

Star product: Obscure Maxima WS

By Noli Dinkovski Friday, 10 June 2011

Italian wire-binding line comes to the UK just in time for calendar season

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Obscure Maxima WS



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Will manufacturers becoming more involved in buying and selling print as well as machinery be a good thing for the print industry?

Yes

No

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When was the machine launched and what market is it aimed at?

The Maxima WS isn't a particularly new machine, but it is new to the UK. The calendar line had already been available in Europe for four years when finishing kit supplier Don Valley Graphic Equipment took on the Maxima distributorship last year. Both the WS and its smaller cousin, the WM, are designed primarily for the production of calendars and double-loop wire-bound books. The machines are made by Obscure Maxima, an Italian company that had previously specialised in high-speed heavy-duty collators often used in the large-scale production of calendars.

What are the machine's main features?

Don Valley managing director Derek Wood says both machines have been constructed from a "clean slate" and are not just re-hashed and improved versions of previous models. A feature shared by both lines is a removable binding unit, which allows for tooling changes outside the confines of the machine. The jogger has a pneumatic 'square knocker', which registers the product from the top, bottom and side, while punching comes with a fixed zero-point, so once any adjustment has been made, the binding station will adjust automatically.

What's its USP?

Wood says both machines are constructed to the same high standards as Obscure's collating machinery, which has proven to be able to withstand years of operation. "During the calendar season – June right the way until the end of December – these machines run continually," he says. In addition, Wood says Obscure Maxima is the only manufacturer in the world that produces both a calendar binder and collator, meaning there is a linked electronic interface between the two, something that isn't possible with any other calendar production line on the market.

How quick is it?

The WS runs at 3,000 cycles per hour. Importantly, the puncher and binder are synchronised, meaning the binding speed will change as soon as the line speed changes. According to Wood, the WS isn't a number of machines "pushed together with a transfer unit, but an all-in-one line". Touchscreen controls allow the operator to make adjustments quickly and an additional binding unit can be purchased so that makereadies can be completed while the machine is still producing the current job. Both the WS and WM make their own hangers on the run from straight wire lengths, which can be continually topped up during production.

What's its cost and how many have been installed so far?

At the current exchange rate, the Maxima WS will set you back something around £166,500 (€190,000). The WM model starts at £100,800 (€115,000), though there is a special rate of £85,000 (€97,000) for the first three sold in the UK. As yet there are no UK installations, which is unsurprising given Obscure Maxima only re-entered the UK market last year.

What training and level of service support can users expect?

Wood has many years' experience dealing in Maxima collators, and has personally inspected and tested the calendar equipment in Turin. However, he says the first few installations in the UK will be carried out by the manufacturer. "Don Valley is a pretty small operation; basically there's myself and two engineers. We will need a while to get up to speed," he explains. "That said, it can be frustrating being an agent for Maxima – the machines tend to be so reliable you rarely get any work to do." Wood says there is no point holding any spares until the first calendar line goes in, but as soon as it does, he will put together a detailed spares inventory.

SPECIFICATIONS

- Max speed:** 3,000 cycles per hour (cph)
- Max sheet size:** 600x800mm
- Min sheet size:** 105x210mm
- Pager weight:** 70-900gsm
- Wire diameter:** 3/16", 1/4" – 5/16" – 3/8" Pitch 3:1" (3 holes every inch) 4:1" on demand
- Footprint:** 7,500x1,300x2,500mm
- Weight:** 3,500kg
- Price:** WS: £166,500 (€190k) WM: £100,800 (€115k) WM special introductory rate: £85,000 (€97,000)
- Contact:** Don Valley Graphic Equipment 01909 489068 www.ultimatescore.co.uk

ALTERNATIVES

Kugler-Womako HS536
The HS536 can be linked to a wide selection of collators and can incorporate in-line wire forming and specialised headerboard feeding and stitching. Two-up production is possible by adding a cutting station after delivery. Bottom board turning and a double manual feed station are optional.
Max speed: 3,000cph
Max sheet size: 606x740mm
Min sheet size: 125x120mm
Price: £510,000
Contact: Stanley Press Equipment 01625 429211 www.s-p-e.co.uk

Renz Inline 500

The Inline 500 can also be used as a book punching and binding line, and the manufacturer says this versatility means the machine isn't stood around doing nothing for most of the year. Block-to-block punching speeds up the binding of thicker products such as manuals, while end-of-line product handling machines can be added to further increase productivity.
Max speed: 2,300cph
Max sheet size: 500x700mm
Min sheet size: 70x135mm
Price: £155,000
Contact: Renz UK 01707 270001 www.renz.com

Rilecart PB-796 HD

Thanks to retractable punching pins, makeready on this Italian machine is said to be less than five minutes. The PB-796 HD can be fed by any collator and optional extras include hanger insertion, an automatic vibrator system, semi-automatic feeder and inline forming. Both the unwinder and the shingled delivery unit have adjustable speed.
Max speed: 2,300cph
Max sheet size: 600x800mm
Min sheet size: 120x100mm
Price: £125,000
Contact: Joto 0207 511 4411 www.joto.co.uk

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