

Case studies

SANTA MARGHERITA



Sector: Marble

Place: Verona - Italy

Santa Margherita chooses innovation for its *just in time* logistics, and innovation means Ferretto Group

A growing number of companies are looking for storage systems able to meet the market's increasing need for *just-in-time* logistics solutions. This is the case of Santa Margherita: faced with its customers' more customized demand, the company decided to upgrade its materials storage and handling system.

The solution designed and built by Ferretto Group combines flexibility in the automatic management of mono-code and multi-code orders, safety in handling quartz and marble agglomerate slabs and tiles, as well as optimization of space and workflow times.

Santa Margherita's storage needs

Santa Margherita is an established company based in the province of Verona that for over 50 years has been producing quartz and marble agglomerate surfaces adaptable to any design application. With a daily production of 7,000 square meters, it distributes its products in the form of slabs and tiles in 70 countries worldwide. Every day, Santa Margherita works with both large distributors who make scheduled orders for large quantities of just a few items, as well as with customers who place subdivided orders, made up of more than 10 types of items each.

Thus, warehouse logistics has a fundamental role in the company's production flow, since it must be able to manage orders as quickly and automatically as possible in order to meet the customers' needs.

A tailor-made solution for *just-in-time* demand

From the early stages of commissioning, the Ferretto Group assisted the customer by creating a storage system that efficiently integrates production and shipping, suitable both for handling and storing packs of mono-code slabs and for preparing multi-code orders. Picking is fully automated and load units are handled with maximum care, thus reducing the risk of damaging slabs.

A pick & place machine receives and reorganizes the slabs coming from the production area by combining the load units for better space management. The handling of single-code load units in the storage system is managed by a massive two-column automated storage and retrieval system. Orders consisting of multi-code load units are, in contrast, managed by means of a two-column vacuum lifter.

Customized logistics, optimized space and safety

This state-of-the-art Industry 4.0 system allows Santa Margherita to manage its warehouse space more efficiently while at the same time improving inventory control.

The automation of the entire system has speeded up the preparation of orders, optimizing the *just-in-time* logistics required by the market, and has ensured personnel safety, a critical requirement given the type of product handled.

Objectives:

- Review handling and storage logic based on new demands for just-in-time performance and the extensive customisation required by the market
- Reorganise the finished product storage area more efficiently, both in terms of reducing waiting times and saving space.
- Ensure faster packing and loading of goods being shipped

Solution:

- The slab collection and palletising area has been reorganised using a pick&place machine that reorders and combines two unit loads and stores them in the new purpose-built area, ensuring better space management.
- An automated storage system linking the production and shipping areas
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- One two-column picker stacker crane with suction cups for creating multi-part unit loads ready for shipment
- One single-depth industrial racking system with eight load levels, suitably sized for the required capacity
- Three stations for packing the goods ready for loading and shipment

Added value:

- Optimised management of internal logistics and spaces both in the storage area and the shipping area
- Significant reduction in working times, with special attention to the storage, packaging and preparation of goods for shipment
- High level of customer satisfaction by responding to just-in-time demand and the extensive customisation required by the market
- Greater workplace safety guaranteed for operators

Storage system facts and figures:

Overall capacity	8.280 slabs
Maximum unit load	4.700 kg
Total surface area	670 m ²
Load levels	8
Stacker cranes with forks	1
Stacker cranes with suction cups	1



