

The strength of ideas

According to the best Italian tradition, inspiration and creativity are at the roots of the Project 2000 success, which has grown steadily over twenty years: first as a steps producer, then as a folding beds manufacturer and today as a successful global project partner.

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Exactly twenty years ago Project 2000 started an adventure which, at the beginning at least, few would have bet on. All began in 1995 with only a small office and little else, except for a strong idea and the iron will to implement it. So much good will, so much passion, many hopes and few certainties. Behind it all, therefore, only an extraordinary idea: a retractable, automatic step. An idea born from direct life experience, because during their first camper trip, Davide Nardini and his wife Susanna Azzolini forgot the step open and collided with a tree. A few months later Davide and Susanna made up their mind: they would create a forgetfulness-proof step, which could automatically retract. Designed, built, perfected and even patented, the step model n. 10570 (currently in production) was based on a mechanism consisting of two rods that allow the translation of the first step under the second one and then the whole system roll-over under the camper floor. Mobilvetta was the first company that believed in Project 2000, and then many other came, even though it should not be overlooked the considerable success achieved in the aftermarket.

The retractable steps production became an important business, with an extensive product catalogue, which has resulted in a constant updating of the production mechanisms and methods. In the latest models, the withdrawal and extension mechanism is no longer based on translation rails, but on hinges, while the footboards are non-slip anodized aluminum -



made. The cold dip galvanizing process and painting offers a high degree of resistance, even to salt-fog, with a coefficient comparable to the hot-dip galvanizing's. However, what turned Project 2000 into a large company is the dynamism that made the owners consider other items, even very different from the steps. While remaining tied to recreational vehicle industry, Project 2000 has substantially widened its horizons as well as its activities scope. A first step in that direction was made between 2004 and 2007, with the creation of a line of metal brackets for TV sets (to be inserted in a wall or in a cabinet), and rear beds handling systems, able to vary the height of the garage below. Today the TV brackets are being produced at a rate of 40,000 units per year, making the Project 2000 the undisputed leader in this interesting market niche.

But that's not the whole story: in 2009, the company guided by Davide Nardini took on a new challenge that would have a really happy outcome: the movement system of the folding front bed was born. It would be improved many times over a six years period, which goes beyond the traditional pantograph systems. In 2011, a special division aimed at the folding beds'



bedsprings production was created with the purpose of offering a complete product. Although the

financial crisis did not leave Project 2000 untouched, thanks to the peculiar emerging type of semi-integrated folding-beds equipped motorhomes, the Italian company easily survived the storm. Actually, Davide and Susanna considered it appropriate to extend their scope of action, gaining additional foreign markets. A great deal of progress was made since 2000, the year when the Davide Nardini's company participated for the first time in the Caravan Salon of Düsseldorf, giving way to profitable cooperations with several European manufacturers. In 2013 the company joined the American market and in 2014 Project 2000 attended the "All In Caravanning" fair in Beijing. Today, Italy accounts for 20% of the company's turnover, while the rest comes from the foreign markets: the United States has given truly important results.

Human Resources and Investments

Project 2000 evolution owes much not only to ideas, but also to the people. A first, major breakthrough, took place in 2008 when



Innovative bed lift with longitudinal development



Project 2000 has realized an innovative bed lift with longitudinal development, that will be the characterizing element of a new line of German vehicles.

Project 2000, an Italian company leading the market of bed lifting systems, was challenged with the development of a bed lifting system of new conception.

It is in fact a longitudinal descending bed with a knee folding point, which Project 2000 itself had already presented in the past. Short after, the market had awarded the bed lift with transversal conception as the best solution. Now, the bed lift is back to its origins, to the longitudinal conception, developed in partnership with a well-known German manufacturer.

Project 2000 had already a so-called "knee style" bed lift, but it has further developed and improved the Project, making the movement automatic. In the manual mode, in Project 2000 catalogue since 2013, the "knee" is put in traction by two sets of additional belts positioned in the front area, able to make that specific bed portion structural, but only in a specified position. On this new automatic interpretation, instead, the backrest has been motorized and moves independently with respect to the rest of the bed, allowing the user to use the bed at 2 or more levels: at the first level, 2 sleeping places can be obtained on the bunk bed and 2 additional ones can be obtained by transforming the dinette; at the second level the bed can be lowered up to the cushions of the dinette, making it very

comfortable for the daily usage. To manage this device, a dedicated control unit connected with a remote panel has been developed. The unit commands the functions and allows the bed to be used in several different locations, acting in parallel on the motion of the knee portion. Once that the descent button has been pushed, the bed secedes from the ceiling and lowers until a first stopping position. Here it stops and the 2 sections – the horizontal one and the headrest – align themselves to create a perfect horizontal plan. Then, it's possible to lower the bed further until a preprogrammed position is reached.

To facilitate the user, 2 standard positions are pre-programmed, one perfect for the use of the bed as the only sleeping area; another one optimal for the use as bunk bed in combination with the dinette. Once risen, the bed knee bends to adapt to the curvature of the windshield and is perfectly concealed within the ceiling, leaving a very interesting headroom.

The advantages of a longitudinal bed foldaway are manifold. Not occupying the full width of the vehicle, but only a central band, allows the realization of side cabinets, less bulky but at the same time more capacious with respect to those hooked under the bed. Also thanks to the fact that there are no cabinets below that interfere with headrests and seats, the electrically controlled bed reaches the base of the seat and makes it easier to climb even to those who are not young any more

Niccolò Nardini, the owners' son, joined the company - he is currently the production manager. Then in 2012 Lorenzo Manni joined the staff too and takes the sales manager role with a strong inclination for the foreign markets. Today Project 2000 employs approximately 30 people.

The production development has led to a progressive facilities widening. In 2001, the 500 sqm headoffice, created in 1997, was enlarged up to 1300 sq. m, then in 2010 massive renovation works took place, with a

notable enlargement of both production and offices areas (3,000 sqm in total). The last enlargement took place recently, in order to create a complete bed production division (involving not only mechanisms, but also bed-springs): the total surface area of the company has thus exceeded 5,000 sq. m.

Even the equipment have followed the company's evolution. The first investment in this direction was made in 2000, with the purchase of a punch, then in 2004 a machinery suitable for metals laser cutting came, which were followed by investments in robotic machinery aimed at bending and welding. Finally, a 4-axis automatic milling machine has been installed, which is able to work on any corner of a bar up to 7 meters in length.

In recent years an advanced management software has been introduced, able to com-

municate with all the departments the company consists of as well as to monitor the various production processes. Each workstation is connected to the computer system and the assembly personnel employed can recall on screen the exploded view of the product under assembling. The achieved results are lower production costs, small margins of error, higher overall quality. The components and materials for production are stored in four vertical, recently installed warehouses, which have resulted in a further business flows optimization. With a brand history stretching back over 20 years, Project 2000 has evolved from a small player to an appreciated and much required project partner of the largest manufacturers in the world. Project 2000 is able to automate any mechanism, or, in other words, is able to set any idea in motion.

