

InnoLite, advanced folding step technology for vans

At the Salone del Camper in Parma, Davide Nardini talks about InnoLite for the Fiat Ducato and Mercedes Sprinter, and the future of Project2000 with its recent entry in the large American group Lippert.

Words Giorgio Carpi



Davide Nardini
 Director & CEO

The electric slide-out folding step introduced in the new Project2000 product line is much lighter than its predecessors. In fact, it is 80% made up of special plastic components, and 20% aluminium and stainless steel. The innovative system that combines these three materials is the result of extensive research and testing that have led to the creation of a high quality product that is corrosion proof, highly resistant and extremely light. The 12V motor is shielded from incoming splashes of water by a built-in thermal protection. A patented special scrolling guide

allows for smooth frictionless motion, even after a prolonged period of inactivity. The platform is made of anodized aluminium, with a non-slip rubber profile and no water stagnation areas. Opening time is 2.5 seconds and power absorption just 2.5 A. Davide Nardini, the fiery founder and CEO of Project2000 personally illustrated in detail the innovative features introduced with this product: "InnoLite was designed to be very light and provide rigidity and mechanical strength specifications that offer improved resistance to environmental conditions and wear," explains Nardini. "It is a product that is prone to dirt depositing easily, which is why we designed it so that the moving parts remain dirt free, and any dirt is expelled during the step's movement. In addition, the step's internal parts are made of a plastic material to prevent corrosion. InnoLite

comes in three different sizes: 440, 550 and 700 millimeters. Currently, for the Van sector, this type of step is ideal and is the most popular on the market. The 700 mm model is the one most suited to recreational use. On motorhome vans especially, the door aperture area is instead occupied by furniture or kitchen utilities: the other measurements, especially the 550 and 700 mm versions by InnoLite will certainly be capable of satisfying any needs on any vehicle. Lastly, we put as much effort into the product's looks as we did in its technology," continues Davide Nardini. "In fact, the door on the Fiat Ducato has a black plastic stripe about 20 cm high, and Project2000 reiterated this aesthetic motif on the sub-chassis step joint. With this aesthetic detail, the step is less noticeable and is more ideally integrated with the vehicle's looks."



The dinette bed with the slatted base



Project 2000 presents a folding bench that can turn into a double bed with slatted base. Developed together with manufacturer Trigano S.p.A, this new bench is built into the dinette with opposing seats. When closed, it offers a comfortable travel seat, also thanks to the slats lending appropriate support to the weight of the occupant. When opened, it connects to the fixed bench opposite, creating a comfy slatted bed in a few seconds.



In terms of user safety, an issue that is always of foremost importance in the design of each Project2000 product, InnoLite can be managed by an on/off switch when needed, or slaved to an electronic control unit. "If the step is configured and connected to the electronic control unit, it automatically recoils back in if it encounters any obstacle in its movement, with an "open step" sensor," explains Nardini. "An optional accessory is available which connects the step's opening and closing with that of the cabin door. An emergency device for the system's use is located underneath the operating mechanism, via a release and movement screw, in the event of a malfunction, even in manual mode. With a little inconvenience, users can still serenely make the most of their vacation, with access to their motorhome guaranteed, and postponing repairs at a qualified service center when they get back."

Concerning the recent merger of Project2000 with the large American group Lippert, Davide Nardini is very clear and enthusiastic: "Project2000 has been part of the American group Lippert for four months now, and our growth and development goals have been plainly outlined. Project2000 gets things done right: design and innovation, translating the needs of users into ideas, and subsequently into useful and highly successful products. This

important merger will allow Project2000 to further relaunch this long-standing objective. This great opportunity that has been created also includes the development of new commercial and research activities. First and foremost, the introduction of new products and technologies from the United States, through the broad Lippert range, for the European OEM market. Project2000 will

act as a go-between with manufacturers on our continent in introducing knowhow and the necessary servicing for European manufacturers regarding new products. We're confident that our experience and the historic feedback from our customer base will allow us to sustain this process towards further innovation, leading to excellent results in new industry sectors over time."



Company Profile

Project 2000 was founded in 1995 by Davide Nardini and his wife Susanna Azzolini after an experience in his motorhome when he felt the need for a more functional living space access step. Nardini shortly went on to design a more efficient motorised step that was quickly adopted by European caravan manufacturers. Over the years, Project 2000's steps have evolved to become a mainstay of the European market and opened the way to even more innovative products. The company started to manufacture TV mountings in 2000, and in 2004 dedicated themselves to producing a high-quality bed lifting and lowering system for saving space. Project 2000 has designed and patented the electronic bed lifting and lowering device: the model 12600. Unlike others, which only motorised the pantograph mechanisms, in 2004 the Calenzano-based company presented a system employing side columns to achieve fluidity and stability. This resulted in the most versatile and flexible system on the market today (Art 12600), installed entirely beneath the bed base and which only requires four belts to be anchored to the wall or ceiling. This device obtained an international patent in 2011. In May 2016 Lippert Components, Inc. (LCI®), a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Drew Industries Incorporated group (NYSE: DW), bought Project 2000 S.r.l.

