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Research and Quality Boost Pitti Filati

By [Teresa Potenza](#)



A display from Lineapiu. - Courtesy

Internationalization, research and quality: these are the words used by Raffaello Napoleone, chief executive officer of Pitti Immagine, to sum up the 79th edition of [Pitti Filati](#), which took place in Florence June 29 to July 1.

Pitti Filati's managers were satisfied by attendance figures, as around 5,400 buyers visited the fair, 4 percent more than last year. There was a 5 percent increase in Italian buyers and a 3 percent rise in the

number of international visitors. This included a 30 percent increase from China, 18 percent from Russia, 14 percent from France and an 8 percent gain from Spain.

Despite an internationally troubled financial situation, Italian yarn companies still had a positive outlook.

The key to success lies in research and quality, Napoleone said. The market is in search of products that are able to combine quality and well-being, [Tollegno 1900](#) believes. As people are asking for multiseasonal high-performance products, the company has been investing in innovative fibers for the last several years. The challenge is to mix those kinds of materials with noble yarns, cashmere and merino wool above all, in order to meet customer demand.

“Wool is a high-performance yarn by itself,” said ceo Lincoln Germanetti.

An example is [Princess Charlotte](#), swaddled in Tollegno 1900 extrafine merino yarn — just like her brother — when she left the hospital a few days after her birth.

“But beside our 100 percent wool products, we are enriching our mixed fabrics, as we believe high-performance materials are having a widespread distribution,” Germanetti added.

The U.S. market is one of Tollegno’s most important, despite the market’s retail woes. “We think this is the time to convert the problem to an opportunity,” Germanetti said, “as the U.S. still has the power to be the leading market.”

South Korea, Vietnam, China and Asia in general are other relevant markets for the Biella-based spinner.

“There is a general demand for clothes which can be used throughout the day,” said Chiara Taddeucci, owner of Lanificio Dell’Olivo together with her sister Ilaria. “This is the reason for ath-leisure’s success, a kind of apparel which mixes athletic and leisure and can be used for different activities.”

The yarn industry is therefore following the same trend, offering fabrics that can be used for different activities and help people save time.

“The defining features of our autumn collection are high-performance alpaca yarn,” said Taddeucci. “Our company has produced alpaca yarn for a long time, so we have developed it and maximized its natural characteristics,” producing a fabric which maintains body temperature, for instance. On the other hand, the company has worked on a mix of alpaca and technological fibers to create both “highly comfortable and attractive” products.

Managers seem to be on the same track at Tuscan company Filpucci.

“What all of our fabrics have in common is a deep research to improve yarn performances,” said vice president Federico Gualtieri. “We are also working to increase the offer of products which combine high-level materials and fashion like our ‘Lesotho’ yarn. The goal is to reach the high-end of consumers.”

Exports account for almost 70 percent of the company’s production. “We are very strong in North and Central America, even if a relevant number of retailers are closing down,” Gualtieri said. “But we are upbeat about the future as we work with famous labels and designers,” such as Alexander Wang.

Botto Giuseppe ceo Silvio Botto Poala highlighted that sustainability remains a top priority for the company as it is a key factor for the yarn industry. Naturalis Fibra is the new project presented at Pitti Filati, a range of yarns marked by “natural purity and respect for the environment.”

The project follows the success of the partnership between Botto Giuseppe and American brand Maiyet, which gave birth to a yarn called Fair that is certified Gold level by the Cradle to Cradle Products Innovation Institute. Wool is at the center of the research and all of it comes from the Australian company Congi, where sheep have not been subjected to mulesing. Consistent with these principles, the dyes used are the result of a selection process conducted by Cradle to Cradle to guarantee sustainability. The color palette is therefore less wide than usual: only 15 dyes are allowed.

The efforts made by Italian yarn companies to produce sustainable materials ensuring fine products is appreciated by international buyers. “We have seen an increase in American buyers this year,” Botto Poala said. The company’s main market is the U.S. followed by South Korea, Japan, France and England. Promising signs come from China as well, which is slowly climbing out of its economic difficulties.

This is the reason why spinners asked Pitti Filati to boost the presence of international buyers.

“Pitti Filati is the most important fair for us as it attracts buyers from all over the world,” said Cristiana Cariaggi, managing director of her company. “We wish the fair had more visibility, yet the most important thing to do is stick together and attract more and more buyers. Anyway, we are working with Pitti management on important projects to be developed in the next editions.”

Chrysalis is the new yarn presented by Cariaggi in Florence. The product comes from a partnership with Swarovski Crystals and is the result of cashmere blended with Mulberry silk and Swarovski crystals, which give an unusual light to the yarn.