

# All Glass STEPPING OUT INTO THE LIMELIGHT TO SAY: “WE REALLY DID IT!”



After over ten years of important activity in the manufacture of machinery for the cold end of glassworks, the company presented in this article has finally decided to come out from behind the scenes to speak about itself, its machines and developments, and more important, what it has decided to do in the future. All based on the dynamism and passion of its founders and owners.

All Glass was set up thanks to the experience and ability of the founders, in an area – just outside the city of Parma, northern Italy – where there are many other companies working in the packaging and transport sector.

*Glass Machinery Plants and Accessories* went to visit the company, where we spoke to the two founders of All Glass: Mr. Luigi Orlandini and Mr. Marco Domenico Ballerini. Francesco Diemmi – Italian Sales Manager – was also present.

Ballerini: All Glass has never been a company to boast about what it has done – we leave that part of ‘advertising’ to our clients. And this seems to have been working incredibly well. In fact, without being involved in complex advertising campaigns, the company has, since its founding in 1999, grown from a five-person staff into the 70 people of today, and is recognized in diverse areas of the world for its ‘special’ and custom-built machinery.

Orlandini: Let’s take a step back and speak a little about the world of

glass and the general situation until some years ago. Those who were present at that time have been living each in their own little niche and were highly jealous about their technology, ability and products.

Let’s not forget that *Saint-Gobain* built its first palletizers in-house, while *Owens-Illinois* set down the bases of the idea for palletizers that were then used the world over. At both the hot- and cold-end of glassworks, technology had a fundamental importance.

To those observing the market situation, it seemed as if all companies were working together but in reality it was not true. And rightly so because this is competition and the market needs competition.

Then, as time moved on, especially with regards to the cold end, companies started to understand that the problems the hollow glass industry was having – containers especially, but also tableware – were caused, with regards to glass-makers, by the strong competitiveness of the market. And at one point, glassmakers had to even get involved with marketing and not only with machinery and products. Now, for example, all companies with products in glass are starting



to demand containers with 'designer' shapes and sizes, which are creating serious problems for machinery manufacturers due to the difficulty in automation and in transporting these special items.

In the last few years, and thanks to our experience in this sector and to our primary position, we have taken on this idea - it's not important to appear but it is important to have an excellent relationship with your clients, protecting our interest as far as technology is concerned, but also protecting our clients' interests too. This means conser-

ving all the series of ad hoc machinery that we make for each of our clients.

Many of these aspects are starting to disappear and know how is becoming global and can be found in any technical office around the world.

There are no standard series of machinery manufactured at All Glass. Everything is made to measure and, therefore, the price is not standard either.

Another strong point is our availability - which is mostly 24/7 for 365 days of the year. This total availability and dedication to our clients and their needs has brought

us to the position we have today.

*Glass Machinery Plants & Accessories (GMP&A): So how can you be competitive without having to advertise excessively?*

Orlandini: We rely basically on word of mouth. Our clients are our advertising as they speak with their clients who then speak with other glassmakers. We have always worked this way and it has proved correct. And, as for all machinery manufacturers, there is a high level of jealousy when technical ability is concerned.

Another aspect regards our clients - we consider protecting their interests a fundamental aspect of not revealing too much about our machinery.

*GMP&A: If this is true, why have you now decided to change this company philosophy?*

Orlandini: Times are changing and we are seeing companies

affirming that they were the first company to have developed a certain type of mechanism or to have installed a machine at a glassworks. In many of these cases, All Glass developed or installed these products and machines before them and we now think that it is important to make these situations known to our present clients and to those who will contact us in the future. It is therefore becoming more and more important to inform the market what we are doing and the level of technology that we have.

We all have our special projects and ongoing developments that we do not want to reveal but there is always something that can be said and publicized.

As a company already well-known and recognized for its products the world over, All Glass does not want to start being aggressive or to attack its competitors. We will continue to follow the philosophy that we have always had and leave the judgement of our ability and technology to our clients.

If we want to explain why we have decided to do it only now, this is because, as we just said, most companies are very jealous of their technology and are not always willing to inform their competitors of their methods of working and the machinery that they have.

This situation has changed somewhat as we are all connected worldwide and it is rather difficult to 'keep a secret'! Information passes back and forth across the Internet and finding out about something is almost immediate.

**THE HISTORY OF ALL GLASS**

Orlandini: Our history is quite simple - just like many of the smaller companies set up 10 to 15 years ago in northern Italy - a group of technicians and businessmen get together and decide to set up a company. And the idea of the founders of the new company was, and still is, to create a series of innovations in machinery and tech-



nology based on the requests and needs of clients.

*GMP&A: How did All Glass manage to become an active part of this sector, since there were already a number of 'famous' names already working on machinery? You already spoke about special lines.*

Orlandini: It would be more correct to speak about special demands rather than special lines.

Diemmi: The ability of All Glass was that of being constantly - also during this growth period - flexible to the utmost. And we have always done this, as Marco Ballerini said, by working behind the scenes, without publicizing our developments too much, and therefore also protecting the interests of our clients.

We have and are always ready to live 'in the field' and experience and solve first-hand the problems that glassmakers have with the solutions that we can provide.

All Glass and our work is not only that of sitting at a desk and speaking to clients on the phone or communicating over the Internet. For us it is having a first-hand relationship, speaking to clients at their

premises and being available for them continuously.

Orlandini: This same flexibility is also valid for our plants and machinery. In fact, over the past few years, we have created a series of new projects and lines that have made our name well known to glassmakers worldwide.

The fact that we are here speaking to a magazine now does not mean that we have changed our way of thinking or working - no! It just means that we would like to inform the glass industry of what we have done over these past years - and what we intend to do in the future.

All Glass' success is based on its humble approach to its clients, the ability to listen to them and together find a solution to their problems - following our company philosophy.

*GMP&A: Many machinery manufacturers say that All Glass has the lowest prices on the market, making their life difficult. What have you got to say to that?*

Orlandini: This is not true at all. If anything, our prices are normally the same or even higher than our competitors because of the special



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features that all our machines have. Being custom-made, we cannot lower prices much as there is a lot of work involved for each and every machine that we make. In any case, we hope that our competitors continue to say this – it's good advertising for us!

**Ballerini:** We can give another example of how our prices are no less than our competitors. We have gained two new projects in Egypt, even with prices higher than those of our competitors – involving four palletizers and lines as well as another project in Saudi Arabia.

Our philosophy is that of not wanting to enter the 'price war' and if we see this happening, we walk away and look for another market. We cannot, as we have already said, lower our prices because of the special features of our machines and because they are really and truly made to measure.

**GMP&A:** What does All Glass consider as its flagship product or strongpoint?

**Orlandini:** We think that our best quality is our technical ability. All our personnel have some level of technical information and instruction. With our machinery and technology it is essential that



our personnel are able to speak about technical matters to clients. We think that we are one of the top companies in the development of new technology.

This is not only because we are good at what we do, but also because we simply listen to our clients.

Nowadays, many new models

of bottles and containers are specially designed and therefore need specific changes or adaptations to the palletizing machines or transport belts to move them from one area to another.

Our ability is therefore that of

being able to create a machine 'around' these new bottles and shapes, able to transport them without creating problems or causing damage to the items.

Most glassworks know the name All Glass for our transport lines but, in 2010, we were probably the company that manufactured the highest number of palletizers for glass containers.

One of the other strongpoints of All Glass is its commercial department. We may give the impression – and our main competitors are first to say – that we are not organized at all and that our commercial department is weak, but if we have reached the position that we have today it is also due in part to our commercial people.

If we speak about our competitors, we are speaking about companies with more than 50 years of history and experience, and with a completely different way of working and organization.

We must always consider the most important aspects – our company first of all but also our com-

petitors, both positive and negative. The fact that in our field of work competition is strong can only be considered positive and interesting.

Each client can judge for himself which of these competitors he wants to work with, on the basis of his needs.

It is not our intention to discredit our competitors, because it is by recognizing the value of these companies that we can move on and develop. In fact, All Glass always recognizes the value of its competitors and it is thanks to this that we are able to organize the financial aspect of our offers in a certain way. We do not want to break into the market with drastic price cuts.

A market must have competition or it would not exist, and competition must be of a certain level and quality to be able to create a real challenge for us at All Glass and, of course, for our competitors.

**Orlandini:** We have, in fact, made our life a lot harder by not

lowering our prices. It's too easy to accept to cut prices right down to be able to win a contract, but this is not the philosophy of All Glass. At the same time, we have never copied the ideas of other companies and this can be seen in all our machines – which are, as we have already said, made to measure as per our clients' needs and demands.

I was the person to design and patent the first universal palletizer 20 years ago, as well as the first complete straight lines for the transport of shaped articles.

While our competitors were producing portal and pantograph machines, we had the double column palletizer, and we have made, sold and installed hundreds of these machines. Simple, flexible machines, low costs for maintenance. This is a clear demonstration as to how we did not follow the footsteps of our competitors, but we took a completely different direction as far as technical aspects are concerned.

**GMP&A:** There are certainly facts and figures that can demonstrate these situations and the fact that All Glass is certainly among the leading companies of the sector ...

**Ballerini:** In the last two years, 90 per cent of the machinery for the cold end of one of the major global glassmakers has been manufactured by All Glass.

We are also working on other important projects, which will be revealed when the time is right for us.

**Orlandini:** Facts and figures – easy to see. From five people at the beginning – 1999 – we have now reached 70 employees. We started up by exploiting the contacts that we had – always with discretion and without being aggressive. Our aim was to provide special and made to measure machinery for clients. Today, the market is almost



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entirely taken up by made to measure and custom built technology. All projects have some percentage of speciality and flexibility.

About 95 per cent of the projects that we carried out in 2010 (and since 2009) involve special and personalized machinery. If, in the past, our clients wanted to know about the technical aspects of the machines, today they are requesting speed, shapes and yield of the machines, or, in the second case, the glassmaker who needs to transport different types and sizes of containers or diversified production at the same time, all with the highest speed.

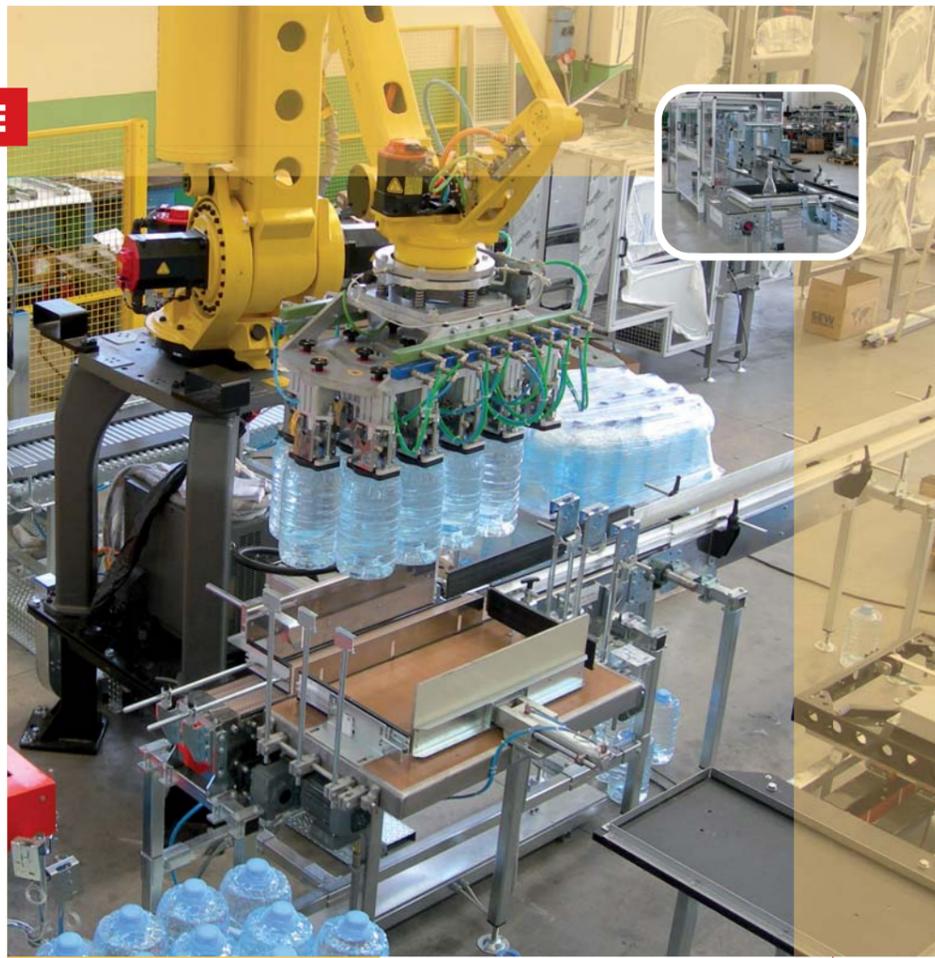
Eight out of ten projects today have important technical components.

*GMP&A: Do you intend to increase your presence in other market areas, developing your network of agents?*

Orlandini: It's not easy, but we already have some interesting contacts. The agents that we look for are all specialized in this sector. This means that we need people with a technical background, and not only commercial. We are speaking about people who have real, in the field experience in working with glassmakers and who therefore know about the machines and, moreover, are well-known by the same glassmakers. This means that he can speak to the clients with regards to technical and commercial aspects and, to some extent, pricing too. Economic aspects also regard the availability and possibility of obtaining fundings for the machines.

In All Glass' situation, and because we do not deal with standard machinery, our agents need to know us and our products very well.

And now, considering the present global market, we think that it is time to start to look at market areas where we have not had any contacts until now.



Orlandini: In my opinion, and looking back over the years, especially the last two or three, our commercial network has seen steady growth. However, because we need commercial collaborators with specific technical background and knowledge, it has always been and is, even now, very difficult to find the right person.

Therefore, our search for agents is a slow and laborious task – and is not easy to realize. We need people with dynamism, and who are well-known by global glassmakers.

*GMP&A: So what is All Glass aiming to do in the future? How will you deal with the continuous ongoing globalization?*

Orlandini: Even if we are basically a company that enjoys working 'behind the scenes' and without making a fuss over what it does, the time has come to inform glass-

works of what we have done and what we can do now. With regards to technical aspects, what we want to do now is not only to put on show what we do and have done, but also to demonstrate that what other companies have done, we probably did before them.

As far as the future is concerned, we will continue to work the way we have always done – responding to our clients' needs with special and custom-made machinery – with innovation, technology, flexibility and more. ■



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