

With the purchase of its Lasertube LT8, Gatti & Frigerio Srl, Italy, is pursuing a strategy designed to diversify end markets

## Winking to structural **tubing**



The Gatti & Frigerio Srl was founded back in 1963 by Mr. Gatti and Mr. Frigerio, who recently welcomed us to their production facility located in Alserio, in the province of Como. The company employs about 60 people and operates as sub-contractor of semi-finished products mainly in the laboratory equipment industry, which is one of the few industries apparently not affected by the current economic crisis.

According to Mr. Frigerio, among all the events that have occurred during the past years of ac-

tivity, the application of laser technology in manufacturing processes has been a key step in the growth of the company. This important change took place about 10 years ago, when the first laser cutting systems for sheet metal were introduced and, at the same time, the company's facilities were extended with the purchase of two additional factory units.

Five years later, a second critical step was taken with the introduction of the first Lasertube machine, an ADIGE LT702. To some extent, this was a bit of a gamble, says Mr. Frigerio. While he really and profoundly believed in the great potential of tube laser cutting, in the beginning, he had to battle to convince customers of the countless advantages and opportunities of this new technology. Fortunately, the subsequent positive developments proved him right, and, after two years, the company purchased the second Lasertube, the LT712 model, and recently, to complete its range of equipment, the Gatti & Frigerio Srl has purchased also one ADIGE LT8 system, which is considered the most advanced laser tube processing system on the market.

### From the tube bundle to the finished product

Prior to using laser cutting systems, the tubes were cut with ADIGE sawing machines and then processed through sequential production stages: cutting, deburring, drilling etc. The production flow was continuously interrupted due to the need to move material from one work station to another. Laser technology has significantly simplified and optimized the production flow. In fact, laser cutting has replaced many of traditional operations with a single production stage which starts from the raw tube bundle and ends with the finished product, ready to be welded.

One interesting feature of the laser systems is the "cut-bend" function. Where 'v' notches are



cut into the tube allowing it to be bent by hand into a **the final structure from a single piece of tube**. This function consists in the possibility of cutting precise notches on the tube, to perform then on it different angles and multiple bends, thus obtaining one final work piece. In addition to simplifying the welding fixtures and the welding process, this function facilitates logistics in the workshop, as only one piece of tube has to be handled, resulting in significant time and cost savings.

The company works with the drawings provided by its customers. However, even if the customer has a clear idea of the final product and wants it to be made in accordance to the drawings, usually, they are very receptive to any knowledgeable suggestions based on the wealth of laser expertise from Gatti & Frigerio. As a result, the traditional customer – supplier relationship turns into a successful partnership.

### Larger tube diameters, but what a performance level!

Their recently acquired ADIGE LT8 laser system opens up Gatti & Frigerio's job shop services for the bigger dimensioned tube market.. The ability to process larger tube diameters, up to 220 mm with the LT8, allows them to diversify into new end-user markets and to compete in all sectors demanding larger tube diameters, such as the structural building, construction machinery and the furniture industries. There are still market sectors, where the demand is growing but the supply is not sufficient to fully cover it. As Mr. Frigerio points

out, the increase in tube capacity has not slowed down the output productivity of the LT8, on the contrary, it is even faster by comparison their two previous two machines. Finally, another important characteristic of the LT8, particularly valuable given the increasing size and thickness of tubes, is the 3D cutting head.

To conclude, Mr. Frigerio emphasizes his satisfaction with the relationship that his company and the BLM Group have been able to build; a strong relationship based on trust and continuous commitment. It is not only about providing the customer with a good service, it is even more important to support him in finding the best solutions to suit his requirements.

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