



## GIANLUCA BERNARDINI, SALES AREA MANAGER GIARDINAGROUP

**"WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND WHAT WILL HAPPEN..."**

"As far as I have to premise that, due to the limitations due to "Covid-19", I was unable to travel in 2020 and "to touch", but the woodworking market is regaining **strength**. In China, the recovery has already begun in the middle of the year, investments have been measured, perhaps not as much as could have been expected the previous year, more targeted and more aimed to the internal market, but they have been there.

2020 was not an easy year of course. We were forced into a break by global lockdowns. We have always tried to enter into **new agreements**, to expand our network of contacts, but – as you can imagine – it is not easy having to rely solely on "digital" contact, especially in a market like the Chinese one that requires a strong "live presence" and a relationship of trust based on looking each other in the face and shaking hands. **Chinese customers are very careful**, it is not easy to establish bonds of trust in standard conditions, through a screen it is even more complicated.

With what we have faced in the last year, it is premature to have expectations for 2021, we must travel on sight and wait to understand the developments of the pandemic. The hope is to be able to return to normal, return to travel, to meet new potential partners in person. The latest news is not encouraging, as new outbreaks have erupted in China. The authorities have taken steps to contain them, but it will be necessary to understand what will happen and if, consequently, customs will still be kept closed, almost totally limiting travel from

abroad. We will see if the vaccination campaigns reduce tensions". "The markets of Southeast Asia have always been quite fluctuating and have alternated periods of expansion and periods of contraction

in very short periods. The Chinese market is certainly the driving force for the woodworking sector. It is the **locomotive market** and also attracts the others, even those a little more "static" like the Korean or Japanese one. As I said, it is not a simple market. There are many challenges dictated by the legislative differences between one region and another that make it possible to depend heavily on the choices of local authorities. When a foreign investor chooses to invest in China he is aware of this.

By virtue of fierce competition, in some segments the aim is for complex solutions that require superior experience and technologies and opting for **European technologies and manufacturers**, while "entry level" solutions are also sought on the domestic market. It is difficult to say how long this European supremacy will remain. Local producers are acquiring know-how and the gap tends to close".

"The trade fairs in China were also held in 2020, albeit postponed as in the case of Ciff Guangzhou and the turnout in proportion at the time was good, but they were greatly affected by the **absences** of exhibitors and foreign visitors. We will see what happens for the next editions". ■

