

Inspire

TOPIC

With SOMA, Automation Leads to **Greater Print Efficiency**

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Plate Mounters



Flexo Presses



Slitter Rewinders



Laminators



Stand Number: 4B21
Location: Hall 04



Where Intelligence Meets Automation

- Designed for short runs
- Print features that maximize quality
- Less mistakes, less waste, less time



www.soma-eng.com



PAVLA KUSA INTRODUCTION

Dear Readers!

“ We feel a strong commitment to each of you. We genuinely believe that a trusting partnership with our company leads to success for you, as well as SOMA.

At the beginning of the 1990s, exactly thirty years ago, my father decided to go into business and founded the company, SOMA. It was all in the uncertain spirit of ‘either...or!’ It had immediately followed the backdrop of the fall of the Iron Curtain and the Czechoslovakian Velvet Revolution in 1989. That brought us freedom, and enabled every citizen of my country to express our creativity and opinions—and to start our own businesses.

My father, who was a mechanical engineer, was surrounded by a team of very talented people across all professions, but especially designers and electrical engineers. They had a common dream to develop the most demanding technologies and manufacture and sell them to customers all over the world. At the beginning, none of them had any idea that the technology would develop into CI flexo printing, but they all had the ambition to create the best, highest quality, most innovative machines—no matter where they would find themselves.

Today, after thirty years, recollecting all the successes and failures experienced by our company to this moment, we could

compare the SOMA story to a fairy tale with a happy ending—but one that has not ended, yet. There has been no shortage of courage, struggles with adversity, fears, moments of uncertainty—along with some happiness and feelings of victory.

But, all of this could not have happened without the increasing trust from you, our customers and key suppliers. You all decided to enter into a long-term partnership with our company, where people can rely on each other.

Taking this short look back at the first thirty years of our history, on behalf of the SOMA team and my family, I would like to sincerely thank all of you, our partners. We thank you for your trust in our joint

partnerships, and for your enduring support in the many moments that helped define us, and discover new, innovative solutions. They allowed us to grow gradually, year after year, to the size and position we really appreciate now.

We feel a strong commitment to each of you. We genuinely believe that a trusting partnership with our company leads to success for you, as well as SOMA.

Thank you!

Pavla

A large industrial machine, likely a printing press, with a dark grey upper section and blue lower section. The machine has glass doors that are open, revealing internal mechanical components. The SOMA logo is illuminated in blue on the top right, and 'optima 2' is visible on the top left. The machine is situated in a factory or industrial setting with overhead pipes and lights.

SOMA



But, what really makes them special is that some mounters and presses also share an automated register and impression setting system. This allows presses to quickly get to register and set the press for exceptional print quality.



TOPIC

With SOMA, Automation Leads to Greater Print Efficiency

The requirements for superbly-printed packaging jobs have continued their change of course and more lower-volume packaging is being printed. If there was anything that defines the requirements of the modern flexo press, it is the need for preset, programmed systems that can deliver quickness and flexibility—particularly automation and agility. There are ways that SOMA Optima presses and S-Mount mounters have responded to these needs.

SOMA S-Mount mounters add intelligence to plate mounting and inserting sleeves into the press

Although not a piece of the press by itself, the mouter plays an important role in print quality and the speed of changeovers. When plate mounting is automatic, it accelerates the ability to make a plate available to go to press. With automatic precision, mounters assure exceptional registration. But, what really makes them special is that some mounters and presses also share an automated register and impression setting system. This allows presses to quickly get to register and set the press for exceptional print quality.

For example, the newly developed SOMA S-Mount automatic plate mouter, combined with the IRIS intelligent register & impression setting system—offers printers a powerful solution for short runs. During the process of mounting a flexo plate, data for registration and topography/impression settings are stored in RFID chips in a sleeve. When the sleeve is inserted into a SOMA Optima flexo press, this data is read and prepared for fully automatic operation, assuring very quick—and accurate—settings. There is no longer a burden on the press operator to tell the press where to set register and impression. It helps to assure that every job is automatically in perfect registration. This reduces makeready time and assures faster completion of jobs—along with almost zero-meter set-up waste—a flexible and agile solution for short runs.

How important is this? Printers (88%) in an FTA Flash Poll said it was vital to maximize efficiencies. When it comes to efficiency, 84% vowed to trim waste and 82% expect to enhance productivity—relating not only to speed, but to fast changeovers. They are quoted as saying, “Expect fast changes!” and “New innovations and equipment are allowing for much better process control.”

SOMA Changeover Wizard: Taking the guesswork out of changeovers

This brings us to unskilled press operation. Any job changeover requires a number of steps that need to be taken in proper order. With an automated self-directed system, even inexperienced operators may run the press and perform efficient changeovers. Each step is done properly, and in the correct order.

With the automated SOMA Changeover Wizard system—a 2022 FTA Technical Innovation award recipient—a flexo press operator can take advantage of the speedy transfer of all job information. It's what SOMA likes to call the recipe, required to set a flexo press correctly. Because this

prepared and verified data is pulled from SOMA's cloud-based S-Cloud system, there is not human error caused by re-typing information.

The SOMA Changeover Wizard user interface guides the press operator through all the steps involved from one job to the next. In doing so, it reduces the number of tasks or may shorten required tasks, defines their optimal order, and automates as many steps as possible, minimizing operator error.

The Changeover Wizard system, in an automated and agile way, analyzes differences between the job just printed and the job that follows. It advises what steps go first and last, because from job to job they don't always work in the same order. It is very intuitive—for example, providing tension or drying temperature settings based on the chosen substrate. If the system can do certain things by itself—for instance, opening a unit so a sleeve can be changed—it does so automatically, and reports that the task has been completed. It also lets experienced operators overrule any suggestion at any time. The Changeover Wizard process will continue, making agile adjustments based on the

operator's input.

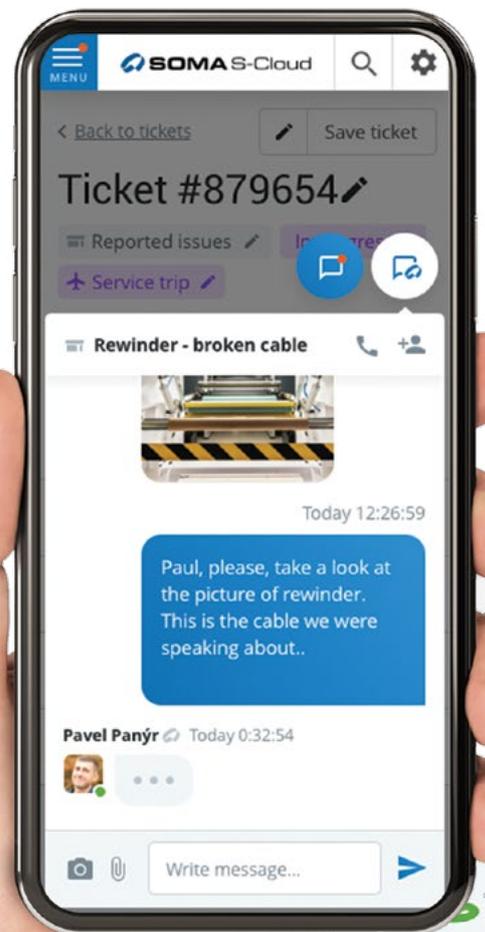
Beyond maximizing efficiencies and trimming costs (52%), 70% in the FTA study acknowledged the importance of manpower management and the adoption of best practices and process controls. An agile, automated Changeover Wizard does not rely on the manpower to do the work, and ensures that the best processes are adopted. Printers in the study said, “Adding automation in as many of the day-to-day tasks—software to machinery—will greatly reduce errors and miscommunication”, “Digitalization will help steer future production runs by eliminating waste, reducing makeready times and increasing press uptime,” and “Automation will be a large focus as labor is limited.”

SOMA Job Tuning: Ready for an automatic tune-up

The intelligence of drive mechanisms already analyzes performance. During job setup, taking less than one minute, SOMA can automatically tune the press with specially designed algorithms that



During the process of mounting a flexo plate, data for registration and topography/impression settings are stored in RFID chips in a sleeve. When the sleeve is inserted into a SOMA Optima flexo press, this data is read and prepared for fully automatic operation...



minimize the bouncing effect and ensure accurate registration for each particular design. SOMA's technology, Job Tuning, takes into consideration the dynamic effects of each bridge, the sleeve, the tape and the plate itself. It controls printing stability to assure exceptional levels of precision. By diminishing the majority of concerns for bounce with the help of built-in SOMA Advanced Bounce Control technology—of which Job Tuning is part—exceptional quality at extremely fast speeds is assured. Maintaining overall equipment effectiveness was important to 63% of those involved in the FTA Flash Poll.

Flexibility for any ink

Cost efficiencies pertain not only to the press (and our abilities to control costs on press by saving on labor and film costs), but to the packaging systems downstream. Packagers and more importantly, brand owners, are always looking for new materials that are easier to work with, and substrates and inks that are safe—for food products, for example.

Some of the same dynamics that have driven the interest in new substrates

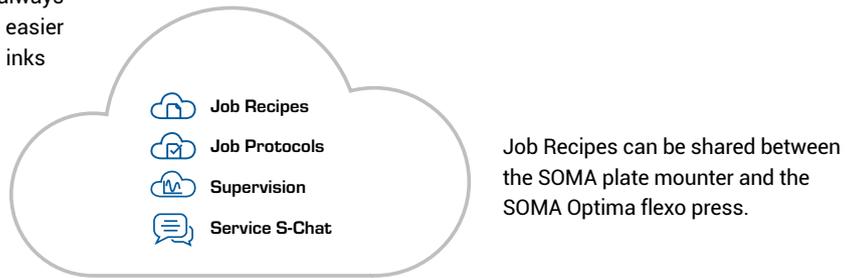
and ink systems are found in the trends towards sustainable packaging. In addition to research into new inks and substrates is the construction of packaging—particularly as it relates to the use of sustainable laminates. These requirements also are driving innovations in presses, to print effectively on a new generation of materials.

The SOMA Optima press can handle a variety of inks—solvent-based and water-based inks—as well as UV, UV LED, or EB inks. It means that our presses can print on a wide variety of substrates. In fact, SOMA Optima presses are capable of handling materials as thin as diaper substrates and as thick as paper board, opening up a wide world of flexible (including food) packaging, and labels; particularly cups and beverages. While allowing for more flexibility of substrates and work, it also holds color for printers and converters (of interest to 21% of the survey).

Looking at new flexo press technology to optimize production

More than half of those interviewed in the FTA Flash Poll admitted that they're considering a purchase of equipment to optimize production. In fact, 76% think that it is a necessity to optimize production now and into the future. We see that, ourselves. It's driving the press market in a big way. SOMA is finding that companies are replacing their 15-year-old presses with newer ones to keep up. They admit, as one printer acknowledged to us, that "Staying focused on new technology will improve overall equipment effectiveness." While few (8%) considered the application of Industry 4.0 as a primary objective, indeed everything SOMA is addressing meets this goal. The press has become the agile and automated computer—required to stay efficient.

(This article was originally published in the US, in the August issue of FLEXO.)



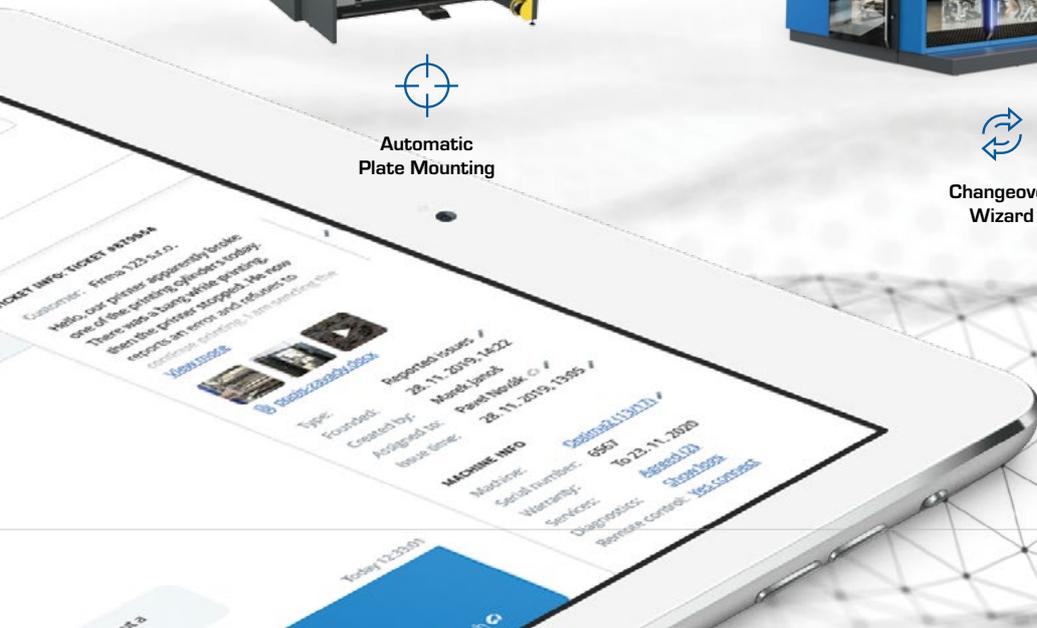
Automatic Plate Mounting



Changeover Wizard



Intelligent R&I Setting (IRIS)



SOMA S-Mount Plate Mounters:

Automation Makes a Difference

With greater demand for shorter run lengths in flexography, there comes the need for accuracy and efficiency upstream from the press. Makereadies must be as quick as possible. Thus, plate mounting becomes a critical offline activity for flexographic printing—and, an even more significant tool if done automatically. With excellent mounting precision, it reduces the time needed to mount plates and assures repeatable jobs. Any converter would also like to eliminate human interaction and mistakes in mounting. The perfect solution is automated mounting, which delivers exceptional precision and eliminates human errors.



When considering a new press—or just thinking about how to be more productive with the Optima press you already own, remember that plate mounting becomes a critical offline activity for flexographic printing.

exceptional registration. An automatic plate mounter helps to assure that a press can hold every color to registration, even before the job goes to the press.

An automatic mounter delivers two different types of efficiencies. While a manual mounter might take 20 minutes per color to affix a plate on a sleeve, it takes only a few minutes using an automatic mounter. It is not unusual to install an automatic plate mounter and double the output of sleeves. The efficiencies of an automatic mounter's precision are also found on the press. There is virtually no press downtime caused by improper mounting of the printing plate. So, the overall press efficiency increases. Because an automatic mounter places every plate in register, makereadies are faster.

The SOMA S-Mount: An advanced automated plate mounting system

SOMA has responded to increasing demands for productivity, short runs and greater accuracy with our next-generation S-Mount plate mounter.

The result was significant operator ease of use. The accurate and repeatable perfect registration makes it easier to set the register when the sleeve is placed into the press. When that process is used along with an accurate print setting system available on all S-Mount models as an option, there is no longer a manual

burden on the press operator to set—or tell the press where to set—the register and impression. It is done automatically.

Unlike similar machines that are available as different devices, the S-Mount offers three different levels of automation on the same piece of equipment. You can invest in a plate mounter for manual plate mounting and, as your business grows, upgrade it to automatic or fully automatic.

The S-Mount automatic plate mounter is extremely repeatable. The implementation of new optics and high-resolution cameras expands the use of automatic mounting inspection, letting operators check the accuracy of mounting. It has a motor-based movement that will place the plate, every time, exactly where it was 'trained' to do so. No one is asked to make a decision or perform adjustments during the mounting process. The operator 'tells' the mounter what to look for—a microdot, crosshair or any specific mounting mark—and where to mount the plate, and the machine does the rest.

Best of all, it is very simple and intuitive to operate the S-Mount. The device performs a series of calibrations on its own to ensure a constant level of accuracy and reliability. If an unexpected situation occurs in the mounting process, the operator is notified immediately and can easily solve the problem. Everyone can adjust the settings according to their requirements. Defining



Scan to read more about S-Mount

a new job has never been easier.

There is a lot of data that can be shared between software and hardware systems, moving job and registration data from step and repeat prepress systems to mounters and, ultimately, other information to the press. Key parameters, such as changeover information, plate topography measurements, register measurements and press energy consumption are just some of the data being communicated. SOMA is preparing 'intelligent' flexographic process features that will arrive soon, starting with our own cloud-based network—the SOMA S-Cloud—to share an impressive amount of data between prepress, mounting and printing, as well as to slitters and laminators.

So, in summary, what makes the SOMA S-Mount a great choice? Actually, there are a number of reasons.

- **It is accurate:** SOMA responded to ever-increasing demands for productivity, short runs and, most important, increasing demands on accuracy. The S-Mount plate moulder put the emphasis on accurate—and quick—plate mounting. Accuracy makes it easier to set the register when the sleeve is placed into the press. When that

process is used along with the precision of the IRIS print setting system, there is no longer a manual burden on the press operator to set or tell the press where to adjust register and impression. It is done automatically with minimum waste involved. The result also makes it significantly easier for the operator to use.

- **It is fast:** Where quick turnarounds are critical, the S-Mount dramatically accelerates the make-ready time on the press. When mounting plates automatically, it can take approximately 45 seconds per plate. During that saved time, the operator can do something else: prepare additional plates, tape, or create job specifications for a new job.
- **It is versatile:** It can also mount plates on machines with different core diameters and sleeve widths, and adapts to different print setting systems.
- **It communicates well:** If you invest in an Optima press, you get all the benefits of SOMA Intelligent Automation. The S-Mount connection to the Optima press ensures the easy transfer of job recipe data—communicating all of the job details—offering further intelligent functions unique in the market. Because the S-Mount is connected to our

S-Cloud solution, it will be possible to monitor the load of the machine online, prepare recipes from the office, or order spare parts.

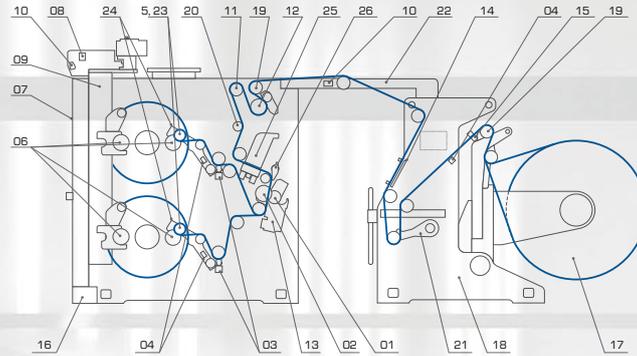
- **It is cost-effective:** You can initially invest in an S-Mount for manual plate mounting and, as your business grows, upgrade it to full automation.

A good, automatic moulder can easily deliver an attractive ROI. Because automatic mounting reduces makeready times when setting a job up on press, it delivers added capacity and completes jobs faster. The mounting staff can be reduced and people can be re-allocated to other areas in the facility.

So, when considering a new press—or just thinking about how to be more productive with the Optima press you already own—remember that plate mounting becomes a critical offline activity for flexographic printing. Consider an S-Mount plate moulder. It will pay for itself quickly, while helping to generate the speed and precision you need for your toughest jobs.



Scan to read more
about Slitters



SOMA increases the performance parameters of its slitters, offering greater speed and larger rewind roll diameters. Both slitters are equipped with the Tenzomat III.2 tension control system. The system delivers precise unwind and rewind tension control during the entire operating cycle, in a closed loop. In doing so, the Venus III.2 slitters are able to slit very thin and difficult substrates.

TOPIC

SOMA Releases

Next-Generation Slitters

Venus III.2 and Venus III.2-Turret

SOMA announces the release of the Venus III.2 and Venus III.2-Turret, the second generation of its successful slitters. The SOMA Venus III.2 and Venus III.2-Turret are top of the line, high performance servo-driven slitters that offer printers and converters maximum efficiency at high speeds on a wide range of substrates, including PET, PP, LDPE, HDPE, paper, laminates, and others. They are designed with a web width of 1350/1600/1850 mm (53.1/63/72.8 inches) with a maximum speed of up to 850 m/min (2789 ft/min), in the case of the Venus III.2. Larger converting companies interested in multiple slitting of medium diameter rolls with the highest level of automation and productivity might prefer the Venus III.2-Turret.

Both slitters are equipped with the Tenzomat III.2 tension control system. The system delivers precise unwind and rewind tension control during the entire operating cycle, in a closed loop. In doing so, the Venus III.2 slitters are able to slit very thin and difficult substrates. The Tenzomat III.2 system can operate in two modes. One is based on tension preference, where the system automatically adjusts the speed to reach the highest possible tension. The other is based on a maximum speed preference, where the Tenzomat III.2 system automatically limits the tension to reach a desired speed, for special applications such as pressure sensitive and diaper substrates.

The Venus is known as a family of exceptional SOMA slitters. They share a unified electronic platform of precise

control, increased safety, and boosted efficiency with energy savings. Venus slitters deliver exceptional productivity with automatic knife/blade positioning to ensure quick and precise knife settings, and automatic laser core guiding for precise and very quick core settings on new jobs. There are a number of handling systems to make work as easy as possible for the operator.

Venus slitters are very safe to operate, with an overhead web path suitable for pharmaceutical and food packaging, where stringent hygiene and clean room standards are mandatory. Several control panels help to operate the machine, including two touch screen panels for rewinding and slitting, one panel in the unwind section and a portable control panel for parent roll loading.

"Venus slitters have been very successful throughout the world. Its automated features make it easy for short runs and quick changeovers," comments Petr Blaško, SOMA Marketing Director. "We believe this new generation of Venus III.2 and Venus III.2-Turret slitters operate even more efficiently, at greater speeds."

SOMA to Demonstrate

Exceptional Flexo Printing and Fast Job Makereadies

at K 2022



Stand Number: 4B21
Location: Hall 04

SOMA will be presenting its state-of-the-art flexo printing technology at Hall 4 Stand B21 during this year's K Show (K 2022) from October 16-26 in Düsseldorf, Germany. The highlight of the SOMA stand will be live demonstrations, showing not only the exceptional printing accomplished on plastic substrates with the second generation Optima press, but also the speed and ease in which jobs are changed—complete job changeovers from plate mounting to press makereadies.

SOMA Optima: Outstanding quality and fast makereadies

The SOMA Optima flexo press has earned a reputation around the world as an outstanding, easy to operate flexo press for short runs—typically for mid-web jobs such as wrap-around labels, shrink sleeves, sachets, various pouches, and a variety of other applications. At K Show, SOMA will display a second generation Optima flexo press.

Changeovers are fast

The challenge for printers has become short runs, and the need for quick makereadies. Those who watch the SOMA demonstration will not have to wait long. The press can be installed with the SOMA IRIS (Intelligent Register and Impression Setting) system for automatic job setting, a unique off-line solution that combines the advantages of a plate moulder with

a fully automated device for plate topography and register measurement.

Changeover Wizard helps with flexo expertise

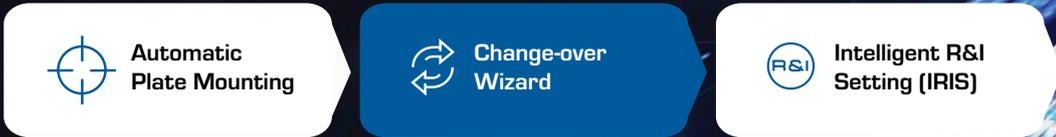
Flexo needs to meet the challenges of efficient changeovers while under the operation of a novice workforce. SOMA will show visitors how they can master their changeovers with its SOMA Changeover Wizard, an innovative component of new SOMA Optima flexo presses, and a recipient of a prestigious 2022 FTA Technical Innovation Award. The SOMA Changeover Wizard flexo press user interface automatically guides the press operator through all the steps involved changing from one job to the next. In doing so, it reduces the number of tasks or may shorten required tasks, defines their optimal order, and automates as many steps as possible, minimizing operator error.

Making plate mounting automatic

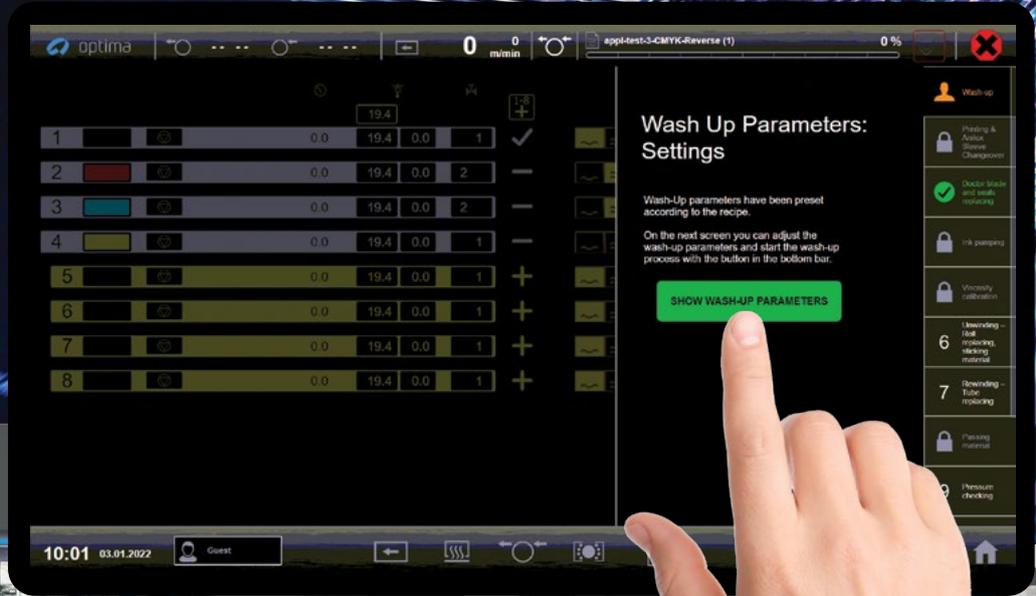
The S-Mount plate moulder puts the emphasis on fast and accurate plate mounting. SOMA responded to ever-increasing demands for productivity, short runs and increasing demands on accuracy. The result was significant operator ease of use. The accurate plate mounting makes it easier to set the register when the sleeve is placed into the press. When that process is used along with the accuracy of IRIS print setting system, there is no longer a manual burden on the press operator to set or tell the press where to adjust register and impression. It is done automatically with minimum waste involved.

SOMA to run two extremely demanding jobs daily during K Show.

It is not easy to print exquisite packaging artwork on plastic substrates. The new



FTA TECHNICAL INNOVATION AWARD 2022 WINNER



The SOMA Changeover Wizard, an innovative component of new SOMA Optima flexo presses, and a recipient of a prestigious 2022 FTA Technical Innovation Award.

Optima is capable of reproducing rotogravure-like print quality. When used with latest prepress technology, the SOMA Optima can solve a number of print challenges.

SOMA intends to run two extremely difficult print jobs, highlighting the 260 mm repeat length which, for certain jobs, provides extra savings on plate material.

The print results will display exceptional contrast, minimal dot gain, superior dot stability and registration, and exceptional, smooth transitions to zero.

“Since we last visited K Show, SOMA has grown as a company and has been extremely busy adding even more innovative features and equipment to our product line. Our goal is to produce

exceptional flexo print quality, while making our equipment as fast and easy as possible to operate,” comments Petr Blasko, SOMA Marketing Director. “We look forward to showing printers and converters in Düsseldorf how easy the changeover process on a flexo press, using SOMA equipment, can be.”



PRINTED DESIGNS





Gang Printing of Coffee, Mozzarella, and Cheesecake Graphics

- Exceptional contrast
- Gravure-like print quality
- Minimal dot gain, superior dot stability
- Real, smooth transitions to zero



Nebula Chocolate Pouch

- Gravure graphics conversion by ProjectBlue technology
- Unparalleled high density
- Digitally active capabilities by Digimarc

Focusing on Addressing Everyday Flexographic Printing Issues



After a successful opening of The Flexo Xperience Center, MacDermid Graphics Solutions, SOMA, and partners are focusing on addressing everyday flexographic printing issues.

Founding partners MacDermid Graphics Solutions and SOMA are looking forward to addressing flexo challenges as well as conducting customer trial tests at the newly inaugurated Flexo Xperience Center (FXC). The FXC is a collaborative center for pre-media suppliers, printers, converters, brands, CPGs, students and educational institutions—anyone interested in experiencing the best that flexo has to offer. It is the first and only flexography-focused center to explain the print story from start to finish.

Recently, The Flexo Xperience Center Inaugural Open House was successfully attended by nearly 200 key players—a 'who's who' of people involved in the business and advancement of flexographic printing. The FXC is truly a flexo partnership sharing in the mission of moving flexo forward. Along with MacDermid and SOMA, industry partners involved in The FXC include: 3M, Apex, AV Flexologic, BST Group, CleanPlanet, ColorConsulting, CSW Inc, Daetwyler, DAM, Digimarc, Esko, Esterlam, Flexo Wash, Flint Ink, GMG Color, Hamillroad, Harper, Hybrid Software, Interflex, Kongsberg Systems, Lohmann, Polymount, Provident Group, Rossini, Rotec, Sandon Global, Sun Chemical, Tech Sleeves, tesa, Troika Systems, and X-Rite Pantone. The event included a ribbon cutting ceremony to mark the official opening of The FXC; a tour of MacDermid's Global Headquarters, The FXC and The Works; a SOMA Optima² press demo with live job changeover showing how fast the process can be; networking time with event

attendees and the partners of The FXC; and a cocktail hour with live music. A short video of the event can be seen at www.linkedin.com/company/the-fxc/

The Flexo Xperience Center is a place to collaborate, research, experiment, and learn together to achieve excellence in the flexo process.

The extensive cooperation between partners makes The FXC a unique environment—a one-of-a-kind, global innovation center designed to help companies involved in flexo and packaging explore state-of-the-art solutions. It includes a full suite of the latest prepress software, plate and print analysis technologies, thermal and solvent platemaking systems, and liquid photopolymer platemaking equipment. The SOMA Optima² flexo press expands the facility to include product benchmarking, print trials, hands-on press training, print application research, and print troubleshooting.

"MacDermid has partnerships with many companies and is extremely pleased with the way everyone's efforts coalesced into an all-encompassing facility," explains Meghan Richburg, Global Program Manager, Experience Center, MacDermid Graphics Solutions. "The FXC has all of the equipment and manpower to allow global flexo and packaging companies to collaborate on innovations, optimize processes, and create new standards for flexo excellence. We look forward to all of the exciting work that will come out of the FXC. We encourage visitors to come experience The FXC and move flexo forward with us."

"The mission of The FXC is simple – to move flexo forward. This global center will combine hands-on and virtual visits for a one-stop-shop for the flexo printing industry's entire workflow to experience. We are excited to see the impact this center will bring to the industry," states Brad Wills, Global Senior Vice President, MacDermid Graphics Solutions.



The extensive cooperation between partners makes The FXC a unique environment—a one-of-a-kind, global innovation center designed to help companies involved in flexo and packaging explore state-of-the-art solutions.



"SOMA's goal has always been to play a significant role in the advancement of flexo printing—not only in the development of effective equipment, but by acknowledging that our influence is one part in an industry-wide effort," comments Pavla Kusa, SOMA Commercial Director. "The FXC is an unprecedented venue to allow all of us to explore new ways to move flexo forward."

"SOMA's request to the flexo printing community is very simple: Challenge us. The FXC is ready to accept and print the demanding jobs we receive," remarks Garrett Taylor, SOMA Sales Director, US and Canada. "We sincerely believe that 'the next big flexo innovation' will come out of The FXC. Our objective is to push the envelope of what flexo can do."

The FXC is located in The Works at the Upper Westside of Atlanta. Anyone who wishes to learn more about the center can visit www.the-fxc.com. Additionally, those who wish to schedule a visit at The FXC can do so at www.the-fxc.com/book-your-xperience.

NEWS

SOMA Celebrates 30-year Anniversary



SOMA credits our success to the combination of exceptional product engineering and manufacturing, with passionate attention to customers.

SOMA celebrated its 30-year anniversary recently during a gala dinner at our headquarters and new production facilities in Lanskrone, Czech Republic. SOMA was founded in 1992 by Mr. Ladislav Verner, CEO, who today leads a team that includes his son, technical director Jan Verner, and daughter, commercial director Pavla Kusa.



We see our role as putting printers in a better position to deliver exceptional packaging for their customers. We believe in being there for our customers, to give them a competitive edge over their competitors and helping them to win orders.

SOMA has a rich history, solid production expertise, and a unique know-how resulting in our long-term success. SOMA has focused on packaging—a result of building products that combine the best of Czech engineering with superior components, along with perfect workmanship. All products are manufactured and assembled in-house, enabling the company to oversee all aspects of production and quality control. SOMA is also heavily involved in producing all the critical parts that are key to press quality. In this unique way, we maintain tight control over all its products.

Like our product range, the firm possesses a unique legacy, having helped our loyal team of employees navigate through the past three decades of a free market economy. Some on the SOMA team say this has helped them excel at life-changing experiences—and that drive and commitment are in their DNA. Our history

is extraordinary. The land upon which SOMA sits housed a textile factory from 1890-1948. From 1956-1992, the facility was a division of TESLA, a division of a state owned company which produced various parts and machines for the electronic industry. In 1992, SOMA was founded, with an initial focus on special purpose machines. In 1995, the successful development of the SOMA Flex CI flexographic printing press opened SOMA's path to serve fast-growing flexible packaging companies. The company ranks among the leading international producers of CI flexo press technology. To meet demand, SOMA has begun efforts to nearly double production capacity. Completion of our first phase of construction was recently announced. Among many other achievements, the company has demonstrated our innovative thinking with the development of our next-generation Optima flexo presses in 2019, and a 2022 FTA Technical Innovation Award.

"SOMA has always considered our heritage as a family-owned organization, with an extraordinary team, extremely advantageous. Our approach is much more focused on the individuality of each of our customers, and our key value is that we really pay attention each of them and listen to their specific needs," explains Pavla Kusa, SOMA Commercial Director. "We see our role as putting printers in a better position to deliver exceptional packaging for their customers. We believe in being there for our customers, to give them an edge over their competitors and helping them to win orders. Our motto, 'There is nothing more important than customer satisfaction', resonates throughout our company. We believe in a world where hard work pays off."





SOMA



Those who are interested in seeing a video of the groundbreaking and initial development of the facilities can visit our website. Scan the QR code below.





NEWS

SOMA Announces Completion of Expanded Manufacturing Facilities

State of the art production halls to assure increased capacity and the production of state-of-the-art flexo equipment.

SOMA announces that it successfully opened two new manufacturing facilities in June that are fully operational. These are located at the company's headquarters in Lanskronec, Czech Republic.

As demand for SOMA flexo presses and other equipment increased, the company put into action the development of manufacturing capabilities and capacity that would assure the most efficient production workflow for the assembly of its products. Also important was a comfortable, yet suitable, site for effective SOMA customer equipment facility acceptance tests.

Two of three new manufacturing assembly halls, almost 6000 square meters (nearly 65,000 square feet) in size, have been completely built and are actively involved in the manufacture of SOMA equipment. The third hall is currently in the planning process, with the goal of starting construction as early as next year. In the long term, based on SOMA business growth projections, expectations are that as many as six production halls could be ultimately built on the same site.

The modern facilities contain state of the art monitoring and climate-control features to protect SOMA employees and visitors, as well as the equipment that is manufactured. This includes, among others, dust reduction and temperature controls.

"SOMA has been very diligent in not only developing innovative flexo presses and equipment, but also advanced production facilities that support the most efficient and productive manufacturing processes. We intend to assure that every SOMA product that leaves our facilities is built to the highest standards," comments Pavla Kusa, Commercial Director. "We are proud of our achievements—as well as those of our customers. Perhaps, as a fitting tribute, one of the first activities in the new production halls was a gala event celebrating the company's thirty-year anniversary. We hope to have many more reasons in the future to celebrate milestones in these buildings."

Baltimore-based Vac Pac to Invest in a SOMA Optima² Flexo Press and S-Mount Automatic Plate Mounter

SOMA is pleased to announce Baltimore metro-based Vac Pac (vacpacinc.com) has invested in an eight-color 59" SOMA Optima² flexo press. Along with the Optima² press they have purchased an automated SOMA S-Mount plate mounter. Flexibility, fast changeovers, and two sided printing in one pass—as well as a respectful partnership—are major factors.



Our company is very different from most small converters. Many of them specialize in only one type of work. We get involved in a number of very specialized niches, changing materials very often from job to job, from shrink tubing to poly sheeting to PET materials for oven roasting.

Founded in 1928 as Duradene, a maker of cosmetics, today Vac Pac Inc. has grown to a multi-generational family business focused on packaging. The company's 30 employees design, print and manufacture bags and pouches for bakery, poultry, meat, seafood and industrial applications. The company specializes in high-temperature cook-in packaging for oven and microwave cooking as well as high barrier shrink bags. Vac Pac is a longtime leader and innovator in high temperature packaging, holding patents for bag design since 1968. Vac Pac exports finished products around the world through partnerships in South America, Canada,

New Zealand, the United Kingdom—and has prospects in other European countries and Asia. "In the barrier shrink bag business, there are about five companies that are heavily involved in the market," notes Matt Tary, Vac Pac president. "Three of our competitors are billion dollar businesses. It means that Vac Pac has to work harder to execute a successful business plan and earn our customers' respect."

Vac Pac currently owns two flexo presses, a 6-color and a 10-color, but are replacing their existing 6-color press with the SOMA Optima². Their challenge was that, as a smaller company, they needed to modernize and push the boundaries of their work to get new business. They expect that the quality of the SOMA Optima² press will allow them to do so.

"Our company is very different from most small converters. Many of them specialize in only one type of work. We get involved in a number of very specialized niches, changing materials very often from job to job, from shrink tubing to poly sheeting to PET materials for oven roasting. We looked for equipment that is versatile. The SOMA Optima² was the first flexo press with real potential to offer flexibility and execute well across all our demands," explains Tary. "For example, while we produce very good print quality work, our limitation has been that we currently print on only one side. SOMA can provide its Optima² press with a turn bar, which will allow us

to print both the front and back in one pass, in register. We will now be able to be significantly more aggressive in the market with this two side capability that our customers are looking for."

Vac Pac was very interested in how other SOMA Optima² press features could increase their capabilities. This included fast speeds and quick changeovers—which have taken much more time using Vac Pac's existing presses. "Like any printer, we were interested in faster changeovers and reducing scrap. Tube material is expensive. With the use of the automatic SOMA S-Mount mounter, there will be very little waste in the setup. Reading registration and impression settings automatically into the press will save a lot of time," says Tary. "The Changeover Wizard is also very intriguing. We have the same problem as everyone—hiring skilled flexo printers. To be able to take untrained people and quickly put them into operation, is the future."

There are many similarities between SOMA and Vac Pac. "We are both family owned and operated. Thus, as the grandson of the person who moved Vac Pac into packaging, I felt connected with Pavla and Jan, whose father founded SOMA," adds Tary. "We have already been very impressed with our tech consults and have been very comfortable with the purchase experience. The Czech mentality is to build their equipment like a tank, but with intelligence. We're learning that."

"Matt told us that SOMA worked with him on the relationship as much as the product," remembers Garrett Taylor, SOMA Sales Director, US and Canada. "It was just as important for Matt to find the right business partner as it was to be able to invest in a productive, customizable flexo press. SOMA always makes sure that we solve solutions—and are not just a producer of 'boxed' presses."

The SOMA Optima² is three times faster than Vac Pac's existing presses. The press will no longer be the choke point of Vac Pac's business. It will help them grow and gain new business. "We have been a small company for a long time—perhaps aided by my grandfather's passion for sailing from Friday through Sunday, every week," remarks Tary. "I don't have a boat yet, so we need to grow! We intend to push with the press with even more materials and capabilities, and I am confident SOMA will stand with us every step of the way."



View of historic ship at Inner Harbor area in downtown Baltimore, Maryland USA

NEWS

Clifton Packaging Group Ltd

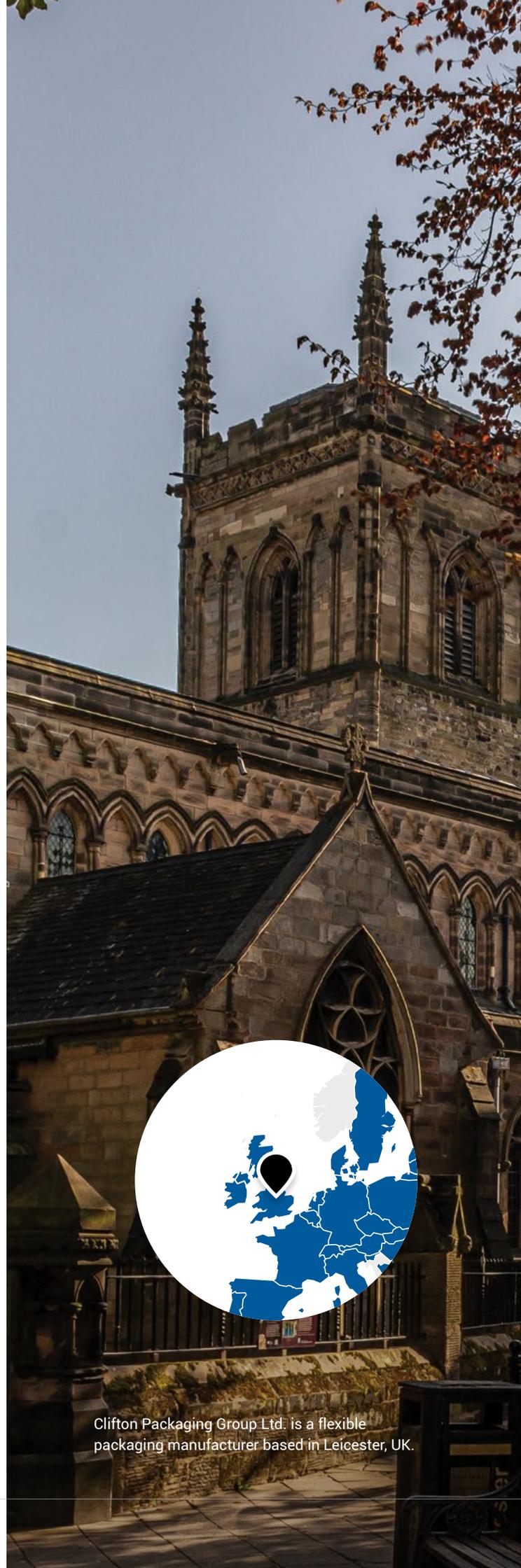
Invests in the Latest SOMA Flexo Technology

SOMA announces that Clifton Packaging Ltd. (cliftonpackaging.com) has invested in a new SOMA Optima² 1270-8 EG flexographic printing press and SOMA S-Mount 1300 plate moulder.

Established in 1981, Clifton Packaging Group Ltd. is a privately owned family business, specializing in the manufacture of packaging, packing machinery and contract packing, predominantly in the food sector. They offer the latest, complete packaging solutions to meet the very demanding requirements of their customers. Like SOMA, Clifton is dedicated to innovation and development, demonstrated by many packaging advances and design awards.

The next-generation SOMA Optima² CI flexo press is equipped with new Intelligent Automation features. Intelligent Job Tuning is SOMA's second-generation Advanced Bounce Control feature, contributing to exceptional print quality. It is a specially designed software algorithm, performed during job set-up, that minimizes the bouncing effect for each design. The Automatic S-Mount plate moulder offers full automation of plate mounting utilizing a precisely defined process. With it, press downtime due to incorrect plate mounting is minimized. Part of the S-Mount process utilizes plate topography and register measurements, which provides the foundation for automatic registration and impression settings on the press, while minimizing waste.

"SOMA offers innovations and unique technological developments that genuinely help customers to be more competitive. We are proud of the installation at Clifton Packaging. It is another step to build SOMA's reputation as a company of excellence that is well placed to meet the evolving needs of companies in the UK and Ireland," explains Richard Redfern, exclusive SOMA UK and Ireland agent.



Clifton Packaging Group Ltd. is a flexible packaging manufacturer based in Leicester, UK.

NEWS

Boran Mopack Ltd. to Install a SOMA Optima² Flexo Press and S-Mount Moulder

The company expects to add capacity along with exceptional print results for its packaging customers.

Boran Mopack Ltd., based in Strabane, Northern Ireland, has been providing flexible packaging for over 40 years.

SOMA is pleased to report that Boran Mopack Ltd. has invested in a SOMA Optima² flexo press and a SOMA S-Mount automated plate moulder.

Family-owned Boran Mopack Ltd., based in Strabane Northern Ireland along with Boran Packaging Ltd., a packaging plant headquartered in Johnstown, has extensive manufacturing capabilities in extrusion, flexographic printing, lamination and conversion processes. These cover a range of substrates, allowing a wide array of flexible packaging to be created to their customers' specific needs. Backed by their significant experience, expertise and competent staff, they produce products to exacting standards that meet and exceed customer requirements.

Boran Mopack has purchased the SOMA equipment to replace an existing flexo press and to provide additional capacity. Because of the speed and productivity of the moulder and press, reduced changeover times, and exceptional quality, the company expects to be able to deliver added capacity with exceptional-looking packaging for its customers.

Boran Mopack's new SOMA Optima² has a 1270mm print width, with eight printing decks. Features include the SOMA IRIS system that sets register and impression completely automatically; Advanced Bounce Control, that allows top speeds with absolute print stability; the SOMA Ink Cartridge that reduces ink costs by minimizing ink volume and residual waste; and the Service S-Chat, a very convenient chat-type communication.

The SOMA S-Mount automated plate moulder is considerably easy to operate while offering SOMA's IRIS (Intelligent register & impression setting system)—its new generation of topography and register measurement. New optics and high-resolution cameras expand the possibilities for automatic control of the mounted plates. S-Mount is provided with a completely new and intuitive user interface that lets the operator immediately change or adjust settings according to the requirements of the specific print job. It also provides accuracy—precise plate mounting means less problems on the press.

"There are a number of reasons behind our latest purchase of the SOMA Optima² flexo press to our existing range of flexographic presses, along with two SOMA S-Mount A mounting machines. We feel that the SOMA Optima² with the improved IRIS (Intelligent Register and Impression Setting) operator control system will provide us reduced changeover times along with decreased waste, while increasing our run times—especially on short run work," states Máirtín Boran, Managing Director at Boran Plastic Packaging Ltd. "The additional operator aids designed by SOMA around the inking systems, chambers and the machine cleaning operations are very welcomed. The reduced footprint afforded by the Optima² ensures very little change to the current print hall layout in our Northern Ireland factory in Strabane. All of these features, coupled with the excellent print quality we have achieved, have made us very excited with this addition to our family of presses. I should add that we are also happy to work with a family-owned company that shares the same business and personal values as we do."

"We are very pleased that our technology met with Boran's demanding expectations for high quality and efficiency standards. We look forward to working with Boran Mopack," says Pavla Kusa, SOMA Commercial Director. "We are also happy to build on SOMA's recent sales successes in the United Kingdom and Ireland."

NEWS

Masterpack S.P.A.

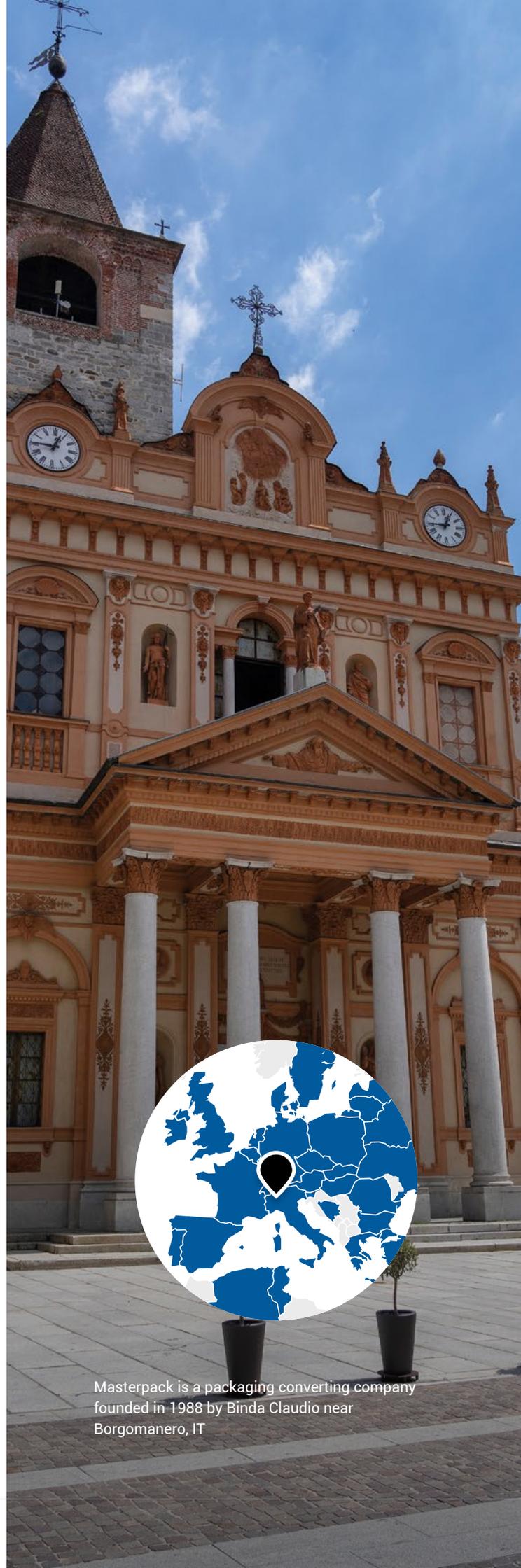
Invests in the Latest SOMA Optima² and SOMA Automatic S-Mount Plate Mounter

SOMA announces that Masterpack S.P.A. (www.masterpack.it) has invested in a new SOMA Optima² 1050-8 EG/WG flexographic printing press and SOMA S-Mount A 1300 plate mounter.

Founded in 1988, Masterpack S.P.A. is a privately owned family business that is known for its high quality package manufacturing and flawless service. With more than 30 patents—some of them worldwide—they can offer their customers a number of unique products, technologies and services, particularly for eco-friendly applications.

The next-generation SOMA Optima² CI flexo press is equipped with new Intelligent Automation features that boost efficiency and minimize operator errors. In doing so, print quality is better and press operation is more efficient. The Automatic S-Mount plate mounter offers full automation of plate mounting. The accurate and repeatable perfect registration makes it easier to set the register when the sleeve is placed into the press.

“Working with Masterpack S.P.A. is a big step towards raising awareness of the SOMA brand in the Italian market. It will allow us to demonstrate that SOMA is known as a reliable, helpful partner who offers innovative, unique technological print solutions,” explains Matteo Melegatti, SOMA Area Sales Manager for Italy.



Masterpack is a packaging converting company founded in 1988 by Binda Claudio near Borgomanero, IT

Sigmaplast S.A. Invests in the Fourth SOMA Flexo Press for its Quito, Ecuador Manufacturing Facility

Sigmaplast is also installing an automatic SOMA S-Mount plate moulder.

Sigmaplast has purchased its fourth SOMA Optima flexo press—and an automatic SOMA S-Mount A moulder—for its printing/packaging plant in Quito, Ecuador.

Sigmaplast S.A., part of the Sigmaplast Multinational Group owned by the Khamis family, is the leading company in Ecuador specializing in the production of flexible packaging. Sigmaplast's mission is to offer creative, innovative and cutting-edge flexible packaging through the use of innovative technology and its integrated production system. This allows the company to be competitive in price, quality and service to build long-term relationships, assuring the satisfaction of its clients, collaborators and shareholders. The Sigmaplast industrial facility located in Ecuador is currently considered one of the industry's most complete and advanced facilities in Latin America. It is designed to be friendly to the environment in addition to offering technological solutions that meet market needs.

Sigmaplast is also recognized internationally, which has allowed it to expand and build production plants in the Dominican Republic and Brazil. In fact, this investment of a SOMA Optima represents the fifth flexographic press Sigmaplast will have installed throughout all of its facilities.

The SOMA Optima flexographic press is the culmination of the latest advances in flexo technology and design, delivering faster output speed and exceptional quality. They provide higher output speed and quality. Optima presses are fitted with a Bounce Control System, designed with emphasis on rigidity, precision and reliability. The press can consistently hold highlight dots with perfect registration while minimizing bounce at high speeds.

The Automatic S-Mount plate moulder offers full automation of plate mounting. The accurate and repeatable perfect registration makes it easier to set the register when a sleeve is placed into the press, automatically helping to prepare fast makereadies. Due to IRIS—the automatic register and impression setting system—there is no longer a manual burden on the press operator to set, or tell the press where to set, register and impression. It is done automatically.

"SOMA regards the investment by Sigmaplast not as much a sale as it does a sign of a strong commercial relationship with the company. We appreciate the recognition we have acquired from our respected client," says Robert Acuy, Vice President of Sales for Latin America.

Sigmaplast is a flexible packaging company based in Quito, Ecuador. (Picture is a view of El Panecillo, Old Town of Quito.)

Lamipol SL

Invests in a Complete Portfolio of SOMA Equipment

Company purchases a SOMA Optima flexographic press with a SOMA Lamiflex E and SOMA Pluto III slitter/rewinder.



We are extremely happy with SOMA. The way they support us makes us feel important. And, as our slogan says, we always bet on the best technologies for our clients.

SOMA is pleased to announce that Lamipol SL (www.lamipol.es), based in Valencia, Spain, has purchased a SOMA Optima flexographic printing press along with a SOMA Lamiflex E solventless laminator and a SOMA Pluto III.2 slitter/rewinder. It is the second SOMA Optima flexo press that they have invested in.

Lamipol SL, established in 2013, is dedicated to the manufacture of food and non-food packaging. Both workers and founding partners offer their customers the benefit of their experience, to deliver products of higher quality. Lamipol focuses on flexible packaging for liquid, dry, and refrigerated or frozen products. In addition to manufacturing, it provides design services and technical consultation.

"Our relationship with SOMA began in October 2016 when, as a young company, we took an important step by acquiring a SOMA Optima flexographic press. We preferred SOMA over other manufacturers because this Czech company understood

us. Originally, making that decision was a risk because SOMA was unknown to us. But, looking back, it was a wise decision," explains Santiago Albelda, Production Manager of Lamipol SL. "Today after five years, we have repeated our choice, but with our second SOMA Optima flexographic press, our first SOMA Lamiflex E laminator and our first Pluto slitter/rewinder. We are extremely happy with SOMA. The way they support us makes us feel important. And, as our slogan says, we always bet on the best technologies for our clients," adds Albelda.

Lamipol prints up to 8 colors of different types of ink for its clients. The SOMA Optima press is the culmination of the latest advances in flexo press technology and design. The presses have made packaging products more competitive, as they provide higher output quality and can handle complex printing patterns. Optima presses are fitted with a Bounce Control System, designed with emphasis on rigidity, precision and reliability. The press can consistently hold highlight dots with perfect registration while minimizing bounces at high speeds.

Lamipol laminates with various types of glues, with or without solvents. The SOMA Lamiflex E laminator is equipped with efficient features such as a cantilevered sleeved transfer roller to enable quick and easy on-board sleeve exchange. The shaftless unwind and rewind units provide fast, simple and comfortable roll clamping horizontally. Its loops with

individual thermo-controlled units for the three rollers ensure faster running speeds while increasing the processing of a wide range of substrates. All machines are equipped with a recipe system for job file storage to be easily recalled from memory.

Lamipol can cut film to the packaging needs of each client, whether the film is laminated or complex, printed or unprinted, adapting both the width of the reel and the weight of the substrate. The Pluto III.2 slitter/rewinder with automatic knife/blade positioning and automatic laser core guiding ensures quick and precise knife settings and core settings for new jobs. A variable knife shaft permits tangential slitting with lower and upper rotary knives or with razor blades against a grooved segment. The Tenzomat II tension control system provides precise unwind and rewind tension control—slitting very thin and difficult substrates. Several touch screen panels help operate the machine.

"SOMA is delighted that we have taken another important step in Spain. This time our client, Lamipol SL, decided to invest in a complete portfolio of SOMA machines, including a second generation Optima flexo press," says Robert Acuy, VP of sales at SOMA. "I can say that this new investment from Lamipol makes us proud, showing us that we, at SOMA, are doing things right."



Lamipol SL is packaging manufacturer based in Valencia, Spain (City of Science in Valencia)

SOMA Announces Launch of SOMA Intelligent Service and SOMA Care

Comprehensive SOMA S-Cloud-based Intelligent Service provides a communications channel to receive quick expert press diagnostics and remote troubleshooting. It is part of a new, complete SOMA Care maintenance program.



SOMA is constantly aware that it is extremely important to understand the needs of our customers. It is necessary to properly evaluate dynamic equipment situations as they constantly evolve over time. With the help of SOMA Intelligent Service, we can collect all relevant machine information such as communications history or press supervision.

SOMA is pleased to announce that we are rolling out our SOMA Intelligent Service and SOMA Care.

The web-based SOMA Intelligent Service platform is a comprehensive cloud solution that provides a quick problem-solving communications channel for every SOMA customer. It is made possible with SOMA S-Cloud technology that the company recently put into place. By connecting software and SOMA equipment to the SOMA S-Cloud, we are able to develop and utilize intelligent functions that boost efficiency, minimize operator errors, and improve communication.

Service-related data is fed throughout the SOMA ecosystem using the SOMA S-Cloud. In case of a specific machine issue, the service request is delivered to SOMA's service team using the SOMA S-Chat—a very expedient chat type of communication. The first reply is typically conducted within a short time of customer contact, offering expert diagnostics and remote troubleshooting. Subsequent communication is conducted via S-Chat. This will also provide critical failure spare parts dispatching if needed, and determine if a service team visit is required.

SOMA Intelligent Service also allows a number of files, pictures and videos to be shared from any S-Cloud connected device. Utilizing these media are other helpful tools such as a complete S-Chat communication history, online training videos and documentation, available retrofits, and more.

SOMA is also launching SOMA Care, our new service program designed to provide customers comprehensive maintenance, and which relies heavily on SOMA Intelligent Service for customer support. At the conclusion of the SOMA warranty period, a SOMA technician will visit and offer a number of SOMA Care package options. There are several programs offering increasing service, adding unlimited remote diagnostics, covered preventive maintenance visits, and services rate discounts, as programs progress from silver to platinum. A la cart service is still offered, but at less cost-efficient basic rates.

"SOMA is constantly aware that it is extremely important to understand the needs of our customers. It is necessary to properly evaluate dynamic equipment situations as they constantly evolve over time," says Milan Papacek, Service Department Manager "With the help of SOMA Intelligent Service, we can collect all relevant machine information such as communications history or press supervision. While we will always visit a customer when needed, to a good extent much of SOMA Intelligent Service is as effective as an onsite 24/7 SOMA service team. This, and our new SOMA Care packages, are great tools to help SOMA keep our customers happy."

Intelligent Service

The web-based Intelligent Service platform is a comprehensive cloud solution that offers a quick problem-solving communications channel for every SOMA customer. It is made possible using SOMA S-Cloud technology.

In case of a specific press issue, a service request is delivered to SOMA's service team using the SOMA S-Chat—a very useful chat-type of communication. The SOMA Intelligent Service also allows a number of files, pictures and videos to be shared from any S-Cloud connected device.

S-Chat

A very convenient chat-type of communication that includes files, pictures, and videos—easily accessed from any S-Cloud-connected device.

Remote diagnostics

In case of an emergency, remote diagnostics are conducted via a secure VPN connection.

Data sharing

The SOMA S-Cloud contains a lot of helpful information, such as equipment manuals, instructional videos, a list of spare parts and retrofits, and service programs available.



OPTIMA Intelligent Automation

helps to ensure quick and easy change-overs between jobs, while minimizing operator error.



Follow your ambition

Product Portfolio

Flexographic Presses



Optima



Optima²



Optima² extended repeat

Laminators



Lamiflex E

Plate Mounters



S-Mount



S-Mount FA

Slitter Rewinders



Pluto III.2



Venus III.2



Venus III.2-Turret

Die Cutters



Bulldog



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