

COMPANY PROFILE

Cartiera Confalone, making paper and making it well is the family tradition

It is told that the territories of the Maritime Republics (Amalfi, Pisa, Genoa and Venice) were the first to discover the existence of paper in the XII and XIII centuries. These Republics, thanks to intense commercial relationships with the Orient, had the opportunity of learning the art of papermaking rather easily.

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The Republic of Amalfi in particular, thanks to frequent commercial relations with the Arab world, developed a veritable paper industry that in a short time saw the birth and fast growth of many paper mills that contributed to making this city world renowned for its prized production of paper. Most of the paper mills were established along the area of the Valle dei Mulini, the historic valley that constituted, and still constitutes today, the final portion of the Canneto Torrent before it passes through Amalfi's residential center. The name of this portion of the Valley derives from the production establishments of the mills for the pasta industry. Some of these mills, between the XII and XIII centuries, were replaced by paper mills.

AMALFI'S PRESTIGE IN MEDITERRANEAN COMMERCE ALLOWED IT TO EASILY FIND THE RAW MATERIAL. The diffusion of the "fulling mills" to process woolen cloths could be easily adapted to paper manufacturing, and the presence of many clear-water streams along the coast, allowed producing a good quality paper, the so-called "bambagina" paper, a very prized and valued type.

The Amalfi paper mills, exploiting the waters of the Canneto stream that flows from the Lattari Mountains, started to produce and diffuse this prized paper in every city of Medieval Italy. It was used for private contracts, public deeds and document stamps, for ecclesiastical archives, for the production of coats-of-arms and heraldic symbols, and was widely used also at the Courts of the House of Anjou, the Aragonese and the Bourbons.

DUE TO THEIR LOCATION, MANY OF THE PAPER MILLS WERE SUBJECT TO DAMAGES FROM FLOODS and in the course of the years the number of mills was drastically reduced. But with great spirit of determination and tenacious will, many Amalfi paper producers, among whom the Confalone family, continued production in the virtue of tradition. And for the Confalone family, the art of making paper is indeed a tradition that has been passed down from father to son for four generations. In 1800, in Maiori, a small city on the Amalfi Coast, Cartiera Confalone was founded and dedicated to the production of hand-made paper. And here is where the history of this company, headed today by Gaetano Confalone, begins. A history that has followed – and still follows today – the evolution of paper production, starting from hand-made paper, passing to the production of flat paper and then on to creped paper, to arrive in the 1970s to a diversification with the intent to perfect the production of tissue paper. Today, the Maiori mill, still in full operation, produces 20,000 tons per year, converted at the new Montoro facilities, in the province of Avellino.

INVESTING AND BELIEVING IN TRADITION ARE THE TWO MAIN FEATURES THAT DISTINGUISH THIS COMPANY, active in the market of Southern Italy. In 1994, the passage of the company reigns from the third to the fourth generation, marked Gaetano Confalone's entrance in its management, and this change also marked the start of a renewal process. In 1998, investments were made towards complete renewal of the mill's technology, with the purchase of a Crescent Former PM by Toscotec and the start-up at the Salerno facilities of a converting line with Sincro rewinder from Fabio Perini S.p.A., with packaging entrusted to Casmatic machines.

The investments in technology have allowed to augment the areas of business, incrementing the production of jumbo reels. Because Cartiera Confalone also produces reels and, thanks to the optimal quality of paper produced – for which only first-choice fibers are used – the company has become the main supplier of some of the most important Italian

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converting companies. The renewal of the machine park has also given renewed vitality to the range of Vit-brand products. The range of products include toilet rolls, kitchen towels, table napkins and industrial rolls and has favored greater company visibility in the regional and national scenario.

THE EXTENSION OF THE PRODUCT OFFER, AIMED AT INCREASING VISIBILITY AND TURNOVER, has made it necessary to enhance the paper mill side of the company and to intensify investments also for the technological improvement of the converting side. In the paper mill, attention towards environmental respect has led to the purchase of a high temperature hood by Novimpianti that allows to recover steam from the fumes and to return it to the production cycle. A technical feature in respect and protection of the environment. The expansion strategy put into place by Confalone also created the need for new industrial space, which culminated in the move, in the month of March of this year, of the Salerno facilities to the new Montoro site.

FROM HERE, THE INVESTMENT IN A NEW INDUSTRIAL LINE model 730 by Fabio Perini S.p.A.: a purchase aimed at strengthening the professional tissue product range for the jumbo roll segment dedicated to the consumer field. Downstream, integration with a MacDue packaging line has allowed extreme production flexibility. Novelties also for what concerns the hygienic products of the consumer segment with the new Class brand, part of the Vit range. Class, whose name was chosen to emphasize the aesthetic aspect of the product, soft, completely white and refined with an elegant embossing, is a 3-ply perfumed toilet roll sold in packs of four. It can be found in the versions Vit Class Maxi, Vit Class Extra and Vit Class Midi. Vit Master and Vit Mister complete the range of consumer jumbo rolls. Vit Master comes in a 300-sheet and a 750-sheet size, while Vit Mister comes in a 500-sheet size.

MANY NOVELTIES AIMED AT ENHANCING THE APPEAL OF THE PRODUCTS PRESENTED ON THE MARKET WITH NEW EMBOSSING TEXTURES and new graphic versions in terms of packaging, that confirm the vitality of the Confalone company in expanding its market, maintaining the family tradition of “making paper and making it well”. Today, 70% of the company’s business is in the region of Campania with shares also in the regions of Puglia, Calabria, Lazio, Molise, Abruzzo and a strategy aimed at also being present on the Sicilian market.

Surely the vitality and tradition that distinguish the Confalone philosophy will allow this historic mill to grow further, consolidating its position and obtaining optimal results in its markets. •

[1] A “fulling” machine is a pre-industrial-era piece of machinery used mainly in the wool-producing industry, but also in the paper industry. Sometimes, “fulling” refers not so much the machine used but rather to the entire building (mill) housing it.