

# Optimism Tempered by Caution at the Fastener Fair in Stuttgart

by Marco A. Guerritore,  
Editor-in-Chief of  
"Italian Fasteners" Magazine



"There is no doubt that this fair in Stuttgart," says Paolo Dell'Era of Dell'Era Ermanno e Figlio srl, "is the most important event of its kind specialising in fasteners in Europe. It was in fact the first in the sector and over time it has gained strength and confirmation."

For three days, from 28 to 30 March, 894 fastener operators from five continents showed their best and most interesting products on their stands. The event now fills three pavilions in the Stuttgart trade fair complex, halls 1, 3 and 5 with a total surface area of 20,800 m<sup>2</sup>. 895 exhibitors representing 91 countries welcomed over 11,000 highly qualified, very interesting visitors from 91 countries and the range of articles on the show included a huge array of fasteners, for industrial and building use and more. Exhibitors also included manufacturers of machinery, storage technology, communication and services. There were also plenty of distributors present, looking to expand their zones. Visitors were mainly from Germany, followed by Italy, Great Britain, France, Poland, Holland and Spain. Those from Asia were primarily from Taiwan, China, Turkey, India and South Korea.

There is no doubt that organisation of a fair like the Stuttgart one requires huge effort from its promoters and considerable investment from its exhibitors, raising the obvious question: "In this era of digital technology and IT, is there any sense in still organising and taking part in a sector trade fair?" We put this question to a small sample of exhibitors and received a variety of answers.

"Sector fairs are still valid today," stresses Stefano Bronzini, Sales Director for ARSER Srl, "as personal contact is necessary otherwise it is only for handing out your catalogue and re-establishing your brand's value."

Gianbattista Calabria, Sales Director for INOX VITI Snc, also sees fairs mainly as a means for contacting clientele.

But there are those operators who have started to wonder if the organisational and economic effort needed for participation in a fair are then justified.

"In this digital era, whether to take part or not in a sector fair," says Laura Missaglia, owner of SCOB Srl, "is a question that many of us are starting to ask. This fair in Stuttgart especially has become very big, meaning that some visitors told me it is no longer user-friendly. For us it is however still an excellent opportunity for meeting our clients."

But not everyone would agree, with some thinking that the set-up of the Stuttgart fair is a positive aspect.

"For us a fair like this," emphasises Stéphanie Dupuis, External Relations and Legal Affairs Manager at NOF Metal Coatings Europe S.A. "is still a very important event. It allows us to have lots of contacts: with our clients and with other parties in our market. The power of a show lies in its capacity to physically unite a large number of operators while digital is a powerful yet



P. Dell'Era, Dell'Era Ermanno e Figlio Srl, Manufacturer of Steel Fasteners



M. Pizzi, Carlo Salvi SpA, Manufacturer of Machines for the Production of Fasteners



S. Bronzini, Arser Srl, Manufacturer of Steel Fasteners without heads



impersonal means of communication. In the past we used to mainly hand out paper, now information is primarily diffused via digital media.”

“The bottom line,” says Marco Pizzi, Sales Director at Carlo Salvi S.p.A., “is that fairs are still a useful means enabling human contact and integrating digital work.”

In other words, most of the exhibitors asked are convinced that the fair is a valid tool, above all for the direct, human contact it offers with clientele. In three days a large number of people and clients can be seen, who would otherwise have to be visited individually, a lengthy process involving great expense.

Evolving times and circumstances are however calling for adaptation also by the trade fair sector. In the future, shows will definitely have to find equilibrium and will need to answer questions and meet the requirements of exhibitors, but also, and above all, of visitors.

We must not ignore the fact that there are proactive fairs such as those for automobiles, electronics and so on that present new products awaited by consumers and then there are fairs like those for fasteners that are not so proactive as product renewal in this sector is much slower and however not as decisive.

Any new initiatives are therefore welcome.

At this edition of the Stuttgart fair, an initial step towards renewal was certainly taken with organisation of a series of seminars, which were very popular and well-attended by the public. The programme included 15 seminars, with an average of 5 a day.

The first day was dedicated to machines that produce fasteners.

The first speech was given by Enrico Brigatti—Sales Manager at SACMA Group, followed by Jerry Bupp—Vice President of Sales and Marketing at National Machinery LLC, Christian Bürgin Management Board member at Carlo Salvi and Manuel Vogelsang, head of the thread rolling die

G. Calabria, Inox Viti Snc, Manufacturer of Stainless Steel Fasteners



department at WAFIOS Umformtechnik.

The second day was given over to associations and the press. With talks by Volker Lederer—President of the European Fastener Distributors Association (EFDA), Phil Matten—Executive Editor for Fastener & Fixing Magazine, followed by Anders Karlsson—President of the European Industrial Fasteners Institute (EIFI) and Barbara Sorgato—Secretary General of the European Consortium of Anchor Producers (ECAP) and finally, Thomas Holland-Letz—Deputy Managing Director of the Association of German Tool Manufacturers.

The third and last day looked at the topic of coatings. Talks were given by: Dennis Stritter from Atotech Deutschland GmbH and Eduard Rybka, European Sales Manager at Magni Group. The seminar session was brought to a close by Guus Vermeulen, Director for Business Development in Europe—Greenkote Plc.

The fair is also a catalyser for operators’ states of mind and above all it acts as a reliable finger on the sector’s economic pulse.

“The first three months of 2017,” noted Raoul Bontempi, owner of Bontempi Vibo SpA, “were very good for work in general thanks to a reawakening of the automotive sector, very important for the fastener sector.”

The increase in the cost of raw materials has also caused wholesalers in particular to integrate their warehouses, increasing product demand, in the opinion of Manuele Avanzolini—Director General of RIVIT Srl, a very competitive, determined producer of rivets and riveters that sells into fifty countries, most recently Morocco.

But the mist of economic uncertainty, due initially to Brexit and now to Trump’s unpredictable politics, are undermining this climate of optimism.



M. Caracciolo and S. Dupuis, NOF Metal Coatings Europe, Supplier of Corrosion Protection Systems for Metallic Parts



R. Bontempi, Bontempi Vibo SpA, Manufacturer of Steel and Stainless Steel Fasteners

“The recent past,” says Enrico Brigatti, Sales Director at SACMA Group, “has been very good for the fastener sector and as a consequence also for those of us who produce large machinery that produces screws, nuts and bolts.” But the future is worrying, especially in terms of political uncertainty on an international level.”

This political uncertainty is strengthening the winds of competition and is challenging international sales agreements. Growing dissatisfaction must not degenerate into protectionism.

All the operators asked said they were definitely against any form of protectionism because we need to distinguish fair competition from its unfair counterpart. The former contrasts with stronger company commitment, in other words with improved products and productivity, with greater and more attentive business management. Fair competition is a stimulus that does the manufacturer and consumer good, and therefore is good for the entire market. Unfair competition is quite different, and must be combated, but not with forms of restraining protectionism. The operators interviewed said that perhaps the right path is that of agreements, dialogue, sales commissions and a search for a solution via good politics.

In the search for agreement and sales stimulus, fairs provide a chance for countries to meet and discuss and could, in the future, play a specific role, thus finding their own evolutionary form.



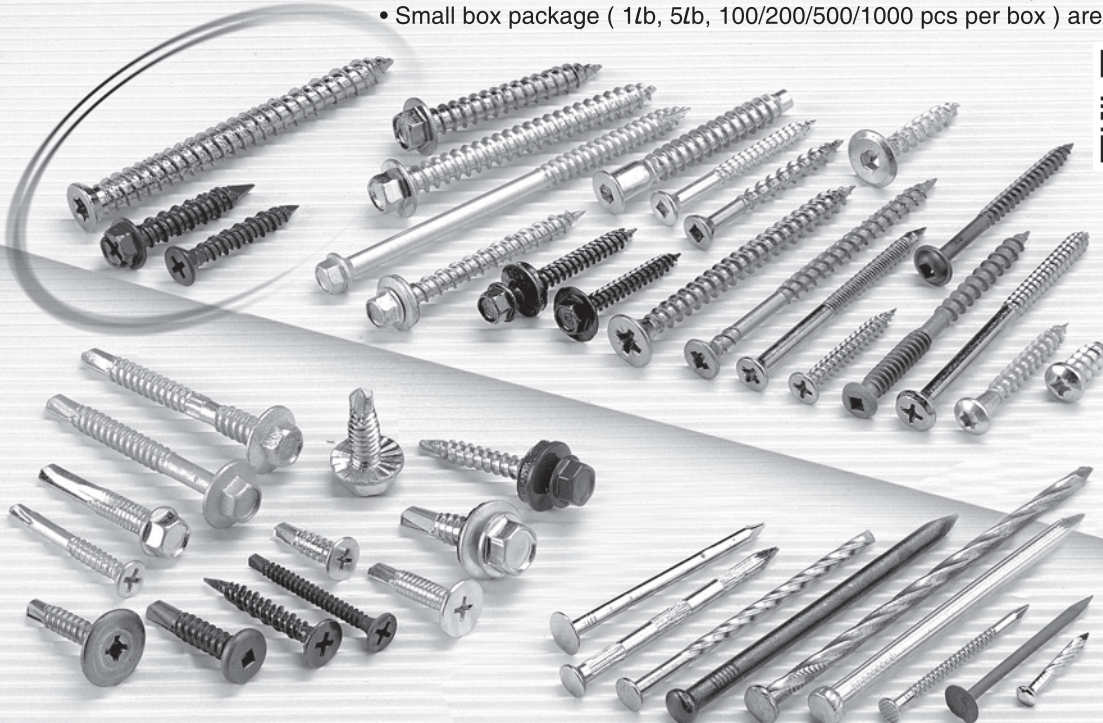
L. Missaglia, Scob Srl, Manufacturer of Hot-Forged Steel Fasteners



M. Avanzolini, Rivit Srl, Manufacturer and Distributor of Steel Fasteners and Relating Tools

## SCREWS & NAILS

- Masonry screw. Self-Drilling screw. Roofing screw. Chipboard screw
- Roofing Coil Nail. Drywall Nails. Concrete Nails. Common Nails. Bulk Nails.....
- Small box package ( 1lb, 5lb, 100/200/500/1000 pcs per box ) are welcome



### **GINFA WORLD CO., LTD.**

8F-3, No.185, Fu Kuo Road, Tsuo Ying Dist.,  
Kaohsiung, Taiwan 813

Tel: 886-7-557 6562

E-Mail: [gifa@ms15.hinet.net](mailto:gifa@ms15.hinet.net)

<http://www.fastener-world.com.tw/ginfa>

Fax: 886-7-557 5598

<http://www.ginfa.com.tw>