



# masters of laminates

Tallinn-based Plaat Detail, a manufacturer and distributor of laminate products supplied across a variety of sectors, has grown into a market leader throughout Estonia and across the Baltic region. “We have room for further expansion,” affirmed CEO Karmo Lomp. Romana Moares reports.



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Plaat Detail is one of the companies that has managed to seize the opportunities in the new economic circumstances, turning into a fast-growing, highly agile and success-driven modern business.

Established in 1996 as an importer to the Baltic States of products such as loose laminates and ready-made post-formed worktops, the company soon started its own post-forming production in newly purchased premises near Tallinn.

“In 2006 Plaat Detail divested its marine and offshore component production into another business entity within the same group, to keep our eggs in different baskets,” said CEO Karmo Lomp. “Plaat Detail continued in the kitchen and furniture industry and the other company, Sunship, as a marine and offshore furniture and component producer.”

### Fast expansion

A significant milestone came in spring 2011, when Finnish company Formica decided to sell its bonded element factory in Kolho and offered the business to Plaat Detail.

“We did not have much time to think about it,” recalled Mr Lomp. “We had only two months to find a suitable 2,500 sqm building in Tallinn to house the whole plant.”

“So, in summer 2011 we moved the factory from central Finland to Tallinn – it took two months to install 35 truckloads of equipment, without the clients knowing that the factory was re-located to another country.”

In 2015 Plaat Detail became official distributor of UNILIN and HOMAPAL metallic and leather laminates (also part of the Formica Group) in the Baltic States, and to add more value to the products and further expand the laminated product range, in May 2018 took another major step and started flat lamination, using PUR pre-polymer glue.

“This was quite a unique setup. We played a major role in developing this PUR production line to be fully automatic operated by a single person, with a capacity of producing more than 30,000 sqm of laminated products per month,” noted Mr Lomp.

But business development did not stop there. In early 2019, Plaat Detail became the official exclusive distributor of DuPont



Corian® solid surfaces and Döllken edge bandings in the Baltic States.

“The last five years have been a period of steep growth,” remarked Mr Lomp. “We have widened our product range adding market-leading brands to our portfolio to offer customers everything necessary for the furniture component sector. These days, our production capacity is over 70,000 sqm of laminated products a month and we have room for further expansion.”

### Fast and flexible

Mr Lomp explained that the company has divided its activities into three main sectors: mass component production, special component production and wholesale sales and distribution of the brands. In recent years, the company has moved to working with different products from well-known high-end brands targeting the furniture sector.

“Plaat Detail’s core business is to provide components to furniture companies. We can see that combining high pressure laminates with other products will give the customer an opportunity to save money and time by ordering everything from the same place – such as matching edge bandings and Corian with other products,” explained Mr Lomp. “The main idea is that we never make readymade furniture, in order to avoid competing with our clients.”

He added: “The market is increasingly demanding semi-finished products such as laminated boards or even cut-to-size, edge-banded or routed. Customers want to concentrate on their brand development, not on the production of semi-finished details.”

A core strength at Plaat Detail said the CEO, is the company’s speed of response.

“We try to keep our lead times as short as possible. We are able to supply about 90% of our products within seven days, while most of the simple products can be shipped within 24 hours.

“Flexibility is another strength. Despite mass production, our minimum order quantity is still only one piece. We can do anything from high pressure laminates. All the details or components can have different shapes and measurements, from 2D to 3D. And always in maximum quality!”

### Capacity consolidation

Despite a notorious shortage of labour, which is painfully felt particularly in Eastern Europe, the company builds on its dedicated and motivated staff who provide first class service to the customers.

“We fully support our staff and offer them the opportunity to grow,” continued Mr Lomp. “Most of them stay with us a long time, as they know that they can develop with the company.”



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“Fostering business partnerships, and creating long-term relationships with both customers and suppliers have been an important factor of our growth. We are always open to new ideas and strive to improve along with the clients and their needs. Therefore, we put a lot of effort into R&D and constantly develop new products using different kinds of materials.”

The company has made considerable investments in production digitisation in the last four years, and investment continues to expand the Industry 4.0 concept, so far implemented only in the mass production plant, across the other business lines.

This should be facilitated by a recent capacity re-location: to improve flexibility and customer response as well as cost-effectiveness, the company recently completed the consolidation of its two production facilities, including warehouses, in a single site. The move, accomplished in the incredibly short time of just a few weeks, means all three business lines – mass production, special component production and wholesale – as well as all warehousing capacity, are now concentrated in a single location.



### Continuous improvement

Today, 75% of turnover is generated by the company’s own products, with wholesale accounting for the remaining quarter.

“We offer a full-package service now, in line with the current market requirements,” said Mr Lomp. “We are moving along with the market and trying to anticipate future developments. This proactive approach differentiates us from others.”

Mr Lomp noted that the company’s strongest markets continue to be Finland and the Baltic States, although business has been done in other countries in Europe and beyond. While the furniture sector remains stable, sales for the marine industry have been growing.

“We are increasingly active in the marine sector where we have provided fast deliveries to mock-ups with different kinds of solutions – especially for weight reduction and higher fire retardancy. We are working with multiple partners to improve our products.”

He concluded: “Continuous improvement in line with the market developments will continue to be our focus.”

