all our projects with the support of a testing room to carry out tests on machines and also thanks to constant cooperation with paint manufacturers: this allows us to define the best technology at the lowest price for each customer”.*

INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY WITH NEW TECHNOLOGIES

Emc based in Imola (Bologna) produces sanding-smoothing machines and polishing, buffing, sanding machines with automatic feed. Central process stages for panel finishing. Machine technology evolution goes hand in hand with market evolution and meets – also during the economic crisis – requirements for high quality finishing, great flexibility in the production and attention to “trendy” aesthetics in furniture design.

*“The latest trend is brushed glossy, where painted surfaces are first polished and then “brightened up” through abrasive brushes”, explained **Ivano Coveri**, owner. The new “passing technology” allows to produce more with a reduced footprint: “We have been the first to produce innovative machines without fixed bed and tra-*



Ivano Coveri.

versing heads but, on the contrary, heads are fixed and the piece is in motion. In this way production is three times higher with a reduced footprint plant inside the



The entrance of Emc in Imola (Bologna).



Indoor view of Emc facility in Imola (Bologna).

facility. We have installed 20-25 machines with these features all over the world in a four year period”.

Emc exports account for 70-75 percent of the total, with a good sales presence in consolidated countries such as France, and in emerging countries including Poland and Turkey. In Italy, Emc is positioned in the medium-high end of the market and it works for subcontractors cooperating with important kitchen manufacturers; an industry where finishing is one of the basic aspects characterizing the global quality of the product.

“The evolution of the market for finishing will be increasingly split in two segments, with a low and very low market end which will continue to grow and a high-end which will grow as well, but slowly, while the medium end will lose its importance”. Emc has 22 employees. Expectations for the next few months remain uncertain. “In the global scenario of historical markets we do not see new opportunities due to current socioeconomic situations. In emerging countries we are subject to the competitiveness of local manufacturers that leverage a very competitive price”.

PROTECTION AT HIGH SPEED

The packaging of the finished product – from the panel to assembled furniture – is often considered as a “standalone” stage, of secondary importance as compared to the functions of a complex production line; in fact it is a strategic step that can improve the effectiveness of a production process.

Cpc, based in Crespellano (Bologna), brand of the **Scm Group**, is specializing in the processing of complete packaging and palletizing lines, assembling and buffer plants, automatic packaging



Andrea Vignocchi.

solutions with die-cut cardboard, with stretchable and thermo-shrinking polyethylene as well as assembling narrow lines for furniture, furniture doors and drawers.

"The market is rather stagnant, but there are positive signs for markets such as Russia, China and Brazil. Italy and Europe are full areas", explained Andrea Vignocchi, product and sales manager of Cpc-Scm Group. "We export 60 percent of our production, and in 2012 we might reach 70 percent taking into account markets including North Africa, Middle East and Eastern Europe".

Talking about packaging in the furniture industry, the most significant problems include surface protection, quick application times with automated systems and the need for customized packaging solutions for different orders and products that are difficult to standardize.

"Packaging solutions with thermo-shrinking polyethylene meet all three requirements because they are more flexible and suitable for packaging pieces – assembled or not – with different sizes". Even if technologies are changing: "the current trend is towards cardboard, influenced by the spreading of furniture kits. It is however bound to standard measures, to the presence of operators at the machine and to a larger working space. Considering the demand, we have enhanced the automation of the lines according to customer's requests". Non-functional packaging can lead to bottleneck slowing down the machining process. "It is often an underestimated stage but it influences production efficiency for 20 percent". ■



Packaging of furniture components with Cpc-Scm Group technology.

OFFICINE NERLI FOR BRUSHED BRIGHT GLOSSY PAINTS

Nerli (www.nerli.it) produces on its own design technologies for furniture finishing and execution of a complete cycle for brushed glossy paints at the highest level with special **sanding machines**, new concept brushing machines "**Grotos**" and polishing machines for kitchens, wardrobes, doors, musical instruments and others with finishing on polyurethane and polyester, glossy, opaque and transparent paints, wengè, zebrano, walnut Daniela, bleached and coloured durmast and others.

The new brushing machine "**Grotos 18000**" gives the paints the best finishing with high gloss brightness, without scratches or damaging of the outside edges of panels thanks to the newest and innovative technologies that allow to machine paints with the highest softness: with two combined, contemporary and adjustable rotating motions and rotation reversal the highest brightness is obtained. Nerli transversal sanding machines are specifically manufactured to carry out the sanding of panels to be polished besides other kind of workings on wood and paints. In fact, any top quality polishing can be obtained without a perfect and soft sanding, especially if directly compared with finishing without shadings and undulations or if tested against the light with "**mirror effect**".

Nerli also produces modular wide upper belt sanding machines equipped with the newest innovations and special heads for super finishing. ■



"Grotos 18000".



Sanding line "Corian".