



# The business also expands overseas

Fifty years of experience, of which twenty in the RV sector, make Filippi 1971 a point of reference in the international interior design sector. The phase of growth continues, new materials and new processes are tested, and China and America are the new market goals.

*Words Andrea Cattaneo*

**T**he new office area has been completed: Filippi 1971 now has a modern administrative and management area in its headquarters in Berbenno to better support the runaway production growth. This is a further step, certainly not the last one, which increasingly raises the level of this Italian company that has come to the attention of the international RV manufacturers not only for the quality of their products and service, but also for the dynamism of their proposals. In recent years, investments in machinery, technology and human resources have been considerable, the number of employees has almost tripled and the diversified markets has been broadly expanded. «*The RV sector is still our core business – explains Ivo Bolis, Sales Manager at Filippi 1971 who joined the company one year ago to support Francesca Filippi’s and Roberto Spreafico’s marketing and sales activity – and today represents about 70% of our turnover. But we are trying to broaden our range, and I am sure that by working in other sectors we will be able to bring new concepts to the RV world. For example, also assisted by the commercial experience of our partner Giorgio Levoni, since last year we have started to successfully supply the most important naval group in Italy with all the panels used in the public areas of many new cruise ships under construction*». Filippi 1971 entered the RV sector around the year 2000 with the Filippi Legnami brand, starting to collaborate with various manufacturers. Six years ago, thanks to the partnership with Giorgio Levoni, a significant growth phase began in various fields: new machinery, new technologies and new products. The introduction of a melamine press allows the production of laminates based on the customer’s design. The wooden panels can be further customized thanks

to digital printing: two plotters have been purchased to create multiple effects on the surface, satisfying the most personalized requests of the customers, in combination with 3D surface effects. In 2016, after several experiments in the company’s research and development department, VittEr® was launched: it is a modern, high-performing compact laminate, highly customizable, anti-scratch, fire-retardant





(BS2DO certified) and water-resistant, also tested for outdoor use under the action of atmospheric agents. It is a laminate with zero formaldehyde emissions also suitable for contact with food. Thanks to these characteristics, it is highly recommended for any use in kitchens and bathrooms of RVs. The high mechanical strength makes it possible to create solid slabs with reduced thickness, while the full color in the core allows you to create unique effects with the wide range of available colors, also customizable with digital printing and combinable with other in-house made surfaces too. A strong development in production was given by the opening, at the beginning of 2017, of the joinery department. No longer a simple manufacturer of laminated panels, but a company recalling its roots in the furniture industry, Filippi 1971 started offering products and services of various types to RV manufacturers. The joinery was subsequently implemented with new machinery and other specialized personnel: it is now able to produce not only flat elements, but also curved components and complete, complex furnishing kits, already assembled if requested, too. For some months Filippi 1971 has started experimenting with highly innovative systems for the produc-

tion of light components. As the result of a relentless activity of the R&D staff, a collaboration project with a company specialized in the production of composite materials has started and a 4.00x1.60-meter autoclave has been acquired, making it possible to produce special components in carbon fiber. "We are ready to enter the world of carbon fiber – says Ivo Bolis – and bring real, important news into the RV sector. The combination of high quality and low weight are our goal to offer the OEMs advanced-technology products». The search for new materials and production processes is functional to a growth that does not only aim to broaden the field of treated products, but also to enlarge the market, outside the well consolidated European and Australian contexts. In March, Filippi 1971 will be exhibiting at two major international trade fairs: in Beijing, in China, and in Salt Lake City, in the U.S.A.



## Filippi 1971 in China

*"We have been present in the Chinese market for five years – explains Roberto Spreafico, Filippi 1971 sales associate – and we have taken part in many shows. China is a potentially very large RV market but it is also a young one. We offer high quality materials so we made the strategic choice to use only Italian poplar plywood panels, which are considered to be the best quality worldwide, thanks to its consistent thickness and lightweight, controlled manufacturing process and flawless surface. We also offer panels without formaldehyde, which leave no odor in the vehicle interior: those who can understand the added value of these products appreciate them in no uncertain terms and rely on us. We think we have invested a lot of resources in China and we will stick to our commitment to offer the Chinese market not only laminated panels, but also different kinds of semi-finished products necessary for the construction of furniture components".*

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## The American market

Filippi 1971 will be exhibiting at the RVX fair in Salt Lake City. The mockup of a van will be on display with the various furnishing components clearly visible, to show visitors some different technical and stylistic solutions. Filippi 1971 started an exploratory activity in the USA at the Louisville fair in 2017, continuing to have contacts in 2018. Now several manufacturers are interested in the products and 2019 could be the year of the beginning of a collaboration with one or more manufacturers. "From the first approach with the American market – explains Ivo Bolis, sales manager at Filippi 1971 – we realized that we should not only focus on our laminated panels, but we also had to propose all the furniture components that we are capable to make. We want to dialogue with American OEMs and propose our high-quality European design furniture to fit into the American RV interiors, respecting their peculiar space management while bringing our curated design and details. Exhibiting at the RVX fair will confirm our presence in the American market, along with participating at the RV Open House in September which takes place in Elkhart, an event of sure reference for the world of OEMs".

