

CONQUERING THE WORLD

Avancity+ bus model, available in the 10.8m or 12m versions, diesel or CNG engine.

BredaMenarinibus, the second biggest bus manufacturer in Italy, has been investing in the development of in-house exclusive competences over a period of almost 100 years. After its 2006 fusion with Finmeccanica, the company is ready to conquer worldwide markets by developing environmentally friendly means of transport. Massimo Miato reports.

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BredaMenarinibus is one of Italy's most important producers of buses. The company was founded in 1919, and in the past 90 years it has managed to set a new standard for technology and comfort by manufacturing more than 30,000 buses. Today, the firm is still a leader in the transport sector thanks to the exclusive mix of the technological improvements and in-house competences it has developed during the past 100 years or so.

According to company chief industrial officer Mr Reposi, "The technical intuitions of our founders, together with the continuous search for innovative solutions and the use of only the most technologically advanced tools, have allowed our company to remain one step ahead of our competitors, both in Italy and farther afield."

The buses manufactured by BredaMenarinibus are definitely one step ahead when it comes to safety devices. Another of the company's goals is to make it simpler for drivers to do their job, whilst always keeping in mind the importance of sustainable development, environmentally friendly solutions and, above all, the needs of the passengers.

New models

Today, the firm employs more than 300 people and has a production capacity up to 500 buses each year through its main plant in Bologna, Italy. In 2006, BredaMenarinibus merged with the well-known Finmeccanica holding by becoming a part of the group's transport



division, together with other firms such as AnsaldoBreda and Ansaldo STS. The cooperation with Finmeccanica has already proven to be a very positive one, and today the BredaMenarinibus brand has become a well-known name in almost all markets throughout the world. This cooperation also has its advantages when

it comes to increasing the catalogue and becoming more competitive in international markets.

Since 2006 co-design and co-production agreements have been signed with foreign companies to enlarge the product lines and reach more competitiveness in the market, to follow the new strategy and to ensure high volumes of delivery.

In fact, through these new technical cooperations an enlargement of the BredaMenarinibus product family has been achieved. During the 2007 international bus show in Verona, Italy, the newest creations of the Italian company won general praise. Mr Reposi says: "We have noticed that people were especially interested in such models as the Lander and the Zeus. The first of these is a brand-new type of interurban bus, in line with the company's tradition, which was so successful in the past. The second is a brand-new model of electric minibus – a field in which we've been one step ahead since we started to manufacture electric buses back in 2000. Also, when we talk about environmentally friendly buses we have to mention our flagship Avancity+ and Vivacity+ series, which use diesel and natural gas as a fuel, and therefore have been

created according to the Euro 5/EEV standards for environmental care."

The chief industrial officer adds: "Our strategy of further development is definitely based on our new products, but there's a lot more to it. First of all, we want to increase our production capacity in order to meet the increasing demand coming from global markets, and this can only be done by improving the efficiency of our plants and by introducing new production facilities. We are also doing our best to diversify our business model by investing more in the customer care side of our business, i.e. by introducing new service and financing features, and also by diversifying our production so as to provide our customers with chassis and fully customisable products."

Future prospects

Mr Reposi has clear ideas on which will be the next step in the development of BredaMenarinibus. On the one hand, the goal is to enter new markets with its niche, highly specialised products, which they have managed to develop over many years of specialisation and investment in technology – a feature which has always been the company's strongest point. On the other hand, they definitely want to search for new areas where top technology buses can be truly appreciated.

In addition, the Italian company has recently started to generate a lot more business in foreign markets, concentrating in particular on western European

countries such as France, Germany and Spain. But other markets also have their importance for BredaMenarinibus, particularly eastern Europe and, recently, the Middle East. Mr Reposi points out: "Lately, we've noticed that there's always demand for top technology, high quality buses. In October 2008 we participated in the Madrid Bus Expo, an occasion which allowed our company to show the quality of Italian buses to the rest of the world. At the moment, we're doing our best to improve our global distribution network, because we think that our products have what it takes to conquer worldwide markets." □

