

An international gathering in Monte Carlo

Any event held in the principality of Monaco is always going to be lavish and the First Degraf International Open was no exception. Whilst the company has been in flexo for some 20 years, surprisingly little is known about it outside OEM (Original Equipment Machinery) suppliers and pre-press trade houses. *Martin White* joined more than 100 such suppliers and found out more.

Spanning four days in December, participants from across the world met to celebrate the company's success and take part in an exhibition of equipment for processing flexographic printing plates designed and made by the company.

Many of these concepts are used all over the world for the exposure, processing, drying and finishing of flexo plates and have been developed and made by Degraf from its network of operations. The company's head office is in Lacchiarella, south of Milan, Italy; it provides the research and development for the entire production processes for conventional plate processing from the smallest unit 66 x 81cm (26 x 32") to the maximum size of 132 x 203cm (52 x 80") which can be all in one, combined units, as well as individual units for each single phase in the production process.

The company's focus is the development of innovative technological solutions that are delivered to the market

partners and account for almost 60% of the company's production.

Primarily the event was to bring together customers and distributors for an exhibition of familiar and new concepts. However, these business sessions were punctuated with the finest cuisine and entertainment Monte Carlo had to offer.

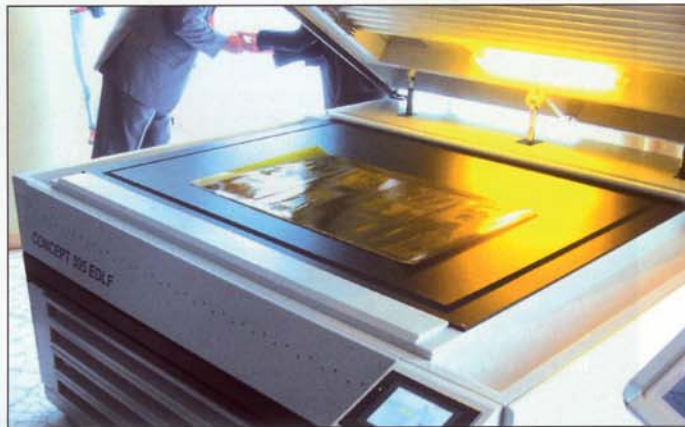
Equipment

The processing units are compatible with all plate materials and solvents available on the market, whilst most units provided systems for analogue plates, the Concept 505 DW was the company's first for washing out digital plates of large format 132 x 203cm (52 x 80"). The system has two separate tanks for the solvent. One that is dedicated to the pre-washer section and collects the solvent used to

remove the (black) layer of the digital plate. The other tank is for the washing section and is used only with non-contaminated solvent.

For analogue users the Concept 505 XP is claimed to be the first washout processor for both batch (individually) and inline (incrementally) where up to eight square metres can be

processed in an hour. 'This system is really unique! There's nothing like it, anywhere' says Riccardo De Caria, president of Degraf SpA.



The 305 EDLF for exposing, drying and finishing plates.

New generation dryers

The HTD 300 and 500 have provided a new faster generation of drying for plates. This operates with a powerful combination of special energy bulbs and a controlled flow of cold air, which allows drying of any kind of plate, analogue or digital, of any thickness, in about 30 minutes. Printing trials have shown that there is no difference in terms of ink transfer between a plate dried in a conventional way and a plate dried using a new generation HTD dryer. The new drying system is incorporated into the Concept 201 HTD an all in one unit for washing, processing and drying in a size of 66 x 81cm (26 x 32") aimed at the narrow web market.

Whilst Degraf has not moved into supplying equipment for in-the-round processing, the range of its units for 'flat' processing must be second to none and does truly provide a size and system to suit all applications and needs. Printers wanting to upgrade their own in-house platemaking facilities can obtain further information from their plate supplier or in the UK, Pomeroy/Plastotype the agent for Degraf. ■



Interested parties in the Degraf equipment from the UK (left to right) Carl Garner, Reproflex; Andy Beesley Pomeroy/Plastotype (UK agent); Barry Gowan, MCG Graphics; Ray Clarkson, Clarkson Services; David Ball, AC Graphics.

under the brands of the main producers of equipment of this type. DuPont, Flint, Asahi, Kodak, MacDermid, Toray and Jet are the main business