

cover story

# Clean machine

Deacro slitter stars in cleanroom at Polyester Converters



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**A** new state of the art cleanroom in the central London factory of Polyester Converters is the first European installation of the latest slitter rewinder from Canadian manufacturer Deacro. Supplied by the company's UK partner TS Converting Equipment, the model CL24 is a cantilevered centre winder featuring laser guided core positioning and digital knife set-up, and capable of running film at speeds of over 600m/min.

Lawrence Gardezi, managing director of Polyester Converters, says the investment (totalling £300,000) will drive the company forward, and allow it to enter new and innovative markets.

"We spent a lot of time and effort looking at different machines but felt that the Deacro slitter had the flexibility and efficiency we required for expansion within our company," he remarks. "It is geared up for extremely quick set-up and job change, which is what we need. Everything is bespoke to our cleanroom's requirements. It will be used for the conversion of medical, specialist trade conversion and food grade packaging films."

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The CL24 is the latest development of Deacro's C24A system – claimed to be the most popular centre winder in North America. Designed for maximum productivity at high production rates, in addition to knife setting and core positioning, the machine's automatic features include reel removal and packaging. Featuring an Allen-Bradley PLC and Zicom touchscreen, the company says it offers simplicity in machine set-up and minimal operator fatigue in

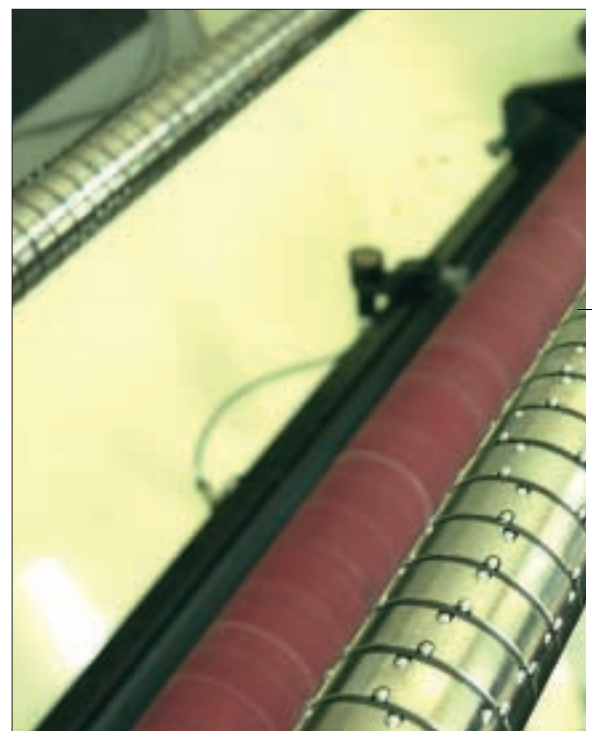
operation. The overhead web path facilitates machine access and provides the operator with maximum visual inspection during the rewinding process.

The machine is designed for one-man operation and easy maintenance, and has a compact footprint that is economic on floorspace. It will handle web widths between 1,600-1,800mm. Maximum unwind diameter is 1,300mm, and the rewind 610mm. Cantilevered differential rewind shafts allow fast reel removal with no shaft handling.

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The machine frames are 50mm thick ground steel plate braced with pre-stressed heavy duty torque members. This is said to ensure frame stability and vibration-free operation. Control Techniques drives are used. All driven systems are synchronous timing belt drives to minimize noise, vibration and maintenance. All idlers after the slitting section are tendency driven to provide the required sensitivity for light gauge films. The standard roller covering is cork rubber and upgrades to neoprene, urethane, plasma or custom coverings are available. Alternative, special roller coverings can be supplied based on product requirements. All bearings are sealed for life where applicable. Adequate guarding is provided along with conveniently located access doors for servicing of the drive train motors and all power transmission elements.

A demo trim extraction unit set up by Kongsilde is attached to the new slitter to control waste trim and dust in the cleanroom. Polyester Converters is currently working towards full BRC and ISO 1400 accreditation, and this system



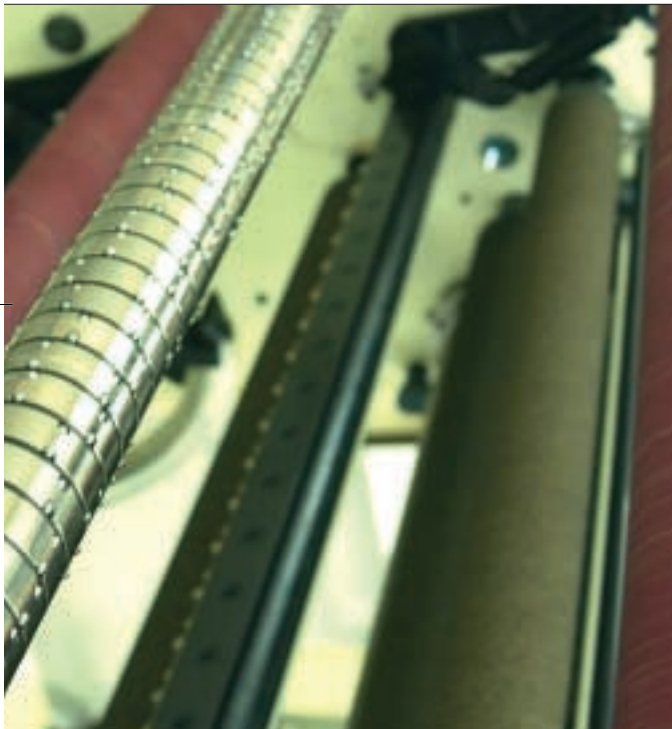
will eventually be extended to link up with all the other slitting machines located within the production facility.

"The profile and quality of the end reels produced on the CL24A is phenomenal – second to none," enthuses Lawrence Gardezi. "We've just done a job for a US customer – and we were able to deliver it to them faster than their prime supplier in the 'States. Consequently we have become their primary supplier."

Polyester Converters is part of the PSG Group, which also includes Plastic Shims & Gaskets – the original operation founded by Lawrence Gardezi's father in the 1960s. At its 13,333m2 premises not far from Tower Bridge, the company stocks,



has a complete range of sheeting facilities to handle all types and thicknesses of material. It claims to achieve tolerances of within 0.25mm on sheets up to 1,500x1,650mm. Larger sizes may be obtained, depending on type of material, up to 1,524x3,500mm, where a tolerance is not so critical. Guillotining is also used to produce sheets, maximum size being 1,500x1,650mm at tolerances of 0.25mm. Finally, die cut and cut components are manufactured and supplied to any specification. Materials include polyester



current fluctuations associated with petroleum based products."

Film types available include clear, super clear, hazy, milky white, matt, opaque white, black, metallized and coloured. Films can be supplied uncoated, slip treated, anti static, corona treated, chemically pre-treated for adhesion (to solvent as well as water based inks, adhesives and resins), diazo coated, co-extruded (heatseal), dyed and PvDC coated. Polyester Converters can service small and large orders efficiently.

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The ISO 9002 registered company's conversion service can produce rolls from 10-1,600mm in width and sheets from 15mm square to 1,270x1,524mm. In addition to the new Deacro in the cleanroom, it has a variety of slitting machines, from 7-1,600mm (with capabilities for slitting up to 2,200mm). In

distributes and converts polyester films in thicknesses from 3.5-500 micron. It also offers a trade conversion service on customer supplied products. 3M, ITW and Ford are all major customers of the Group, which also has sales offices in Germany and the USA.

The operation in London stocks a range of films supplied by Saehan, Toray, Du Pont, Hoechst, 3M and Agfa, including Excell, Terphane, Lumirror, Melinex, Mylar and Hostaphan grades. Films are also sourced from other leading manufacturers. "We are independent - not tied to one supplier," Lawrence Gardezi emphasizes. "We are increasing our stock in order to offer price stability given the

addition to polyester film, other materials can be converted, including paper, board and other films from 6-1,000 micron. The slitting service will convert materials to specification, producing coils from 6-1,600mm in width. Rolls are supplied on 76mm or 152mm cores.

The markets supplied are packaging - carton windows, laminating, lidding for ready meals, overwrap for bakery and aromatic products, and metallizing; printing and stationery products; and industrial items such as carrier/release films, adhesive tapes, labels, holograms, stamping foil, thermal transfer ribbons, and magnetic tape.

The Polyester Converters armoury also

paper, PP, PVC, and rubber.

PSG's collaboration with TS Converting began in 1983, when it purchased a new Cameron slitter, since refurbished in 2001. Such is the close relationship between the two companies now, that in addition to its main function, the new cleanroom will be used as a sales tool for TS and Deacro - it has been built with viewing windows for prospective customers. Significantly, the 1,836m<sup>2</sup> also has space available for a second machine to be installed "probably next year", Lawrence Gardezi reveals. "It will be a wider web model, to meet the growing demand for bigger reels."

Tim Self, director of T S Converting, comments: "The European introduction of the Deacro range at the recent drupa exhibition was very encouraging. We received over 100 enquiries for machines and expect further orders shortly." Some 1,500 of the Canadian company's machines are already in operation, mostly in North America.

T S Converting is also owner of Elite Cameron, whose range includes automatic and manual core cutters, centre surface slitter rewinders, and coating and laminating machines. The company is actively promoting both the Deacro and Elite Cameron ranges in the European market. It will open a fully operational showroom early in 2005, providing a working facility for potential customers to take their material for trials and extended production runs. ■

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