

Record year for Simac Tanning Tech

ILM exclusive interview with Gabriella Bocca, President of Italian Footwear, Leather Goods and Tannery Machinery Manufacturers Association, Assomac. She reflects on the 2018 edition of Simac Tanning Tech fair and how the future market is looking for the tannery machinery sector in the era of Industry 4.0.

ILM: How many exhibitors and visitors attended Simac Tanning Tech 2018?

Gabriella Bocca: The latest Simac Tanning Tech was a record breaker and we welcomed new exhibitors this year giving a total of 300, up on 2017. Visitor data was also positive, +18% compared with the last fair. These are hugely significant figures and we are working to take them forward further next year.

ILM: During the fair you (Assomac) introduced a new “Green Label” scheme for tannery and footwear machinery. Can you tell ILM readers more about this initiative?

GB: The market changes and so does the needs of our clients, driven by consumer demands for a greener and more sustainable world. As a key part of the supply chain, we had to make our own contribution, so we decided to do what many companies in the sector have been doing for years, namely work on the energy and environmental performance of the equipment we produce. As an association, we opted for a multi-structured project of which the Green Label is the first tool and is currently voluntary. The Green Label is certified by RINA, an external body making it very different from other similar certifications. It calculates the Carbon Footprint (CFP) of the production of machinery, measured on the basis of international Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) standards.

To date, more than 25 companies have joined the scheme and we expect this figure to continue to rise throughout the year.

ILM: During the fair, Assomac hosted a large guest group of international buyers. Can you tell us more about this group and whether any business was done on their visit?

GB: Simac Tanning Tech has always been an exhibition with international appeal.

The ITA (Italian Trade Agency) and all those participating in the exhibition received visitors from all parts of the world. Every year, the ITA-backed delegation brings more than 150 foreign delegates during their three-day stay at the exhibition. Their visit features direct discussions with the companies and institutional meetings (directly with Assomac) that lead to partnerships, MoUs and all the relationships that are essential for our association. On all occasions, we encourage a positive business atmosphere but one that does not end when the exhibition does. The event is a splendid rendezvous, but the business relations are further bolstered afterwards.

ILM: Focussing specifically on tannery machinery, how does the market look for Italian tanning machinery manufacturers at the moment? How do you see the international business climate for the remainder of 2018?

GB: Given the latest available data, for January-November 2017,



Simac Tanning Tech 2018

we recorded a rise in tanning machinery exports of +12% compared with the same period the previous year, reaching a total value of more than €150 million. I think this shows that the companies really do represent excellence in the sector and an ability to always offer a good technological response. Forecasts for the rest of the year are hard to make given the global political and economic situation. For now, our members are happy with the Simac Tanning Tech trend, the requests and their order books.



▀ Gabriella Marchioni Bocca, President, Assomac

ILM: Regarding tanning machinery, what innovations were on show in Milan and how do they comply with the Industry 4.0 concept?

GB: Once again, this year, and as seen last year, many companies presented solutions for processes that are more connected, digitalised, robotic and flexible, which all bring benefits in terms of quality control and traceability. Machines are increasingly connected and in a dialogue with each other, providing more process information and data on both the machine and the process.

For Italian companies, this evolution towards 4.0 has been facilitated by government measures providing tax cuts and relief to offset technology costs. This is certainly an opportunity for the Italian market and our clients worldwide who will benefit from ever smarter and more

innovative machinery and solutions.

ILM: When and where will Simac Tanning Tech 2019 be held?

GB: For 2019, we shall be in Milan again, February 19-21, as it is undoubtedly a strategic location in which to greet Italian operators and those coming from all over the world. I believe the results of the last two exhibitions in Milan have proved us right. Both exhibitors and visitors have reiterated their confidence in us and we shall work to consistently give our visitors the very best in the future. ▀