

# Meeting expectations

**An exclusive ILM interview with Assomac President, Gabriella Marchioni Bocca, following the Simac Tanning Tech exhibition which took place alongside Lineapelle, February 21-23 at the MilanoFiera Rho showgrounds.**

According to the organisers of Simac Tanning Tech, the trade fair registered a “double-figure increase in visitor numbers compared with 2016, which had already been a record year for the event, and recorded longer exhibition visits”. This edition, which had Industry 4.0 and environmental sustainability as the main themes, also saw a 20% increase in exhibition space.

According to Assomac (Association of Italian Manufacturers of Footwear, Leather Goods and Tannery Machinery), the industry's exports increased for the fourth year in a row in 2016, despite difficulties seen in the tanning and footwear market. After the increases recorded in 2013 (+15%), 2014 (+11%) and, lesser, in 2015 (+1.7%), the first 11 months of 2016 recorded a 12.4% export growth, with positive export results seen across all machinery types and in all three sectors, including spare parts and components.

A round-up of some of the latest tannery machinery innovations on display at Simac Tanning Tech can be found on page 86.

**ILM: Following Simac Tanning Tech 2017, how do you feel the fair went?**

**Gabriella Bocca:** We are delighted with the results for 2017, first and foremost because of the better quality and quantity of visitors compared with last year. Even more significantly, we have found that they spent more time at the exhibition, a sign that Simac Tanning Tech meets their expectations. Over the three days, I was personally able to meet and hear the comments of numerous visitors both Italian and non-Italian, and found that the exhibitors were providing them with concrete answers. This is where the exhibition's success lies, and it is the fruit of continuous technological research and listening to client needs, plus the guarantee of both a pre- and post-sales service.

Looking ahead, we intend to increasingly accommodate both visitors and exhibitors and try to improve our exhibition year-on-year.

**ILM: What were the major new trends in the market, especially with regards to new tannery machinery?**

**Gabriella Bocca:** The three core themes of this year's exhibition were Industry 4.0, environmental sustainability and traceability; and they applied across all three sectors of machinery for footwear, leather goods and tanning. In recent years, we have seen a fast-growing market awareness of environmental issues, transparency, social responsibility and innovative production processes.

**ILM: How important is Industry Machinery 4.0 in the leather industry and what does it mean for tanners?**

**Gabriella Bocca:** Innovation is the challenge our clients must rise to if they are to remain competitive. Industry 4.0 moves in this direction and many companies in the sector are already turning to it. Industry 4.0 changes the way we think about production,



having to consider the entire production process and not just the single machine. It is no coincidence that the governments of leading industrialised countries are implementing direct and indirect incentive policies on these issues to help users adopt these changes.

**ILM: Can you provide a breakdown of the visitors by type and country of origin that visited Simac Tanning Tech 2017?**

**Gabriella Bocca:** No visitor number data is available yet. To date, we can say that approximately 50% of visitors were made up of tanners from abroad. This confirms Simac Tanning Tech as a truly international fair.

**ILM: Can you tell us more about the foreign delegations and what business Assomac members hope to obtain following the fair?**

**Gabriella Bocca:** Thanks to our collaboration with ICE-Agenzia and the Ministry for Economic Development, we worked hard to bring in visitors, with delegations from 17 countries and 150 people from our main focus markets. We hope all the buzz and satisfaction of the delegates over the course of the event will translate into concrete business over the coming months.

**ILM: How do you rate Simac Tanning Tech 2017 compared with the editions of the same fair held over the past ten years, especially with the Milan factor?**

**Gabriella Bocca:** The move to Milan was certainly a major step in the event's history, and undeniably successful for the exhibition. It forms part of a broader process centred on the growth and renewal of the event. Milan's central position and easier transport access from all over the world has helped bring international visitors. ■



■ Gabriella Bocca, President, Assomac