Sophisticated technique and aesthetic research

Pierre Cibrario and Lamicolor general manager Roberto Gandino

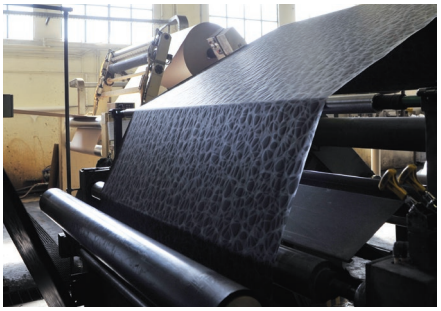
The Caravan Collection is the tool with which Lamicolor presents customers from the RV industry its new HPL laminate colours: a thorough investigation into the current trends backs the brand's new colour palette.

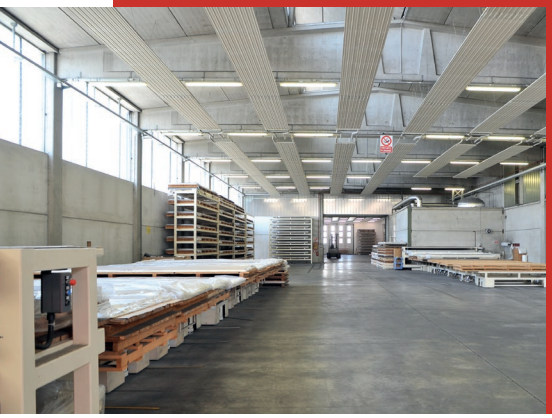
Words and photo Enrico Bona

HPL high pressure laminates are without doubt trendy products that are increasingly being extended from exclusive use in the home furniture sector to the recreational vehicles industry. Lamicolor is the leader of this particular production sector, with its laminates applied to vehicles made by the major European and Australian groups, despite the fact that the company is not a direct supplier to RV manufacturers. In order to work and stay competitive in the field of furniture design, one needs to demonstrate to customers a complete grasp of the product, and that is the result of superior quality standards and constant aesthetic research. Ongoing investments, combined with half a century of experience, have enabled Lamicolor to work to high levels and be appreciated by customers, with whom the brand communicates primarily through an instrument of fundamental importance such as the Caravan Collection. This is a catalogue created specifically for the RV sector: it is updated every year, precisely because we need to follow the latest new trends and be proactive.

"Every year, our supplier paper mills send us hundreds of proposals - states Pierre Cibrario, sales manager of Lamicolor - *and we conduct a thorough selection process: this allows us to offer laminates that are not only technically sophisticated, but also aesthetically modern and trendy. Needless to say that a spot-on choice as regards the style of furniture can make or break the success of a new model of*

motorhome or caravan".
Lamicolor performs thorough investigations into the trends in the furniture industry, and then selects certain types of decorative paper. The colour, or better the chosen shade, may in turn be teamed with various types of finishes. The Caravan Collection is split into two parts: one section contains the existing decorations in the Lamicolor collection, but there is also a very important section containing the new proposals.
Some of these decorations can be made exclusively at the customer's request.
Between November and December, Lamicolor receives the majority of proposals from paper mills, and then selects around forty of them. Some successful colours are offered repeatedly over the years: by changing the finish, for instance from glossy to matt, an existing colour can be restyled and given a new lease of life.
"The trust we establish with our customers is important - continues Pierre Cibrario - *it may seem trivial, but it isn't at all: there is trust in the choices that Lamicolor makes and which, as I said, can determine the extent of the success of a line of products. Our customers eagerly await the new proposals from the Caravan Collection, towards September-October each year, and this continued trust in us is gratifying, it rewards the considerable efforts we make".*
To achieve top quality HPL laminates, a thorough investigation of trends and the use of suitable technologies is not enough; highly specialised workers are required on the production line: there is in fact a lot of manual work because materials and colours need to be composed, and the chosen thicknesses need to be determined. The motorhome industry uses laminates with a thickness ranging from 0.8 to 1.5 millimetres. Lamicolor offers an extensive array of possible combinations: there are around 300 colours, 20 finishes, 30 thicknesses and 5 panel sizes to choose from. Each year Lamicolor produces several million square metres of laminates.





Company Profile

An Italian company with a 50-year history, Lamicolor works in the field of producing laminates for the furnishing sector. The key product is Lamco HPL, produced through high-pressure, high-temperature pressing. More than 1.5 million laminate panels come off Lamicolor production lines each year. The factory, located in lower Piedmont, can count on an area of 27,000 m², 15,000 of which is covered. 130 employees work there and the company's turnover exceeds 27 million euros. The RV sector represents about 20% of activity and involves the supply of laminates for furnishing (see the table and kitchen tops) to the biggest carpenters working in supply to European groups, joined by collaboration with Australian companies. The first product collection for the sector dates to 1998: since then, specific ranges of laminates for the sector are created every year. Lamicolor production is guaranteed by various European and international certifications, including FSC and PEFC with reference to the use of products sourced from sustainably managed forests.