

PICANOL ACHIEVES MILESTONE WITH PRODUCTION OF 300,000th WEAVING MACHINE IN YPRES

Ypres, 1 June 2010 – Yesterday saw the 300,000th weaving machine pass the end of the production line since production first commenced at the weaving machine manufacturer Picanol, Ypres. This represents yet another milestone in the long history of Picanol, which was founded on 22 September 1936. The 300,000th weaving machine, an OMNIplus 800 airjet weaving machine, will be shipped this week to a customer based in PR China.

The very first Picanol weaving machine - the Omnium – was produced in 1936 in the Polenlaan in Ypres. It was based on a design from the Spanish engineer Jaimé Picañol. In the early years, the company achieved an annual production of 120 machines. However, by the time of the outbreak of World War II, production had risen to one machine per day. In the 1950s, Picanol laid the foundation for future international expansion with the President weaving machine (which was also exhibited at Expo '58). In the early 1960s, Picanol moved to a new industrial area on the borders of Ypres as a result of increasing demand for weaving machines. And it continues to assemble its high-tech weaving machines in the K. Steverlyncklaan to this very day.

Staying ahead with innovative technology

Through its policy of innovation and constant focus on product quality, processes and people, Picanol has managed to surprise the market time and again with new, high-tech weaving machines. Since the first Omnium weaving machine in 1936, more than 15 new models have been launched on the market. And for the forthcoming ITMA-Asia + CITME fair (22-26 June, Shanghai), Picanol will introduce a new airjet model, the OMNIplus-X.

Picanol is currently the technological market leader in both airjet and rapier weaving machines. The machines are made in Belgium and China (since 1995). Driven by the continuous efforts of the Picanol engineers, the speed of weaving machines has evolved phenomenally: the first (shuttle) weaving machine was able to achieve a speed of about 140 picks per minute. Today, the OptiMax rapier weaving machines are able to reach industrial speeds of more than 700 picks per minute (the fastest rapier machine in the world), while the OMNIplus 800 airjet machines reach the speed of more than 1250 picks per minute.

High-tech Picanol weaving machines can be used to weave a variety of textiles in three main segments: apparel (e.g. denim, blouses, sportswear etc), household (e.g. percales, curtains, blankets etc) and technical textiles (e.g. airbags, parachutes, sail cloths, tire cords to reinforce car tires etc). Indeed, an estimated one out of three pairs of denim jeans worldwide is made on Picanol weaving machines.

"In the past decades we have always pushed the limits of weaving machines both for and with our customers. As a result, we are one of the world's top weaving machines producers. We have always stuck to our core mission: developing, assembling and servicing innovative and reliable high-tech weaving machines. The accumulated experience we have following production of these 300,000 machines is the best

guarantee for our worldwide customers that they get the best weaving machine when choosing Picanol. We would like to thank all employees that contributed to these 300,000 weaving machines in the past decades. It is thanks to their dedication and motivation that Picanol has been able to develop into a global leader today," stated Geert Ostyn, Vice-President Weaving Machines.

Picanol is part of the Picanol Group, which will celebrate its 75th anniversary in 2011.

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