

GSC Group expands its automotive horizons

The Italian leather chemicals supplier is focusing on sustainability and new product innovation to drive its international growth.

Italian leather chemicals supplier GSC Group, based in the heart of the Veneto tanning cluster in Arzignano, has been operating primarily in the domestic market for the past 45 years and is a leading name in the Italian leather industry. It is a privately-owned business under the stewardship of the Serafini family, headed by CEO Adriano Serafini. The company was quick to recognise a shift in focus by some key Italian tanners towards the automotive sector, and it supported this move with research and development. Going a step further, now it has decided to enter the next phase in its development by expanding its technology internationally. GSC has partnered with Austria headquartered agency Daniela Matyk, a specialist in the leather industry, to reach beyond the Italian market. The Group says it is aware of the issues that are facing the

automotive leather business in the future, including towards more autonomous driving, car sharing and the emergence of electric vehicles. Added to this are pressures that tanners are facing from NGOs and animal rights groups such as Greenpeace and Peta, along with frequent misinformation about the industry from mainstream and social media. Led by Serafini, the group's core focus is now firmly fixed on its ESG (Environment, Social, Governance) goals. Upcoming legislation such as the recent German supply chain law and its expansion into the wider European Union present a challenge for the whole supply chain where cooperation between all partners and more open and transparent operations will be key. However, Serafini feels the time is right for expansion and the new motto 'For Leather, For you' is his way of expressing GSC's company philosophy and DNA.



The Board of Directors at GSC Group, spearheaded by the Serafini family. The privately owned company has been a leading name in the Italian leather sector for 45 years.

A new product range for auto leathers

GSC has expanded its portfolio of specialised products for the automotive leather wet-end as well as new dyestuffs and finishing chemicals. On the wet-end side, GSC has been developing a new range of greener chemical technologies following its involvement in the GOAST project, that was developed with the help of European Union funding. Also, recent announcements such as the ban of glutaraldehyde from 2024 means that GSC has created new tannages based on green wastewater from another industry that meet the stringent requirements of the automotive leather market. As chrome tanned leather is still the most prominent tannage, GSC offers a wide range of options to suit all leather types that offer a tight 'zero break' leather in both chrome or chrome-free. Furthermore, the company is

committed to the reduction of COD and BOD in the wastewater, aware of the increasing regulations by local water authorities governing its customers' operations and demands for cleaner solutions. With a range of fatliquors, GSC can adopt to customers' needs and specific requirements in seat and IP constructions. It also offers a complete range of automotive dyestuffs and can tailor make bespoke colours and specific solutions, for example, to produce high fastness properties for perforated leathers. In-house quality control will ensure that legal and quality requirements will remain traceable. Within its finishing portfolio, GSC has optimised its raw material supply and the company can produce very low to zero VOC (volatile organic compound) products that perform well with all application equipment. Low odour leathers, in particular for the Asian market, are a core focus, especially around VOC emissions. With the total range of just under 50 automotive products, GSC has created a product architecture that can meet every OEM requirement, from the most supple stretch and softness, to the most astringent abrasion requirements, along with all the physical resistances required for the drivers of today.



CEO Adriano Serafini is leading the growth and expansion of GSC Group.

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In addition to the existing portfolio of automotive leather chemicals, a new automotive leather line will be launched at the end of 2021 that encompasses the latest technology and innovation and has made great progress towards a non-fossil fuel dependent range.

Focus on sustainability

Going forward, sustainability will remain a key strategic focus for GSC as it believes it is an important "anchor point" for the years ahead. According to Adriano Serafini, it has gained "new meaning and vision, being viewed from 360 degrees, starting from the raw material supply to the shipping of sustainable products", all of which is "under microscopic scrutiny". Therefore, GSC has made some important investments to certify its production, safety and environmental standards. The current certifications are ISO 9001, ISO 14001 and ISO 45001. GSC Group has also installed photovoltaic panels at its headquarters as clean energy source. Last year, the Group obtained the GHG (greenhouse gas) certification for its reduced environmental impact and carbon footprint and it is the first chemical supplier in the sector to be part of the Carbon Footprint Italy national register. |