journal

North European Group

AMADA®

For your success

The Voice of Our Customers

UK	DK	SP	NO	SE	PT
Recol GPS Fracino Belfast Fabs	Soco	Marsu T. Ruiz	Sifa	Skandia	Lacovale

EDITORIAL

Welcome to the new look North European AMADA Journal.

This issue showcases customer success stories from around our region, from the smaller start-up companies, through to the larger international companies we support.

Our teams in the UK, Spain, Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Portugal, are committed to providing exceptional customer service from enquiry to production on an everyday basis. Our main strengths lie in the ability to pull resources, expertise and skills from anywhere within our block, giving support to the very highest level wherever it is needed.

Our innovative machine solutions are engineered to provide our customers with new capabilities that enable them to grow with ever increasing efficiency and productivity. Our after sales support ensures that continued success.

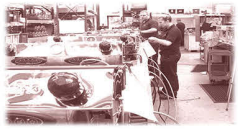
AMADA

Growing Together With Our Customers

If you would like to know more, please visit
www.amada.co.uk

The Voice of Our Customers

Sifa
SIFA ACHIEVES LEAN NEEDS WITH AMADA FIBRE LASER



Fracino
FRACINO INVESTS IN UK's FIRST FLW AUTOMATED FIBRE LASER WELDER

Soco System
AMADA FIBER LASER REMOVED THE BOTTLENECK ISSUE

Belfast Fabrications
AMADA MACHINES UNDERPIN RAPID GROWTH AT NEW BELFAST BASED COMPANY

Marsu SL
QUALITY AT THE SERVICE OF OUR CUSTOMERS

GPS
ENSIS FIBRE LASER HELPS GPS MAP OUT SAVINGS

Transformados Ruiz
PASSION FOR METAL

Recol
AUTOMATED AMADA PRESS BRAKE REDUCES LABOUR COSTS ANDvSLASHES SET-UP TIMES

Skandia Elevator
SKANDIA TARGETS RETURN ON INVESTMENT WITH AMADA AUTOMATION

Lacovale
FASTER AND HIGHER PRODUCTION QUALITY

SIFA ACHIEVE THEIR LEAN NEEDS WITH AMADA FIBRE LASER

Investing in both an AMADA LCG-AJ 4kW fibre laser and HD-ATC press brake with automatic tool changer, Norwegian sub-contractor Sifa AS future proofed their production facility. These latest investments fit closely with Sifa's drive towards lean production techniques. With a 38% improvement in efficiency and 16% increase in laser productivity, Sifa have remained profitable despite the low oil market impacting its competitors.

Sifa

Sifa, based in Selbustrand, Norway offer a complete concept to finished product service to their customers. The company works with many industries, as well as designing and manufacturing their own products. The company was established in 1992 after the business was acquired from Siemens. Since this time the company has expanded its facility by 50% and turnover by 20% in the past 2 years.

Sifa began their search for a new laser to replace their existing CO_2 machine at Euroblech 2014 and considered all major manufacturers. At first a new CO_2 laser was considered, but after researching the solutions on offer, the company opted to invest in emerging fibre laser technology, which best suited their production needs.

The AMADA LCG-AJ 4kW fibre laser cutter features the Amada developed AJ fibre source providing high speed, high quality cutting. This technology coupled, with the machines competitive specification, made it a clear choice for Sifa's requirements. Eivind Aune, Manager Director of Sifa, explained his decision "The AMADA LCG-AJ is a fast, accurate and competitively priced laser. It enables our company's core values of quality and on-time delivery to be achieved".

The HD-ATC high speed press brake with automatic tool changer also caught the company's attention. The machine offers fast tooling setup ideal for smaller production batches and flexible scheduling. Eivend recalled "The possibility to switch jobs within 2 minutes was seen as a real opportunity, I could see this machine fitting within the company".

Following the initial interest at Euroblech, Sifa visited the AMADA UK Technical Centre. Eivind explained "I was impressed with the service and solutions offered in the UK. In particular I saw an opportunity with the AMADA software demonstrated and felt having common features between the solutions was very important".

During this visit the order was placed for the package, making Sifa the first 4kW LCG-AJ and HD-ATC in the Norwegian market. This addition of high speed machinery complementing the company's existing production capabilities was seen as a real prospect to attract new contracts.
"Being the first company in Norway to own both a 4kW LCG-AJ and HD-ATC was seen as a means to win new clients. Every day when pitching to customers, I will promote the fact that we have a fast, accurate fibre laser and a press brake that can be set in 1-2 minutes".

With a drive towards quality and on time delivery, Sifa employed lean manufacturing techniques in 2013 and spends over 4000 hours on lean projects per year. The LCG-AJ and HD-ATC machines have supported this push towards continual improvement.

""The ATC allows for very fast switch over on repeat jobs. Whereas the LCG-AJ is double the speed of our old machine with the biggest difference on thin materials. The twin bed shuttle table has also allowed for faster switch over times compared to our old machine".

For Sifa the cutting accuracy and quality of the LCG-AJ was another vital aspect to attain their lean manufacturing goals. "The accuracy and cut quality of the machine is significantly better than our old machine. This has allowed us to save greatly in secondary operations such as de-burring. This saves cost and reduces customer lead times".

An added benefit of fibre laser technology is its expanded process range providing the opportunity to cut reflective materials such as copper and brass. Sifa have been able to acquire several new contracts in this area and move some existing production from their punching machines to the more cost effective fibre laser machine in order to maximise profit.

The HD-ATC hight speed press brake with automatic tool changer offers tooling setup ideal for small production batches.

Looking towards the future, Sifa looks to continue its growth and acquire ISO 9001 certification in 2016 with AMADA as its manufacturing partner.

Reflecting upon the investment, Eivind said "We were originally looking only for a new CO_2 laser. However we felt the LCG-AJ fibre laser solution was more future proof. We saw the benefit of high speed processing on thin materials and reduced maintenance costs. The quick setup and common software features offered by the ATC then attracted us towards investing in two machines rather than only one".

FRACINO INVESTS IN UK's FIRST FLW AUTOMATED FIBRE LASER WELDER

Fracino, the UK's only manufacturer of expresso and cappuccino coffee machines, has added laser welding to its already extensive list of in-house capabilities by investing in an AMADA FLW automated fibre laser welder. It is anticipated that the machine, which is the first in the UK, will run 24/7 and provide rapid payback, potentially within 18 months.

A third generation family business, Fracino's story began in 1963 when machine tool designer, Frank Maxwell, stripped down a second-hand coffee machine bought on a family holiday in Italy. A year later, he launched the business in a garden shed and started importing and supplying coffee machines to retail outlets in Britain.

"Our business model changed in 1990 when we were struggling with the supply of machines from Spain," explains Adrian Maxwell, the company's current Managing Director. "As a result, we started manufacturing our own machines and haven't looked back since. Today we make around 4000 machines a year and sell worldwide via an established network of distributors.

Fracino

"Around 25% of our production is exported, and growing fast. We also provide distributor training and have an established in-house service division."

The relationship between Birmingham-based Fracino and AMADA began six years ago following a recommendation from an existing user of AMADA machines.

"We went to see an AMADA machine in action and thought it was extremely nice kit," says Mr Maxwell. "We were also told about their excellent aftersales service, which is what tipped the balance and persuaded us to place an order. Over the years this has proved to be a wise decision. AMADA never leaves us unsupported and it's the reason we continue to buy its machines today."

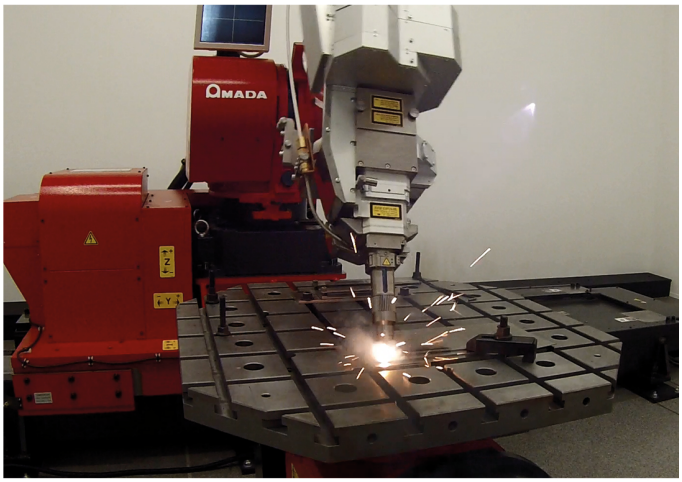
The driver for Fracino's initial investment emanated from growing dissatisfaction with its existing subcontract supply base.

The future looks extremely bright for this multi-award winning business, which has won 18 awards since 2012, including the Made in the UK Advanced Manufacturing Innovation Award 2016, where Fracino was recognised alongside UK and global manufacturers, including Jaguar Land Rover and Nestle UK.

"We previously used three suppliers for our sheet metal requirements but they were all struggling to keep up with our demand and it felt like we were losing control," says Mr Maxwell. "We spent around £400,000 a year with one of them and they would leave us waiting six weeks for parts. Something had to change, so we made the decision to invest in our own technology and bought our first AMADA laser cutter and press brake."

Today, the AMADA LCG3015 3.5kW laser is accompanied by an ASLUL300 automated load/unload tower, while the HFE press brake has been joined by a second HFE model. Fracino is also a user of AMADA's Dr. ABE manufacturing software.

The addition of the AMADA FLW automated fibre laser welder will further strengthen the company's in-house production capabilities.



"We brought our copper boiler manufacturing in-house about 2½ years ago," says Mr Maxwell. "They were previously produced in Italy but, in all honesty, we were getting poor service. For this reason we invested in automatic roller machinery and rotary/linear semi-automatic TIG welders for the end caps and seals. However, we are finding that good welding and brazing skills are hard to come by, which means that some boilers are leaking at the test stage. In turn, this leads to rework, at great time and expense."

Recently, another job emerged that was proving tricky to seam weld, which prompted Fracino to begin looking at alternative technologies.

"We assessed some automated TIG welding systems but they seemed problematic in terms of burn holes and tungsten not picking up properly," explains Mr Maxwell. "However, there is no tungsten in laser technology, nor any arcing and sparking, so we concluded this process would give us far more continuity with regard to quality output."

As soon as Fracino started investigating AMADA's fibre laser FLW system and understanding its capabilities, the company realised how many of its existing jobs could be accommodated.

"We performed some welding trials on 1.5mm thick copper and it performed very well," he says. "You get a beautiful quality of weld with a fibre laser."

And Mr Maxwell knows quality engineering when he sees it. He joined his father's company some 30 years ago having first completed an engineering apprenticeship at Rolls-Royce, an experience that he says has helped him enormously on the manufacturing side of the business.

"The FLW is a big investment for us, but as it's fully automated we should reap the benefits quite quickly, possibly within 18 months if we manage to keep it running around the clock," he adds. "Furthermore, the reduction in copper scrap will also help accelerate our return-on-investment."

British Made Espresso Coffee Machines

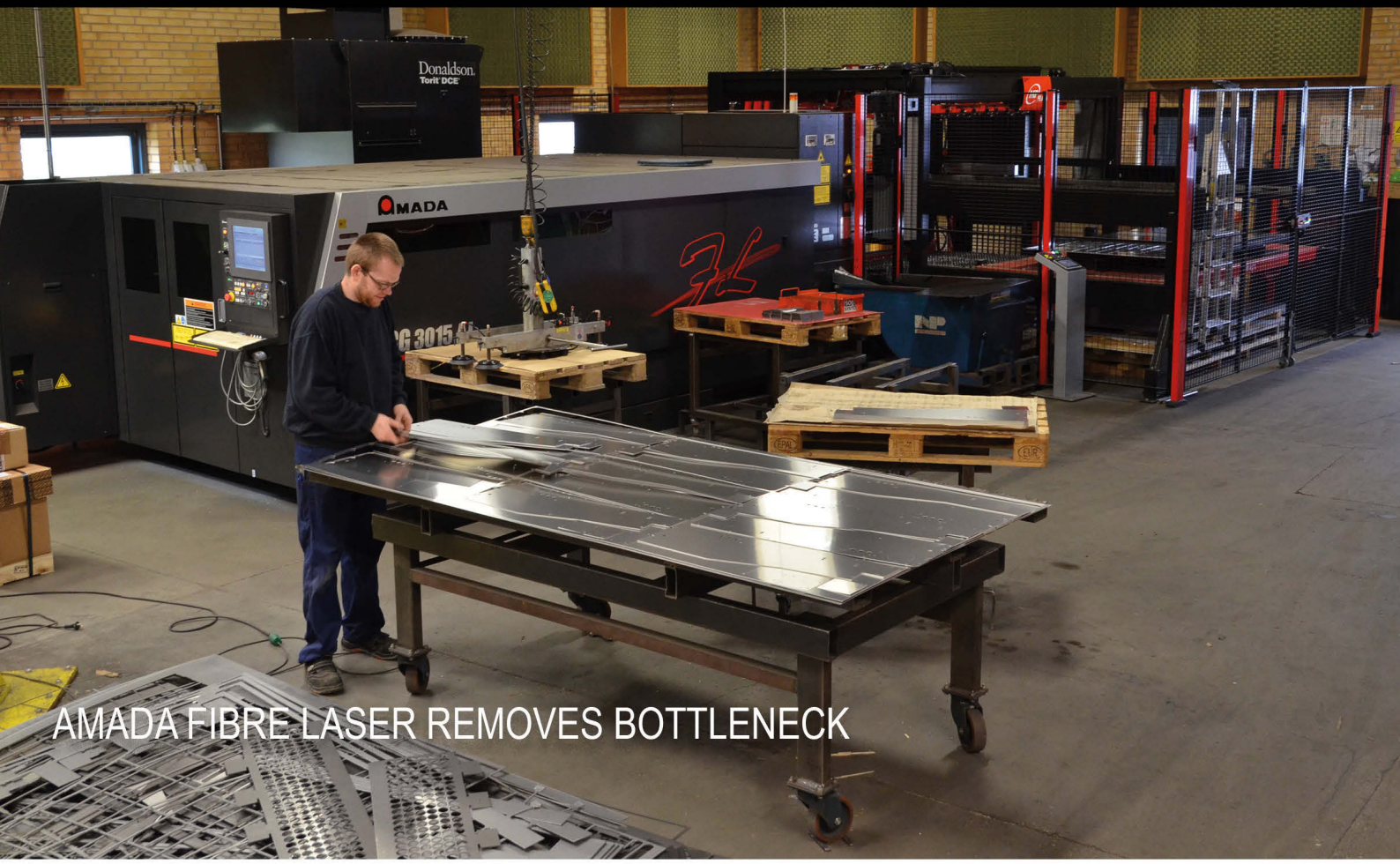
The UK's multi award-winning manufacturer of cappuccino and espresso coffee machines.

The future looks extremely bright for this multi-award winning business.

Turnover has more than doubled since 2010 to circa £6 million, while the current staff head count stands at 58 and growing. In a speech on exporting and growth, November 2011, then Prime Minister David Cameron said: *"It's not just the film industry where Britain is excelling – Fracino in Birmingham is selling coffee-makers to Italy."*

In 2012 the company expanded its manufacturing facility to a new purpose-built headquarters close to its current site, bringing the total size of Fracino's premises to 50,000ft². A year later, the company was invited to supply 11 of its Piccino machines to the G8 summit in Enniskillen, Northern Ireland, while *LondonLovesBusiness* tipped Fracino as one of five 'Super-Brit' brands taking over the world.

Indeed, the company is already taking over AMADA UK's restaurant at its Kidderminster headquarters, where one of Fracino's now world-famous coffee machines is currently in residence, with another planned in the near future.



AMADA FIBRE LASER REMOVES BOTTLENECK

An automated AMADA fibre laser has considerably increased the production capacity at the Danish manufacturer Soco System, who has also seized the opportunity to freely improve part design.

Soco System

For many years an AMADA Pega punching machine faithfully punched through tons of sheets at Soco System in Nykøbing Mors, Denmark. Nevertheless, it had become a bottleneck in the production until January 2015, when SOCO System took delivery of a LCG-AJ 2kW fibre laser with an MP-F automatic loader/unloader.

The factory is one of two Danish factories that produce their own packaging machines ranging from small models to large fully automatic packaging lines. The company distributes their products globally with 88 percent of production exported.
As far as possible, the factory on the island of Mors produces all components in house. This includes a lot of sheet metal components in mild and stainless steel. Due to the volume of these components, the existing AMADA turret punch was becoming a constraint on production.

"Things are going well for our worldwide sales and to strengthen our production, we have invested in an automated fibre laser. The analysis showed that there had been a bottleneck around our turret punch press, which also limited the possibilities of working with the design of products" says Production Manager, Peter Dalgaard, adding;

"It helped right away that we got the fibre laser, which can work automatically around the clock if needed. At the same time, we now have artistic freedom that we did not have with the punching machine due to the limitations with fixed punching tools. Now we have much greater opportunities to work with our design."

High Cutting Quality

The AMADA LCG-AJ 2kW fiber laser can cut up to 16 mm thick mild steel, 10 mm stainless and 8 mm aluminum; whilst the automatic MP-F 3015 loader/unloader has capacity for 3 tons of material. The machine is supplied as standard with VPSS 3i software with automatic nesting, which distributes parts optimally across sheets to reduce material costs.

"We quickly decided upon an AMADA fibre laser after reviewing the market. We have good experiences with the brand here in the factory, and have received good service for many years on our punch machine" says Peter Dalgaard.

Soco System uses their fibre laser for production of thin to thick materials, although 90 percent of products are up to 3mm. The LCG-AJ fibre laser runs alongside the AMADA turret punch, which continues to run in production, as a result capacity has increased considerably.

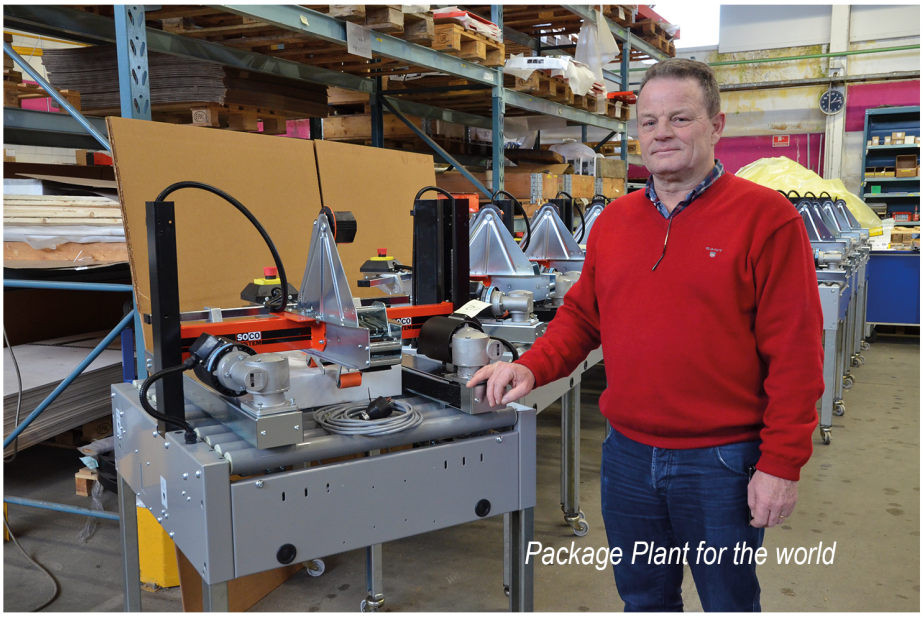
"The fibre laser is proving reliable with high cutting quality, providing a number of benefits. Rounded curves, cut holes and edges are nice quality and there is no longer a need for deburring. At the same time, the fibre laser utilises more of the raw material than turret punch does, which also helps to make the machine a good investment. Especially when the same series is run again and again." emphasizes Peter Dalgaard.

The MP-F 3015 optimizes production

"With the fibre laser, we have taken a step into the future on our sheet processing, which has been significantly more effective.

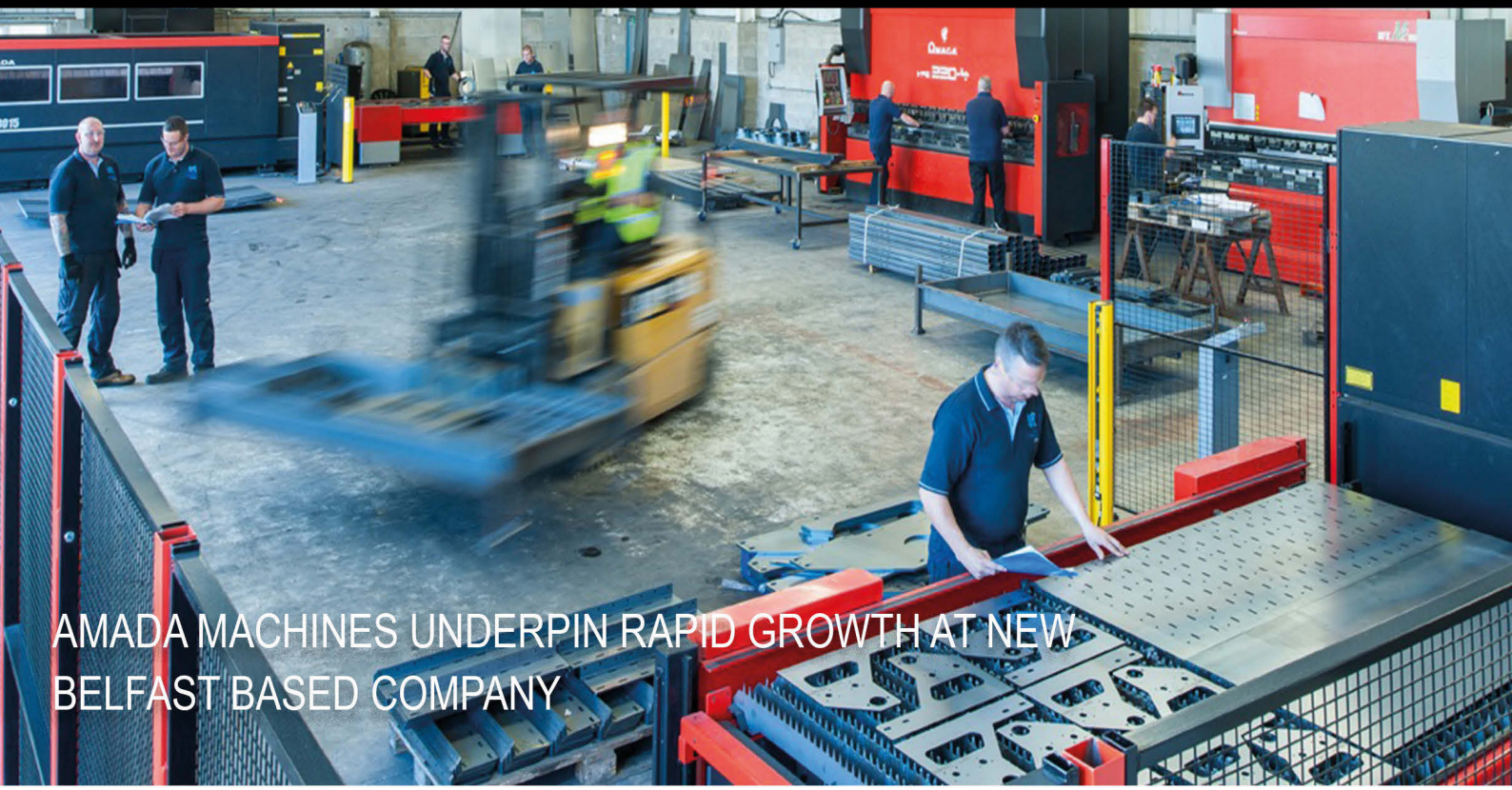
When you get new technology into the factory, you can feel that there has been a great development, which means a lot to our competitiveness "concludes Peter Dalgaard.

Continuing their relationship with AMADA, SOCO recently added an AMADA HFE3i 130-3 press brake to their factory. The machine features 7 controlled axes and the new AMNC 3i control. This investment seeks to balance the additional capacity gained from the addition of the AMADA LCG-AJ fiber laser.



Package Plant for the world

Soco System *was founded in 1961. It is an international company with headquarters in Taastrup. Production takes place in two factories in Denmark, and 88 percent of the total activity exported to customers worldwide. Design is made in Denmark using the latest technologies. The company has subsidiaries in England, France, Germany, Spain, USA and Hungary and a network of agents and distributors worldwide. The group is 100 percent Danish owned and employs about 180 employees. Around the world, the company has more than 110,000 carton sealers, hundreds of thousands of meters of conveyors and more than 1,200 pallet loaders and palletising robots.*



AMADA MACHINES UNDERPIN RAPID GROWTH AT NEW BELFAST BASED COMPANY

Belfast Fabrications is leveraging the benefits of AMADA laser cutting and bending technology to promote impressive growth. Formed in 2014 with just three people the company has swiftly grown within the first 2 years of trading. To help accommodate this rapidly expanding customer demand, Belfast Fabrications has recently added a second AMADA LCG laser profiling centre and another AMADA HFE multi-axis press brake to its increasingly comprehensive plant list.

"I've been working in this sector for a lot of years and spotted a gap in the market for a new type of subcontractor," says Managing Director Gavin Swift of his decision to launch Belfast Fabrications in April 2014. "There are a lot of laser cutting shops in Belfast, and many fabricators, but hardly any that can offer both. They have to outsource from each other, with all the extra cost and time that entails."

Belfast Fabrications, which is located in Moneyreagh just 5km from the city centre, offers not just laser cutting and bending, but welding and powder coating to ensure full fabrication requirements can be met. In its short existence, the company has already established a strong client base, mainly in sectors such as transport and agriculture, but also construction and energy.

From the outset, Belfast Fabrications has based its success on CNC machine tool technology from AMADA, initially installing an AMADA LCG 3015 CO_2 laser cutter with 3.5kW resonator, an AMADA HFE 220/4 press brake (220 tonne, 4m capacity) and AMADA Dr. ABE Blank software/Production Designer.

Belfast Fabrications

"I first approached AMADA in 2013 with a business plan for a start-up company," explains Mr Swift. "AMADA's willingness to support the company, even at this early planning stage, made it an easy decision to go with AMADA technology. Put simply, the combination of attractive finance options and first class machines put AMADA in pole position."

One of the company's first contracts involved the provision of parts to a major trailer manufacturer, which led to a large, regular repeat order. From there, Belfast Fabrications hasn't looked back.

"In the 2½ years since launch we have gone from three to 18 employees, and from 6000 to 20,000 ft²," says Mr Swift. "This growth has come about for many reasons. In particular, the use of AMADA machines allows us to offer short lead-times. Since the outset we have found customers surprised that we can offer 1-2 weeks for laser cut parts and 2-3 weeks for fabrications. The best they can find elsewhere seems to be in the region of 4-6 weeks."

Needless to say, word soon spread and the order book grew. As a result, Belfast Fabrications made the decision to effectively double its capacity.

"We needed to do something – two of our biggest customers were tying up the entire capacity on one of our LCG laser cutters," says Mr Swift. "We therefore opted to invest in another LCG 3015 from AMADA, again with 3.5kW laser resonator, along with a HFE Mk II 1003 eight-axis press brake, which offers 100 tonnes, 3m capacity."

"The addition of our second AMADA LCG 3015 flat-bed laser profiling centre sets new benchmarks for performance and functionality in laser cutting in the UK and Ireland," states Mr Swift. "This is the latest specification for cutting technology available in Europe today. Two AMADA machines give us the ability to provide high speed cutting of thin to mid-thick material, but most importantly it means no-fail delivery for our customers and 24 hours, seven days a week operation."

Today, the company accommodates a wide spectrum of jobs, typically up to 20mm thick mild steel, 2-6mm stainless steel and 2-5mm aluminium. Weekly output is now in the region of 10,000 parts.

Ultimately, Belfast Fabrications Ltd has expanded rapidly to become a thriving, forward-thinking business offering sheet metal fabrication solutions to a diverse range of sectors. A combination of the latest technologies and a team willing to go the extra mile, ensures customer projects flow seamlessly from start to finish. Mr Swift says that rather simply employing anyone available, the company hand picks its staff members after careful scrutiny.

"Our customers expect state-of-the-art equipment, years of experience and a strong commitment to quality, investment and innovation – and that's what we deliver," he says. "We're fast, capable and 100% reliable. Our dedicated team of designers and metalworkers make sure customers get the end product they want and can be proud of – all supplied to tight delivery schedules."

Any size and complexity of job is possible, from one-off items, subcontracted works and partnerships with industry, to large-scale projects for multinational companies.

The additional press brake in support of the second laser cutter is also seen as an important investment.

"The AMADA HFE press brakes give us the capacity to work on anything from simple brackets to intricate metal housings, and everything in between," he says.

Today, the company accommodates a wide spectrum of jobs

Mr Swift describes the current market as "pretty good" and, as a result, is looking to add an evening shift later this year.

"We continue to attract new customers," he says. "For instance, we are currently completing a bespoke piece of city centre architecture for a whiskey company. It comprises a series of 10 fabricated whiskey barrels stacked up, and will look really impressive once it's in place. The extra capacity offered by the new AMADA machines has introduced greater flexibility, which means we can now take on jobs like this with greater frequency.

Furthermore, the machines are extremely reliable, while the support from AMADA is second to none, so we can be confident in our ongoing ability to supply customers with high quality, short lead-time parts in line with requirements."

QUALITY AT THE SERVICE OF OUR CUSTOMERS

"We used to have problems producing some parts as we only had a punching machine, sometimes it would be complicated to produce a certain part due to the type of geometry that was required. The laser gave us the opportunity to produce a much wider range of parts" Suñer mentions. MARSU only works with a maximum of 8mm sheet thickness so they pay much more attention to "accuracy, completion and quality of the products".

Marsu SL

MARSU SL is a well established subcontracting company dedicated to processing and producing in sheet metal (aluminum, stainless and mild steel). Their production is completely designed to meet the demands of their customers, which are companies that lead in their respective fields of energy and elevators. Based in Zaragoza, they are not only capable of manufacturing parts but also assembly and processing of complete systems. Their strong commitment to new technology has placed them at the forefront of an increasingly competitive industry.

The family business was founded in 1983 and since the start has been dedicated to subcontracting. The Managing Director and partner, Manuel Suñer explains "We have never had our own product so we have always been serving our customers; they are the ones who have really helped us grow". In his eyes to be a good subcontractor "you need to have the same or even better resources than your customers so you're able to do what they can't do or are not interested in producing".

The company facilities are located in La Puebla de Alfindén and Muel in Zaragoza.

In La Puebla factory, they have a manufacturing plant that is 7,000 m^2 where the punching and laser cutting sheet metal process is centralized together with a technical office. Meanwhile, in Muel, they have another plant of 7,000 m^2, located next to the factory of their main customer. This plant is capable of performing a range of processes including bending, welding, painting and assembly. MARSU activities focus on producing metallic bodies for generators, compressors and transformers, as well as manufacturing parts, components and complete lifting systems. A 90 strong team of experienced staff are responsible for the operation of the company, with a workforce that can operate over three shifts.

For this group, the acquisition of a fiber laser FOL3015-AJ, equipped with an automated tower ASLUL, has been revolutionary Suñer describes it as "a turning point in the way we work".

The machine achieves a high cutting speed, superior accuracy and great reliability. Furthermore, significant energy savings of up to 70% and a reduction of production costs mean that they are extremely happy with the machine. The combination of the laser with automated storage system for loading and unloading improves productivity and minimizes waiting times.

With the new laser "we have taken a giant step in our production. It has been here for a few months now and works 24 hours a day. We are very satisfied with its performance" says the manager.

MARSU has also recently acquired an HD 8025 7 axis press brake machine as a result of a new project. The machine is equipped with a BI-S which allows angle measurement in real time. The supervisor comments "A common press brake can bend any angle; however it doesn't give you any repetition guarantee nor piece to piece accuracy. The new AMADA press brake guarantees that every angle will be exactly replicated even when a part has different geometries at various angles. We are delighted with it"

The HD Series press brake introduces new hybrid technology that improves productivity, achieves higher accuracy and reduces operating costs drastically. The lower beam, an AMADA patent, represents a major advance in the quality and accuracy of production.

The Best Option

Regarding the laser purchase process "it was long and very thoughtful process as it is a significant investment. We did extensive market research and AMADA exceeded in all areas. We studied different options and saw the machines running at exhibitions; we also sent our parts to chosen companies so they could replicate them on their machines. Finally, we valued the engineering capacity of each option, after-sales service and price" Suñer explained.
Suñer reflects on the final stages of the process "we studied the innovation that AMADA introduced in their oscillators and fiber technology; we knew that we were buying into the latest technology in the industry. Economically AMADA also came out on top therefore we made the decision totally convinced it was the right one for us. AMADA gave us more guarantees and a better price".
The company planned to expand production using CNC machinery and in early 2015 they recognized that "in the future we need to add more lasers before other machines. In this industry, you must be always investing. You have to be in the forefront so the ones behind don't overtake you. The investment is inevitable. If our customers ask us to continue cooperating with them in even larger quantities, we need to expand our facilities and keep our technology up to date".

As a consequence of all the above, in late 2015, Marsu decided to replace the biggest punching line they had for another laser, an LCG 3015 with an automated ASLUL tower. The benefit for them was that they could work uninterrupted: "the results we get by leaving machines working unmanned is a fantastic feeling" Suñer tells us, "in fact, this laser has barely stopped for an hour since we bought it".

The workload over the past year has increased enough that they needed to add another LCG 3015 laser with ASLUL tower (the third in Marsu) in September 2016:

The combination of the laser with automated loading and unloading tower improves productivity and minimizes waiting times.

"Marsu staff are delighted with this machine. As soon as the machine installation is finished we will be working without interruption from the first minute possible" insists Suñer.

The increase in cutting production resulted in them needing a faster and more accurate press brake. That's why, in 2016, Marsu has also replaced two old press brakes for new machines: a small and versatile press brake HFE 5012 IBF, and a HFE 3i 1303 7 axis, "the truth is that AMADA makes everything easy, they search for solutions quickly and effectively to suit our needs. Any concerns that I have are addressed promptly, they are always there when I need them"- states Suñer.

In addition, the company values AMADA's "very positive" technical service. "The team is highly effective and always solving issues in a timely manner – this gives you extra security when purchasing a machine", he says. He was also keen to point out the professionalism of AMADA when removing older machines before the new ones were installed. In this case, MARSU part exchanged several older machines like a V368Q hydraulic punch press, a combined punching machine with shear and several older press brakes along with some shearing machines. "AMADA's absolute support in this step has been really important and decisive for all of us," he says.

Besides buying and selling their own second hand machines, AMADA also has many contacts in Europe who value and buy machines made by other brands. Thus, the client deals 100% with AMADA without having to worry about anything else.

MARSU highlights that the fact that the first press brake and fiber laser gave a critical push to the family business, both in quality and quantity by increasing their production capacity. "The second generation of machines ensures the future of the business," Suñer explained. In this growth project AMADA will continue offering the most recent technology and the best manufacturing solutions to safeguard their company's success.

ENSIS FIBRE LASER HELPS GPS MAP OUT SAVINGS

Following the acquisition last year of an AMADA ENSIS 3015AJ CNC fibre laser profiling centre, Dudley based Generic Punching Systems (GPS) has been going from strength-to-strength. The machine has not only helped the company increase output by 45%, but is saving GPS more than £1000 a month in energy thanks to the lower power requirement of fibre laser in comparison with the company's previous CO_2 machine.

GPS is a highly competitive, forward-thinking fabricator with a proven track record of investing in the latest manufacturing technologies. Formed in 2002, the company's predominant market is the construction sector, although it is also finding favour serving a range of leading furniture and street furniture manufacturers. The notable venues where products made by the company can be found include Silverstone race track, Stoke City FC's training facility, Metropolitan University London and the Science Museum Research Centre, to list but a few. Components range from small brackets and trim line gutters, though to downpipe systems and rain-screen cladding systems. In fact, GPS produced 16,500 rain-cladding panels for the new pit lane complex at Silverstone.

The relationship between GPS and AMADA can be traced back over a decade when the company first acquired AMADA tooling for its punching machine. So impressed was GPS that the shop floor at Dudley is today adorned solely with AMADA technology. As a result, when the company recently relocated and discovered a floor space issue concerning its existing AMADA LC3015X1 NT CO_2 laser cutting machine (installed in 2006), GPS enquired about the AMADA ENSIS.

GPS

"We could purchase the ENSIS in exchange for the X1, close down a previously rented 3000 ft² rented unit where the X1 was housed, open a new 10,000 ft² unit and still be financially better off," states Managing Director, Geoff Bull. "The extra 45% output and £1000 a month energy savings have proved to be added bonuses. We've cut our energy bill by an average of 50% a month."

According to Creative Director Sally Bull, the figures simply made sense: "After discussions with our accountant regarding the power savings offered by the ENSIS, he advised us that now was the best time to spend the money, which is probably the first time he'd ever said that."

GPS accommodates a wide material mix, processing over 60 different material types on the ENSIS every month. Importantly, the fibre laser machine allows the company to cut copper and brass, which was not possible using its previous CO_2 machine. Batch sizes are typically 10-50 off, although GPS often supplies 1-off prototypes through to volumes up to 3000.

"We cut up to 25mm thick mild steel and 15mm stainless steel – in other words we use the ENSIS to its full potential – that's how much trust we have in the machine," says Mr Bull. "In particular, the speed of the ENSIS is mind-blowing, which is great as the majority of our work is supplied on a just-in-time basis. The savings we achieve each month allow us to do other things, such as buy material in higher quantity at a better price. Furthermore, the quality of product coming off the machine is incredible.

"We cut up to 25mm thick mild steel and 15mm stainless steel – in other words we use the ENSIS to its full potential – that's how much trust we have in the machine," says Mr Bull.

"We can see how our business has advanced in the past 10 years by buying the right machines," says Mr Bull.

All of the laser cut edges are smooth and safe, so there is no requirement for deburring or cleaning."

Another factor that influenced Mr Bull to buy the ENSIS was his desire to become a launch customer, and he achieved this goal in June 2015.

"I wanted AMADA to bring people to see us if they requested a machine viewing in the field," he says. "I enjoy giving feedback; plus it's an exciting time when you see 'machine number one in the UK' going into your factory."

Word of mouth has always been integral to success at GPS; the company prefers to let its work and impressive range of machines do the talking rather than spending fortunes on marketing campaigns.

"We can see how our business has advanced in the past 10 years by buying the right machines," says Mr Bull. "Around four years ago we were turning over around £460,000. This year we did half of that again in the first quarter alone. Many wrongly assume that machines like this are beyond the reach of small family businesses – we have 15 employees – but we're proving that isn't the case. Today, our AMADA machines are really paying dividends. The quality is always fantastic and from the very beginning we longed to become AMADA machine owners as we feel they are the pinnacle of machine tools in the market today."

In total, GPS now has five AMADA machines, including two HFE series press brakes and an EMZ3620NT punch press, which has also made a significant impact at GPS.

"I can recall the first job we put on our AMADA EMZ punch press in 2014 – we saved 43 hours of punching and 48 hours of programming," says Mr Bull. "What was previously a five-day job had been reduced to 1.5 days. It was a jaw-dropping moment."

With AMADA's EMZ, we saved 43 hours of punching and 48 hours of programming."

When asked what differentiates GPS from its competitors, Mr Bull says it is the company's commitment to never say no, even if the job is extremely challenging. He also attributes success to the company's fast job turn-around.

"We offer some of the fastest turn-arounds I know of in the subcontract building system sector," he says. "Our customers know they can put their reputations on the line by using us to make the parts for them, on time and on schedule. At GPS we have never been busier, which must mean that our customers are happy as they keep placing repeat orders."

According to Mr Bull, the next phase of investment at GPS will see the company move to even larger premises and install an FMS system linked to the AMADA ENSIS laser and EMZ punch press, taking production towards a fully automated environment.

AMADA

HFE M2 4006L

PASSION FOR METAL

The general manager of the company highly values the relationship with AMADA. "Since the purchase of the first machine, we started an experience and journey that goes far beyond labour. AMADA offers you expertise and support to help you improve your business and opens your mind to new goals and ideas. They study each situation, offer the best solution and accompany you in every step. They also make you aware of all the options available so you can be sure that you have everything you need at all times".

Transformados Ruiz

With nearly two decades of experience, the company Transformados Ruiz has become a benchmark in the field of sheet metal processing thanks to its flexibility and adaptation to new challenges. Their main objective is to provide impeccable service to their customers through an innovative productive capacity and a committed and enthusiastic team. This modern and environmentally involved company is committed to the most advanced technology promoted by AMADA, whom they consider its "most valuable" partner.

Transformados Ruiz was established in 1997 in Tudela (Navarra). Founded by Juan Carlos Ruiz, the company had its beginnings in machinery designed for the construction sector. In 2004 the company began to grow thanks to its employees' hard work and a major production investment. Sadly, in 2006, Juan Carlos Ruiz past away and, his widow, Isabel Jimenez took over the company. Helped by the departmental managers, Isabel gave a new direction to this ambitious project.

From 2011 onwards, the company has opened up to other sectors with new ideas, with Manuel Saborido as Deputy Manager. Besides the construction industry, Transformados Ruiz started producing for sectors such as street furniture, metal fencing, wind systems as well as some other industries. This turning point coincides with the acquisition of their first AMADA machine, a decision that marked "a before and an after in our history," reflects Isabel Jimenez.

Among the values of this strategic new approach, they highlight the commitment to the environment. In this sense, Transformados Ruiz has engaged in various projects with many entities, including the University of Navarra, the workshop school 'The Work', and sports sponsorships, such as Navarre Inmotec MotoGP team. It is clear Isabel is keen to maintain good relationships "One of our goals is to benefit those around us with our work. This is an attitude we always promote,"The director emphasizes her confidence in the management team, especially her sister, Marisa Jimenez, her "right hand" who is in charge of Quality and also Health and Safety areas.

Investing in AMADA

The relationship with AMADA began in 2011 with the acquisition of an electric punching machine EMZ 3610 NT, a machine that "offered us many benefits, such as: countersunk holes, marking, small forms and tapping. Having these options allowed us to make a major breakthrough in our production. The punching machine we had before was very old and the AMADA machine was a decisive leap for us," explains the head of the company.
The EM series punching machine employs AC dual servo-drive. This advanced machine combines high production speed, excellent reliability and numerous advantages in terms of cost and equipment.

A year later, the company put their trust again in AMADA when they invested in their first laser machine. "It was the machine we needed however it took a little longer to buy as the level of investment was much higher. However, once we were introduced to the AMADA technology, it was clear for us we needed a laser to expand our business to other sectors" comments Isabel.

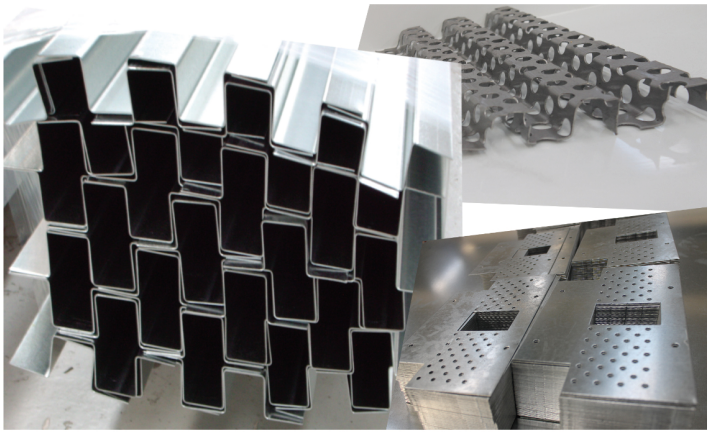
Thus, they incorporated the laser LC 2415 ALPHA IV 4kW, a fast, precise and compact machine with a high speed and a reliable processing capability. The line manager tells us "the versatility and performance of this machine, gives us great flexibility and precision when working with different materials. It has a special table that guarantees no scratches when working with stainless steel. "

Market evolution and the progress of one of its main customers led them subsequently to replace the ALPHA laser for a fully automated EML 3610 laser/ punch combination machine. Isabel remarks "AMADA understood the situation and helped us make the change in a way that was beneficial to both parties. Also, the versatility of this machine is spectacular and has opened many doors that we never thought we could open before"
In early 2013, they purchased a HFEM2 400-6 a 400 ton 6m press brake because "the machines we had were running short when bending thicker material. The new machine bends with great reliability". Later on, they added the HFEM2 130-3 press brake and finally the HFEM2 50-12. By the end of 2015, Transformados Ruiz also incorporated an HG 100-3 ATC press brake, with automatic tool changer, to its production system. In addition to the other three AMADA press brakes, this machine increases their versatility and reduces setup time between jobs considerably.

This new machine bends with great reliability without a break

The EM series punching machine combines high production speed, excellent reliability and numerous improvements in terms of cost and equipment.

These multi-axis press brakes feature a patented lower beam design and a large workspace that gives greater flexibility to the operator. Moreover, a system combining energy saving and intuitive touch panels means the machines are using the most up to date technology. "It's great to see how the machines are ready to work in just a few minutes after being programmed from the Technical Office," comments production manager Manuel Saborido.



Last but not least, the company has a full suite of AMADA software, called VPSS, which includes AP100EU, SHEETWORKS and SOLIDWORKS and Dr. ABE Blank. AP100EU is a 2D CAD package ideal for creating layouts and importing files from an existing system. It also manages relevant information such as materials and bendingspecification allowing seamless information flow.

Meanwhile, SHEETWORKS, SOLIDWORKS and Dr. ABE Blank software "has allowed us to work with such a worldwide recognized tool as Solidworks. To own a license of this software has been an important milestone for the company. In the past, most pieces were designed with Autocad which had limitations, now we can teach customers how to design and develop a part that can get sent directly to the machine. Communication between the technical office and the workshop now flows freely".

For this Navarran company it is important to move forward, and their next challenge is the automation. "We will need the support and collaboration of Amada. We will continue counting with their valuable experience", Isabel said.

The director also highlights the customer service offered by the Japanese company, because "the care, maintenance and training are wonderful. It is very easy to contact them, choose the time and days that best suits us with wonderful planning. They are always willing to help and answer any questions we may have. For sure, the attention is a 10 ".

This year, Transformados Ruiz has started its internationalization by working for companies in France and Morocco, and its products are already present in 13 countries on four continents – through its Spanish customers. Thanks to its commitment to the latest technology and the quality of its service, they will undoubtedly be a benchmark in the industry.

AUTOMATED AMADA PRESS BRAKE REDUCES LABOUR COSTS AND SLASHES SET-UP TIMES AT RECOL

"Labour is the biggest cost to any business like ours, and we knew that introducing automation into our bending operations would deliver significant gains"

Recol Engineering Ltd, a Northampton-based subcontract supplier of complete metal-based manufacturing solutions, has become the UK's first user of AMADA's new HG-ARs automated press brake system. The adoption of robot-tended bending operations is not only providing a reduction in labour costs for this forward-thinking manufacturer, but thanks to the system's integral automatic tool changer (ATC), has cut set-up times from 45 minutes to just 90 seconds in some instances.

Privately owned with 85 employees, Recol is currently enjoying a period of year-on-year growth. For instance, the company's 36,000 ft² fabrication facility has recently been supplemented by a 12,000 ft² machining unit. Moreover, Recol's continuous programme of ongoing investment in the latest manufacturing technologies has never been healthier, as evidenced by the company's commitment to automating its press braking operations.

"Labour is the biggest cost to any business like ours, and we knew that introducing automation into our bending operations would deliver significant gains," states Director Ben Guntrip, son of the company's founder Rhid.

Recol has been a user of AMADA technology since it was established nearly 40 years ago. Today, the company has an array of AMADA machines, including an LC3015F1 CNC laser profiling centre with material tower and an ACIES CNC punch/laser combination machine with load/unload automation.

Recol

"We had automated other aspects of our process chain with great success, so bending seemed a natural progression," says Mr Guntrip. "AMADA have never given us a reason to look elsewhere, so when we heard about the HG-ARs at EuroBlech 2014, we were keen to learn more."

The HG-ARs is a fully integrated robotic press brake system with a six-axis robot (motion) plus one axis travel, automatic gripper changer (AGC) and ATC with patented AMADA tooling. Each stage of the bending process, including tool loading, gripper exchange and robotic bending, is performed at fast speeds to maintain high levels of unmanned machine productivity. It supports workpieces up to 1000 x 800mm, with a weight capacity of 20kg.

Recol's trip to EuroBlech was followed by a visit to AMADA's European Robot Technical Centre in Italy, which had a working prototype of the HG-ARs. Mr Guntrip took along a few jobs and the automated press brake system performed extremely well considering the short amount of time available. The order for the system was cemented in July 2015, when the team was invited to AMADA Japan. Here, the company challenged the machine with some of its most complex jobs.

"Not only did the automated system perform really well, but we were taken to see one of the first users in Japan," says Mr Guntrip. **"Interestingly they had migrated from the previous AMADA automated press brake system – the Astro – and strongly preferred the new HG-ARs."**

"With the HG-ARs the operator simply pushes the button and walks away to start doing other things, such as programming new jobs," says Mr Guntrip. "We have already started using the HG-ARs overnight, unattended. Ultimately it has changed the way we do things, as well as the way we quote. Taking labour out of the equation through automation is the only way to level the playing field."

Duly installed in February 2016, the machine has been set to work producing a range of different components, some of which are extremely complex, for industries that include telecommunications, construction, food and pharmaceuticals.

The six-axis robot offers a wide range of motion capabilities to perform all part loading, bending and unloading operations. What's more, during bending, a potentiometer back-gauge system with additional side gauge compensates for any deviation when the workpiece is placed in the die. This ensures that parts are produced consistently with maximum accuracy.

Batch sizes at Recol are mid-range, typically from 10 to 1000-off. With this in mind, the system had to offer sufficient flexibility in terms of minimising set-up times when changing from one job to another.

"With the ATC we can change jobs really quickly," states Mr Guntrip. "For instance, setting up one of our manual press brakes for a complex bending job can take 45 minutes. However, this is reduced to around 90 seconds using the HG-ARs. Differences of such magnitude are game-changers."

AMADA's ATC ensures that tools are loaded quickly and precisely. Four tool manipulators quickly load tooling from 15 punch stockers and 18 die stockers. Each stocker can hold 800mm in tooling, which brings the ATC's tool capacity to over 26.4m.

"With the ATC we can change jobs really quickly,"

Further process flexibility is imparted by the machine's 8m rail – the first of its type in Europe – which allows Recol to have more loading stations, and hence more jobs in progress.

"It's a hungry machine that's for sure," says Mr Guntrip. "Indeed, we are now actively seeking more work to help fill its capacity. If we can achieve this we will shorten our ROI and look at investing in another, possibly the smaller version."

The Recol vision has always been that of high quality goods with manufacturing flexibility and excellent customer service. To this end, the company places strong emphasis on its programme of reinvestment in the very latest technology developments. Recol believes that this forward-looking approach has secured its place within a very competitive market, and helped gain a strong and diverse customer base within the UK and Europe.

"Customers today want more than simply a good price, they want a package that comprises right-first-time, on-time, good quality product – and the same next time," concludes Mr. Guntrip. "They want a partnership based on added value solutions, which is where we excel. We work with our customers to help develop parts that are suited to the manufacturing technologies available, passing on any resulting savings. This proactive stance has helped us retain some customers for over 30 years. Indeed, with regard to the HG-ARs, we've had customers come in to see what jobs might possibly lend themselves to our new investment. For us, this signifies that we have made the right decision."

SKANDIA TARGETS RETURN ON INVESTMENT WITH AMADA AUTOMATION

Skandia Elevator, a Swedish family owned business has partnered with AMADA to provide technical solutions to meet their lean production needs. The company operates two AMADA compact storage systems, connected to three AMADA EM punching machines. Since the installation of the first system, Skandia's turnover has more than tripled, thanks to 50,000 hours production from these systems.

Skandia Elevator is the European market leader in grain handling equipment, with products sold in 28 countries. The company has a long history dating back to 1914; when it was established by the grandfather of today's owners Joakim and Jonas Larsson. A milestone in the company's history was establishing its export business model in 1975, today accounting for 80% of turnover. Skandia specialises in grain elevators with a complete range of galvanized steel modular solutions capable of moving 30-600 tonnes of grain per hour. Another unique strength is their complete service offering, demonstrated by their latest campaign 'Happy Farmers'; this includes annual product training held at Skandia's headquarters in Vara, Sweden.

Jonas Larsson, Vice President at Skandia Elevator, proudly stated "Being made in Sweden is important to cement our strong brand. Furthermore, our product quality is very high; this enables a 10-15% higher selling price. Conversely operating in Sweden means we have to optimise machine hours to remain competitive."

Skandia Elevator

The strong relationship between Skandia and AMADA began more than 25 years ago with Skandia's first investment, a 1989 AMADA ARIES punching machine. The company's second AMADA machine was a 2001 VIPROS punching machine with automation, this machine provided a competitive edge with its forming capability. In 2007 Jonas and Joakim visited AMADA headquarters in Japan. Following the trip, they invested in their first AMADA compact storage system with EM electric punching machine.

Skandia is a forward thinking company with the aim to become the global leader in grain handling equipment. This approach is also applied to their investment planning.

Jonas added "At the time the investment was planned for future capacity, but this quickly become current demand. The AMADA EM CS solution allowed for a 98% increase in sales to be sustained within a year. This was due to both expansion into Eastern Europe and the marked increase in bio-fuel production in the USA affecting global markets. At this time, grain was the new gold".

Lean principles were adopted in 2006 by Skandia to improve competiveness. At this time a trend of decreasing batch sizes was also observed. These factors led to a move towards machines with automatic tool changing capabilities. In 2012, Skandia took delivery of a second AMADA compact storage line with 741 tonnes of capacity and two EM punching machines with automatic tool changing. Jonas emphasises that tool changing functionality was very important to allow for changeover of different material thicknesses unmanned.

"Ten years ago our typical batch size was 250, now it's around 45. The flexibility needed was achieved through automation. Production that previously took 24 hours can now been completed in one".

AMADA HG and HG-ATC high speed press brakes are Skandia's latest AMADA investments. These machines are fully programmed in the production office, with AMADA's offline bending software. The machines have allowed the second shift for a five week period to be removed. In addition, the solution has seen a shift from 4 operators running 2 machines to 2 operators running 3 machines. This has allowed operators to move around the business providing production flexibility.

"The automatic functionality of the programming software has seen a 75% reduction in programming time. Furthermore if 3D part data is available, the processing time is halved compared to working with 2D data."

Jonas believes that operators' opinions are important when considering investment into new machinery. He involved the operators heavily in the decision for this latest investment. The updated AMNC 3i machine controller was a well-received feature with operators finding it easy to use and understand. So much so that an operator recently re-joined the business and learnt his way around the HG-ATC within 15 minutes.

The automatic tool changer supported the company's current drive to reduce setup time across the bending division to 20 minutes per batch including all material handling. The in-line angle measurement system has also contributed towards this lean goal, as well as eliminating the need for producing 2-3 test parts to ensure their high standards are met.

AMADA HG and HG-ATC high speed press brakes are Skandia's latest AMADA investments

"Our philosophy towards capital investment is to think future capacity requirements, not present. We consider the return across the next 10 years. The solution must enable continual improvement and enhance the work environment. We trust AMADA to provide the right solution to match our needs".

AMADA's solution combines the latest generation of machines, software, tooling, peripheral equipment and engineering solutions to meet the high demands of their customers.

FASTER AND HIGHER PRODUCTION QUALITY

Lacovale

"From the beginning we realised AMADA offers high quality both in products and service, we knew this would allow us to offer our customers faster delivery and superior quality. AMADA is an international market leading manufacturer, providing a complete solution for machines, tools, software, service and parts. We have chosen to invest in the latest technology on offer, bringing Lacovale's equipment up to date with worldwide recognized quality. The dealings that we have had with AMADA as a company have been extremely professional, with fantastic service and customer support since the very first contact."

Lacovale is a company where the dedication of their staff is key to their success! We could not be the company we are today without the contribution and commitment of all our employees, from the welder to the management team, Lacovale is a successful company where everyone is equally important – comments Bárbara Cardoso from Lacovale's Marketing department.

Contrary to all forecasts that predict that a Portuguese company has on average, a life expectancy of just 10 years, Lacovale has now reached its 20th anniversary in 2016. Adapt to grow, is our motto! Since we were first established in 1996, we have adapted and responded to the demands of a market that is constantly fluctuating, consequently have been rewarded with continuous growth. Our activity has evolved over these 20 years and nowadays we are a multifaceted company with services ranging from laser cutting, bending, welding and machining too our a vast range of electrostatic painting solutions, very different to the company's initial activity.

As our goal is always to guarantee our customers a "turnkey solution", as AMADA is represented in Portugal by someone we fully trust, it made us wonder what solutions AMADA could offer to help us achieve our goals.

Lacovale has always looked for a future using the right resources believing that would lead to our success. It is important to make the appropriate investments for continuous growth, investments that can place us on the same level as the biggest Portuguese sheet metal companies. We selected AMADA as a partner in business and AMADA's machinery, we are sure, will help Lacovale to maximise our investment in the future. The AMADA equipment we invested in includes a CO_2 Laser (LCG 3015), Fibre Laser (LCG 3015 AJ), Press brake (HFE3i1003), 2D Fabrivision, and AMADA software (Dr. ABE Blank, Production Designer and AP100) they added important advancements in our service. Lacovale is also looking for a brighter future overseas and having an internationally recognized company such as AMADA on our side allows us to face new markets confidently knowing that we are fully prepared and qualified for this demanding task. Prior to the purchase of the laser cutting machines, we were using subcontracting companies, and therefore had to deal with the restrictions inherent to it. Now, our quick response, capability and quality of service make us one of the most qualified company in this sector of the industry.Our relationship with AMADA promises to be enduring. Their technical support, given by a young and enthusiastic team of engineers, is quick to respond to any questions or issues we have, this is a big advantage for us. They are able to support us in all aspects of our production and are continuously giving training to our programmers and operators. Being able to fully satisfy a customer's requirement is not simply a matter of having the right machine. In today's highly competitive market a fully integrated philosophy is a necessity. AMADA wants to contribute to the success of their customers, as much as (or more than) selling machinery. They pursue opportunities for their customers, creating a business network for all those involved.

"They have also exceeded our own high expectations, this is obviously one of the factors distinguishing AMADA from the other manufacturers."

AMADA will always be at the forefront of our choices, not only because of its high quality machinery and service but also because AMADA proposes solutions that can take our business to the next level.

AMADA UK
info@amada.co.uk
+ 44 (0)1562 749 500
www.amada.co.uk

AMADA NORWAY
info@amada.no
+ 47 64 97 31 00
www.amada.no

AMADA DENMARK
info@amada.dk
+ 45 75 63 14 00
www.amada.dk

AMADA SPAIN
amada@amada-mi.es
+34 93 474 27 25
www.amada-mi.es

AMADA SWEDEN
info@amadasweden.se
+ 46 (0) 322-209900
www.amadasweden.se

AMADA PORTUGAL
info@amada.pt
+ 351 308 809 511
www.amada.pt