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Electric breakthrough for Faresin



Italian telehandler and agricultural equipment manufacturer Faresin has been designing and building telehandlers for the past two decades but has never really had much of an impact on the global market – until now!

Faresin unveiled its first telehandler in 2001 and promptly concluded a deal to sell them under the Haulotte-Faresin 'FH' brand through the French manufacturer's dealer network. The agreement showed some early promise but never really gained much traction, which is not unusual with this type of badging deal. Then in 2007 Haulotte decided to start building its own telehandlers at a brand new plant in Spain.

Since the deal with Haulotte ended Faresin has been quietly plugging away, chalking up some notable successes here and there, such as in Australia, which has been offset by some less successful distributor appointments. In 2018 Faresin announced a new badging deal with Ahern/Snorkel for North America and later for Europe and the rest of the world. Few expected the partnership would amount to much or have much impact on Faresin's share of the global telehandler market, in spite of it having a full, well designed product line, however the signs are increasingly promising. Things really began to change however, after bauma 2019 when

Faresin quietly unveiled a compact all electric telehandler - the Full Electric 6.26 - which it claimed was ready for production. It later emerged that it had discreetly placed several evaluation units with customers in late 2018, receiving some solid feedback data from its ongoing field trials.

Most of the people who spotted Faresin's innovative machine at bauma were sceptical about its readiness for the rough and tumble of the real world. Up until then Merlo had focused its first electric efforts on the agricultural and industrial markets, while Manitou had been testing its compact electric prototype for a year or more. Manitou had a big budget behind it and some strong technical partners yet was not ready to start shipping – and even now its electric telehandlers are not quite ready. JCB would announce its all electric model at the end of last year, however it is still not clear when the first production units will ship.

Some canny eyed distributors spotted the potential for Faresin's Full Electric concept and began talking with the company. These included GGR in the UK as well as



Faresin began selling its telehandlers through the Haulotte distribution network



The Faresin product gave GGR its entry into the telehandler market

Snorkel of course. GGR is new to the telehandler market but has a good nose for a concept whose time has come. Critically, it has zero tolerance for unreliable products or less than perfect product support, having become accustomed to the bullet proof Japanese built Unic and Maeda spider cranes. At the risk of stereotyping, many assumed that a small Italian manufacturer would not live up to GGR's expectations,

especially with its new and unproven concept...

The first units arrived and were shown to several customers with plans to let them give the new machines a good work out. Just in case, of course. As this process got underway a surprise was in store, and something of a battle broke out among a few contractors and rental companies over who should get the first units. Eventually, Flannery Plant won out and took the first two units. Would a 'paid for' machine entering the real world of construction prove a brilliant success or an unmitigated disaster? A few people held their breath but needn't have worried. The new machines went to work on the high profile HS2 high speed rail project and ended up working out even better than anyone had hoped.



The Faresin line up



Faresin's Full Electric 6.26 made its debut at bauma 2019



The Breganze landscape

The feedback from Flannery was glowing and GGR found it had a desirable product on its hands as word began to spread. In the words of Flannery operations director, Niall Hester: "It has been very well received on site and has helped set up a concrete compound. The teams were able to get full 10 hour shifts with the machine without needing a re-charge. It was then left to charge overnight, ready for the next shift. A fast charger was supplied to the customer which would have charged the machine in just under two hours but was not needed in the end."

Flannery promptly ordered a further six units. In the meantime, others placed orders and a unit was even spotted at the JCB Research Test Centre within its Rocester headquarters. Since then, at least six more companies have added the 6.26 to their fleets, with several placing repeat orders. Faresin has ramped up production and is breaking its production records in spite of Covid-19 lockdowns. The company has now added a further production line and is currently building 38 to 40 units a week. With the additional line running at between 40 and 50 percent of maximum capacity – it still has the potential to build between 80 and 125 units a week before investing in more capacity.

So how did a small family owned Italian manufacturer manage to out-smart global market leaders to not only be first to market with such a

machine - and one that works better than expected - but to generate repeat orders? We contacted founder Sante Faresin to learn more.

How did you get into equipment manufacturing?

Sante Faresin: "My father was a farmer but had a real passion for engines and mechanics like many in this region of Veneto. It's a passion that I inherited and began to develop from a very early age, learning to repair bicycles and agricultural machinery."

"I grew up in a fertile environment to cultivate my passion. This land, to which I am strongly tied, is an example of an integrated economy where agriculture and industry grow together. For example, the Laverda factory in Breganze, has been in operation since 1870, and was one of the first metalwork industries in the world. It was in that very factory where I went to work when I was very young, and where the seeds were sown for my entrepreneurial career."

"Having left Laverda in my early 20s, I was determined to produce my own machines, together with my brother Guido. We started out doing contract welding work and after gaining some experience we produced our first 'mass-produced' machine in 1989, a mixer wagon of our own design. Although after a few years Guido went his own way to create Faresin Formworks. In 2001, we designed and built our first telehandler - which



Flannery Plant took the first Faresin Full Electric

we sold in the Haulotte livery because at that time, we did not have our own sales network."

How do you rate Faresin's performance in the telehandler market since then?

"These intense 19 years can be summed up with my motto: "Excellence is not the finish line, but a race made of increasingly challenging stages". In these years, we built an avant-garde company with deep design and industrial skills by always seeking to improve ourselves and trying to learn from the best. Today we build machines of a construction quality with few rivals in the industry."

"Moreover, since the beginning, the know-how and production of telescopic handlers has been 100 percent Faresin. We developed our own telehandler technology which, I believe, puts us in an advantageous position vis-a-vis our competitors. Our design and industrial skills are complemented by the ability and the deep desire to listen to our customers and respond to their needs. Thanks to a commercial and marketing team that truly lives in the market."

What prompted the relatively fast development of the Full Electric telehandler?

"One of the strengths of what I call the 'Faresin system' is that the factory, research, development and marketing groups really do act as a single team, connected by a

direct and very fast line. Just as our decision making chain is very short and effective. The story of our Full Electric is exemplary in this respect because we were able to develop technology that is entirely Faresin, rather than buying electrification kits from third parties. This has been the result of an integrated action involving marketing, R&D and our supply chain, leveraged by our industrial experience."

"But our constant push for improvement continues through 360 degrees, because we believe that technology and ergonomics are the critical success factors in the telehandler market. We will be launching a new machine later this year that will raise the bar in the industry. It's the first of a new



An early Faresin telehandler stand at SAIÉ



Young Sante Faresin's (standing on the machine) passion for technology started with farm equipment



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Faresin models



Faresin Full Electric 6.26s brave the Norwegian winter



Snorkel began distributing badged Faresin telehandlers in 2018

telehandler generation that will combine top productivity and fuel efficiency with an extraordinary operator experience in terms of comfort and intelligent operating systems."

What is the split now between agricultural machines and telescopic handlers?

"We build product on demand so our production output may vary by season. In 2020, we produced 331 mixer wagons and 399 telescopic handlers. Behind this mix, we have developed important industrial and technological synergies. Such as the Farmatics system, which enables remote performance monitoring. It was initially designed for our mixer wagons and has now been adapted for our telehandlers. We are convinced that to be competitive, industry must be able to implement 'intelligent' transfers of technology between different sectors to improve the customer experience through tangible product benefits."

In how many countries is Faresin active in the telehandler market?

"We have delivered our telehandlers to 52 countries on five continents, and have growing markets in China, Russia and Brazil. In the United States, our machines are marketed under the Snorkel brand, our North American partner that ensures a widespread quality after sales service throughout the country."

Why did you decide to launch an electric telehandler? Are you planning any larger models?

"The integration between agriculture and industry is the main feature of the economy in this region of Italy. Sustainability is a theme that we have always dealt with, long before the term was coined or became popular. On an industrial level, it has been an almost natural evolution that has led us to develop our project and full electric technology."

"The advent of electronically controlled engines, due to emissions regulations, has led to the

development of inhouse knowledge relating to wiring, software programming and electronics architecture. It is this evolution that triggered and facilitated the design of our Full Electric machine. It is a response to the growing demand for a 'greener' approach on urban construction sites as well as working in enclosed spaces and sensitive environments such as airports or in the oil/fuels industry."

"As to the future, we are already working on an evolution of our Full Electric range towards a larger platform to increase productivity on construction sites. I suggest you keep an eye on us at the next international trade fairs..."

Does the company manufacture any other all electric products?

"Our stationary mixer wagon, part of our agricultural product range, is a full electric machine. We are analysing and exploring some other possible innovative applications in terms of electrification. Sustainability is now a driving value for our industrial activities, so we are very attentive to all technological developments in this direction."

Has the company considered a hybrid version with a small diesel engine to recharge batteries?

"We are approaching alternatives to the diesel engine in a systematic way and therefore not ruling out any possibilities including hybrid and we will continue to research."

How important is the Snorkel agreement?

"Quality international partnerships are the basis of our brand strategy because they enable us to be a household name everywhere in the world. Snorkel is among the most valuable of these partners. Through their widespread presence in the immense territory of the United States, they guarantee a high quality service, an essential condition for success in one of the most complex and important markets in the world.

Beyond volumes and economic results, we are learning a lot from the US experience, because we have the opportunity to get to know some of the big players in the industry. As I said beforehand: we are always ready to learn from the best."

What are the plans for the future and succession plans?

"Our future has long since begun. More than succession, we are talking about a transition that is maturing over time. My daughter Silvia is now our vice president for finance, sales, marketing and HR, while her sister Giulia is our chief operations officer. I remain the president of Faresin Industries."

"My daughters grew up in the factory cultivating the passion and destiny of the family business. I may say that they even choose their studies towards this end - respectively business management and management engineering. Both of them then enriched their background with work experience abroad with our international partners before joining the family company."



The three Faresin managers - Silvia, Sante and Giulia

Many Italian companies produce fantastic products in terms of design and fabrication BUT fail when it comes to product support - fast parts deliveries/ warranty/ service and manuals etc...

What is your policy on these areas?

"As soon as we ventured outside our domestic borders, long ago, we realised how strategic it was to have an efficient and prompt after sales service. We started to work on it right away and continue to invest in technology and training to ensure an after sales and parts service that can guarantee continuity to our customer's business and make our telehandlers profitable investments for them."

OK, but what about parts for current and older machines?

"Our process of continuous improvement of the service we offer our customers is based on commercial partnerships with companies that share our philosophy and guarantee proximity and efficiency to customers who buy Faresin around the world. Our partnerships include, for example, GSR in the UK that guarantee proximity to the customer with quality and promptness."



Faresin has made some significant investments in the replacement parts operation

A virtual plant tour

"Our manufacturing facilities are structured in four seamlessly connected plants alongside company headquarters which is home to management, R&D, administration and finance, sales and marketing, and HR departments.

The production process follows the lean manufacturing system,



The aerial view of the Faresin plant

and it is organised along with the Kaizen principles of continuous improvement. As part of our industrial philosophy, we continue to invest in technology and professional training, averaging five percent of our annual revenue over the last 10 years."

Fabrication and paint

"Approximately 95 percent of our fabricated components are made in-house with laser cutting, bending, welding, and painting processes. Our equipment includes:

- Three plasma cutting units and a fibre laser unit.
- A welding robot operating over eight stations.
- We also have a dedicated submerged arc welding production area for telehandler booms.

All fabrications are painted in-house through a four part process: surface cleaning; primer coating; top coating and varnishing, all which are completed in a booth with a temperature up to 90 degrees."



Plasma cutting table



Welding robot

Component assembly areas

"We pre-assemble several sub-assemblies, to guarantee the quality of our telescopic handlers and to speed up the assembly line process. These include booms, engine accessories such as pulleys, pipes and accessories, cabs, and the electrical system - 90 percent of which is produced in house, with the exception being options, such as air conditioning, which we purchase."

Assembly lines

"The assembly of telescopic handlers is now structured over two lines. One is dedicated to compact models - the 6.26 and 6.26 Full Electric - while the other line is dedicated to the rest of the product range, including medium and large telehandlers. Both lines are organised in assembly steps with automatic progression. At the end of each step, each operator presses a switch to confirm the completion of the task assigned to them, allowing the forward movement. The assembly lines are fed just in time according to lean manufacturing."

Test and rectification

"All pre-assemblies pass through quality and functional testing before moving to the assembly lines. A final functional test is then carried out on the completed telehandlers, including driving on slopes and testing with a range of implements before they are passed to the shipping area."

What are your non-business passions?

"My greatest personal passion is the history and traditions of this region, and the Breganze area. I even bought the old 16th century forge in Breganze - where the regional metalwork industry was born. I restored it with a close eye



Sante Faresin



Fasca, Silvia, Giulia and Sante Faresin in their vineyard



The electric sub-assembly area



The Full Electric telehandler assembly line



The diesel telehandler assembly line

on preserving its original features and converted it into a guest house for our customers and visitors. But the way I best realise this passion of mine is through the production of superior quality wines."

"This has been a passion since my childhood, having grown up in this fairy tale landscape of hills and vineyards at the foot of the mountains and full of history. A landscape made alive thanks to the work and initiative of man, which has made it into a territory that bears fruit without stripping it, but rather enriching it from season to season in an almost symbiotic relationship."

"You could say that with wine I am realizing a dream that comes from a family tradition enriched by new attention to the environment. We produce a quality organic wine that revives the terroirs of the Breganze district."

What are you most proud of?

"No doubt about it: my family. First, my extraordinary daughters, Giulia and Silvia, two top managers of the 21st century in the making. A parental success that I share with Fosca, my beloved wife, and lifelong companion. Then there are my

granddaughters, six year old Sole, and four year old Eugenia, who can do whatever they want with me, just like any self-respecting grandfather."

What is your favourite-Book?

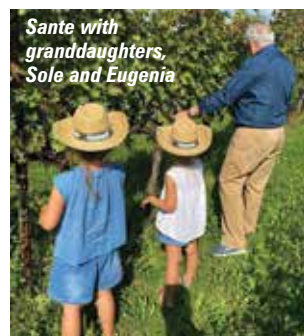
In my spare time, I read a lot of trade magazines. Then I read the usual relaxing best sellers in the style of Ken Follet or Gore Vidal. But the book that has influenced me the most is Marco Polo's 'The Million' (the travels of Marco Polo). I studied it as a child in school and it made me dream of travel and distant countries that I later explored as an entrepreneur, such as China. A leather bound copy of the book with period illustrations still has a place of honour on my bookshelf.

Film?

The Godfather part 1 and 2 with my favourite actors Al Pacino and Robert De Niro.

Gadget?

Not so much a gadget, but my Laverda motorbike which was made in Breganze in 1972 and a Fiat 500 L manufactured the same year, which I bought the year before founding the company in 1973 and both of which are still in my garage.



Sante with granddaughters, Sole and Eugenia



A 1972 Laverda bike