



Goal achieved: it's time to reboot

The new manufacturing lines have reached peak capacity by now, enabling the production of 120 meters of reels with an improved quality of the laminates. And now they are thinking of transferring this technology also to other departments. The company is 100% operational, despite the Covid-19 emergency.

Words Andrea Cattaneo

Already operational for the past few months, the new production wing of Vetroresina Spa is reaping several benefits in terms of quality and quantities. And if on one hand it's true that the Covid-19 emergency has forced business to halt in the camper industry, it is likewise true that the recovery can kick-off with momentum. So much so that the positive results achieved with the new manufacturing lines could act as a stimulus towards technological innovation throughout the company.

"Since April 2019 we have started production of the new industrial shed", Simone Colombarini, President of Vetroresina SpA, tells us, "and we thus have been able to capitalize on the three years spent between design and preparation. The new wing hosts four production lines, each 120 meters long, where we use a technology with a higher level of automation, thanks to the installation of new machinery for the distribution of the fiberglass and gelcoat. We have succeeded in cutting down on waste and in overall improving the product to the company's advantage".

Thanks to the new production lines we manufacture fiberglass laminates in 120-meter reels, while the standard production previously was 60 reels. The increase in length is an added benefit for the customer because it helps cut down on scraps in the cutting phase of boards used for the construction of vehicle walls, roofs, and floors. With the new machinery, Vetroresina Spa was able to further improve

the laminates, which have standardized thicknesses and better dimensional tolerances. The manufacturing process is automated and no longer manual as it was hitherto: digitally controlled machines take care of applying the resin and gelcoat, allowing the accurate and uniform distribution of the material. We were also able to install





a machine that allows us to check the quality before applying the protective coating.

Vetroresina Spa, therefore, reaffirms its status as one of the biggest manufacturers of fiberglass laminates worldwide. Thanks to the new lines, the manufacturing plant can now produce more than 6 million square meters of boards per year, with an increase of about 20%.

"The excellent results achieved", claims Simone Colombarini, "have convinced us to extend this technology also to other parts of the manufacturing plant where we still work using traditional technology. We would like to build a new production wing, in order to have 8 new manufacturing lines by the end of the year. In this department, we will be applying the new technology but will not reach 120 meters of reels, stopping at 60. Except for the waste reduction, we will have the same improvements witnessed with the recently activated production lines".

Handling the Covid-19 emergency

Like all businesses, Italian and foreign too, Vetroresina Spa has had to deal with the Covid-19 emergency. Offices and production departments remained closed only for a few days; the regulatory provisions introduced by the Italian Government have allowed a manufacturing business like Vetroresina Spa to continue its production by adopting certain precautionary measures.

"We have started to apply the measures in order to lower the risks of contagion even before the Government decided to issue a regulatory ordinance that would clarify the situation", says Simone Colombarini, President of Vetroresina Spa, "and were thus able to continue to work, except for a period of 10 days of complete production shutdown. In the offices and in the production departments, we organized work in shifts in order to limit the presence of employees together in one area at the same time and imposed social distancing safety distances. We have been handling goods loading and unloading while privileging safety, hence carriers have realized that they are not facing any added risk. In essence, we have put into practice all those measures that ensure a high level of quality and quantity even in the midst of the emergency. We didn't leave any client behind and are currently working at 100% of our production capacity, so as to guarantee timely supplies to the various constructors even in the present difficult situation. It's not easy to make forecasts for the European camper industry but there is no doubt in my mind that this year, new vehicle registrations will experience a drop. It's inevitable, but the downturn will be followed by a recovery during which we may experience surges in demand even



Mass reduction

Vetroresina Spa is developing materials and technologies to reduce the weight of the fiberglass boards. We made the announcement already two years ago and meanwhile continued our research.

"We went ahead with the studies", says Simone Colombarini, President of Vetroresina SpA, "in collaboration with one of our partners, a major fiberglass manufacturer. The weight reduction goal is within our reach and we may be ready for the market in just a few months. We've created some prototypes, which we sent for testing to some of our customers. Depending on the type of application, we may achieve variable weight savings ranging from 8% for laminates for walls to 15% for laminates for floors. This while still preserving the product's original mechanical characteristics".

higher than before. This healthcare emergency has deeply affected the population, so I imagine an initial phase in which planning a vacation will not be a priority for most people, but after which campers will be seen as one of the safest means for enjoying a holiday".



Company Profile

Founded in 1968, Vetroresina S.p.A. produces glass fibre-reinforced polyester resin laminates. The company's great operating capacity results from thorough research in the composite materials sector linked to the study and continuous improvement of processing techniques. To maintain and increase the level of production, Vetroresina S.p.A. has planned substantial investments and thanks to the contribution of advanced technologies, as well as close collaboration with universities and experts in

the sector, it has been able to apprehend the changes in and new requirements of the market. A high level of technology together with particular attention to aesthetics and materials have given rise to product diversification, extending their range and fields of application. Vetroresina S.p.A. has a production capacity of 6 million m² / year. The main production site in Italy covers an area of 65,000 square meters, of which 36,000 are covered, and employs 140 people. In June 2000, Vetroresina

S.p.A. opened a factory in Brazil, in the municipality of São Paulo, from which it can meet the needs of the South American market, and since May 2008 the company has boasted a new production site in the USA from which it can dedicate itself to managing the North American market. Around 50 people work in the American branches.