LAMICOLOR®

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Artistic laminates

Lamicolor's presence in the recreational vehicles sector continues to grow: its laminates for kitchen and table tops are a hit with manufacturers throughout Europe, and are constantly updated to keep up with current fashion trends.

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Santino Chiaramello and Roberto Gandino

To a distracted observer, Lamicolor's presence in the caravanning sector might appear marginal, since it focuses solely on supplying laminates for furnishings. In fact, these laminates are far from being of secondary importance in the make-up of a motorhome or caravan's living space, with implications both from an aesthetic standpoint and in terms of the usability of furniture elements. We're referring to finishes for table tops and kitchen counters, commonly used surfaces that also have an overall aesthetic importance in the general decor.

As a manufacturer of HPL laminates (High Pressure Laminates), it is essential for Lamicolor to guarantee the product's resistance to abrasion and shocks, ensuring that it will be easy to clean – and, not least, has a trendy and attractive look that will blend in well with the rest of the interiors.

At the company's manufacturing facilities in the region of Piedmont, with an overall surface area of 12,000 square meters of covered production space, where it employs about one hundred people, every year Lamicolor produces over a million laminated panels, and the caravanning sector accounts for an important slice of its turnover, with exports making up the lion's share.

"Our first range of products for the caravanning sector dates back to 1998," explains Roberto Gandino, general manager of Lamicolor. "Since then, we've always sought to create specific product lines for the recreational vehicle segment, a market that's become strategic for us. We now operate with Europe's major groups and manufacturers, and our presence is also growing abroad."

In addition to table tops and kitchen counters, Lamicolor's laminates are also used for kitchen shelves and doors, minor details in bathrooms, and shelves in the sleeping area.

The collection of laminates specific to the sector is continuously updated, with new solutions proposed periodically to manufacturers and outfitters, including designers and architects working in the recreational vehicles sector.

Lamco HPL is a laminate created using a high pressure production process. The starting point consists of layered sheets of kraft paper that are impregnated with phenolic resins, to which a sheet of decorative paper impregnated with melamine resin is added. Quality components first and foremost, as well as a production process that combines pressure and heat, employing heat presses (90 kg/sq. cm of thrust at 150°C) in which the polymerization of the resins takes place. The result is a malleable laminate that is easy to process, but with a high degree of mechanical and chemical resistance.

An excellent product that can also count on a highly professional organizational structure, capable of managing all stages of production with expertise, from manufacturing to sales, and a customer care service that is second to none.

"We have a good product, there's no question about that, but our real strength lies in flexibility," states Santino Chiaramello, the company's sales manager, "flexibility in production, which is essential in our dealings with the world of recreational vehicles. We're capable of satisfying specific requests in just a short turnaround time. Market reactivity is one of our strengths, including

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the ability to respond quickly and professionally to customer needs, and this has enabled us to become a preferred partner of many Italian and foreign manufacturers. A production flexibility that is never separated from reliable customer service. What gives us an edge is the ability to combine quality products, planning efficiency and prompt customer response times."

This level of flexibility is well suited to quickly changing trends in furnishings for motorhomes and caravans. At one time, a marble effect was preferred for table top and kitchen laminates, or wood tints; however, in the past few years glossy effects have really taken hold, in a plain light coloured finish or with soft patterns, providing a bright ambiance and contrasting well with other parts of the furniture.

"Laminates are elements that are decided on towards the end of the design phase," continues Santino Chiaramello, "and we customarily present our collections of laminates to manufacturers a few months in advance, well before the introduction of new models. At one time, vehicle builders tended to make use of the same type of laminate of different models. Today, on the other hand, there is a need to differentiate the range, which entails a greater commitment on our part."

"We work hard to try to adapt to the whims of the designers and manufacturers we work with," says Roberto Gandino, general manager of Lamicolor. "Production has rigid parameters in terms of formats and sizes, but we're flexible in everything else. Our laminates are produced in five standard measurements, up to 160 cm in width by 420 cm in length, and the manufacturers then independently cut these sheets as required. On the other hand, for decors, tints and patterns, we can customize the product based on the customer's demands. Roughly 70% of our products are standard, but a good 30% of production is customized. With our standard products, we can even supply small series."

Quality, variety and manufacturing flexibility are therefore the primary guidelines at Lamicolor, which in maintaining its market leadership position boasts various certifications, not just on production processes and pollutant emissions, but also on energy savings and the use of timber (for paper) acquired from responsibly and sustainably managed forests.

Company Profile

Lamicolor is an Italian manufacturer specializing in the production of laminates. The company's benchmark product is Lamco HPL, created using a high pressure, high temperature pressing process. Every year, Lamicolor's production lines manufacture over 5 million square meters of laminates, of which 55% are exported. Located in southern Piedmont, the company's production site covers an overall surface area of 27,000 sq. m, including 12,000 sq. m of covered production space. Lamicolor employs 115 people, with an annual turnover of around 20 million euros. The caravanning sector accounts for an important share of the company's sales, supplying laminates for furnishings (kitchen counters and table tops) to leading European recreational vehicle manufacturers and outfitters, as well as partnerships with Australian companies. The first collection of products for the RV sector dates back to 1998: since then, specific ranges of laminates are created annually for the sector. Lamicolor's production is guaranteed by various European and international certifications, including FSC and PEFC certifications attesting to its commitment to making use of materials from sustainably managed forests.