

**BRAZIL SERIES - V.**

# SANTA CATARINA

A LONG EUROPEAN TRADITION IN QUALITY  
MANUFACTURING HAS POSITIONED THE  
SOUTHERN STATE AS AN INDUSTRY LEADER

# SANTA CATARINA'S CONSTRUCTION BONANZA

## CONSTRUCTION BUSINESS BOOMS AS THE ECONOMY EXPANDS AND DEMAND RETURNS TO THE SOUTHERN STATE

Long a magnet for both internal and external immigration, almost 20 per cent of Santa Catarina's current residents have come from other Brazilian states or from abroad, drawn by the state's excellent employment opportunities, education system, quality of life and other factors.

This growth, coupled with Brazil's economic performance, means the housing, civil works and commercial property sectors are doing very well indeed and three companies headquartered in the capital of Florianópolis are in pole position to prosper as the state's economy, and construction demand, expands.

### New Urbanism

Grupo Cota, one of the state's leading residential and corporate builders, has seen its fortunes improve immensely in recent years and is now moving into planned communities in a new, long-term project, with prospects to expand outside of Santa Catarina.

"There has been an immense change over the past five years in our sector," explains Cota Group CEO Fábio Joci Martins, the son of the company's founder. "At that time, there was big demand but credit was difficult because of high interest rates.

"But from 2006, interest rates began to

decline and of course the developers and builders were ready to go when money became available. Companies began offering product, sales took off. We've done very well in Florianópolis, Itajaí and Bombinhas where our company operates."

Founded in 1974, the family-run group plans, designs and builds to the highest standards using cutting-edge technology, top-of-the-line materials and skilled labour, Martins says.

The groups' projects receive certifications from the UK-based Bureau Veritas Quality International, a leading global certification firm and research indicates that customer product, sales and service satisfaction is high.

In the residential sector, Cota Group focuses on condominium-style housing for the middle class and above, as the president argues that the margin on lower class residential projects is too small.

And location is a major priority for the group which also pays special attention to developing projects which carefully integrates its buildings, both residential and commercial, with the surrounding landscape.

"Profitability is good," the president says. "Our annual turnover is between 30 and 37 million pounds and we certainly expect to do better in the future."

Although business is good wherever it operates, Cota Group's main focus now is Itajaí, and the region's main port in the north of the state which moves close to 2 million tonnes of cargo each year.

"It is a port city but does not live by that activity alone as it also has industry, and thanks to the beautiful seaside, quite a vibrant tourism industry as well," Martins explains.

"It is one of the fastest growing cities in the state and we are enjoying strong performance in all our activities – residential, commercial and housing developments."

In the latter sector, the group has formed a company called Humaniza Urbanismo along with another Brazilian partner to develop entire communities totalling 6 million



Photo: Grupo Cota



**FÁBIO JOCI MARTINS**

GENERAL DIRECTOR GRUPO COTA

square meters in three areas.

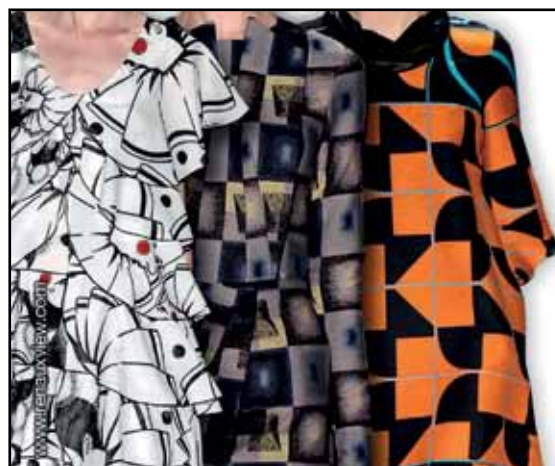
"Our idea is to build planned neighbourhoods which will be self-sustaining subdivisions with shops, supermarkets, etc., through partnering with investors and not just sell the lots and leave," the president says. "This will maximise the project and leave a real legacy."

The project has a schedule stretching over the next 10 to 15 years and Martins says he plans to take the concept to other states at some point in the future, perhaps with international participation.

At the moment, Grupo Cota has no partnership deals with foreign interests although the president points out that investors from Europe and the United States are pouring money into commercial projects which he sees as the most profitable real estate sector.

Demand is constant and should remain so, but challenges in the sector remain, he cautions

"For example, bureaucracy holding up permits required to start a business at the local, state and federal levels is a real problem.



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And labour is expensive, although that may improve as constructors begin using more pre-fabricated components.

“But I am optimistic about our future. Today, Grupo Cota is considered one of the best builders in the entire state and our goal is to be the largest in the state. That is where I expect us to be in five years,” Martins predicts.

### Sold-Out in Florianópolis

Robson Deschamps, the president of the residential and commercial real estate development and construction company Beco Castelo, boasts that Florianópolis is definitely a city of the future.

“This is one of the fastest growing cities in Brazil today,” he says, “with a growth rate of around 16 per cent which is well above the national average. This city needs to expand to accommodate all the people coming here to work.”

Besides job opportunities, other attractions include Florianópolis’ natural beauty and the friendliness of the local inhabitants, many of whom are descended from European immigrants, mainly Germans and Italians.

With over 30 years of experience in the market, Beco Castelo enjoys an excellent reputation for quality, technology and innovation, and its increasing sales prove that customers have taken note.

“Over the past three years we have trebled our production. Formerly, we were averaging around 10,000 square meters of completed space per year. But in 2012 alone, Beco Castelo will launch projects totalling 80,000 square meters for delivery in 2015,” the president says.

A typical residential property built by the company is a multi-storey, high-end building with spacious, condominium-type two and three bedroom apartments. Along with an adult, children’s and lap pool, common areas include a social hall, barbeque area and gym.

On-site security personnel and the latest technology in alarms and movement sensor lighting systems guarantees residents’ safety.

“At the moment, we have four projects

under construction, all of them sold out 100 per cent,” Deschamps says. Beco Castelo can provide financing for buyers or arrange bank loans according to customer requirements.

“For example, customers can have up to 60 months after completion of construction to repay the financing. This is the most popular repayment plan because it is shorter, without charge and there is less documentation required,” he explains.

Among the company’s clients are Brazilian investors who purchase residences or shop spaces then later sell them, the president notes. “Foreigners living in Brazil are also buying, not as an investment but rather for personal use.”

“These days we’re billing around 9 million pounds a year so we can’t complain about the market here in Santa Catarina,” he adds. Beco Castelo has 200 full-time employees, and some 150 sub-contracted staff.

“Fortunately, we haven’t suffered the problems concerning the scarcity of qualified manpower like other companies have. Our strength comes from employing the same people over a long period of time. We’ve had to raise wages but that’s not a problem.”

### Infrastructure Needed

Also involved in residential and commercial development is family-run Cassol Group, a company which got its initial start in 1958 in Brazil’s timber sector.

Since then it has branched out into finished wood product manufacturing, construction materials, real estate and prefabricated concrete building materials, which today accounts for half of its business.

“Our company today is the leader in Brazil, growing organically nearly 15 per cent every year over the past two or three years,” says director Murilo Cassol. “We’re invoicing around 123 million pounds annually.”

Cassol sees Santa Catarina as an excellent location for foreign investment for several reasons. “First of all, there is the excellent harbour and port facilities for trade with the rest of the world, we have a very diverse in-

dustrial base and governments which understand the importance of business and do what is necessary to promote enterprise.”

Like many Brazilian executives, Cassol complains about the lack of skilled manpower, but ironically, his company also benefits from this situation.

“We’ve been around for 50 years and have always trained up our employees and then sent them to other units within the group as the need arises. However, the shortage of qualified workers is still a problem for us.

“But because of this situation, more and more construction these days is being done with pre-fabricated and pre-cast materials which don’t require as much manual labour.

“At the same time, Brazil’s improving economy means more people are buying automobiles and there is an increasing need for bridges, roads and other transport infrastructure which is precisely our biggest market.”

“We are trying to hire specialist engineers from outside Brazil, mainly Spain, which has become a source of skilled labour. But it is difficult to bring them over because of legal reasons,” the director says.

Cassol fills the demand for pre-fabricated material from five manufacturing plants in the states of Santa Catarina, Paraná, Rio Grande do Sul, Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo with production capacity of 20 thousand cubic meters per month or enough to fill 2,000 trucks.

The company supplies some 4,000 customers in Brazil and abroad. Currently it is looking for further opportunities in the immediate region.

“Chile is very well developed and wide open so it is extremely competitive while in Argentina, customers are more comfortable with local producers the locally-made product even though it is costlier than ours and inferior in quality,” Cassol explains.

Along with pre-cast concrete manufacturing, the group operates a network of stores selling construction materials and home décor items, with ten units in three states making it the fifth-largest retail chain in the southern region.

Cassol’s real estate arm, Kobrasol Realty, develops residential and commercial properties such as major shopping centres in Santa Catarina, while another unit in the group carries on its original business: timber and wood processing.

“I believe that in order to continue growing on a national level and beyond is to expand either through a capital increase, an IPO or perhaps merging with another company,” the director says.

“We plan to be the largest supplier of pre-cast and pre-fabricated metal and concrete structures for the building industry.”

**INTERVIEW WITH PATRÍCIO JUNIOR**  
**CEO of ITAPOÁ PORT - SANTA CATARINA**



In operation only from 2010, in these last two years the estate-of-the-art Port of Itapoá in northern Santa Catarina has carved a profitable niche, despite the competition of traditional ports in southern Brazil. Yet growth has only started as it plans to treble its activity as the roads leading to it improve

**How have the first months of operations been? You've not yet reached the end of your second operational and commercial year...**

**P.C.-** Every day's a challenge. I've been on board since December 2010, and no single day is like any other. Each day brings something new. We've had energy supply problems, lack of roads, conditional laws, Department of the Environment constraints, a crisis in Europe, a crisis in the U.S.A., a crisis in Brazil, there is so much happening that one has to change tack the whole time, but we're well on course.



Photo: ITAPOÁ PORT

**How would you define that course? What are your plans for the port, and for the port's contribution to business in Santa Catarina and Brazil as a whole?**

**P.C.-** Itapoá Port, well, I always joke that it will be a success independently of us being here, because the project is so good. It brings together capacity, efficiency and a very competitive market. When you offer efficiency, low costs, real time information, lots of things happening and the Port delivering... I always say: Santos is on a river, Paranaguá is on a river, Itajaí and Rio Grande are on rivers, Itapoá is in a bay. That makes a lot of difference... If it's raining, things aren't affected here. If there's a storm, things aren't affected here... It's one of the safest places in the south, and God alone can give that, everything else money can buy: equipment, trained staff, but only God can give the weather conditions; you can't do anything about that. So Itapoá Port has something extra, and we can exploit that in a competitive market, particularly as it has been designed to harbour big ships; this is something that is already happening. Currently Santa Catarina is receiving ships through Itapoá Port that can carry 8,400

**"WHEN BOTH THE PORTS SANTOS AND NAVEGANTES STARTED OUT, NEITHER ONE WAS AS BUSY AS WE ARE "**

TEUs; this couldn't have happened without Itapoá Port. So we have a competitive edge. There is a niche in the market; it will be the preference particularly for certain lines.

both private, like Navegantes, which is one of the best Brazilian ports, and for us sets targets that we want to beat, not only in a competitive sense but also because it is an excellent, extremely well administered port...

**Give me an idea of numbers... By the end of 2012 how many employees will you have; how busy will you be? what kind of revenue?**

**P.C.-** We should have revenue of around R\$ 100 million. In terms of shipments, perhaps 250 thousand TEUs or a little more. A large part is still for transshipment because this is a differentiated market, with a differentiated focus and a navigation line behind it. In terms of productivity our numbers are excellent, we have an average of 30 to 35 shipments per equipment, and this puts the port at a good international level already, principally with the set-up, because we have a 630 metre-long berth; we are doing well. It is important as well to take into account the ports that we have as bench-marks,

**So you have the ambition to become a point of reference in Brazil in terms of efficiency, I understand...**

**P.C.-** Oh yes. We want to be right up there. And we also have the Port of Santos as a reference, which is currently the number one port in terms of revenue and business. So both of these are bench-marks for us. When both Santos and Navegantes started out neither of them was as busy as Itapoá has been.

**Where do you see Itapoá Port in 4 years'?**

**P.C.-** At the moment it's still a small port because we're only a 1/3 of the way through the project. I hope that in 4 years' time, I'll be able to show you a port handling 2 million TEUs, a very busy port, with a growing service area, and with industries that are currently along the BR 101, Itapoá – Garuva highway, preparing to relocate to Itapoá.



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**THE LARGEST MANUFACTURER OF PREFABRICATED CONCRETE STRUCTURE OF LATIN AMERICA**

Cassol, a Brazilian equity company, is present in the construction of large works in Brazil and abroad for more than 50 years. It is a leading company in the prefabricated concrete sector with five factories located in the South and Southeast regions, covering a total area of more than 120,000m<sup>2</sup>.

## INTERVIEW WITH SEVERINO BENNER

President of BENNER & GLOBALWEB

Banking on the unparalleled tradition in IT development of the city of Blumenau, Benner has quickly become a reference in the ERP sector of the Brazilian Market. Now part of the GlobalWeb Group, the company continues to count on its specialisation in vertical markets to keep its exponential growth



### How did Benner come into being?

**S.B.-** Benner turned 15 years old last this year. It came about due to our dream of rebuilding our ERP and consolidating our ERP systems. That's our story, anyway, but the history of Blumenau as a major software hub goes back to the time when Cetil was a large company. Today around 8% of the working population of Blumenau is involved in the IT sector. No other city can boast such high numbers.

In the year that ended in March, Benner had made 98 million reais. We have 650 employees divided between São Paulo, Maringá and Blumenau, and a few more sales offices and projects spread across Brazil.

### How did the merger between the three companies come about, to form the consolidated group GlobalWeb?

**S.B.-** Two years ago we were already discussing the fact that the IT and software market in general were set to undergo a massive change in profile. In the first place, Brazil, like other countries, has a serious shortage of skilled IT workers. And what does that bring about? Businesspeople are increasingly focusing on their own business, and IT is being increasingly outsourced by companies due to the lack of manpower and the need to reduce costs and investments... The third reason was that the company wants to go back to its core business. We realised that the area of IT is currently undergoing serious consolidation. Major IT customers are beginning to select their suppliers, and they

want companies that will guarantee continuity in this high-risk area of their business. We took note of the trend towards cloud-computing, with everything moving into the cloud. This allows you to assist customers from end to end, and your infrastructure can act as a self-source data centre, along with software and everything related to Microsoft platforms. Global arose from this background as a new company, completely focused on this new emerging world, and offering a plethora of services. All activities were calculated as services, with monthly payment.

### Do you think that Blumenau and Santa Catarina will continue to serve as a good base for IT companies?

**S.B.-** Santa Catarina has an almost European culture, with lots of Italians and Germans. It is continuing to prove a good base for production. The cost of labour is more attractive here than in the larger cities of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, and there is less competition from multinational companies. Yet there is a lack of training for software engineers, so we have ended up taking on a role slightly akin to that of a university. We run several programmes here in Blumenau, including the Intra 21 project, in conjunction with the World Bank, to train young people under 21 in the IT market. We have already provided training for almost 600 professionals, in conjunction with the World Bank and the city council. In doing so, we are complementing university programmes, as it is necessary to train more people in order for us to be able to employ them.



Photo: Benner

"BRAZIL HAS A DEFICIT OF TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND WORKERS IN THE IT SECTOR"

### How do you envisage the long-term development of the group?

**S.B.-** In the first place, we are currently at a stage where we are making new acquisitions and entering new vertical markets. What makes our company different from others is that we specialise in vertical markets. We are not a generic ERP company, but rather create specialised ERP systems in the areas of logistics, tourism, services and other sectors. We are absolutely focused on vertical markets. We want to get involved in the field of health and to enter new vertical markets, making new investments so that we can expand abroad, while also securing a good position for our company.

**Beco Castelo.**  
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# RIGHT ON THE INTERNATIONAL SPOTLIGHT

## GOOD LOGISTICS AND A TRADITION OF QUALITY MANUFACTURING MAKE SANTA CATARINA AN IDEAL INVESTMENT DESTINATION

When casting about for a prime destination for investing in Brazil, the state of Santa Catarina is attracting increased attention from many foreign concerns interested in establishing a presence in the country and it is easy to see why.

A robust economy, a diverse industrial and agricultural base and the perfect location and infrastructure for international trade are just some of the reasons Santa Catarina has become one of Brazil's investment hot spots.

A few facts: the state's GDP, equivalent to 44 billion pounds, is larger than the total of three neighbouring nations – Uruguay, Bolivia and Paraguay.

At the same time, Santa Catarina accounts for just 3.3 per cent of Brazil's population and 1.1 per cent of the country's territory, but is responsible for around 4.1 per cent of the GDP and some 4 per cent of exports.

Investors also give the state high marks for its energy efficiency, qualified human resources, equitable income distribution, low crime rate and entrepreneurial spirit.

Another factor investors find attractive is its demographic balance among its 6.2 million inhabitants with only 40 per cent of the population concentrated in Santa Catarina's ten largest municipalities.

### Perfect Location

One business prospering from Santa Catarina's advantages is the Perini Business Park, located in the city of Joinville and built and operated by the PerVille Construções e Empreendimentos S.A., a construction company.

"Logistically, you are open to the entire world here," explains group CEO Marcelo Hack. "This region is the best for seaports in all of Latin America with six major ports within a radius of 230 kilometres. And the land transport infrastructure is magnificent.



**MARCELO HACK**  
CEO  
PERINI BUSINESS PARK - JOINVILLE

"Also, there are good schools turning out skilled manpower so we have a high human development index. And with so many European immigrants in Santa Catarina, we have an exemplary work ethic."

The CEO also boasts of the region's fine weather, wonderful beaches, international schools and life style possibilities, all vital considerations, he argues, to those executives who are moving their families to Santa Catarina.

"Industries begin to arrive here and demand improved infrastructure, the government responds and then that in turn attracts even more investment from outside," Hack notes.

Many multinationals studying where to set up their business in Brazil first take a look at São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro but then after weighing the advantages of Santa Catarina, decide on the latter, he adds.

The CEO lists such well-known companies as Siemens, Bosch, GM and just recently BMW as recent additions to the roster of foreign enterprises which have opted for the state.

"With Siemens, they initially set up a small

unit of 3,500 square metres, then established in Joinville the hub for their entire Brazilian distribution network for chemical reagents.

"And just recently they opened another industrial plant - the first Siemens unit in Latin America for producing X-ray, CT and MRI equipment and are now planning on yet another unit," Hack says.

The Perini Business Park is also attracting foreign tenants with companies like Brunswick, HSBC, Sherwin Williams, Whirlpool, Bühler of Switzerland and France's Allflex joining the

many big Brazilian enterprises operating there.

Considered the largest multi-sectorial business condominium in Brazil, the Perini Business Park sits on more than 2.6 million square meters of land area in the heart of the Joinville industrial district with 270,000 square metres of constructed space.

Perini houses dozens of small, medium and large-sized tenants with a wide-range of sectors represented: metal-mechanical, plastic, automobile, agricultural, civil construction, electronics, electrical products, chemical, logistics, metallurgical, financial, commercial and services.

"This has been a one-half-billion-dollar investment so far and we're growing an average of between 25,000 and 30,000 square metres of constructed space each year," the CEO says.

Hack sees multinationals as the natural customer base for the park where he says the rents are among the cheapest in Brazil for an industrial park.

"If you're a foreign company looking to rent space here you only have to bring in your

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equipment and furniture instead of building your own structure which can be a real headache with all the environmental permits required in Brazil.

"And all the infrastructure is here: energy, water, sewerage, transport, security, postal services, telecommunications, maintenance and cleaning. We also have banks, restaurants, law offices, recruitment companies and even a bakery!"

### Market Leader

Another Joinville company engaged internationally is Docol Metal Fittings, perhaps Latin America's leading manufacturer of faucets and plumbing fittings which from humble beginnings as a small family concern almost 60 years ago now exports to more than 40 countries around the world.

"Docol actually began in 1956 when my father, who was involved in sales, asked my two uncles, who were mechanical turners, to make certain orthodontic products and that evolved into a business making suction valves, faucets and other hydraulic items for the Brazilian civil construction sector," recalls president Ingo Doubrawa.

**INGO DOUBRAWA**  
GENERAL DIRECTOR  
DOCOL



Always at the forefront in innovation and technology, within 20 years Docol was cooperating with a prestigious foreign company, German manufacturer Georg Rost & Sohne, to develop a high-performance flush valve, the first one to provide a 10-year warranty.

"Our company has always been deeply involved with innovative design, while combining outstanding quality with an affordable

price. It's part of the company's DNA," he explains.

This devotion to finding cutting-edge solutions to plumbing problems led to one of the company's largest-selling product lines called DocolMatic, introduced in 1991, which features an automatic self-closing mechanism for faucets, showers, urinals, valves and flow regulators that save water.

"But we noticed that especially in schools, pranksters could still make off with the product and so we developed what we call "an anti-vandalism" device that is mounted in the wall and can't be pulled out."

Now, the DocolMatic is the market leader throughout Latin America, while the anti-vandalism device is being installed at all the stadiums being refurbished or built for the upcoming World Cup.

Docol's export strategy is tuned to niche markets. For example, company engineers and designers have had to take into account the variation in water pressure in countries around the world.

"India, Australia, New Zealand, Thailand and Latin American countries are all low pressure so we have been specialising in products for low pressure water systems for export and we are still expanding in that field."

Exports account for between 10 and 12 per cent of revenue for Docol which employs around 1,600 people. The president says with the construction boom in Brazil, more workers will be added.

"We don't have a problem with mid-level technicians as the very strong schools in and around Joinville turn out enough. But what is missing is the simple, or unskilled labourers, with the added problem that they tend to jump from job to job depending on who's paying the most," the president says.

"However, it is not really that dramatic as there are many such people coming from other regions of Brazil where jobs are scarce to work in Santa Catarina."

Docol is currently investing heavily in new equipment and working hard to reduce its en-

vironmental footprint to zero, partly as a measure of good citizenship but also it is good business because more and more foreign clients, particularly Americans, insist on it.

"Docol could be the number one company in Brazil in regards to sustainability", Doubrawa boasts.

### Long-Term Planning

Sustainability is also of vital importance to Manoel Marchetti, a major manufacturer of doors, reels and drums for cables and wires, and pre-fabricated and reusable buildings, all made out of wood. Located in the interior city of Ibirama, the company last year recently celebrated its 55th anniversary.

**FÁBIO AYRES MARCHETTI**  
VICEPRESIDENT  
MANOEL MARCHETTI



"My grandfather began this business as a logging operation, cutting and trimming timber for shipment to Rio de Janeiro," says vice-president Fábio Ayres Marchetti. "Then he began making doors and jambs.

"After my father took over we started the industrial part - stronger doors, reels and drums and pre-fabricated buildings - which is today our biggest revenue earner."

The company currently employs around 600 people, mostly in Santa Catarina state.

**Manoel Marchetti**

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Manoel Marchetti's billings this year are expected to reach 23 million pounds. Along with a major part of the domestic market, the company exports its products to the UK, the United States, Canada and Europe.

"Our exports between 2000 and 2005 were phenomenal and we couldn't keep up with the demand from the U.S. market alone. The years from 2009 to 2011 were weak but now we can say that exports are set to rise."

And there are plans to expand closer to home as the regional economy takes off.

"We're doing a study on setting up a distribution centre in the Caribbean, and Trinidad and Tobago is a possibility. Another one is Panama as that country has shipping facilities for both the Atlantic and the Pacific," Marchetti explains.

"There are tax and customs advantages there and Panama can also be a gateway to the United States."

The company's range of doors includes decorative doors, pine doors, fire-proof doors and flush doors in many style and colours, as well as accessories such as jambs and frames.

The vice president describes Manoel Marchetti as a vertically integrated company as it manages its own forests which provide 50 per cent of the wood it uses and buys in the other 50 per cent. All of its products are environmentally certified.

He praises the Central Bank's policy of returning the stability of the exchange rate for the Brazilian real, complaining that when the rate was more volatile it was impossible for the company to plan its production schedule.

"Without a clear policy we could not plan for beyond three months and when you are dealing with forest products, you need to plan five or ten years ahead. But we managed to prosper thanks to our position in the domestic market."

Along with the export market, Marchetti sees further growth at home and is planning accordingly, doubling the current production of 3,000 doors per day earmarked for Brazil.

"We have just opened a new distribution

centre in São Paulo and within four years we want another one in the northeast of the country to take advantage of all the new industries and construction which is happening there."

#### Firm Roots

Also investing in the future is Tuper, one of Brazil's leading steel processing firms which manufactures high-tech tubes, pipes, electrical conduits, oil and gas equipment, construction systems, automotive parts, metal roofing and exhaust systems.

"We're creating new lines of business which we prepared for by carrying out good market research and I must say we're very satisfied," notes president and CEO Frank Bollmann.

"Over the past three years, for example, we began to manufacture large-diameter pipes for the oil industry following the huge Pre-Salt petroleum field discovery off Brazil's coast.

"And we're the only company with one hundred per cent Brazilian capital that is supplying pipes for that project."

The fifth-largest steel processor in the country, the family-owned group turns over more than 30,000 tonnes of steel products each month. Last year, it posted a turnover of 300 million pounds, the president says.

Tuper is well aware that excellence and cutting-edge technology are essential to attend the demanding markets where it operates, so it invests steadily in its manufacturing plants and production processes.

Its research, development and engineering areas are focused on new products and backed by partnerships with research centres and universities in Brazil and elsewhere, as Tuper keeps associations with worldwide technology leaders.

"We search all over the world for collaboration in assembling cutting-edge products but at the same time we are creating our own technology and we are filing our own patents" he adds.

Tuper's structural industrial unit manufactures galvanised conduction tubes and electrical conduits, while its special compo-



**FRANK BOLLMANN**  
PRESIDENT & CEO  
TUPER

nents unit turns out a wide array of products for the motor vehicle sector such as suspension axles, shock absorbers, steering columns, roll bars, motorcycle handle bars, exhaust pipes and motorcycle chassis.

Among its automotive and agricultural machines clients are Daimler, GM, Ford, Fiat, Honda, Renault, VW, John Deere and New Holland.

Its construction solutions line includes steel roofing systems, metal structural profiles and sheets and blanks, as well as assessment services for project designs and assembly schemes. There is also a consumer plastics line, under the brand name Vanfix.

"We still have many plans to grow in processing steel and offer high-tech products to our customers, and we'll never stop," explains Bollmann. "Our strategic plans calls for us to be processing 50,000 to 60,000 tonnes of steel per month, or doubling our current capacity.

"And Santa Catarina is a wonderful place for us and for Tuper. This state has everything we need, the quality of life is superb and also the mentality of the people. It's a great place to take root and grow."

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**INTERVIEW WITH FEDERICO W. STRAUSS**  
**CEO of CRISTALLERIE STRAUSS**



As one of the only four factories that produce hand-made glass and crystalware in the world, this unique family-owned company carries the name of Blumenau's high quality craftsmanship to the four corners of Brazil and around the world

**How has business been for Cristallerie Strauss over the last few years?**

**F.W.S.-** Well, it's improving. More expensive, better quality products are selling more than basic products, because there is a lot of competition from imported manufactured goods. All our goods are hand-made. The average person may not be able to see any difference between them, they may find it hard to tell a hand-made glass from a machine-made glass, but we're working to increase the value given to hand-produced goods. We're working on a line; a colour overlay line, which can only be produced by hand, as there is no machine in the world that can make this kind of product. We're working hard in this area. There are only four factories in the world at the moment that are able to make this kind of product. There's one in France, one in Germany and one in the Czech Republic. So, as you can see, it's a very exclusive product.

**Why Blumenau? What was it that led the company to set up here?**

**F.W.S.-** My father migrated here in 1952, af-

ter the war. He met my mother in Germany and then came to Brazil. My grandmother was very enterprising; she had had her own company before and saw a gap in the Brazilian market for crystalware, as there was none at the time. So my father was given the responsibility of bringing the German technology to Blumenau. This led to the creation of Cristais Hering, and then in 1982 the Strauss family separated from the Hering family, and we set up the Cristallerie Strauss. I and my father created Strauss together. The German and Italian influence - Blumenau also has Italians-, helped in the evolution of crystalware here. The work of the Italians and the strong work ethics of the Germans meant that there were excellent workers available for the Cristallerie.

**How important is the foreign market to you? Do you export a great deal?**

**F.W.S.-** Yes, in the past we actually exported 80% of our production. When the dollar began to rise, we slowed down a little. At the moment we probably export around 15%.

**Which are the most promising markets?**

**F.W.S.-** The most lucrative markets are the U.S.A., the Arab countries, Russia, Germany, Italy, Spain, Greece... It's fragmented. The really strong ones at the moment are the Arab countries and the U.S.A.

**Now that the dollar is starting to come down, do you think that in the future the export market will start to grow again?**

**F.W.S.-** I hope so! We've taken part in the Frankfurt trade fair for the last 6 years, and we're looking at other foreign markets. We're producing a showcase that has been approved by a supplier for France, which is a great achievement; it's a very high-end company, in terms both of products and value. We're looking for new markets.

**So your competitive advantage really is in producing hand-crafted products...**

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**INTERVIEW WITH CACÍDIO GIRARDI**  
**General Director of ELECTRO AÇO ALTONA**



After the years in which an appreciated Real made it difficult for Brazilian industrial products to reach world markets, Altona is confident that the combination of a better exchange rate and the opportunities in the oil & gas sectors will contribute to make this traditional industry grow in the years to come

**What have the past 5 years been like?**

**C.G.-** Let's look at prior to 2008, five years earlier, so let's start in 2003... Altona set out a strategy to reach the world market, and to define its market, product and clients; and it consistently grew over 2003, 2004, 2005. All our work is focused on market demand being there, identifying the energy sector, particularly the oil and gas sector, the sector of infrastructure, mining... These are the sectors that have really come on and have grown, and we have kept up with this growth, our clients have taken us with them, and of course we have continued to invest in order to meet their needs.



Photo: Altona

be competitive". So we drew up a plan, we saw that we could be, and we started working on the basis that we could compete once the dollar reached R\$ 1.65. Of course inflation goes with it... But I would say for us now, with the rates of the dollar and the Euro, that we're competitive, but we still have work to do in order to push out some of our competitors, particularly in Europe.

**Where are most of your clients from?**

**C.G.-** Our biggest market is still Brazil. Altona exported and continues to export around 30% to 35%. That, together with the U.S.A. and Europe are the 3 strongest regions... Latin America, with Chile, Peru, Bolivia, and then the U.S.A. in second place and Europe in third, up until 2008. The crisis hit in 2009, lots of orders were cancelled, and we lost approximately 50% of our revenue and production capacity. So we had to make internal adjustments, adapt everything to fit our budget; we managed to get through 2009 and started to grow again in 2010, a little more in 2011 and even more in 2012, between 5% to 10%.

**What has the Brazilian market been like?**

**C.G.-** The energy and hydraulics sector has gone down; it's not as profitable a sector as it was in 2007 and 2008... But there are now other sectors that are interesting, such as mining, and we are banking on the oil and gas sector, particularly with the projects that Petrobrás is developing.

**What do you think of Blumenau and Santa Catarina as an industrial location?**

**C.G.-** One should assess it in terms of logistics. We're far away from consumption and from the delivery point. We're also a long way from material supply lines, because if we consider our clients in Brazil, they are mostly in the south-east... And then of course there's the rest of the world. We also have clients in our own region of Santa Catarina - Paraná, where there's also

**"WE ARE BANKING ON THE OIL AND GAS SECTOR, ON THE PETROBRAS PROJECTS"**

demand, but it's not so great. The inputs for the operation come from the north-east, the ores, scrap metal... What keeps Altona here are the people that we have with us, the whole group that's with us, and while there could be a different group somewhere else, it takes time to build up. There is also a strong working tradition here, which again, will develop elsewhere, although it will also take time... That's why we stay here.

**Have you experienced any lack of human resources?**

**C.G.-** Not yet, no. But we're always on the lookout as we want to keep the talented people with us. We have numerous incentives to keep our collaborators with us, and we try to keep up with the market in this field, so that we don't lose employees and are able to bring in others, and give them challenges to keep growing. But yes, it is difficult to find workers... We bring in the engineers, we train them to do what we need them to do, and up to now we've been successful.

**What is the most important long-term project you're working on?**

**C.G.-** To have two foundries in order to triple production capacity. There are several reasons that have led to this expansion... We've already identified the demand that is coming. To have productive units, because by building a more modern unit, you become more competitive... And because Blumenau is in the centre of the cities, already with one foundry... I wouldn't say that Altona is in the shopping centre, we have a foundry in a shopping centre in Blumenau... To create opportunities for expansion.

**INTERVIEW WITH BIANCA MITTELSTADT**  
**Managing Director and co-founder of FGM**

Branding, confidence and reputation are the key ingredients of success for this new dental-care company based on the industrial town of Joinville. Internatinal expansion should be the next step in its growth, yet the lack of specilised human resources in Brazil must be overcome to meet its ambitions



**When did you first realise that the international market was a promising one?**

**B.M.-** Six years after the company was founded, we had become well established in Brazil. We then realised that in order for the business to grow we needed to have an international presence, and for FGM to expand we needed to bring in new products and find foreign distributors to work with the FGM group.



**"AT THE TIME BRAZILIAN DENTAL PRODUCTS WERE LOOKED DOWN UPON "**

is a national company, or that Fred might even live in Brazil. When we go to conferences, dentists frequently assume that the company's chemical engineer lives in Europe.

**That can't have been easy...**

**B.M.-** It was a hurdle that was hard to get over for a Brazilian company, particularly in Europe. At the beginning we decided not to focus on the U.S market, which is what we are currently looking at in 2012, now that the company is 16 years old and Latin America has been very receptive to the FGM brand. At the time, we considered that: "we needed to establish ourselves in Brazil." Brazil is a challenge, particularly because at the time international products were much more highly valued. In the field of dentistry, Brazilian orthodontic products were looked down upon, and even dental whitening was seen as something new by Brazilians. We believed that if we could break down that barrier to dental whitening treatment...

who endorsed our products, our brand, and so we gradually managed to increase our credibility within Brazil.

**Do you only work with your own brand or do you work with other brands?**

**B.M.-** With our own brand. We manufacture almost 100% of our own products. My husband Fred is a chemical engineer, and so, the company was born. It helped a great deal, as we then began to give lectures, hold workshops... We grew and established the company by sharing knowledge, sharing the experience we had acquired over the years developing our products. The international market, and particularly the Latin American market, soon caught on that in addition to offering quality, FGM also provided an opportunity to acquire similar products to those from Europe or the United States, but at a much better price. This meant that we were well received very quickly. We have many clients throughout Latin America, from back when the company started to export internationally...

**And what about branding and added value? It's difficult to export a branded and added value product with the rate of the Real...**

**B.M.-** Several years ago it really worked in our favour... I think that one of the reasons we were able to establish ourselves in Brazil was the favourable exchange rate for national industry in 98/99. It's definitely a significant challenge at the moment, distributors may wonder whether we'll be able to withstand these challenging times... I think that what gave, and still gives FGM a strong commercial reputation is Fred and Bianca's guarantee, which over the years has proven that there is no need to fear working with us... I think that our distributors trust us, and this has been picked up on in several countries.

**So you would say that the mental resistance was not only foreign, but also national...**

**B.M.-** It was very strong nationally, because Brazilian dental professionals believed that quality products had to come from Europe or the United States. I realised this was a big challenge at the time, especially as national manufacturers were not as developed as they are nowadays. Investment in technology and in new products... Brazilian technology was limited to multinationals and not Brazilian companies. We had the opportunity to meet some fantastic professors

**Does the fact that you are from the state of Santa Catarina help what you are doing at all?**

**B.M.-** Yes, it does. To be honest, I think that even Fred's surname -Mittelstadt - has opened doors - hence the name FGM... It has certainly opened doors in Europe and in the U.S.A... For many dentists, it doesn't occur to them that FGM

**Where do you see the company the year of the Olympics, 2014?**

**B.M.-** I think it'll be a different company. I hope to have a partnership with a German group in order to establish ourselves in the U.S.A. I hope that certain countries will have moved on, as there are plenty of opportunities... We have different products aimed at both high-end and middle-range markets. We have formed several partnerships with distributors and we are looking at countries like Mexico differently. I think that in 2016, particularly due to our investment in human capital, I think we will find ourselves in a very strong position.



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# QUALITY COMES FIRST IN TEXTILE INDUSTRY

## TRADITION AND TECHNOLOGY GO HAND IN HAND TO KEEP SANTA CATARINA AS A LEADER IN BRAZILIAN TEXTILES

One of Brazil's southernmost states, Santa Catarina is a major producer of textiles, a sector that is rapidly becoming an important industry both to feed growing domestic demand despite inroads by Asian producers and, at the same time, the wider world as Brazilian textile and clothing exports increase.

Brazil's textile and fashion industries, say economists, are worth a total of almost 40 billion pounds with 30,000 companies operating in the sector churning out some 10 million pieces of clothing annually.

These figures place Brazil as the fifth largest textile manufacturer in the world and the fourth largest producer of clothing.

In the five years to 2010, the production of textiles and clothing increased by more than 25 per cent and with the local market booming thanks to the generally positive economic situation with more Brazilians splashing out on consumer items like clothes, the future is rosy indeed even though there has been a recent downturn.

The industry is also blessed by the country's extensive cotton production which enjoys one of the highest yields in the world, while Brazil's domestic petrochemical industry is a cheap and easy source for synthetic fibres.

### Competing for Success

Much of the country's textile production

is centred in Santa Catarina where it is the second most important industry after agriculture. A typical player is Dalila T  xtil, a family-owned enterprise based in Jaragu   do Sul and Presidente Get  lio with a combined production area of 20,000 square metres and manufacturing capacity of 650 tonnes per month.

"We began twenty years ago as a small company producing T-shirts and children's clothing, and then changed our business to knitwear. In 2000 we acquired our dyeing facilities which was a big leap for us technologically," recalls company director Andr   Luis Klein da Silva.



**ANDR   LUIS KLEIN DA SILVA**  
DIRECTOR  
DALILA T  XTEL

"And we've always had this desire to stay ahead of the pack in technology and at the same time, diversify our products."

Da Silva identifies Dalila as a mid-sized textile supplier, presently serving some 2,000 small and medium clothing producers but one which is striving to expand its range and its clients.

"At the present, we employ around 550 people and turn out some 500 tonnes of textiles on a monthly basis. Over the past two years, it has been relatively difficult for the Brazilian textile industry but we're happy with the second half of this year and I'm fairly confident that 2013 will be a good year."

The director suggests that the country's run up to the hosting of the World Cup in 2014 and the Summer Olympics two years later is providing a boost to strong local demand for casual sports clothing.

But taking advantage of Brazilian industry's increasing globalization is also in

the cards. Although exporting to the neighbouring Argentinian market is difficult because of restrictions there, Dalila is supplying customers in Paraguay, Uruguay, Bolivia and Colombia, as well as testing the markets in other Latin American countries.

"We're also looking at possibilities in Central America as it is relatively distant from our big rival, China, and it can be a gateway into the United States," the director explains. "Europe is not as easy for us because of the competition from China."

Although the Brazilian textile market has become more difficult because of inroads by

foreign producers, including those from India and other Asian nations, Da Silva argues this has also forced the Brazilians to up their game by pursuing the latest technologies and advancing the development of the local industry.

"We used to look at our domestic market and say, 'Let's be the best in Brazil.' However, now we feel we must have a global perspective to understand what is happening out in the world."

Other plans call for eventually entering the retail market. "We want to get closer to the consumer but this is a future step as today we still have a strong commitment to our wholesale customers to improve and develop



our current strategies," Da Silva says.

"I have confidence in our sector and our company because we have the appropriate technology, a skilled and competent workforce, an entrepreneurial spirit and an extremely large market which still has more room to be tapped," he says. "I believe that there is still a good ten years ahead of us."

### Fashion Setter

Another Santa Catarina textiles company embracing change to meet the challenges of the constantly evolving sector is RenauxView where executives are concentrating on Brazil's rising reputation as a global fashion innovator.

"In 2006 the company changed management and since then we have been repositioning ourselves to focus primarily on fashion and are keeping a close eye on fashion which is a very rapidly moving industry," says company president Armando Hesse de Souza.

"Firstly, we follow female fashion, then children's fashion and lastly, the male segment, all under the RenauxView brand. We develop collections that often anticipate the trends in Brazilian fashion itself and, of course, other consumer expectations."

Brazil is a newcomer on the global fashion scene, with increasing numbers of Brazilian designers exhibiting at leading runway shows around the world. Meanwhile, local brands like Osklen and Havaianas are gaining international renown.

Aiming to plug into Brazil's fashion potential, RenauxView attends international fashion fairs in Paris, New York and other cities, along with five other companies from the country.

"These days, 'Brand Brazil' is a brand that sells well," De Souza says, "and we've had some surprising results as there seems to be a real desire to buy products with that special Brazilian creativity."

Some of the company's new customers in the United States, for example, signed on for RenauxView products after ditching their for-

mer Asian suppliers, the president explains. "This is partly due to the physical distance as we can send a sample to New York in a few days whereas from Asia it takes longer.

"We can't compete with the Chinese on cost, so what we do is differentiate our products to make them one of a kind. And understanding that fashion is a very timely business, to add maximum value you have to be with the right product at the right time in the right place. That's what we do."



ARMANDO HESSE DE SOUZA  
PRESIDENT RENAUXVIEW

Marketing director Roberto Sander adds: "It is difficult to compete with the flood of Asian textiles but at the fairs I see buyers intrigued by our unique product which China and India cannot match."

But it is not all easy. De Souza echoes other textile executives who complain of the lack of government support for their industry. "From our point of view, the Brazilian government does not see the textile sector as cost effective and we need official policies to strengthen the sector."

Textiles are in Santa Catarina's DNA, he says, as the state was colonised by highly textile artisans from Germany and Italy, and the

industry is vital to the country's economy especially in its role as a major employer of women.

"These jobs provide women with dignity and the wages help families in bringing up their children, giving them a proper education and ensuring a stable family life. But we are on our own as entrepreneurs when it comes to making sure the sector grows."

Despite the complaint, the RenauxView president believes the Brazilian textile and fashion industries can prosper.

"We want to be recognised as one of the major fashion centres in the world, as a provider of quality products right up there with New York, Paris, Milan and Barcelona. That's my vision for the future."

### A Global Player

Already well established internationally is Buddemeyer, a company which produces finished textile products such as towels, Terry cloth robes, bed linens and other consumer goods in three lines: Bud Banho, Bud Cama and Bud Kids.

"Our percentage of production which goes to foreign buyers is around 20 per cent," explains company president Rolf Buddemeyer. "Our international markets are mainly in Europe and Japan, and we have some customers in China, the United States and Latin America.

"In the United Kingdom, for example, we supply Selfridges Stores."

Buddemeyer turned to exporting when the Brazilian economy took a nosedive in the 1990s, basing its appeal for international customers not on cost but on design and innovation. And the formula worked with turnover this year estimated at 130 million pounds.

"We had made strategic errors and were devastated by that crisis and almost shut down," Buddemeyer recalls. "But we created a new model. Companies aren't inspired to make radical changes when everything is going well.

"Now, costs are the major problem for Brazilian manufacturers because the two principal costs for our industry are labour and

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electricity, both of which are indexed to past inflation,” the president says.

“And the only way around this is to make intelligent use of technology so as to boost productivity in relation to the number of your employees and the amount of electrical power one uses.”

However, the president cautions that competitors can also obtain technology and so it is vital that Buddemeyer build and position its brand to ensure that consumers know that it is the best on the market for the price.

Building a brand is a slow and painstaking process and the company also works with its third party clients to nurture their brands.

“We have an advantage here in Santa Catarina because the state is more globalised than the rest of Brazil and most of the local companies are owned by local entrepreneurs,” the president notes.

“Our company represents no more than 4 per cent of sector revenues but we represent 30 per cent of exports, so ignoring the international market is a serious strategic mistake.”

**Branding Success**

Maintaining exports is also the goal of another major Brazilian bed and bath textile producer, Altenburg, one of Santa Catarina’s, and Brazil’s, oldest manufacturers in the sector with 90 years of experience, says company president Rui Altenburg.

“We are preparing a major drive to increase automation in our production and through this effort expect to continue our export position which is now about eight per cent of output,” he says.

However, Altenburg is most interested in focusing on the domestic market by building the brand and expanding retail operations as ways to ward off increasing competition from imports.

“The domestic textile industry is losing competitiveness to global operators primarily because of the relatively high labour costs and taxes that we have here in Brazil,” he explains.

“There is also the inefficiency of government, infrastructure problems and trade unions are beginning to flex their muscles. These are all factors that restrict competitive conditions in our industry.”

Altenburg also complains while there have been government stimulus packages to boost sales of automobiles, appliances and homes with consumers ready to spend on those big-ticket items, but not on bed and bath textiles.

He argues that it is logical that new home owners would want to replenish their sheets and towels but they are not doing so.

“Possible it is because these items are in a more intimate area of the residence and so



Photo: Altenburg



**RUI ALTENBURG**  
PRESIDENT  
ALTENBURG

these consumers don’t feel the need to increase their status by showing these things off,” the company president says.

Based in the Santa Catarina town of Blumenau, Altenburg produces an array of sheet and pillow cover combinations, pillows, bath towel collections and mattress protectors. Its

HotelTex unit supplies the hotel industry and its EcoFiber division manufactures all manner of foam for furniture and other uses, as well as isolation for buildings.

The company currently employs some 1,500 people.

“One of our main goals is to strengthen our brand even though after 90 years in the market we are already widely recognised for the quality of our products and the smoothness of our operations,” Altenburg says.

Another strategy the company is pursuing is increasing its retail presence in the domestic market, opening new stores regularly through franchise agreements.

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**INTERVIEW WITH JOÃO NILSON ZUNINO**  
**President of the Santa Luzia Medical Laboratory**



Already a leader in its home city of Florianópolis, the state's administrative and cultural centre, the ambitious Santa Luzia Medical Laboratory continues to rapidly grow in other cities by greatly investing in personnel training, while keeping a culture devoted to achieving maximum customer satisfaction

**Please could you give me an idea of Santa Luzia's scope?**

**J.N.Z.-** Our turnover is approximately 60 million reais. We are expecting to reach 100 million reais within the next two or three years. At present we have a niche market with a radius of 100km, covering a large population.

**So your business is on the increase... how quickly is it growing?**

**J.N.Z.-** There are two growth factors worth mentioning. Revenue is on the increase, with the number of customers rising by somewhere in the region of 15% every year. This is also reflected in the number of tests that are carried out here. At present we serve approximately 700,000 people every year.

**How are you managing to overcome the problem of competition in the labour market?**

**J.N.Z.-** We have around 80% of the market in Florianópolis, so we can't really find people ready in the market to do the job – we need to help to prepare and train them. We are very strong in this area of training, and we offer an intense training programme. Elsewhere, companies do not see good service to the client as essential in terms of laboratory work – I'm talking about the staff, not the quality of testing. But that's not the case here – here it's considered crucial. The president, the board and everyone in human resources are always making this clear and impressing upon our customer care staff that curing an illness that a patient may have, or that they think that they may have, should always begin with proper care from the moment he or she first contacts the company or the laboratory.

**A foreign company should be starting off alone, or as part of a local partnership?**



**“ELSEWHERE, COMPANIES DO NOT SEE GOOD SERVICE TO CLIENTS AS ESSENTIAL”**

**J.N.Z.-** As part of a local partnership, for sure! He or she needs to gain the trust of those who are at the forefront. Experience in Brazil has shown... I'll refer to a well-known name in Brazil, from five years ago. Fleury offered the best professional quality of any company in the world. Although they had only 20 employees, all of them had to have at least a doctorate in each of their specialities. They established laboratories at various locations within São Paulo state, and some even further afield. However, none of them were successful, apart from the original laboratory in São Paulo.

**Are you open to this type of partnership?**

**J.N.Z.-** Yes, indeed I am. We are at the very beginning, and you know that in three or four years of us being here, people start to associate respect and consideration for the customer with this company. But, as I see it, the name of the local company should be retained for much longer.

**Where do you see the company in four or five years?**

**J.N.Z.-** I see it being immersed in the projects that we are currently planning. We hope

that in five years we will be serving around two million customers per year – three times as many as we do at present.

**What challenges will you face in reaching that goal?**

**J.N.Z.-** Manpower has always been a problem. We prepare our staff and provide constant in-house guidance, and we also help technical schools to train their students. We offer internships at the laboratory and provide assistance to some of our interns, who are studying biomedicine, pharmacy, biochemistry or technical subjects. Here there is also a secondary course, which is different to the system in Europe or the US, for those who have not yet entered university. Although they are not enrolled at university, they do technical courses and companies offer them work experience. These days I think that we have a small problem, not a major issue, when it comes to finding suitably highly skilled employees. There are not many of these people available, and we prefer to train them ourselves. Santa Luzia has now almost become a school for professional development, as in our sector, in particular, with all the certification required, a spell of training alone is not always sufficient. We therefore provide continual coaching and guidance for our team. The strong emphasis on continuing education is a major facet of the company.

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