PLASTICS & RUBBER news

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PLAST 2018: OVER 600 EXHIBITORS HAVE ALREADY REGISTERED

As of the first deadline for applications, more than 600 companies have confirmed their participation in PLAST 2018 – international exhibition for the plastics and rubber industries, which will take place in Milan from 29 May to 1 June 2018 – reserving an area about two thirds as big as that occupied in the 2015 fair.
This is a noteworthy result, particularly in light of the fact that many Italian and foreign exhibitors have reaffirmed their intention to display plants and systems in operation, thus providing an exhaustive and up-to-date technology showcase.
PLAST 2018 confirms its stature as the most important European event for the sector in 2018.
Together with parallel tradeshows in The Innovation Alliance (IPACK-IMA, MEAT-TECH, PRINT4ALL and INTRALOGISTICA ITALIA), PLAST 2018 will occupy all halls at Fiera Milano, representing the second largest event to be hosted there, after the Salone del Mobile.
The upcoming edition of PLAST will feature three satellite shows dedicated to three areas of industrial excellence: RUBBER (in its third edition, with content true to its name), 3D PLAST (second edition, focusing on 3D printing and related technologies), and PLAST-MAT (debuting in 2018, dedicated to innovative plastic materials solutions).
In the meantime, the PLAST Organizing Office is continuing its intense promotional campaign: after its presence at a number of fairs in January – from India to Russia, Germany to the United Arab Emirates – PLAST 2018 will be present in the coming months at KOPLAS (Seoul, 7-11 March), PLASTICO BRASIL (São Paulo, 20-24 March), PLASTEXPO (Casablanca, 5-8 April), CHINAPLAS (Guangzhou, 16-19 May), PLASTPOL (Kielce, 23-26 May), FIP (Lyon, 13-16 June).
The interest in PLAST 2018 expressed by businesses is an important signal, complemented by the moderate optimism expressed in recent weeks by companies in the plastics and rubber industries – machinery manufacturers and processors surveyed by ASSOCOMAPLAST (Italian Plastics and Rubber Processing Machinery and Moulds Manufacturers' Association) in its mid-term January-February studies – in light of improvements in order books both for the export and the domestic markets.
Of particular significance: the positive attitude of operators toward the domestic market is at least in part attributable to positive expectations for the National Industrial Plan 4.0, which sets forth instruments to provide support to companies – in the first place super-amortization, hyper-amortization, and the "Nuova Sabatini" capital equipment law – for investments in operating assets.
Companies may still apply to PLAST 2018 until the second and final deadline of 30 April 2017, benefiting from a 10% discount on participation rates.

The list of participants is available on the website www.plastonline.org.

THE REVOLUTION IN PACKAGING IS THE ALLWRAPPER

ALLWrapper is the new revolutionary packaging system engineered by COLINES. It uses stretch film as a substrate to perform bundle-wrapping on a huge number of different products. Being manufactured and optimized for the beverage industry, its range of application has been extended to the food, cosmetic and pharmaceutical industries with different machines. The system can handle the packaging of bottles, cans, pots or bags made of different materials such as plastic, carton, metal and glass.
Whilst for some applications the unnecessary use of a shrink tunnel comes as the only cost effective solution to secure products in bundles, as in the case of water bottles, in some other areas the heat generated to let the conventional film shrink around products represents a risky process, above all in the case of combustible materials, or even does not permit to use plastic as protective and logistic envelope, for example in the use of carton packaging for drugs. Similarly to what happened in the evolution on pallet protection, from shrink film to cost-effective stretch film, product-bundling by means of stretch film provides an attractive solution to start saving on electricity and packaging costs.

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The ALLWrapper packaging system is covered by several patents and has been engineered on the basis of a modular concept. There are two basic machines that differentiate from each other by their individual operation mode. Whilst the ALLWrapper Basic runs by cycle (the products are bundled at each cycle), the ALLWrapper Auto wraps rows of products in a continuous envelope that is separated in bundles at the end of the process. Regardless of the machine used or the product the be bundled, the mechanical characteristics granted by the stretch film along with the intrinsically money-saving wrapping process (avoiding shrink tunnel), permit an outcome of more than 50% saving on packaging material and more than 90% saving on energy consumption.
"We at COLINES are very proud of sharing this cost-efficient and sustainable solution with our customers as a future challenge to reducing the use of resources down to a minimum, no matter if plastics or energy", say the company's management.
In the development of the new system, COLINES took advantage of the cooperation with ExxonMobil as the provider of the materials for the high-tenacity three-layer stretch film for packaging applications. This film, with a thickness of 10 micron, features an A-B-C structure where the A layer is made of 100% Exceed 3518 mPE material, the B layer of 100% Enable 2010 mPE and the C layer of 95% Exceed 3518 and 5% Vistamaxx 6102 mPP. This formula is intended for ensuring excellent tenacity and tightness even on the thinnest films: Exceed brings tenacity, strength, impact resistance, good optical properties and thickness; Enable combines high processability with HAO (Higher Alfa Olefin) performance; lastly, Vistamaxx ensures high performance and low formulation and process costs.

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MINI DRYER FOR THE MEDICAL INDUSTRY

MORETTO has announced the latest addition to their family of high performance mini-dryers for treating small batches and engineering resins.
The X-Comb mini dryer has been specifically engineered for use by the medical industry where stringent requirements on performance and design are compulsory. The X-Comb mini dryer packs a wealth of MORETTO industry leading technologies into a compact design and is available in four sizes ranging in throughput from 1.4-14.4 kg/h.
"The X-Comb dryer brings together some of our most innovative technologies in developing a revolutionary dryer that again proves we are challenging the status quo. We engineered this dryer to be medical ready, Industry 4.0 compliant, and all the while optimizing energy consumption for small batch and engineering resins", said Benjamin Sutch, CM Officer, MORETTO.
Immediately obvious upon first inspection is the inclusion of MORETTO's patented OTX hopper technology. OTX takes a radical new approach to drying hopper technology utilizing a unique internal geometry that significantly improves material mass flow and air flow distribution throughout the hopper. Beyond the signature Spyro shock-proof casing is a hopper capable of treating the same material as conventional hopper designs whilst requiring 40% less hopper volume, drying time, and airflow.
At its core, the X-Comb dryer features an integrated dew point equalizer that manages the speed and revolution of a zeolite based desiccant cartridge. A direct drive geared motor drives the cartridge rotation and can achieve a stable -52°C dew point.
Powering the X-Comb are two, high performance, VFD driven turbo-compressors; one compressor dedicated to the process circuit while the second manages the regeneration cycle. Add to this a self-adjusting variable air-flow and resin anti-stress control, which together ensure optimal drying while never over-drying. The dryer's filter has been positioned externally and can be easily accessed, without tools, for cleaning. The regeneration exhaust air can be channeled ensuring that the dryer is suitable for medical and other clean-room, optical, or technical applications.
An integrated colour touch-screen control comes standard with either model of the X-Comb series. The simple and easy to use interface allows for quick selection and control of all dryer parameters. In addition, the control has been adapted to centrally manage an optionally connected MORETTO Venturi feeder. Standard RS485 Modbus, Ethernet and USB connectivity options are available and the dryer is compatible with MORETTO's Mowis plant-wide supervisor system.
The X-Comb mini dryer series has been further developed under the umbrella of the MORETTO Drying 4.0 initiative, which sees MORETTO ensure that their full range of machine auxiliary solutions are Industry 4.0 ready.

The compact design of the X-Comb mini-dryer makes it well suited for installation on either the injection machine throat or located machine side. Discharge bases and portable trolleys can be further integrated with the dryer.

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RENEWED INTEREST IN SEQUENTIAL COEXTRUSION

ST SOFFIAGGIO TECNICA has closed a very positive 2016 with orders for three Aspi Seco machines for the sequential extrusion of engine compartment ducts.
Last June an Aspi Seco machine was delivered to the DuPont European technical centre in Meyrin (Switzerland).
At the end of 2016 two new Aspi Seco machines were tested prior to delivery to two well-known tier one component suppliers to the automotive – one in Europe and the other in Asia. The first machine will go into production in Turkey, consolidating the presence of the Italian manufacturer in one of the most important countries for the production of motor vehicles. The second blow moulding machine marks a further milestone for the company, being the first Aspi Seco delivered in India, a country with a fast-growing automotive industry. Besides having an important local automotive industry, India represents a hub for major foreign manufacturers thanks to a number of attractive factors for investors such as low production costs, flexibility in the labour market, abundance of raw materials, high level of personnel technical qualification, incentives and economic policies to name but few.
These recent deliveries confirm a renewed interest in sequential vacuum blow moulding technology. The Aspi blow moulding machines are supplied in the Seco configuration when the task is to produce parts with two different materials arranged in sequence. In this way it is possible to manufacture articles with flexible parts and more rigid sections, thereby avoiding the time and cost of assembling various components. Compared to a single-material solution, this technology also reduces the product cost, because each of the two resins is used only in those sections where it is needed.
The two new Aspi Seco machines have the same clamping unit (with maximum opening stroke of 1,400 mm) and identical plasticization units (two 60 mm extruders each), but differ in some other characteristics: the clamping forces are 15 and 20 tonnes respectively, and the accumulator head capacities are 1.0 and 1.5 litres. A distinguishing feature of both machines - not common on this two-material typology - is the possibility to reach a process temperature of over 350 °C. This characteristic makes them suitable for processing not only any engineering resin available today for blow moulded engine compartment parts, but also new plastic materials that could be developed in the coming years for applications at even higher temperatures.

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