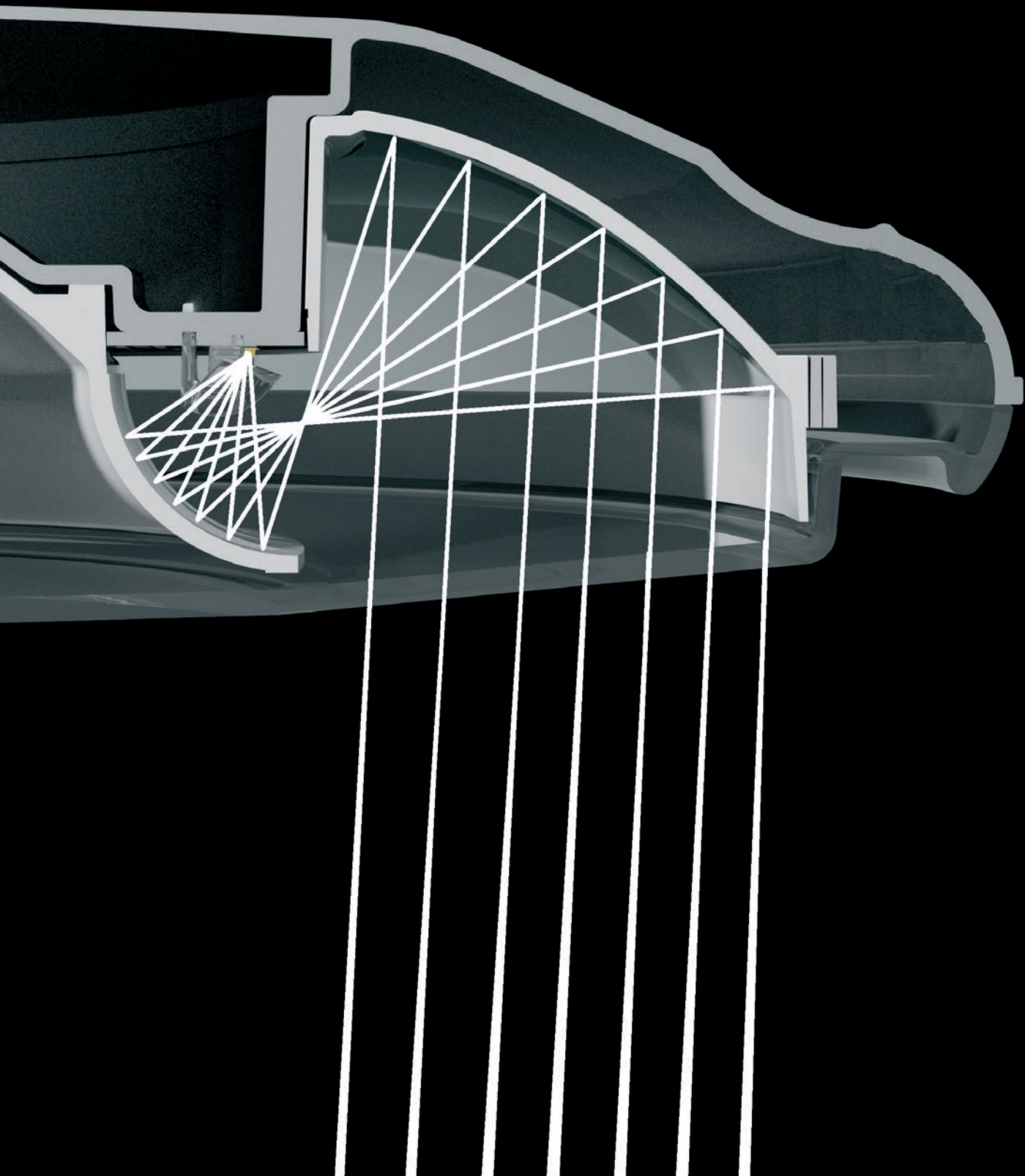


PASSION AND DETERMINATION

RIMSA: 80 YEARS OF HISTORY



The unexamined life is not worth living
Plato, *The Apology*

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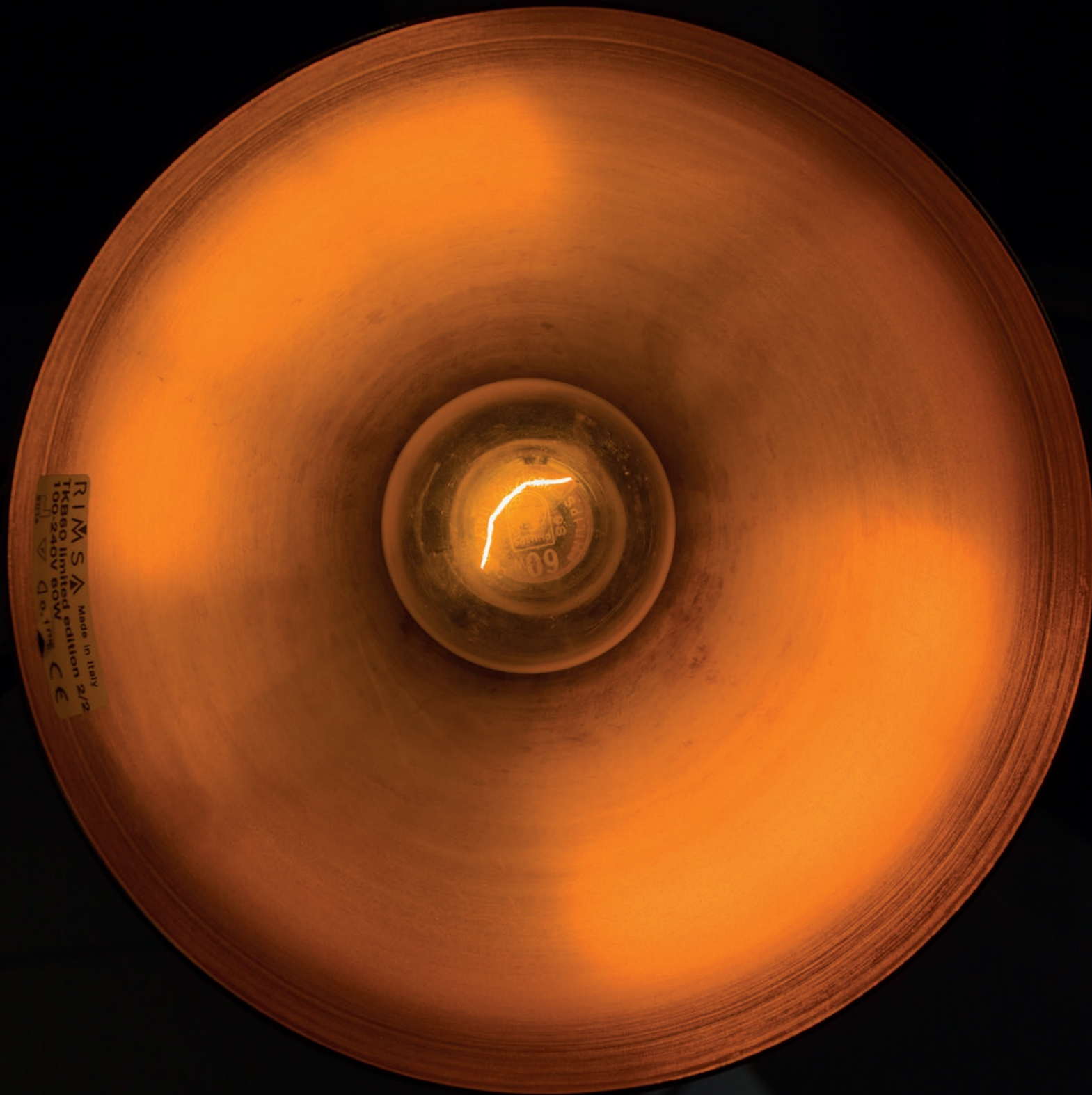
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Why write a book to celebrate eighty years?

RIMSA has been my life since I was a boy. I hold the historical memory passed down to me from Nonno Palmino and from my father Gaetano, the memory of all the wonderful moments working at their side in the company.

Nonno taught me how to use machine tools; I remember him warning me to use them safely. He used to take me with him to Milan to make deliveries to customers. It was during one of these trips that Nonno explained to me why he chose to make pantograph lamps. The story was about a competitor who had refused to work with him and so he decided to make them himself.

Father's task was to consolidate Nonno's inspirations; he was the one who introduced novelty into the company, from new models to automation. I used to listen raptly to the dinner-table tales of his exploits in the workshop and out and about in Italy visiting customers. I was particularly fascinated by the story of how he won over a new and rather mistrustful customer in Turin by rolling off the list of all the legendary players of the Torino F.C. soccer club.

I miss spending time with him in the workshop, I miss his teachings, his advice, his strong, impulsive character, his genius and sense of humor, and his integrity in relations with those who worked with him. He was always ready to put his faith in me, he taught me how to make decisions. I hope that I too can be a wise father like he was, one who is able to instill confidence and transmit passion.

These family memories must not be lost. Nonno's and father's enthusiasm, tenacity, passion, and dedication must be shared and passed on.

The company represents the lives of its owners, and in this a family business carries with it a tradition.

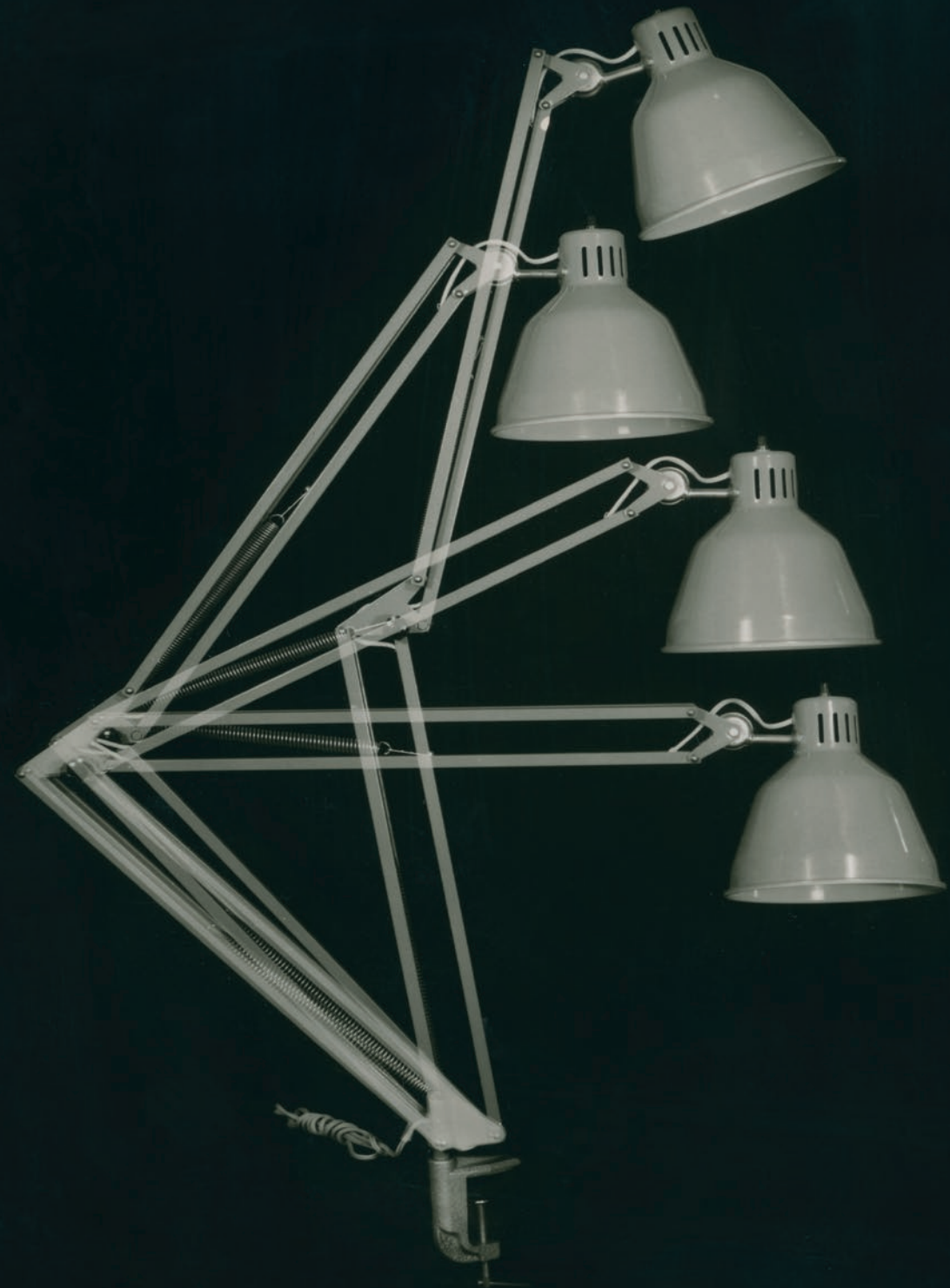
Paolo and I are the third generation of RIMSA. Those who preceded us have shaped our character and our way of conducting business. It is now our turn to carry the baton before it is passed on to the coming generation.

Why write a book?

To create a memoir of a story of people, decisions, choices, ideas, enthusiasm, research, effort, sacrifices and... an abundance of passion.

I share this philosophy with my brother, Paolo, because a family that is not united cannot endure the test of time. The esteem and affection that bind us provide the force and spirit that allow us to pursue this beautiful adventure together.

Carlo Longoni



I have always had a certain reluctance to stop and reflect on my experiences, draw conclusions from them, or figure out where I am going. We know well that this is a bit hard for everyone, and ever since childhood, when our spiritual guide reminded us to dedicate a little time, as the sun goes down, to thinking back on the day and its deeper meanings, it was not such an easy task.

I find it easier to get intensely engaged in the work reality that surrounds me. I think of it as a train in motion: modestly speaking, a Freccia Rossa. No slow steam engine this! As this train streaks along at high speed it rolls out years of activity, decades of dedication and passion. It forces me make fast decisions, find instant solutions, develop projects that last for years but once realized are quickly put behind me as I quest on for further milestones in my professional pursuits.

And so why stop, waste whole days collecting historical documents, engage other professionals in the project (I confess that I did not have this patience. It was my brother, Carlo, and his son, my nephew Glauco, who did), continually rework and refine the product, remain dissatisfied with the work and seek to enrich it without pause in the evenings, on weekends, on the plane during business trips across continents? Why do it? To indulge in self-celebration? No no!

I found the answer in the simple thought that those who preceded me lived their life as if it were an onrushing train, and if we are what they say we are – a dynamic and well respected company – it is thanks to all the sacrifices they made in their lives. That's it in a nutshell. And so, yes, I am ready to stop and think and give thanks that the road has been laid out for us. Without many words but always with concrete deeds.

Paolo Longoni



As the parson of the parish of Santa Valeria in Seregno, I have known RIMSA for many years. The Longoni family's lamps keep me company during my late night readings, and I have two more that Gaetano gave me as gifts, one in my study and the other on my nightstand, both still much used.

What happened to take RIMSA from table lamps to the ultra-modern, cool-light lamps for operating rooms? I believe that the answer lies precisely in the word "passion", the passion of offering increasingly useful and effective products to the market without thinking exclusively about making money. Gaetano showed me the benefits that his idea would have brought without ever thinking exclusively about the economic aspects.

I remember when Gaetano got the idea of a cool-light lamp to help the work of the surgeon and benefit the patient. One day he said to me: "Don Lino, last night I got an idea of how to make a lamp with cool light." I always heard Gaetano talking about passion and never about money.

It seems to me that Paolo and Carlo have assimilated this way of guiding the company, looking to the past, enhancing the present, and thinking about the future.

Don Lino Magni





1936: the first workshop in Tirana (Albania)

Chapter 1

THE FIRST STEPS

The Roots

Brianza, a part of Lombardy between the cities of Monza, Como, and Lecco, is the cradle for many successful businesses. A capacity for industry is embedded in this land that works a stimulating effect on its inhabitants. It is no coincidence that a distributed, competitive economic system first developed here, earlier than in other parts of Italy, with a strong focus on product quality.

The RIMSA story is part of this. The company has been solidly in the hands of the Longoni family since 1936. The beginnings were in Albania, but the business then moved to Seregno to take root in the hometown of its founder. As the years passed, the core of the business shifted from typewriter repair (Riparazione delle Macchine da Scrivere – whence the acronym RIMSA) to the design and manufacturing of industrial pantograph lamps. In the 1980s, their energy would then be directed to surgical lighting.

There is a clear singularity that makes this business stand out against the background of the more traditional local economic industries. But it also has many qualities that give it a kinship with the Brianza industrial galaxy: the capacity to combine loyalty to local and family traditions with an inexhaustible ability to update products and production techniques and the aspiration to weave economic relations with the rest of the world. A capacity and aspiration that emerge quite clearly in RIMSA's long life. However, in telling this story we must start with the life of Palmino Longoni, the one who began it all.

Palmino was born in Seregno on February 16, 1906, the first child of Antonio Giuseppe Longoni, who ran a company that sold wine located in the center of town on Via Umberto I, and Gaetanina



Mastroberardino, descending from a family of winemakers in Campania. While blessed with the good fortune of having been born into an affluent family, Palmino would soon learn some of life’s most difficult lessons. At the age of ten he lost his father, Antonio. Born in 1880, as a sergeant in the Alpine Corps, Antonio fell in action on June 7, 1916 on Monte Fior on the Asiago plateau while encouraging his men to hold the defensive line against attacks from Austrian and Bosnian troops.

After losing his father, Palmino continued living in Seregno with his paternal grandparents, Serafina and Palma, while his mother, Gaetanina, moved to Milan with her other four children. In the meantime, the wine business was placed in the hands of relatives, who were given the role of custodians until Palmino reached

adulthood. However, the young man showed little interest in being a wine merchant and soon turned his attention to mechanical engineering. The flame of inventiveness, which would always be with him, had already been lit: in 1921, at the age of fifteen, he designed an airplane with folding wings. It was his first meticulously numbered and registered creation.



In Tirana

A restless and voluble young man, Palmino was soon at odds with the custodians of the wine business and ended up abandoning it. In any case, the need for a radical change was already in the air. The letters he wrote at the time have not survived, but some thoughts he committed to paper years later give us cues as to the young man’s state of mind at the time. In a note written in 1955 we read: “When a man asks of life that which is necessary to support himself and his family, and in obtaining this sacrifices himself beyond what is humanly possible but still does not reach his goal, his life dissolves into nothing, and nothing is the outcome of the sequence of actions that were the object of his efforts.” While it would be rash to attribute an autobiographical value to these lines, at the same time it is likely that at a certain point in his existence Palmino found himself in such a situation. He had developed his experience in mechanical engineering, particularly in the repair of typewriters and adding machines, and his inventiveness had erupted as a driving force. In some ten years he developed fourteen inventions. They ranged from a folding roof for cars to a propeller-driven cable car and a system for recovering sunken ships. None of them, however, had gone into industrial production. In 1930 he conceived a device based on oscillating elements to generate electricity from sea waves, an energy source that has stimulated the imaginations of engineers all over the world. This example is key in illustrating Palmino’s extraordinary inventiveness. His incredibly strong capacity for intuition often put him well ahead of his times. Suffice it to note that engineers today are still performing experiments to resolve unanswered questions

regarding techniques for converting wave energy into electricity. The following year, driven by his desire to make a change in his life, he decided to move to Tirana. Albania had transformed into an enticing frontier. It was close to Italy and represented the principal route for eastward economic expansion. Of course it needed to be modernized. The Italian government undertook increasing control over the finances of the small country. In that period, many Italian companies won contracts for major works on Albanian soil, including the development of the port at Durrës.

Palmino set up shop in the capital of a country undergoing great changes and continued his work as an inventor. In 1933 alone he is credited with six inventions relating to six military devices. He also began his studies of a train wheel with spring suspension. This was a laborious business which kept him busy, off and on, for two decades. A handwritten note dating back to that period, on paper bearing the letterhead “P. Longoni Rappresentanze, Piazza Mercato Nuovo 10/4, Tirana”, sketches out the designs that he would later perfect.

In 1936, still in Tirana, Palmino founded the company “Casa della macchina da scrivere Longoni” (Longoni’s typewriter house), which may, in practice, be considered the original nucleus of RIMSA. Business burgeoned in the first three years, but in the spring of 1939 the Italian government went through with its plans for invasion. Some one hundred thousand Italian soldiers landed in Albania. The local population did not initially offer resistance, their troops being greatly outnumbered. However, the situation deteriorated over time, changing drastically in September 1943 with the fall of Mussolini. The leaderless Italian soldiers became targets for ambushes set up by the German troops, who occupied

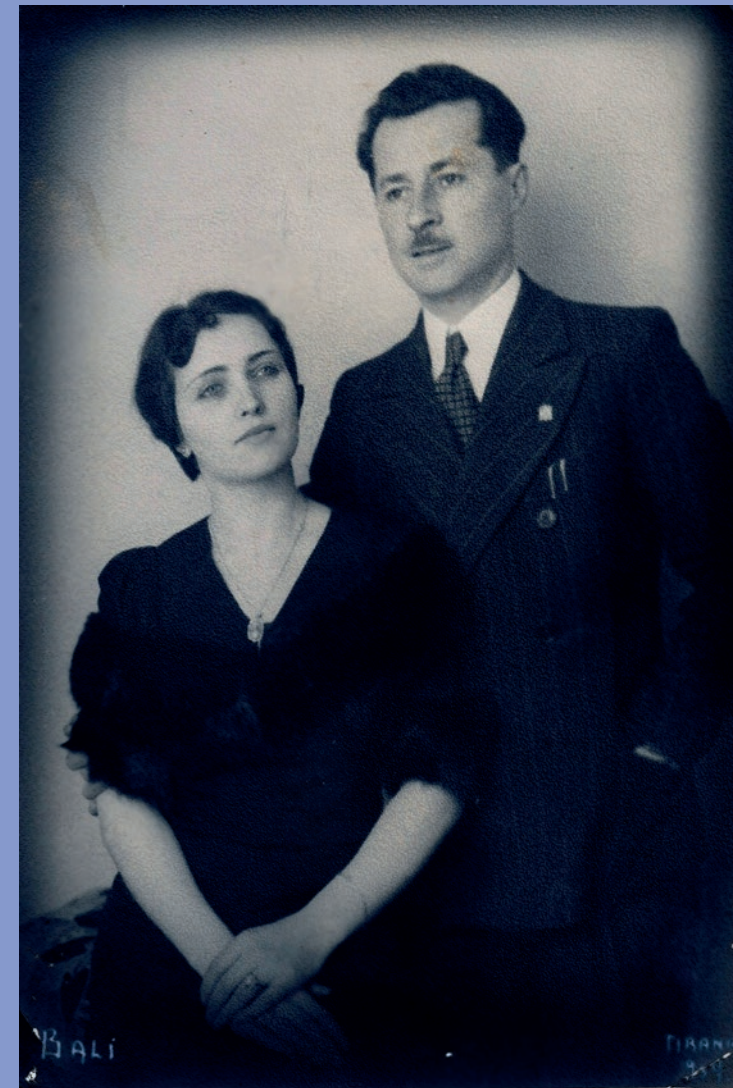
Albania in October of the same year. Most of the Italian forces were captured by the Germans, some deserted, others joined the Albanian resistance, which had been organized in the meantime. Things got even worse after the withdrawal of the troops of the Third Reich, with Albania falling into civil war. In 1944, the Longoni family finally managed to return to Italy, avoiding the risk of being taken prisoners.

Palmino and Carla

In 1933, Palmino Longoni married Carla Sormani, born in Cremnago di Inverigo. The two had met in Italy one afternoon in Seregno, where Carla had come to visit a cousin. Carla was immediately taken by the exuberant young man, who put on a show of Russian dances, demonstrating all the passion and bravado he was capable of. Their grandchildren, Carlo and Paolo Longoni, born in 1966 and 1972, respectively, now managing directors of RIMSA, are now the keepers of the memory of the first time their grandparents met: “He approached the young woman and asked her name. ‘Carla Sormani,’ she replied. ‘Good,’ replied Palmino immediately, ‘then we can make it Carla Longoni.’”

Palmino had already left for Albania when they decided to marry. At first they thought about marrying by proxy, but ended up changing plans and marrying in Italy.

After the wedding, Carla moved to Tirana to be with her husband. The family grew with the births of Antonio (1934) and Gaetano (1937), born in Italy, where Carla came to give birth, and Roberto (1943), who was born in the Balkans because the deteriorating political situation made timely repatriation impossible.





A New Beginning

Back in Italy, Palmino and his family found a country on its knees: production had ceased and the needs were boundless. For the family, the difficulties they shared with the entire country were compounded by their own private hardships: all their possessions were on the other side of the Adriatic, seized after their flight. At the end of the Second World War, Albania hermetically sealed its borders in a very short time. Various consular missions were sent to Tirana in 1946 and 1947 to find a resolution to the problems remaining in the aftermath of the repatriation of the Italian expat community – military personnel, civil servants, businessmen, engineers, and their families – and particularly the issue of their dispossessed assets. These initiatives did not achieve the hoped-for results, with the last delegation actually being forcibly expelled from the country.

Time was inexorably passing but Palmino did not give up. He asked for help from the parson of Seregno, Monsignor Enrico Ratti, who was particularly sensitive to the affairs of his fellow townsfolk. The prelate was ready to help, taking direct action on a number of occasions, but all his efforts were in vain.

In the meantime, life was slowly returning to normal. There were still many difficulties to overcome, but one after another, in Brianza as in all of Lombardy and much of Italy, production resumed in the factories and many were able to find stable employment once again.

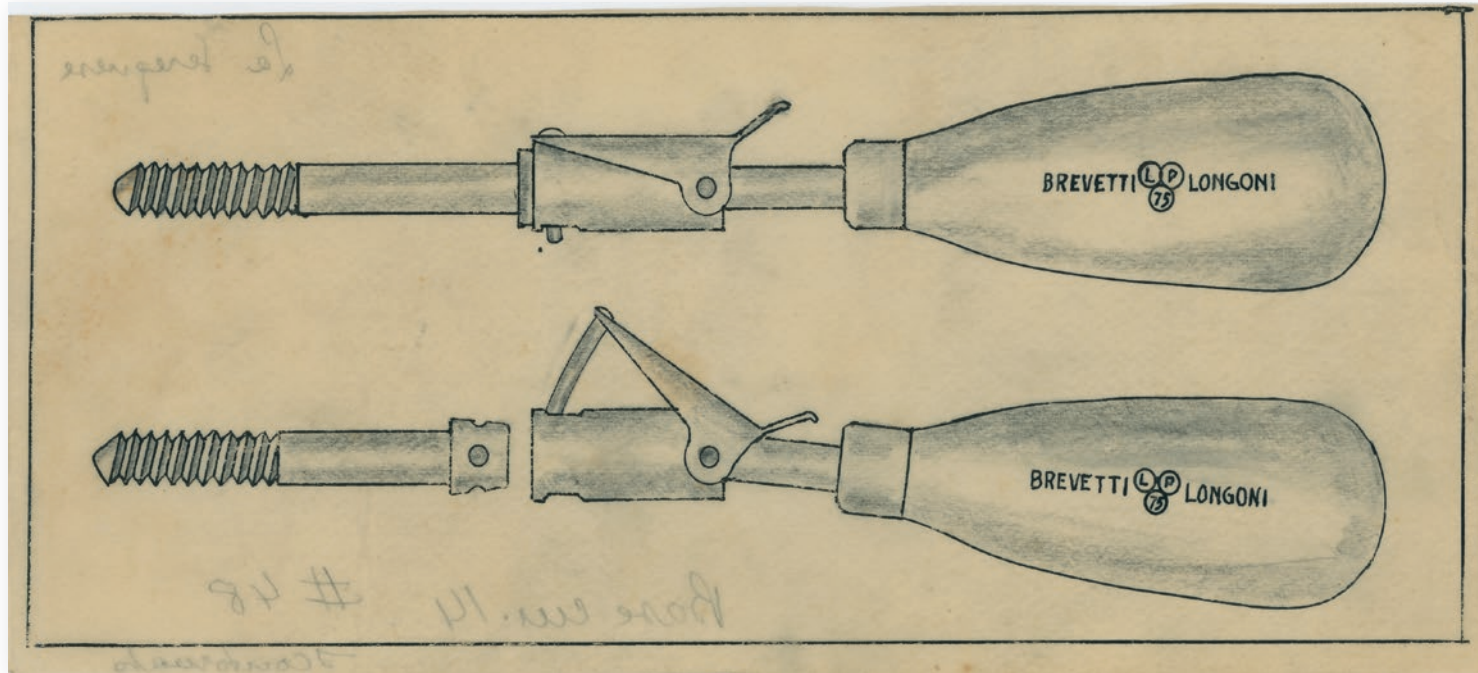
Living with his family in his father's home on Via Umberto I, Palmino went into debt to start a new mechanical workshop in his hometown. He opened a shop on Via Carlini. He was starting again

from zero. The space was small and didn't even have a telephone, but there was no lack of enthusiasm. Carla took calls on the home phone, wrote the requests on a slip of paper, and then attached it to the collar of their dog, who would run to the workshop, thus unwittingly transformed into an efficient messenger.

The business initially continued to be based on repairing typewriters and adding machines. Longoni spent his days moving easily between the workbench and the drawing table. His creative juices, pinched off by the war, were once again running strong. In only five years, between 1945 and 1950, he registered no fewer than twenty-eight inventions.

In 1953 he joined the National Association of Inventors (Associazione Nazionale degli Inventori – A.N.D.I.). The photograph on his membership card shows a man with a lively, penetrating gaze. The following year he completed the designs he had begun in Tirana for a rail wheel with spring suspension to reduce the transmission of vibrations to the vehicle. The long process of that project, which resulted in four patents, is recorded in a small book by Palmino titled “Storia di una ruota 1933-1953” (Story of a Wheel 1933-1953) containing the sketches, designs, and drawings made during those two decades.

The year 1956 was marked by two significant events: “RIMSA” was officially registered with the Chamber of Commerce of Milan and Patent no. 75, “screwdriver for countersunk wood screws”, was registered. The patent essentially regarded a screwdriver that facilitated furniture assembly by making it possible to use only one hand to drive screws. This was quite a significant innovation in a place like Brianza with its dense fabric of companies and workshops working with wood. It was a market success. The pro-



duction and sale of this tool gave the company a bit of breathing room financially, precisely in a moment when the cash flow was anything but abundant.

Following the success of this patent, Longoni's inventiveness literally exploded. In just under a year and a half, from June 1956 and October 1957, he registered twenty-four new inventions with the Central Patent Office for Inventions, Models and Trademarks of the Ministry of Industry and Trade.

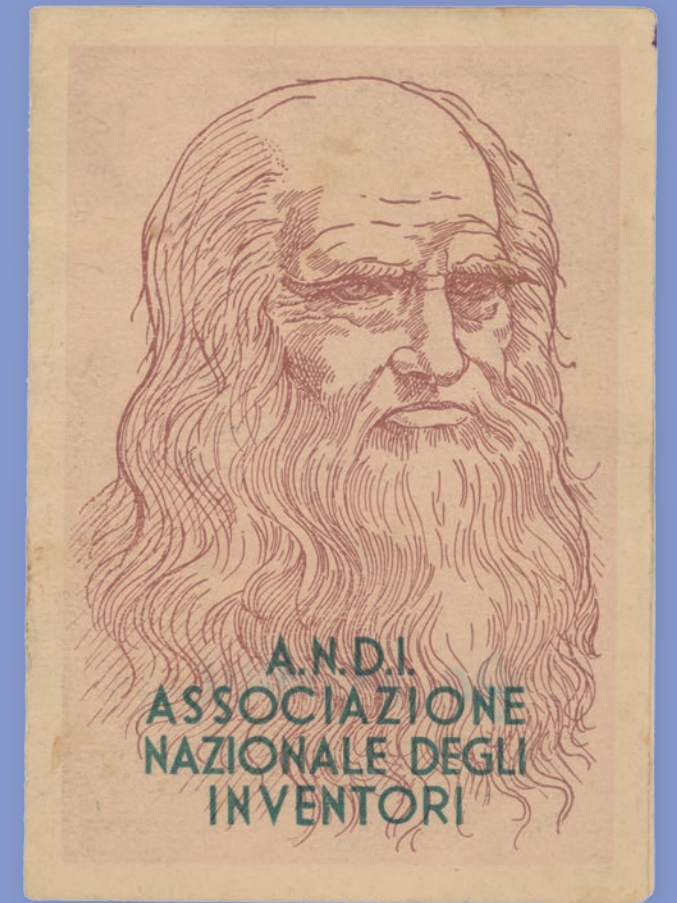
Patent no. 75: "screwdriver for countersunk wood screws"

A Fertile Mind

Palmino Longoni was a prolific inventor. Over the course of his life he developed 103 inventions, a good number of them patented. The full handwritten list drawn up by Palmino himself is still kept in the RIMSA archives. It is composed of a progressive number, the year and a description of the project; an "x" in the last column signifies that the invention went into production.

One of the more brilliant ideas is a light mounted on the car door that goes on when the door is opened to make it more visible and diminish the risk of another driver hitting it. This invention won him the attention of the press. *La Notte*, a famous Milanese afternoon newspaper in circulation until 1995 defined it as a "Columbus's egg" because of the brilliant solution to a rather obvious need. It was brought to the attention of major national organizations and automakers, and also illustrated at many conventions. However, in spite of the widespread interest it aroused, it was never implemented. Following a suggestion by the Touring Club Italiano, which formally praised the utility of the device, the patent was submitted to the Inspectorate of the Department of Motor Vehicles, which declined, in the end, to approve its use.

Longoni faced his skeptics with courage and realism at the same time. In a note dated April 28, 1957 he wrote: "The inventor's contemporaries are instinctively mistrustful because they



are unable to appreciate the effective value of the invention that they have always managed to live without and, for the moment, for which they feel no need.”

The issues of mobility and transportation were often the focus of his work as a mechanical designer. Examples include the “Signal for unmanned level crossing”, and the “Designs for using advertising as a divider between the road and a pedestrian/bicycle path”. Before our landscapes had been blighted by a chaotic and anarchical invasion of billboards and other advertising, Palmino had already envisioned a way to keep it under orderly control along the sides of the road. And he did so showing concern for the safety and peace of mind of pedestrians and two-wheelers.

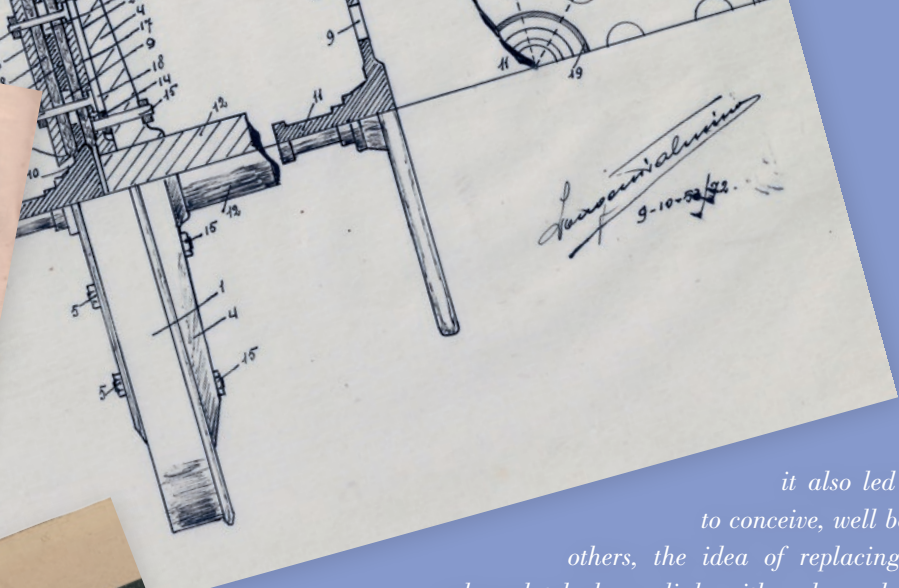
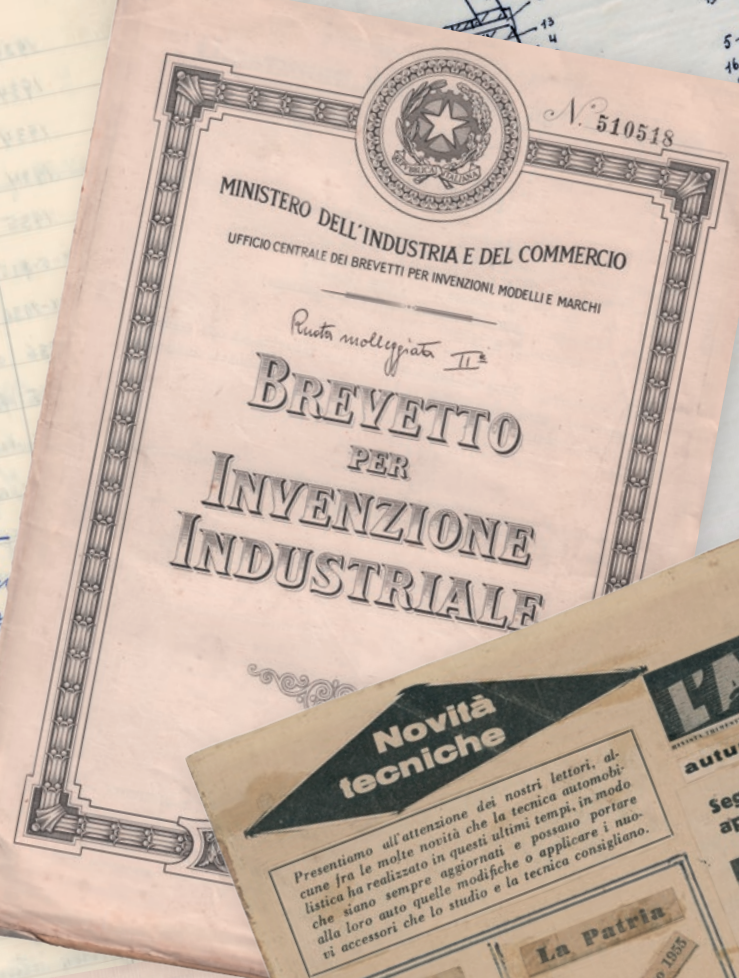
The invention that perhaps best exemplifies Longoni's forward thinking is the “rail vehicle wheel with spring suspension”, which would only receive rightful attention many years later when it turned out to be crucial for the feasibility of high speed trains.

“Nonno was not a simple man, he had a very authoritarian personality,” recalls Paolo Longoni,

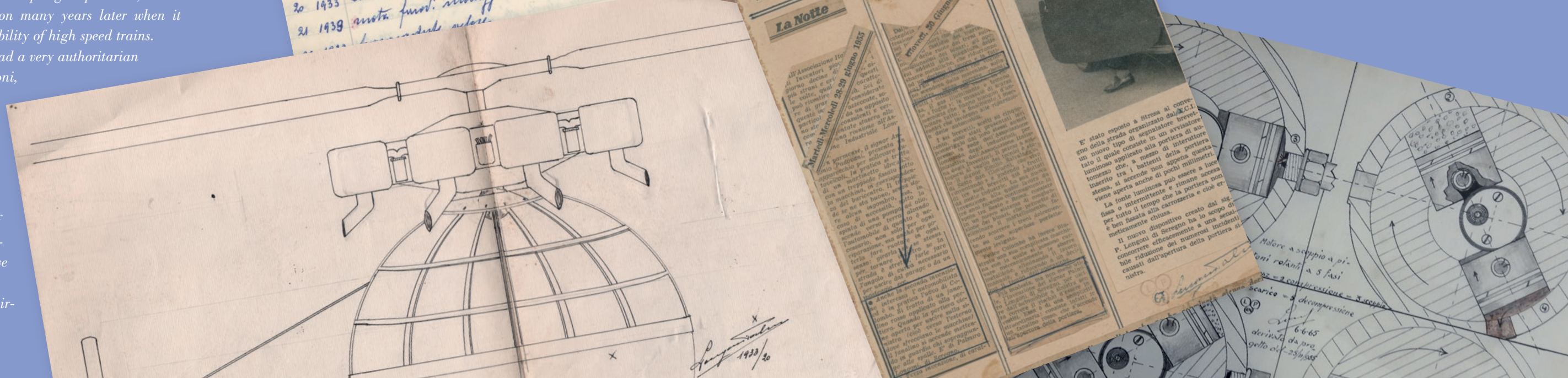
who inherited Palmino's flair for invention, “but he also had a very keen mind. His inventiveness sometimes caused him to spread himself thin across myriad projects. Some of them, however, were truly sensational. He was also a friend of Enrico Mattei, with whom he collaborated to develop the idea of a valve for the petroleum industry.”

Palmino's fertile and imaginative spir-

- cf. progressivo ed eluso intensissimi - data
- 1 1921 aereo con ali chiudibili
 - 2 1922 capote automatica per auto
 - 3 1922 candela fruibile dal conducente
 - 4 1925 cammeo a ripetizione
 - 5 1925 radio supercondensatore reflex
 - 6 1926 altoparlante inserito nell'apparecchio radio
 - 7 1926 mobile - radio - grammofono con altop. interno
 - 8 1926 filiferica con propulsione ad elica
 - 9 1927 m. p. cane
 - 10 1928 pontone per il ricup. carri sommerse -
 - 11 1929 trasmissioni radio con dir. obligata
 - 12 1929 ricupero carri sommerse mod. meccanico -
 - 13 1930 cappucci salit. p. ogni pagg. sollevabili
 - 14 1930 attiv. pers. mar. (flume) mod. oscillant
 - 15 1933 bomba a mano
 - 16 1933 m. p. ruote -
 - 17 1933 cammeo a ripetizione -
 - 18 1933 bomba a mano autopulente
 - 19 1933 pedale dif. a disco autopulente
 - 20 1933 elicottero
 - 21 1939 auto furto. moltiplicata



it also led him to conceive, well before others, the idea of replacing the awkward telephone dials with a keypad. “He got the idea during his frequent visits to Olivetti, which had become one of our customers in the 1960s,” recalls Carlo Longoni. “All the products that he could observe, from teletypes to calculators, used keys. His innocent yet eye-opening comment was: ‘Why should telephones have a dial?’” This idea was never industrialized. It would be two more decades before the new technology became dominant on the Italian market.

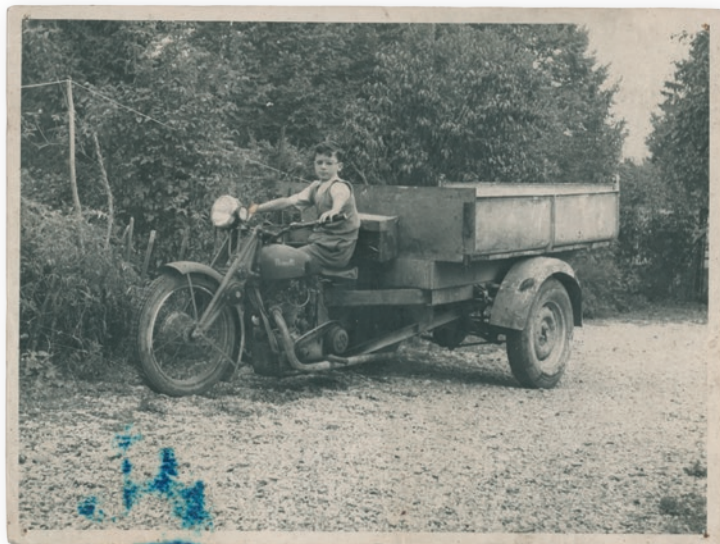


Gaetano arrives

The mechanical workshop founded in 1936 in Tirana and reborn in Seregno after the Longonis repatriated to Italy was following the trajectory envisioned by its founder: develop products that respond to the needs of the time. Palmino's hardheaded genius favored a meeting between continuity – represented by typewriter repair – and a constantly evolving modernity.

The advent of the 1960s, the decade that saw Italy transforming from a largely rural society to a full-fledged industrial society, also brought significant developments to RIMSA. The first and most important was the official entry of Gaetano Longoni, Palmino and Carla's second child, into the family business. Gaetano was seven years old when the family returned to Italy from Albania. He thus had first-hand experience of the difficulties of adapting to a new environment. Of course the Longoni family had a stable dwelling to rely on and an independent business that they had managed to start up amid the many difficulties and opportunities of the post-war reconstruction period in Europe. However, there was clearly no dearth of problems to be faced.

Gaetano began helping his father when he was still quite young, although this did not prevent him from completing his schooling. During the day he was in the workshop, in the evening he attended a technical school in Monza. Nevertheless, the decision to dedicate himself wholeheartedly to the family business was preceded by a number of significant experiences outside of the family walls. His first stable job was with an international shipping company, Fratelli Salvadori. From there he transferred to a transportation company, Gondrand, and finally to Alitalia. "Father had a strong



sense of hard work, he certainly was not one to go easy on himself," recalls Carlo. "Every morning he got on his bicycle and set out for Milan with his lunch box, symbols of a bygone era of fatigue and sacrifice." The experience with Alitalia was particularly rewarding for Gaetano. Indeed, when he announced his decision to quit, he received a flattering letter of praise and a generous offer for a raise. However, he had already decided that the time was ripe to come home to RIMSA, alongside his father.



The lamp bracket

During that period, Palmino was turning his attention to a new objective. The first prototypes of industrial lamps began appearing in the workshop. Each piece was hand crafted without the use of dedicated machinery or molds, which would have been a burden on the company finances.

In 1962, after Gaetano signed on, RIMSA hired a shop boy. He was fourteen years old when he started; who would ever have dreamed that he would rise to become the director of production? “It was a rainy day. I presented myself in the two-room facility that was then company headquarters,” recalls Gianni Consonni. “I can still picture the scene that appeared before me, as if it were just yesterday. Mr. Palmino was drilling some spotlights under a porch. My uncle, who had volunteered to accompany me, told him that I had recently lost my father and needed a job. Longoni listened without stopping his work. Then he turned to me and said, in dialect: ‘Tomorrow morning, you come here and work with me.’” (Ti duman matina te vegnet chi a laurà in de mè). Palmino was like that, he went by intuition also in human relations. He immediately had a feeling about the boy.

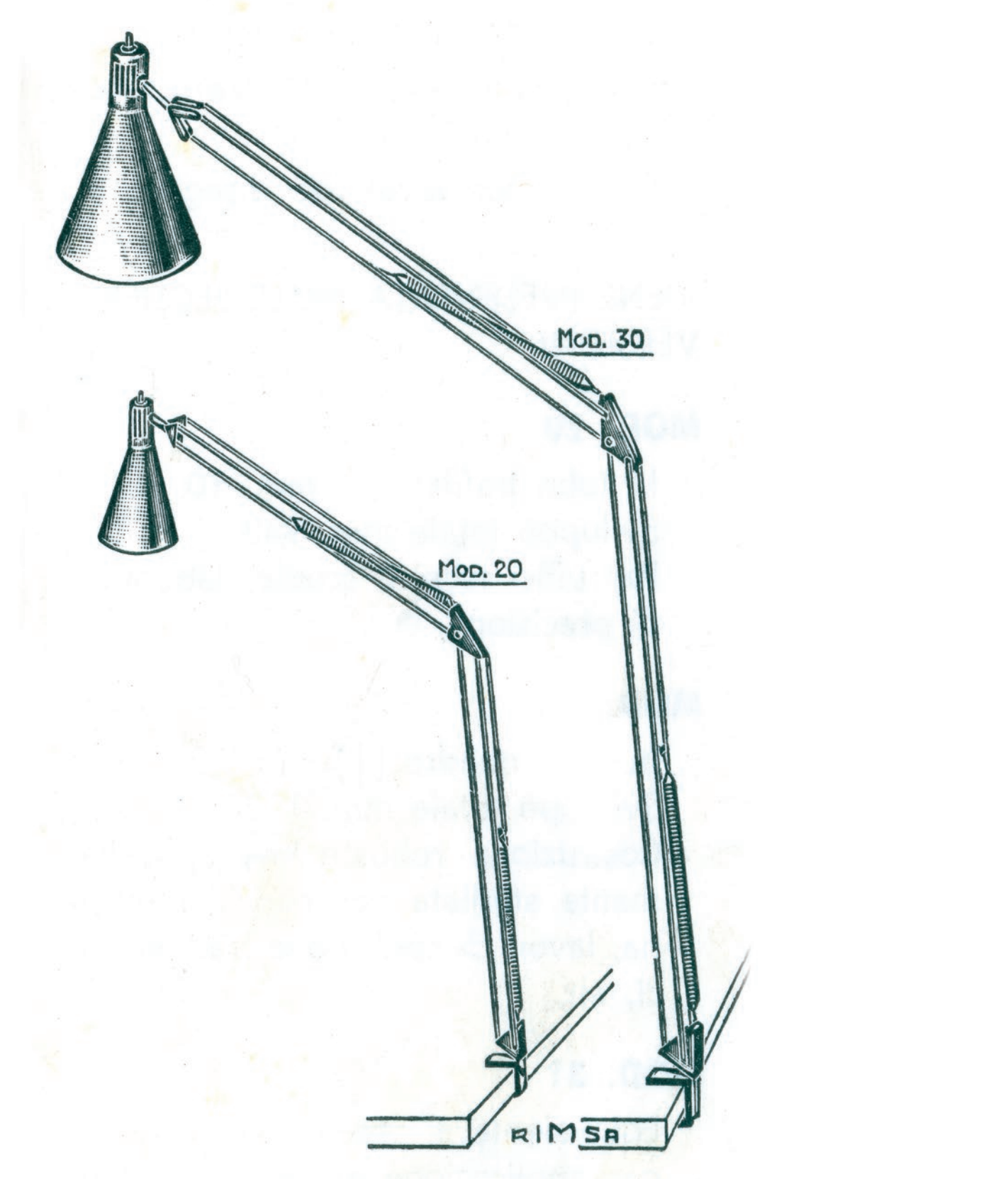
Later that same year RIMSA moved into a new space on Via De Bernardi in the Santa Valeria neighborhood. However, the company almost immediately outgrew this new shop and moved again the following year, this time to Via Stoppani, still in Seregno. This would be their production facility for the next five years.

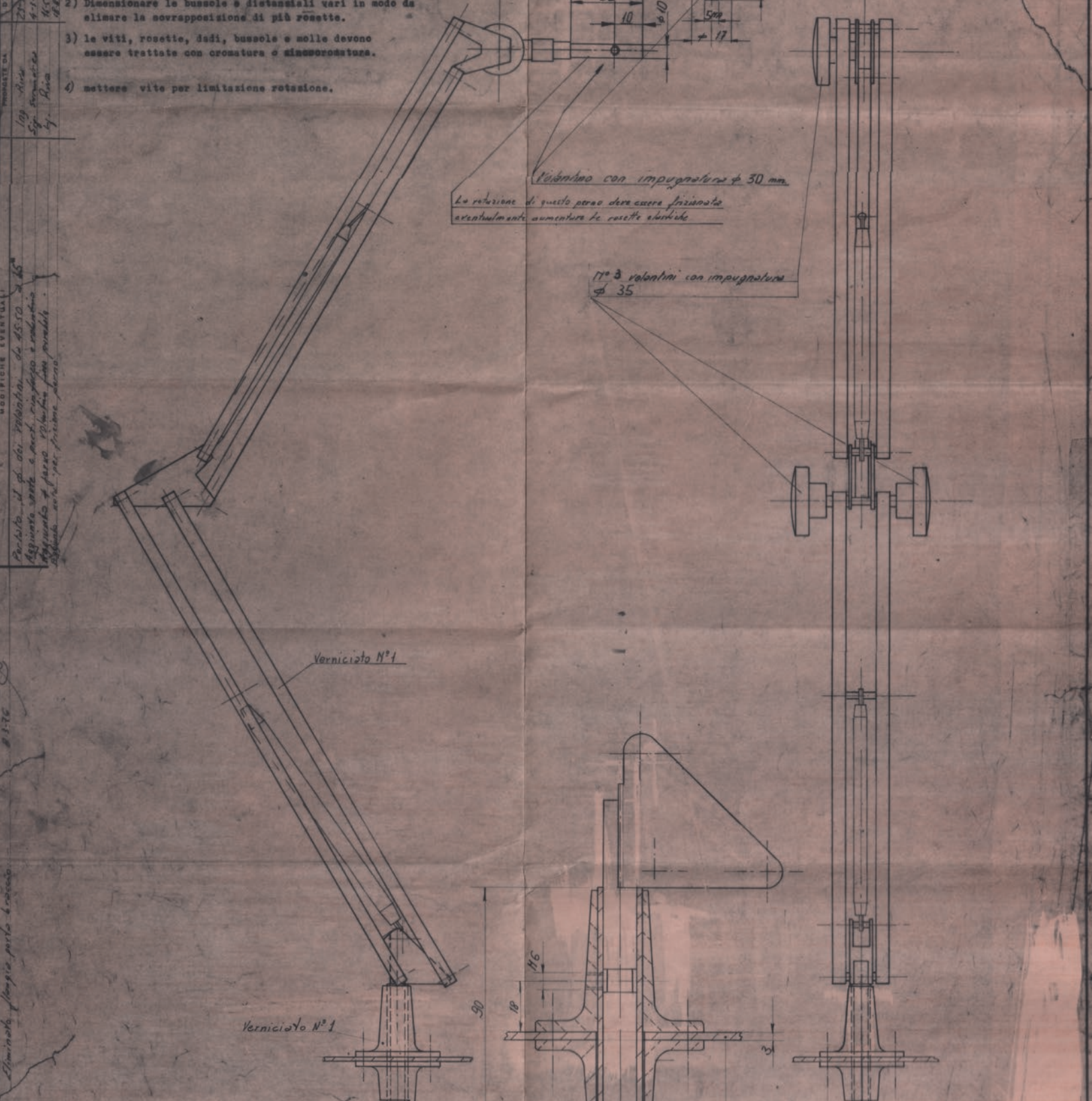
In the meantime, the Italian economy was entering the boom years, growing like it never had before. New factories sprung up, offices opened. To meet the requirements for illuminating desks, workstations, and test benches, Palmino Longoni was hard at work

at RIMSA putting the finishing touches on his latest invention, number 103: the pantograph lamp bracket. It was the perfect solution for all places where an easily moveable lighting source was needed.

The first lamps were entirely hand made. They made two or three a day, but in just a few months they were producing five, then ten, constantly increasing output. The lamp was strong and durable. Right from the start, Palmino was convinced of the value of his products. He wanted to reach all the wholesalers in Milan, knowing that he would have to face the stiff competition of a well established Norwegian manufacturer. However, when you are driven by an indomitable will, everything becomes possible.

He could also rely on the support of his son, who had joined the family business by then. Gaetano immediately demonstrated that he had a very clear idea of what needed to be done: all resources had to be directed in a single direction, the one that led straight into the heart of the market for industrial lamps. “Father brought a wave of innovation and technology into the company,” explains Carlo, “but prior to that, he clearly defined the target market. All bets were to be staked on the pantograph lamps. Of course, it was no simple matter convincing Nonno.” At the same time, Gabriella, the youngest of the Longoni family, joined the company to provide support to Gaetano. Known to everyone as “Titti”, Gabriella worked in the office for many years, from 1965 to 1979. She originally handled administrative matters but as the export segment grew, she dedicated more and more time to commercial matters, writing proposals and letters in English, French, and – with the help of a dictionary and a good dose of determination – also in German. This gave Gaetano more time to focus on research and development of new products and new customers.





The first surge came with a big, unexpected order from Olivetti in Ivrea. The somewhat comical story still circulates at RIMSA. It seems that the beginning of the very profitable relationship between the companies in Seregno and Ivrea was based on an error in interpretation by Gaetano, who misunderstood a letter arriving from the potential customer. Perhaps letting his enthusiasm get the better of him, he interpreted the request for an estimate as an actual order. It looked like a golden opportunity, but it also meant making an effort like never before. Everyone immediately rushed to get started on the lamps. It was only when they drove up with their fully loaded truck and found themselves greeted by expressions of great surprise that they realized that there hadn't been any order. Fate smiled on them however, thanks greatly to the fact that every piece was made to perfection. In the end, Olivetti was quite pleased with the lamps and purchased them in spite of the mix-up. As time passes, it gets harder to distinguish between history and legend. Perhaps the memory of this episode has taken on a bit of color, but it still gives an accurate picture of the atmosphere of those times: you had to keep looking ahead and be ready to take chances. Sooner or later, success would come, at least to the best. The thing that counts is that Olivetti was added to the list of customers. Actually they became the main customer. "We started getting orders for twenty or fifty lamps," recalls Consonni, "but it was not long before we were getting orders for five hundred." A lasting sense of incredulity still fills his eyes. A miracle was happening, in the spaces of RIMSA and in much of the country. "When it was time for delivery, Mr. Palmino took me with him. He had a red Fiat Seicento Multipla with a wooden carrier mounted on the roof to carry the goods. On the way back we stopped off at a winery in Viverone and bought some wine. It was our way of celebrating."



Palmino’s affections

The founder of RIMSA is remembered by those who worked with him as a resolute man who was also very affectionate, who never hesitated to express himself using the local dialect, as if wanting to emphasize a family atmosphere. “Mr. Palmino took the place of the father I lost when I was too young,” says Gianni Consonni. Viviana Frigerio, a pillar of RIMSA who joined the company in 1972 and is still there, remembers him with great warmth. “He had quite a strong character, but he was also capable of kind gestures. At times, at the end of the day, when evening had already fallen, he would come into the office, come up behind me and give me a paternal stroke on the head.” He was very demanding with his workers, but also respectful and magnanimous. This is aptly illustrated in an anecdote told by Giovanni Longoni, born in 1952, who began working at RIMSA when he was fifteen years old. “You couldn’t get anywhere near his workbench; he was extremely territorial. One day he flew into a rage because he couldn’t find his screwdriver. He was sure someone had taken it and forgotten to give it back. He ended up finding it in the pocket of his smock. He went back into the shop and apologized to everyone.” “If he realized he had made a mistake,” echoed Sergio Bonfanti, another longtime collaborator, “he took you aside and apologized by an affectionate pat on the shoulder.” There was a strongly paternal attitude in his way of assuming the role of a businessman. Giovanni adds, “For Mr. Palmino, we were all like his children. When he got angry you could have heard a pin drop, we all respected him.” He contained two people: one was authoritarian, the other benevolent and protective. This dichotomy

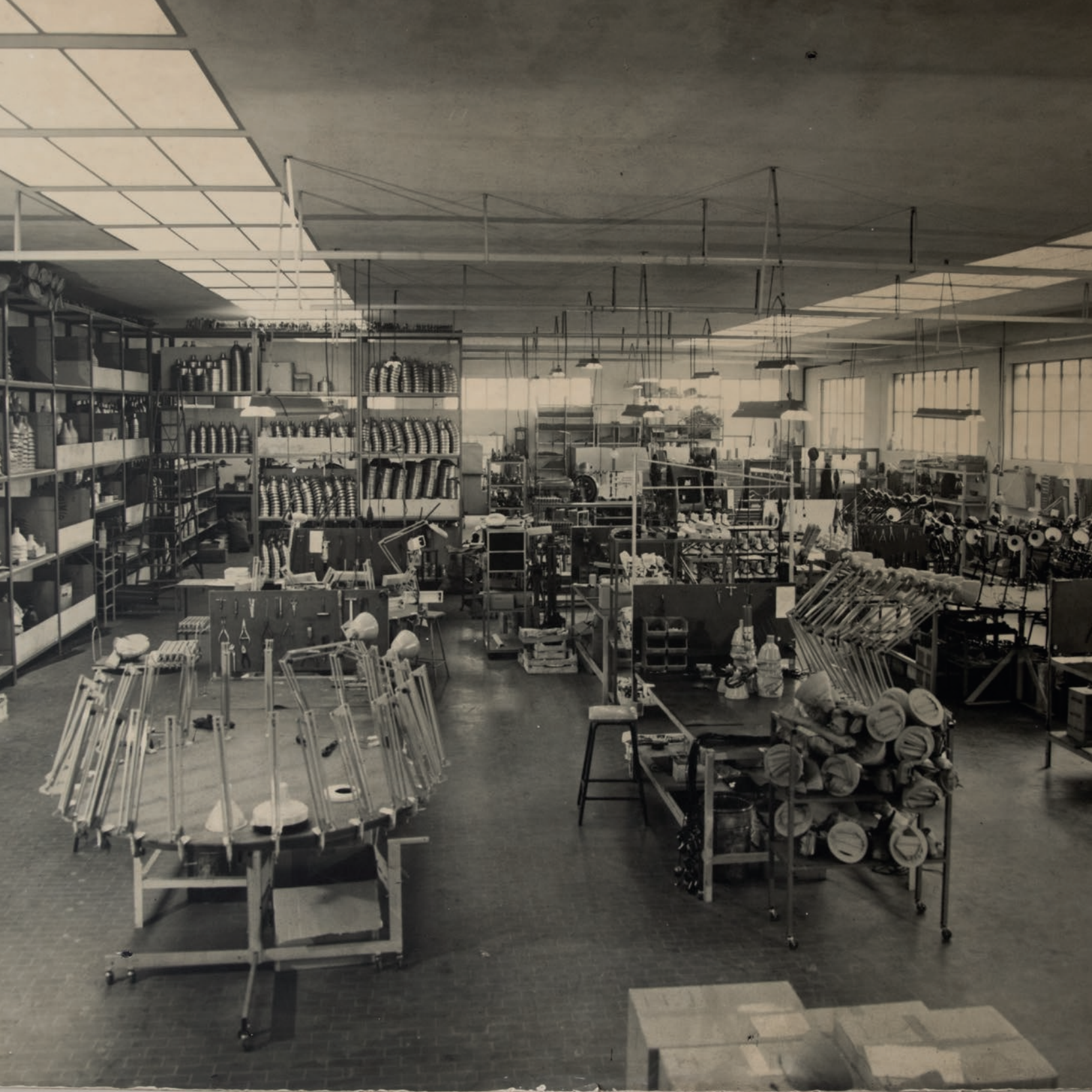
is a theme in all memories people have of him. Sergio remembers the treatment he gave the director of the local bank. “A co-worker and I went to the bank to cash our paychecks. We had both recently begun working for RIMSA and it was the time when everyone tended to have long hair. In a word, they refused to cash our checks. We left the bank and immediately saw Mr. Palmino sitting at a café next to the company, having a cup of coffee. We screwed up our courage and went over and told him what had happened. All he said was, ‘Come with me!’ We went back into the bank and he summoned the director, whom he addressed with a few resolute words: ‘Don’t you ever again dare to refuse a payment to my employees!’ The director apologized, we were blushing in embarrassment, but we came out of the bank happy with money in our pockets.” Even when the company grew to a large size and required a more complex administration, Palmino remained faithful to his inclinations. “I often went places with him,” recounts Pietro Tagliabue, born in 1950. “He never abandoned the practice of making certain deliveries in person, even when he was getting on in years. He liked to drive and it also gave him an opportunity to see the customer’s reaction. When he was tired he would say to me, ‘Come on Pietro, let’s stop and have a sandwich and a beer.’” Like everyone, he had his aversions. For example, he hated the long hair that was the style among almost all the young people. Sergio recalls, “In the morning, as soon as we arrived at the factory, he greeted us like this: ‘Good morning, little ladies!’ He would have readily paid for the barber if he could have convinced us to cut our rebellious hair. It wasn’t just a question of aesthetics. He was sincerely concerned that our locks might get caught in the chuck of the lathe.”



Palmino and his wife, Carla Sormani, with Gaetano, born in 1937, dressed for his First Communion. (Below) Roberto, born in 1942, and Antonio, left, born in 1934.

Late 1980s: the entire family with Gabriella, second from right.





New workers and new markets

The collaboration with Olivetti offered RIMSA an exceptional opportunity for work and growth. Indeed, the workshop on Via Stoppani soon proved to be too small to support the new production volumes. In 1967, Palmino and Gaetano decided to buy a plot of land in the northern part of Seregno and build a new company headquarters. The following year the factory on Via Ferrara was inaugurated, the first element of the current complex. They deliberately built it far from the center of town to avoid urban congestion and reduce the environmental impact, but most importantly it would leave them room for further expansion.

The pantograph lamps, now inextricably bound up with the history of the Longoni family, had marked a decisive turning point in the company history. The pace of work in the factory became faster and faster, from early morning until late evening, on Saturday and, if necessary, Sunday as well. “I would get there before the clock struck six,” recalls Consonni, “and sometimes I would find Mr. Palmino hunched over his table. He had been there since the previous day, perhaps only allowing himself a break for a simple dinner.” The two greeted each other, then the owner went home for a brief rest. But oftentimes he was back at work by ten.

More hands were needed to meet the growing demand for the company’s products. In that period, a steady stream of young people flowed in, their careers merging with that of RIMSA.

The Italian market was burgeoning, but the Seregno company was already looking further afield, to Europe. With production in the hands of Gaetano, Palmino, even though he did not speak any other languages, began exploring Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg, and



1968: construction of the first building.



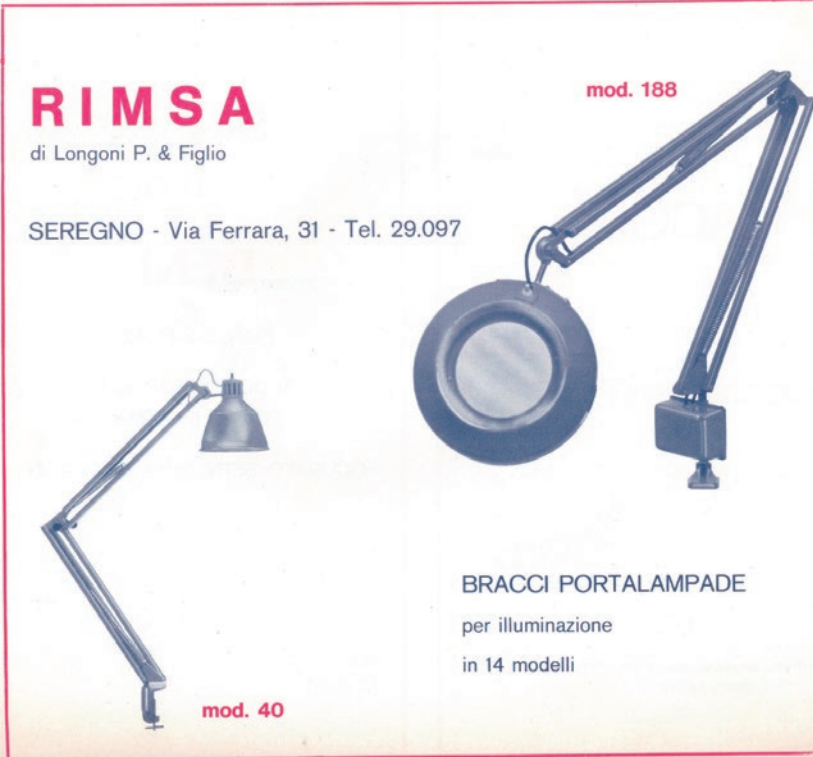
1974: first addition.



2003: second addition.

France. Letters dating to 1971 capture the spirit with which he undertook these first missions abroad. “There are small stores here in Frankfurt, like in Albania, they display sandwiches filled with the strangest things in the world.” Personal and detailed notes were interspersed with summaries of business meetings and commercial prospects. “I herewith enclose two orders I received yesterday, one in Luxembourg and the other in Liège. They are very strong customers and can absorb a lot of our production. They want to have some samples to test and have taken action in that regard. Try to send them on as soon as possible.” And then again, with his characteristic enthusiasm: “France is big! Luxembourg has 750,000 people and Belgium eight million, according to what they told me!”

New frontiers opened up, work increased, the number of employees rose, and the factory also grew bigger. The building underwent expansion in 1974. The atmosphere was still that of a family business marked by a strong sense of unity: happy moments were shared, they congratulated each other for triumphs, and at the same time they helped each other overcome hardships. Palmino and Gaetano had set the tone and laid the groundwork for the development not only of the company, but also of every single person who was near them.



The value of honest restlessness

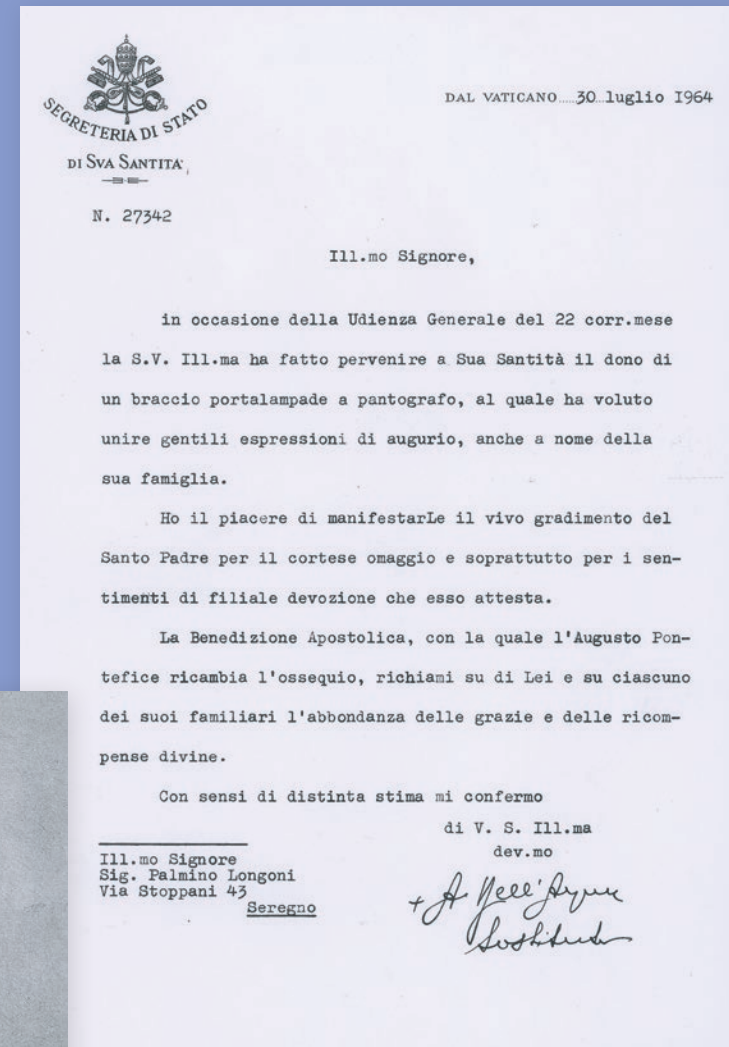
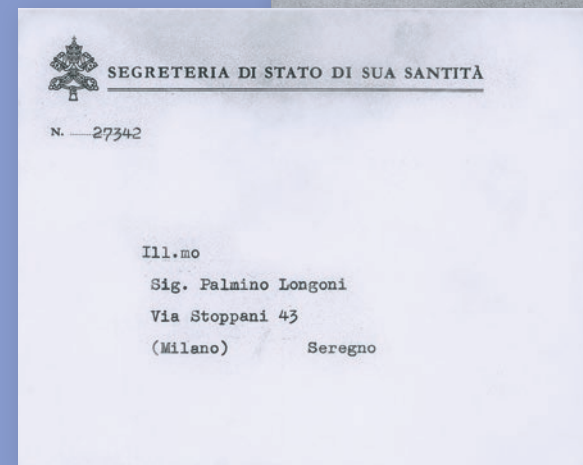
Palmino Longoni was an entrepreneur sui generis. He did not see the factory merely as a means for generating profit, making the principal distinction between that which generates profits and that which leads to losses. In his vision of the enterprise he saw it more as part of a broader environment to which he had chosen to belong. He was always on the go, he carried within him a deep restlessness. This yearning to do things drove him to commit himself on many fronts – both in and outside of his factory – and to explore new territories. He was an active citizen who participated fully in the civic life of his city and his country.

For many years, as a representative of the Municipality of Seregno, he was a member of the board of the School of Arts and Crafts that offered courses in the spaces of the local oratory of San Rocco. The institute accepted young people interested in studying mechanical engineering, woodworking, and restoration of wooden objects under the guidance of experienced teachers. He gave lessons, not only in the theory and practice of arts and crafts, but also regarding life generally. The school had a long tradition behind it and was especially active during the economic boom years. It remained active to the end of the second millennium. In the early 1980s, when this type of school began to fall into obscurity, Palmino wrote a piece for the local newspaper calling on people to redouble their commitment: “May the authorities note that industry is fighting over the young people who come out of these schools, and draw their own conclusions!”

He was a true music lover who transformed this passion into an occasion to express his dedication to his native city. He worked hard



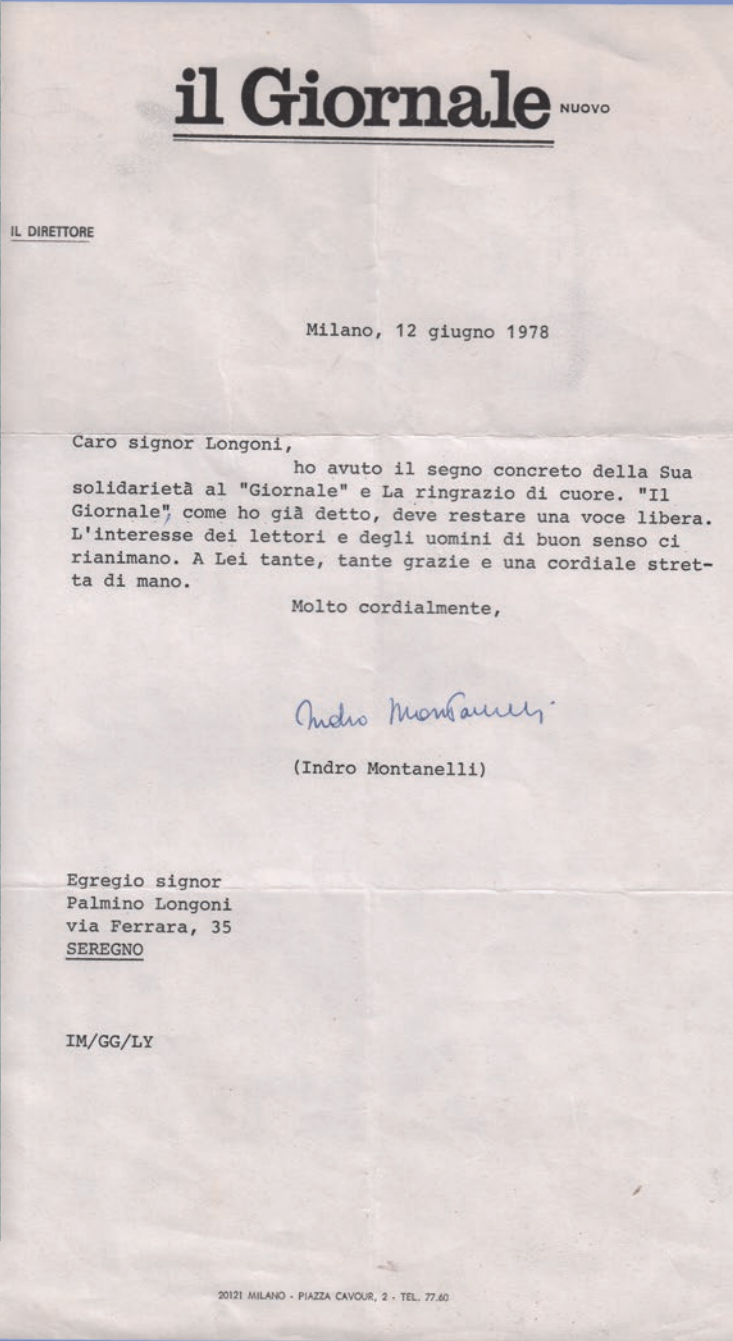
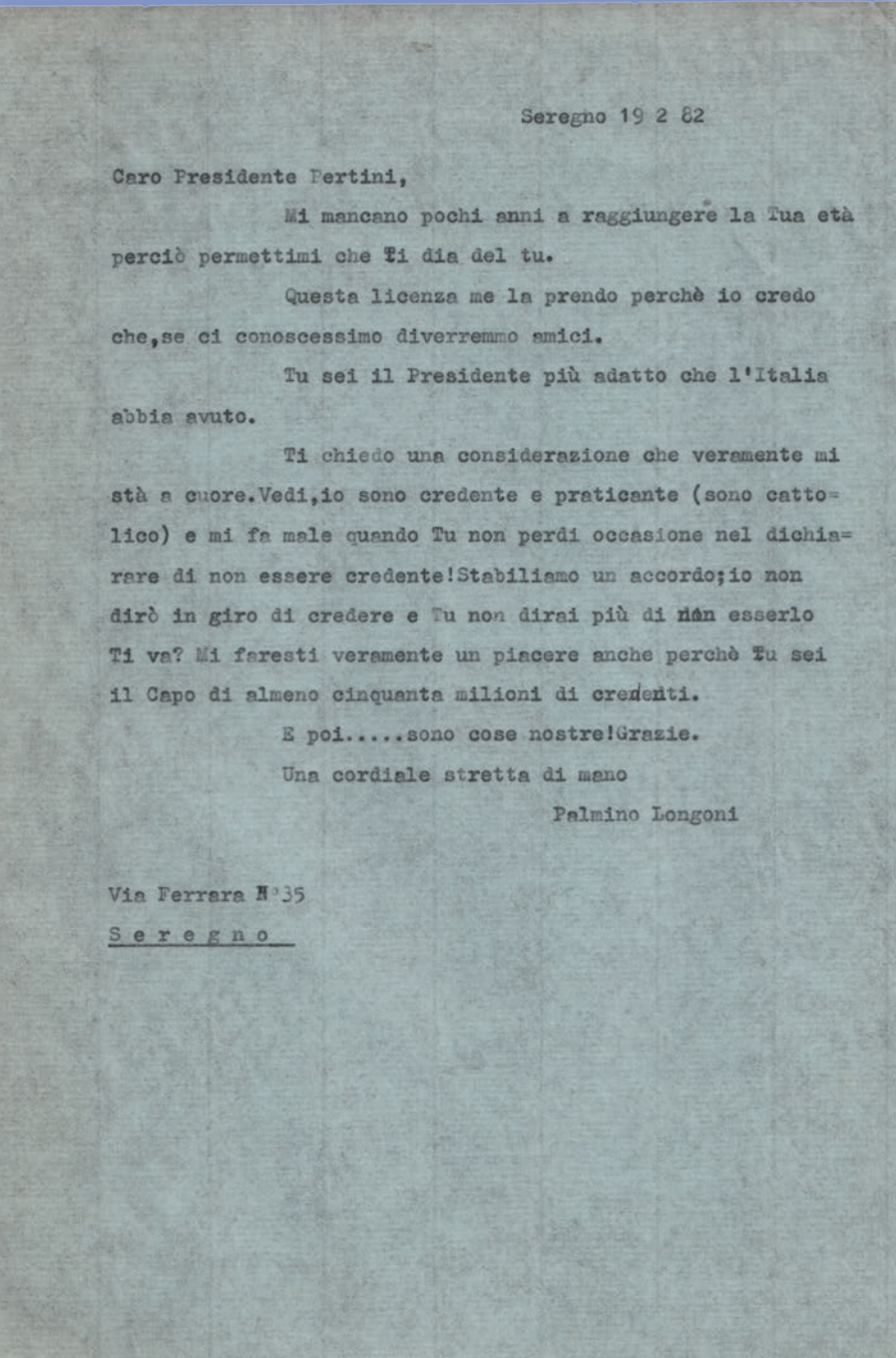
and long to promote the Ettore Pozzoli international piano competition for talented young musicians. Taking place every other year, the high caliber event was instituted in 1959 by Pozzoli's widow, Gina Gambini, in memory of her husband, a great teacher and composer. Longoni believed in it right from the beginning. Many of the contestants who came to Seregno from every corner of Italy and the world found hospitality in his home.



And now we come to the chapter dedicated to the typewriter. Palmino did not see it merely as a device whose mechanical workings he needed to understand so that he could repair it; it was an indispensable tool in his life. He loved to write. He wrote thoughts, meditations, social and political analysis, and letters, some to people of renown, whom he addressed with respect and a good deal of audacity. There are many texts kept by the Longoni family that merit attention. Some contain elements that are still remarkably up to date. We have selected a number of them, such as the one dated

July 26, 1955, which is not addressed to anyone, but shows no small amount of discernment about the politics of his times. “Do we want to go hand in hand and inspect together the political terrain we have sown? Let us take a few steps forward and look around! By now our crops should be well along, but the weeds have proliferated in a prodigious manner. They don’t grow much, because they twine around each other and some succumb, but there are many of them, too many, to the point where they have spread into the neighboring fields...”. Or, “The elections are over, a great victory for our party! Now the people have truly shown that they are intelligent! We now have four years ahead of us and in four years a lot can be done. Our presumption pushes us so far as to think that the victory is of our own doing! Time passes and the memory of our triumph has now passed and we plan on keeping our promises, but we actually can’t really do that [...] We suddenly realize that three years have passed since the last elections and it’s time to go out into the fields and pull up the weeds, but not today, we don’t have time, we’ll go tomorrow, yes, we’ll go tomorrow. But tomorrow it will be too late...”. Palmino Longoni was a man who certainly believed in progress, indeed he contributed to driving it with his inventions and the products of his company. Nevertheless, he never stopped questioning and pondering. Here is a brief excerpt from another writing, in which he celebrates the Santa Cecilia band of Seregno: “Then came progress that gave us the telephone, the cinema, the radio, and mechanization [with] the conviction of making us happy while robbing us of the pleasure of simple things. However, this pleasure is something we feel again every time we listen to the band.” Among the letters in the family archives, the few short lines written by Indro Montanelli, historic editor-in-chief of Il Giornale, are

certainly worth mentioning. He sent a note to Longoni on June 12, 1978 in response to a message of solidarity sent by Longoni during the controversy over the future of the Milanese newspaper. Just a few lines, but very meaningful: “Dear Mr. Longoni, I have received the concrete sign of your solidarity with ‘Il Giornale’ and I thank you sincerely. As I said before, ‘Il Giornale’ must remain a free voice. The interests of the readers and men of common sense reinvigorates us. Many many thanks to you and a cordial handshake.” However, the letter that more than any other provides a genuine snapshot of Palmino’s temperament is the one that follows. It bears the date of February 19, 1982 and is addressed to none other than the president of the Italian Republic, Sandro Pertini.

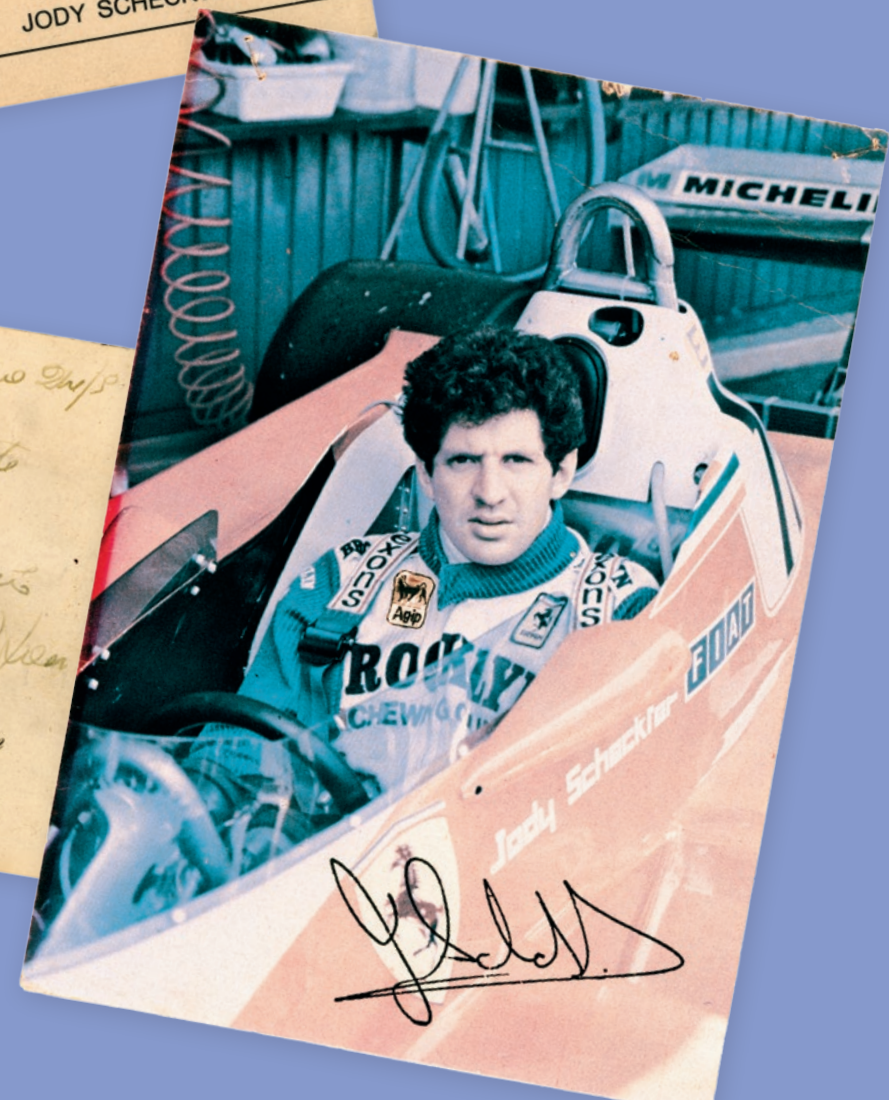




Palmino's wit



Another piece of correspondence that shows his attachment to and pride in Italy is a letter he received from the engineer Ferrari following Palmino's congratulations for the victory of Jody Scheckter at the 1979 Formula One World Championships.





Chapter 2

FULL DEVELOPMENT

Ideas and pragmatism

Keeping up with the times, or better yet, get ahead of them. These were the bearings by which Gaetano plotted a new course for RIMSA. From his father he had inherited an extraordinary creative and inventive flair but in addition to a quick intuition he was also endowed with an entrepreneurial inclination that drove him to face issues with resolution. He was able to quickly shift to a different perspective to address and resolve complex problems. His relationship with Palmino was marked by a generational dualism. Although they had moments of strong conflict, the relationship was fruitful and represented added value for the future of the company. The elder Longoni was a charismatic and extroverted initiator, his son was more meditative and in command of industrial management.

Gaetano had helped direct the vision of the family business toward pantograph lamps for industry, and the choice proved to be quite fruitful. By coupling Palmino's creation with the introduction of new production techniques and new automated production machinery sought by his son, the company enjoyed a decade of strong development. However, the times were changing rapidly. The market was developing at high speed and becoming increasingly demanding. At the beginning it was enough to focus inventiveness and combined efforts on a single product, which soon became the mainstay of revenues. Now clear signals were being received from the market: it was not only increasingly necessary to perfect the product, but it was also necessary to introduce new types of lamps for different uses. A determined, pragmatic, and tenacious optimist, Gaetano took steps to move in that direction.





The number of models grew considerably. Forms and materials changed to meet changes in needs and tastes, without compromising on quality. Some pieces created in that period remained in the catalogue for many years. The glorious Model 10, versatile and easily oriented, combining robustness and modern design, is still being sold.

The search for new models and new applications favored a progressive expansion of the commercial and industrial milieux in which the lamps produced at the Seregno factory could find use. However, the 1960s, a period in which growth in domestic demand supported the growth of RIMSA, were already a distant memory. Now the markets had to be stimulated. To make matters worse, in the late 1970s and early 1980s competition from emerging coun-

tries began to be an issue, eating away at RIMSA's market share. Gaetano understood the importance of distinguishing his products from their Asian counterparts, and so in 1979 he had RIMSA products certified by the Italian Quality Trademark Institute (IMQ). As a stopgap measure, Gaetano also designed the new economical RIMSA model ERI. It was a success, but not sufficiently to alleviate worries: what was needed was a sensational invention to ensure a future for the company.

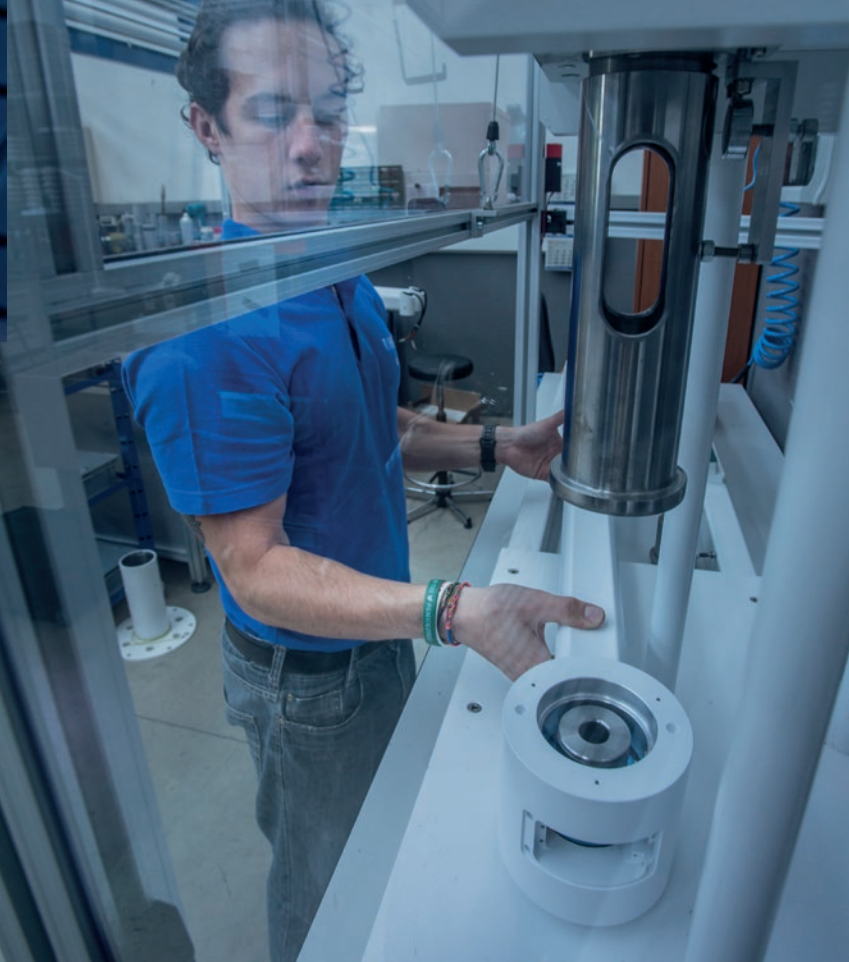
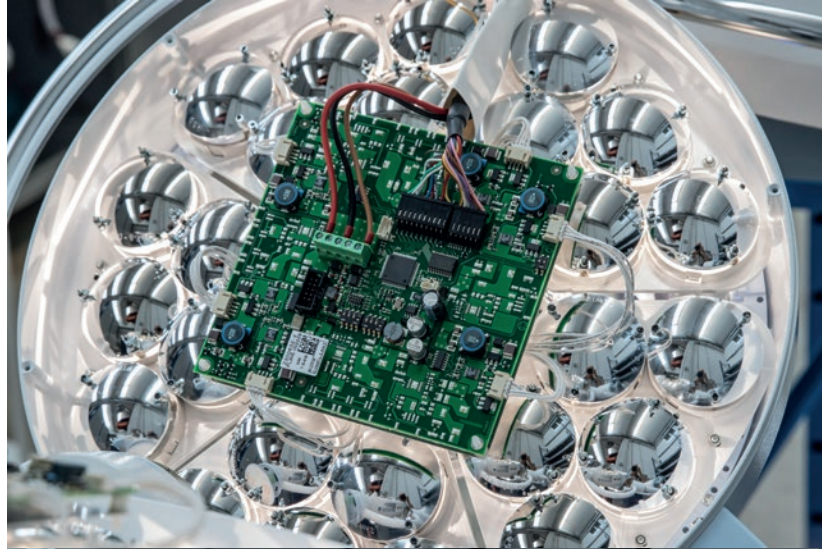


Model 10

Model 10 is the pillar and grandfather of all lamps produced by RIMSA, one that has been featured in the company catalogue since the mid-1960s. With its spring-balanced pantograph arm, the lamp can be oriented in any direction with minimal effort. Over time the materials changed. Originally made entirely of aluminum, the bell is now composed of an upper part in fiberglass and a lower part in steel with decorative edging. In the golden decades—from 1960 to 1990—RIMSA sold about 20,000 of them every year. Sales data were kept meticulously by Viviana, who updated her ledgers by hand at the end of every month.







Human capital

Even during years that were troubled by the uncertainties of markets in turmoil, the company remained focused on building up its employees. To strengthen and enliven cohesion among all employees, Gaetano continued the tradition inaugurated by Palmino of organizing social events. Individual achievement and collective successes were celebrated over dinner or in other gatherings. However, at the Seregno factory, cooperation was also engendered through concrete daily gestures, in industriousness, in the conviction that the motivations and actions of everyone involved had a vital part to play in achieving objectives. “I rose from a young shop boy to being in charge of production,” comments Consonni. “I learned to manage complex machines and to supervise the work of a good number of people. This was all possible because the Longoni chose to invest in my professional growth and I was given many positive examples, starting from Gaetano and Palmino themselves, who worked unsparingly, arriving at work early every morning right up to the end.”

Testimony like this reveals much about the family and its company. The recollections of Giovanni Longoni, who worked as a driver for many years, were on the same wavelength: “I often got home late, sometimes as late as 10 pm if the goods had to be delivered to someplace far away. My wife would say to me: ‘the next thing you know you’ll be spending the night there [in the factory].’ Actually, there was no one keeping me there, I simply liked being in the factory, I felt at home there.”

“It was like being part of a big family you could always rely on,” echoes Sergio. And like in a big family, at RIMSA every-



one shared in the growth, united and determined to amaze the market with cutting-edge products, fruit of a constant quest and ceaseless work.



Spirit of perfection

At the beginning of the 1980s, RIMSA found itself at a crossroads. On the one hand they had the option of staying in an apparently safe haven and continuing to focus their product portfolio on various models of industrial lamps, on the other that of diversifying the production. Palmino and Gaetano were openly vying with one another in a sort of virtuous competition to see who could get the winning idea on the table, the one that would set the company's future course.

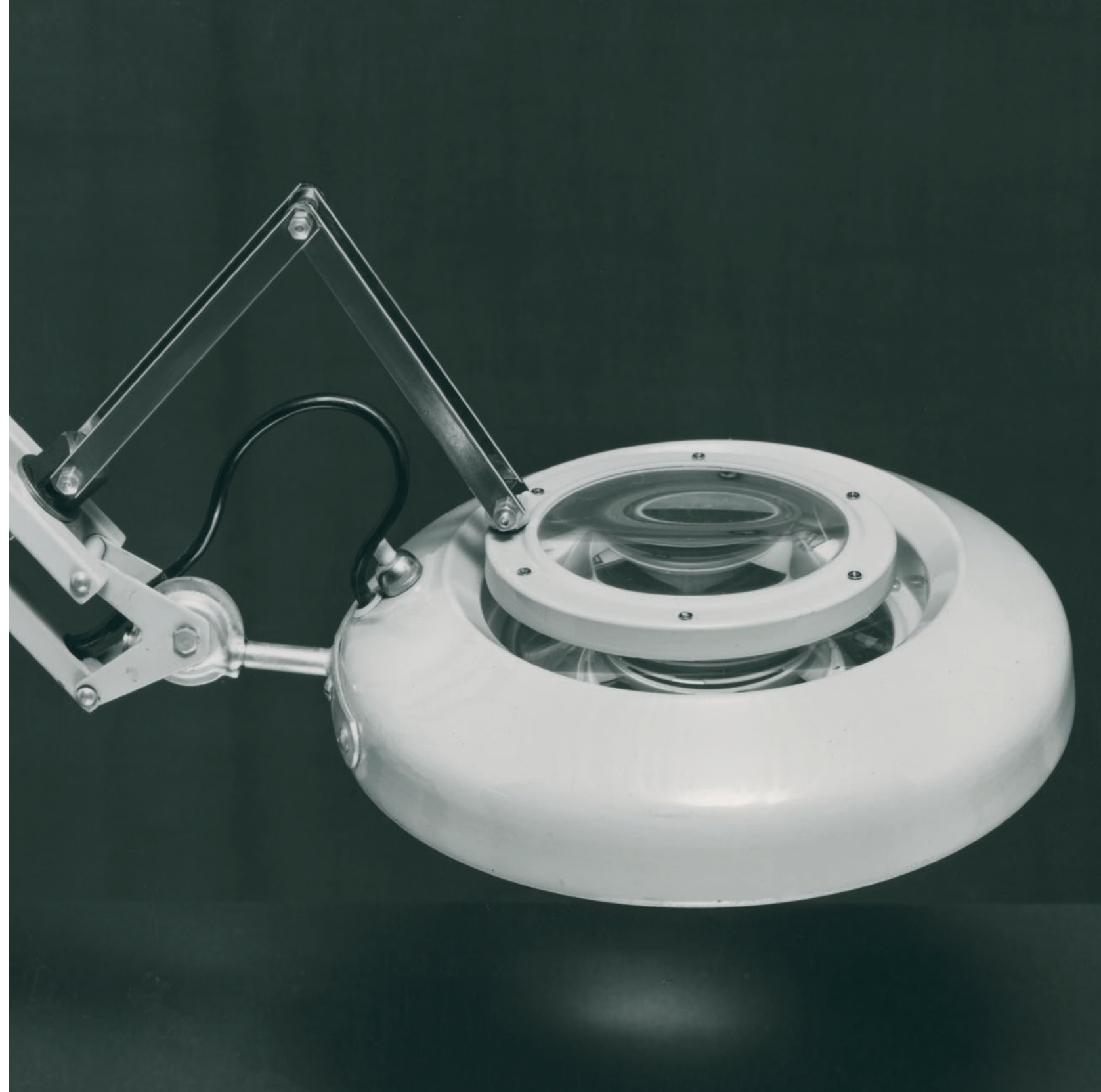
Although Palmino had seen his 70th birthday some time ago, he still wanted to be the protagonist of the choices made in his company. He was sure that industrial pantograph lamps would have kept providing work to at least another three generations. He had fought long and hard to defend the value of his intuitions and transform them into industrial products. The lamp bracket he designed in 1956 had finally made its mark on the market; it has defended itself against the 70s, which had not been an easy decade for any industrialized country, Italy included, and, in spite of the recession, RIMSA was still producing two thousands industrial lamps every month. Nonetheless, Gaetano had sensed that the world was nearing another turning point and that soon nothing would be like it was before. He became increasingly convinced in his thinking that standing still under such circumstances would have been tantamount to a death sentence. Guided by these thoughts he proved to be insightful and farsighted and able to choose the right product at the right time. "Father was innovative and always ready to invest, albeit prudently," comments Carlo. "He weighed his options, but once his mind was made up he moved without wasting any more time."

Gaetano was not only a volcano of ideas, he also concentrated on the



Gaetano celebrates the installation of a new machining center on January 5, 2012.

substance and had no tolerance for inexactitude at work. Hence, at the turn of the decade, before embarking on the sensational adventure of the scialytic lamps, he started a company that manufactured magnifying lenses, Italottica. The reasons for its founding are a bit complex, as related by Gaetano's son Carlo: "Father was getting tired of repeated delays on deliveries from some suppliers, so he finally decided to start producing the magnifying lenses used in some of our industrial lamps on his own." In that same period he acquired five automated lathes so RIMSA would be totally independent in the production of small metal parts. His intolerance for delays and production errors by suppliers was the reason for this choice as well.



A sensational invention

The photo of the first scialytic lamp produced by RIMSA is still on display at the entrance to the company. It's the legendary A300 of 1984 with seven halogen bulbs. The A50 was its precursor, a cool-light scialytic lamp for medical examinations. It was presented at the Fiera Campionaria of Milan in 1983. The idea took form in Gaetano's head during a visit to a specialized fair, MOSAM, which coincided with the inauguration of the Fiera Campionaria on April 14, 1983. Among the many products on display was a medical lamp, the "Prismalix" made by the French firm ALM. It captured his attention. He went back to his factory with a clear objective in mind: create the first Italian prototype of a scialytic lamp.

He had inherited from his father a natural inclination for imaginative ardor and tenacity. Consumed by the ambition of creating something that would remain for future generations, he spent day and night locked up in his workshop doing one test after another to give form to his intuition. There were no more Saturdays or holidays, the days flowed by undifferentiated one after another all focused on the one objective.

The idea of diversifying and bringing a totally innovative product to the market was certainly a winning strategy, but not one that was free of risk. Transitioning from industrial lamps to lamps used in a clinical environment was anything but simple. It was a question of changing horses in mid-stream and suddenly facing novel challenges and obstacles – in production, in technology, in finances – without falling off in the meantime. It took tenacity, constancy, passion and a great deal of sacrifice. Gaetano was leading his company toward an innovative product, distinguished



1984: the first A300

The A300

The lamp was designed for operating rooms where reliable lighting that eliminates shadows while optimizing visibility on the operating table is vital. This type of lighting is based on an array of light sources, called *scialytic* from the Greek (*skiá* 'shadow' and *lytikós*

'loosening'), composed of mirrors, parabolas, and prisms. The particular feature is to minimize the creation of shadows, even when the surgeon comes between the light source and the patient. No other Italian company had ever produced such a lamp before.

by uncompromising quality. The destination for this zealous quest was the A300.

In addition to great amounts of time, the design of the first sci-alytic lamp required significant financial resources. The core of the product was its glass reflector with thin layer technology. The curve of the glass had to be precisely calculated, a mold had to be made, and the thin films had to be applied to the glass in a vacuum environment. One by one, each of these technical obstacles was addressed and resolved. There was no option other than to match the technological level of the European competitors. The mechanical elements were no less challenging, but with patience and zeal, the optimal solution was found for each component: the focusing mechanism, the support with universal joint, and, not least of all, the spring-loaded vertical balancing. Thanks to a system of levers, the first lamps could move through an arc of 90 degrees on their cast aluminum base.

But it seemed there was no end to complications. The question of the halogen lamps also had to be addressed. They all had to have the same filament height so that they could be replaced if they burned out. Gaetano devised a system of sockets with aluminum rings and liquid ceramic. The latter was finally found in Belgium after a long and exhausting search. We must also remember that this challenging process was being undertaken at a time when it was not so simple to find materials and trustworthy suppliers as it is today. The Internet did not yet exist and retailers were very reluctant to reveal the names of their suppliers.

Once the mechanical components and frame had been completed, there was the question of designing the electronics. They had had the good fortune of meeting, quite by chance, an electrical



engineer named Bosisio. His collaboration was of fundamental importance in resolving this final issue. The relationship between Gaetano and the engineer was not easy, their temperaments were too similar. However, their cooperation bore fruit in the end, and they ended up good friends enjoying mutual respect. The result: excellent electronics.

At this point the lamp was ready. “We created a brochure to publicize it. When we look at it today we almost burst out laughing,” confides Carlo, “but at the time it was a truly fine catalogue. This is another indication of just how much things have changed.”

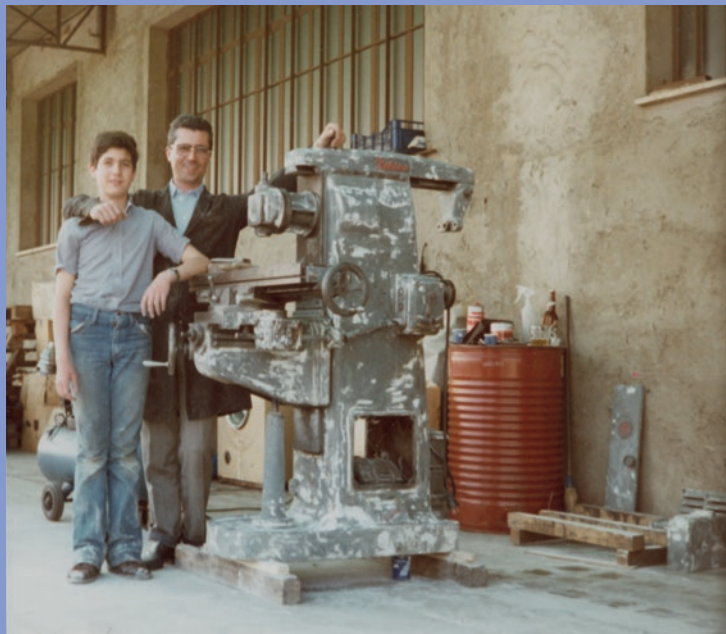
Once again Brianza had proven economics scholars wrong. They believed that the birth of an industry and the establishment of a new product demanded certain environmental conditions, without which all effort would be in vain. Seregno did not have these conditions. There did not seem to be any reason why a new leader in surgical lighting should arise precisely here. But arise it did. The solution to this economic enigma lies in two simple words: intuition and passion.



A gentleman of another age

The mere mention of Gaetano Longoni's name at RIMSA is enough to bring tears to the eyes of many of his employees and colleagues. This does not say a lot about his entrepreneurial adventure, but it helps to get a feeling for Gaetano as a human being. His courteous manners, classical distinction, and thinly veiled reserve made him a man who was both loved and respected at the same time. "In the evening, before going home from work, he would often call me into his workshop," relates Gianni Consonni. "We would stay there a long time talking about our lives and our families, not about work. We confided in one another."

Everything in Gaetano's life was rooted in a soft-spoken manner that was manifested in his gestures and sagacious and courteous conversation. The memories of his wife, Augusta Cogliati, give us an especially keen image of his temperament. "His impeccable manners were evident from the first instant and never changed. My family, originally from Monticello, owned a cheese factory and a gelateria in Besana in Brianza, where I would go now and then to lend a hand. One day a young man came in. He ordered a gelato and sat down to eat it. When he came to the register to pay, he looked me in the eye and said: 'Miss, please excuse me, I am speaking in all seriousness. If you are not already engaged, I would like to marry you.'" That was Gaetano, as clearheaded and resolute as he was serious and courteous. "I saw him again one evening as I was coming out of the Vismara salami factory in Casatenovo, where I was working as the personal secretary of the owner. We began spending a great deal of time together and three years later we were married." The wedding ceremony was celebrated by one



Gaetano and Carlo acquire a used milling machine

of the bride's relatives, a missionary with the Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missions, who was involved in a mission in São Paulo, Brazil and had returned to Italy for a fleeting visit.

Augusta too seems to belong to another time in her manners and conduct. Mrs. Longoni has no lack of pluck, but in the industrial affairs of RIMSA she always remained somewhat in the background, at least in appearance. The situation seems to reaffirm the traditional profile of a Brianza business, which up to a few decades ago tended to be characterized by a strong patriarchal vein. In truth, the relationship between her and her husband confirms a famous axiom, i.e. that



Gaetano with his German shepherd

behind every great man there is always a great woman. And the first one to fully acknowledge the role played by Augusta was Gaetano himself. This is another of her memories, evoked by a photo in a RIMSA meeting room showing Gaetano receiving an award from the Milan Chamber of Commerce. "As soon as he had it in his hands, he waved it high above his head and declared in front of all present: 'This I owe to my wife, who has always supported me and allowed me to pursue my dreams.' I didn't agree with him as a favor, but because I believed in him. He gave me a wonderful life."

It was a life marked by full harmony of intent. Thanks to this accord, even the most outwardly extravagant behaviors were understood. "It would often happen that he got up in the middle of the night, got dressed, and started down the stairs to the workshop. Our house was built adjacent to the new RIMSA headquarters, creating



Gaetano and Paolo with their motorcycles



Pike fishing



the classic situation of a house-workshop. Sometimes I would ask him: ‘Gaetano, but is it really necessary?’ He would respond, ‘Yes, Augusta, I’ve just had an idea.’ That was the way he was, when that light bulb came on there was no way to stop him. And the joy I witnessed in his eyes was reward enough.”

A few essential precepts guided him in his choices: courtesy, honesty, and resolution. His children still aspire to these values in leading the company. “Rules are important,” affirms Carlo, “this is what father taught us. He always told us: in life you have to make decisions and then enact them while observing the rules. If he made a commitment to a customer he always honored it, even at the cost of having to work day and night.”

However, it would be wrong to believe that Gaetano’s life was only filled with hard work. Certainly, his life is strongly intertwined with the life of his company, but he was a man whose curiosity knew no bounds. “One of his favorite pastimes was fishing,” we are told by Augusta. “When he needed a break, he took his fishing lines and



Gaetano admiring his Stellare lamp

went up to Valtellina with his friends. It was his way of getting away and relaxing, although I am convinced that even there he did not stop thinking about his projects.” Among his strongest passions was that for his dogs, to which he dedicated loving care. He also loved Classical music, a taste he had taken from his father, Palmino, and his legendary Moto Guzzi. In summer, his favorite vacation destination was the family house in Civenna, at the foot of the Ghisallo Pass. It was there that he strengthened his affection for father Mariano Ambrosini, a missionary in Mexico who died in March 2017 at the age of 101 years after being very active in his pastoral ministry until the end, even though his age kept from traveling as he had in the past. Their friendship started in a hospital room, where they were both inpatients, and it continued to develop for over thirty years, nourished by mutual respect, renewed each year when they saw each other in Civenna. Gaetano would often

set out from there to reach Chiesa in Valmalenco and then climb up to the mountain hut named after the brothers Antonio and Elia Longoni, his paternal grandfather and great uncle, respectively. Gaetano also cultivated a lifelong love for writing. This love, united with that for the mountains, is captured on a page still affixed to the wall of his workshop. It is a poem titled Le Grigne:

Strong, proud, rosy rocks rising massively skyward
You inebriate men with your majestic presence
Trees and the forest adorn your feet
The waters embrace you on all sides, jealous of such beauty

Perhaps this is precisely the beauty that Gaetano pursued during his life on earth: in his human relations with others, in his work, and in his pastimes.



Chapter 3

ENVISIONING THE NONEXISTENT

Good collaborators, optimal solutions

The affairs leading up to the creation of the Model A300 – RIMSA’s first medical lamp, opening up a new world of prospects – are quite illustrative of Gaetano’s temerity. “Without knowing the market, Father decided to embark on something bigger than he was,” remarks Carlo.

At the 1983 Fiera Campionaria in Milan, the company from Seregno exhibited the A50, the precursor to the A300. Naturally at that point it was a challenge that was anything but won. The game was long and complex and had to be played on a field that demanded a broad range of skills. And to make things worse, it had to be played against major international competitors. But at any rate, everyone was already proud of the invention. Paolo, Gaetano’s youngest son, expressed his pride by doing a pen and ink drawing of the lamp and taking it to school. He was not greeted by the approval he had imagined, but instead by the allusive scorn of a teacher to whose myopic eyes RIMSA seemed to be a humble local business seeking its fortune in a market dominated by technology and thus, to his mind, completely out of its league. It’s quite clear he had little idea of Gaetano’s passion, which was so strong that it could overcome the constraints of limited financial resources and any other obstacle. And he had little idea of Gaetano’s perseverance. Driven by an irrepressible desire for perfection, Gaetano was always able to draw the sharpest minds into his projects. At any rate, in addition to his contagious enthusiasm, he was anything but improvident.

One year later the market was showing interest in the new A300, but Gaetano knew he still needed the right partners to take addi-

tional steps forward. This was the only way to perfect his creation and ensure it could effectively be industrialized. It was at this point that a professor from the Polytechnical University in Genoa, the engineer Giorgio Viale, became part of the history of RIMSA. He would be a key figure in the company's further development, and would continue as a consultant for many years. He was an expert in physics and optics. He calculated the parabola for the scialytic lamps, allowing the A300 to reach a technical standard that made it comparable to the competitors' finest products. "When I was a boy I often had occasion to accompany Father on his frequent trips to Chiavari," recounts Paolo. "There he would meet with professor Viale, someone of capital importance to us, although at the time I knew almost nothing about him." To Paolo's innocent eyes these trips were just fun opportunities to spend a day at the seaside and enjoy the delicious homemade trofie al pesto at the home of the professor's lifelong companion, Mariella Todaro. But there was much more to it than that. Paolo was already beginning a formative journey that would lead him years later to undertake engineering studies and then design new solutions for medical lamps. He was not aware of what was happening to him, and yet even then it was not only the sounds and smells of Liguria to fill his senses. He was also absorbing the principles of a body of knowledge that one day would become the driving force in his life. "Giorgio Viale was an extraordinary man," adds Paolo, "defining him as an engineer really leaves a lot out. He was a university professor and a writer of essays on quantum physics. Even though I was only a boy I remember the long explanations he offered Father on how to design a parabola and a truncated ellipse to optimize the light sources." Given that he was a man of broad culture,

Viale was not always inclined to be pragmatic. With the pretext of talking about luminous rays, he ended up talking about the electromagnetic waves of celestial bodies. "Father, who instead was someone with his feet solidly on the ground and had an aversion to too much theorizing – especially when he saw no opportunity to use it in a practical application – , in order to please the engineer and get the information he needed, would give him free rein to talk about his theories, although that took up half a day and a good deal of the intellectual capacities of each." Gaetano listened, imperturbable, demonstrating also in relatively humorous episodes such as this his signature tenacity and resoluteness. Meanwhile, back in Seregno, it was time to rework the company organization. Alongside the traditional production department where the industrial lamps were manufactured, another one was opened entirely dedicated to medical lamps. Gaetano supervised employee training. Andrea Uccelli, born in 1965 and hired by RIMSA in 1980, is now the production manager. "Thirty-seven years ago I started at the assembly bench for the industrial lamps and slowly but surely gained skills and professionalism. There has always been a place here for those who want to learn and develop professionally. When we entered the market for the scialytic lamps, a world of opportunity opened up, not just for the company, but for each of us individually." Andrea is joined also by his brother, Alberto, born in 1962: "We have always known the Longoni family. We were neighbors and used to play with Carlo and Paolo when we were little. It is really incredible that we went on also to be able to share the development of this company with them." "At the beginning I was a bit terrified of innovation," admits



1992: "Hospital" fair in Bologna

Francesco Camesasca, born in 1964 and hired by RIMSA three years before the scialytic 'revolution'. "I was afraid of making some mistake during the assembly process. But Mr. Gaetano supervised us closely and in the end we all gained confidence."

"Every step was faced meticulously, repeatedly trying it out in the workshop. The first lamp was installed in the operating room at the hospital of Giussano," relates Pietro Tagliabue. "It was a truly thrilling moment."





Onward with the third generation

It is difficult to understand whether the company was conceived ad hoc for the family or vice versa. Whatever the case, the factory setting has always seemed homey and friendly to Carlo and Paolo, to the point where they had some trouble understanding where play stopped and work began.

The smell of paint. Their grandfather's workshop. The shears that looked like a monster ready to attack them. The compressed-air nail gun for building shipping crates. The colored, glistening molds. This and much more fills their memories, the memories of children who went to visit their nonno and father at the factory. It was a realm of adventure for them, where they could play and let their imaginations run wild.

Now that they represent the new management, they remember a bit proudly but also with a smile the time when, trying to find a way to kill their boredom on a lazy day of vacation, they went into the shop and invented a very original lamp using pieces from the models that were then in the catalogue. This game gave rise to the CP, after the initials of Carlo and Paolo, the former not yet fifteen and the latter eight at the time. It all might have stopped there and would already have been a fond memory, but Gaetano, proud of his boys, decided to market the product, which ended up winning the approval of the clientele.

While for Paolo everything was still just a game, it was time for Carlo to take a place in the company. It was almost taken for granted. "When Father asked me to start getting familiar with the company books, my heart was pounding. At first I didn't understand. I saw my friends going out and having fun while I spent

two hours a day with our accountant looking at the ledgers. Later I realized how valuable that time had been for me, and not only for what I learned about accounting. There was a higher lesson I learned from that experience, and that was that having a company to manage is certainly something fortunate, but also an enormous responsibility."

Viewed from this perspective, Carlo's childhood has similarities to those of his grandfather and father. All three had to accelerate their learning process because circumstances demanded it. When he became a fully fledged member of the company he had already been through a lot more than others in his age group. "It was 1987 and I had just finished my military service. Father asked me to accompany him to an Olivetti dealer. We came out with a brand new M24, the best computer available at the time."

As they were walking down the street, Gaetano looked Carlo in the eye and said: "Now you have the right tools. Get organized because starting tomorrow you'll be keeping the books." Carlo did not let himself be daunted by the new responsibility entrusted to him. He had gained much from the apprenticeship he had done in previous years when he was studying accounting. He rolled up his sleeves and accepted the challenge.

Gaetano still had his father working alongside him and could now count on the constant presence of his eldest son. Together they charted a course with the compass needle pointing toward the future, moving ahead quickly.

The world was in great ferment: walls were coming down, the first cell phones were hitting the market, the groundwork was being laid for a true digital revolution. And RIMSA, which was now moving confidently in the market for scialytic lamps, did not

Paolo Longoni



Carlo Longoni



sit idly by and watch. The Longoni spirit proved yet again to be oriented toward the future. The company initiated an exportation strategy that would prove to be a winning choice in the years to come. Carlo was the best navigator on this new course. Having a knack for relations, as well as for numbers, he proved able to get on the same wavelength with people in a completely natural way. His father noted this gift and even sent him to Naples to officially present the new model Alba, an essential lamp that also had a more showy brass version. The first exemplar is still on display at the company headquarters with a label bearing the code AZ065, the number of Carlo's flight to Naples. It was his first business trip and also his first time in an airplane!

"Maximum agility and rapid decision-making capacity," Carlo explains, "we knew we could build our strength on these values. We have never needed to have long meetings and exhausting sessions with the board of directors. We find solutions within a family context at any time of the day."

Strongly imbued with this spirit, the company entered the 1990s with impetus. In spite of the signs of general recession, in Seregno the Longonis continued to believe in and work toward the future. Without overextending themselves, they overhauled production technology to increase their competitiveness.

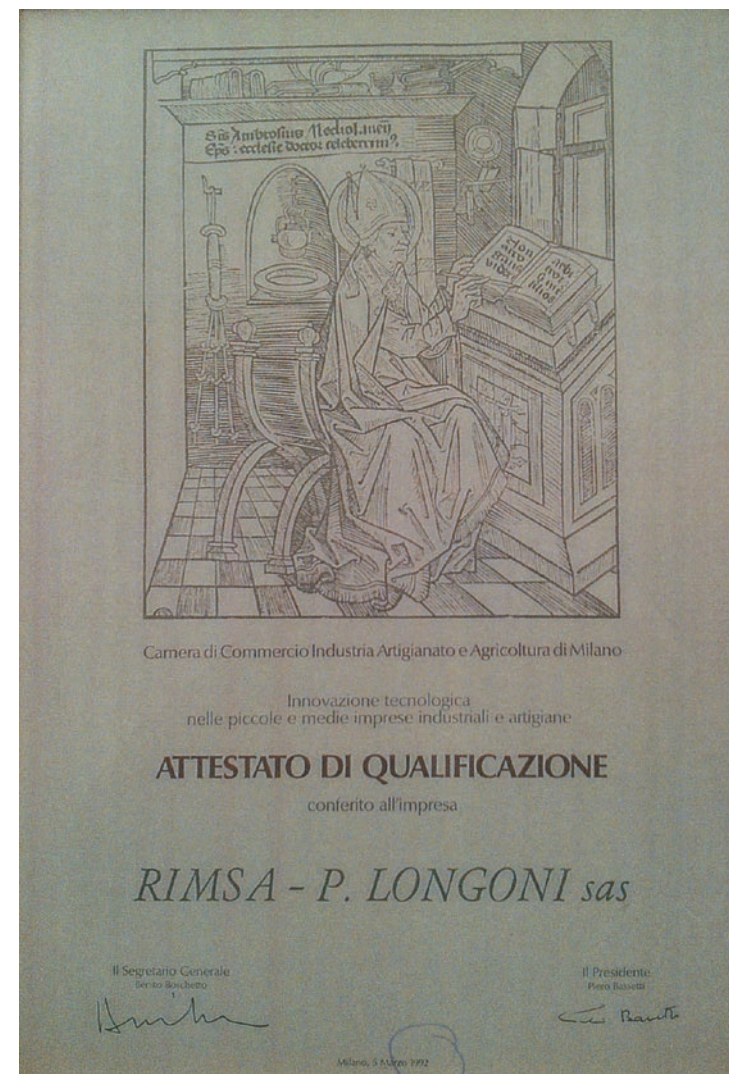




The shining star of internationalization

The beginning of the last decade of the second millennium was marked by two important episodes. In January 1991, Palmino, the one who initiated the whole adventure, passed away at the age of 85. Just one year later he was honored in the best imaginable way. RIMSA won the technological innovation prize from the Milan Chamber of Commerce for the laminar flow scalytic lamp for operating rooms. A photo in the offices on Via Monte Rosa immortalizes the moment that Gaetano accepted the prize at the Palazzo dei Giureconsulti before the then president of the Chamber of Commerce, Piero Bassetti.

The Stellare lamp, once again a model developed over the course of long sleepless nights, was premiered at the Bologna Hospital Fair in 1992, attracting a great number of visitors. At that point the imperative became to make the RIMSA name known abroad. This coincided with the second passing of the generational baton. Just as Gaetano had convinced his father – and not without difficulty – to exhibit the new RIMSA products at the national tradeshows, effectively initiating a new commercial policy, in the 1990s Carlo chose to plot a course for foreign markets. It was no small step. The process of globalization was only beginning and, when all is said and done, in Italy there was only a sketchy understanding of the industrial geography of certain countries.



The Stellare

The Stellare was an evolved form of the A300. For some time there had been talk about operating rooms with laminar air flow, i.e. outfitted with a system to pump purified, sterilized air into the room via special filters. The air passes through the room in a relatively laminar flow and is taken up by inlet ports on the opposite side of the room and filtered. In order to prevent the lamp from being an obstacle to the laminar flow, an open design was necessary. The structure of the Stellare comprised a central element made of aluminum with rays in the same material branching off it. A brass tie rod acts as a lever to simultaneously orient the individual parabolas at the ends of the rays. Each one of these mechanisms was built with the maximum precision. Every ratchet, spacer and lever was meticulously assembled with minimal tolerance. A spring on each joint acts as a tensioner for each parabola.



In 1993, the company took part for the first time in the Interhospital fair in Hannover, the most important tradeshow for the sector. If the exposure in Germany constituted a sort of international baptism, the real global campaign began the following year with a stand at the Sinomed fair in Beijing.

The sights were now on new markets. The world was going faster and faster and it wasn't the Longoni's style to let themselves be caught unprepared. Technological developments were also advancing in leaps and bounds every day. A bold and unflagging policy of updates was necessary to keep from losing ground. No one however forgot where they had come from, nor was the human factor overlooked. A constant concern for social responsibility combined with an inclination toward progress consolidated the image of an enterprise marked by outstanding innovative capacities and respect for the loftiest moral and ethical values at the same time. The power of people played a dominating role in the history of this company. This is something we have already said, but it is worth repeating. In a moment in history in which a technological revolution and increasingly global competition imposes new models of organization, the Longonis never considered abandoning an age old ally: the person. Nowadays, many recognize the need to put people back at the center of society and businesses, to invest and stake bets on human capital. RIMSA never abandoned this philosophy. Investments in the person, in their training and the quality of their work were inviolable elements in the growth of the Seregno company. And the values underpinning Palmينو's and Gaetano's work are reaffirmed by the third generation: respect for employees, for the market, and for customers; diversification of products and markets; flexibility and high productivity. And last but by no means least: the family.



Perspicacity and modern challenges

The continuing presence at the Medica fair, the largest and most important health fair in the world, initially held in Hannover, Germany and later in Düsseldorf, created by merging the preexisting fair of the same name with Interhospital, allowed RIMSA to create a dense network of cosmopolitan relations.

Almost as if to downplay the importance of planning, Carlo likes to attribute the process of internationalization to his desire to interact with different languages and cultures to enrich his own cultural baggage. Actually, this enduring desire had much more relevant outcomes. His was not simply youthful enthusiasm, nor was it a shot in the dark; it was the simple repetition of a story composed of perspicacity and new challenges. A calculated entrepreneurial gamble to get a view, beyond the palisade of everyday certainty, of tomorrow's opportunities. And all was done cognizant of the fact that that was the only possible route to favor further development. Ending up trapped in Italy meant leaving open ground for the competition. But now spontaneous trips around Europe to test the waters, like those taken in the early 1970s, were no longer enough. Now it was necessary to produce a strong, concrete response to the market. A new word was entered into the everyday lexicon of RIMSA: exportation. "A business prospers if sales increase," states Andrea, "and we noted with pleasure that our orders were increasing."

"It made us happy, and also proud," comments Francesco. "We used to say among ourselves: if they buy our products in every corner of the world, it must mean that we are good at what we do. This way we had an incentive to do even better."

In the meantime, Gaetano persevered in his design work. Again

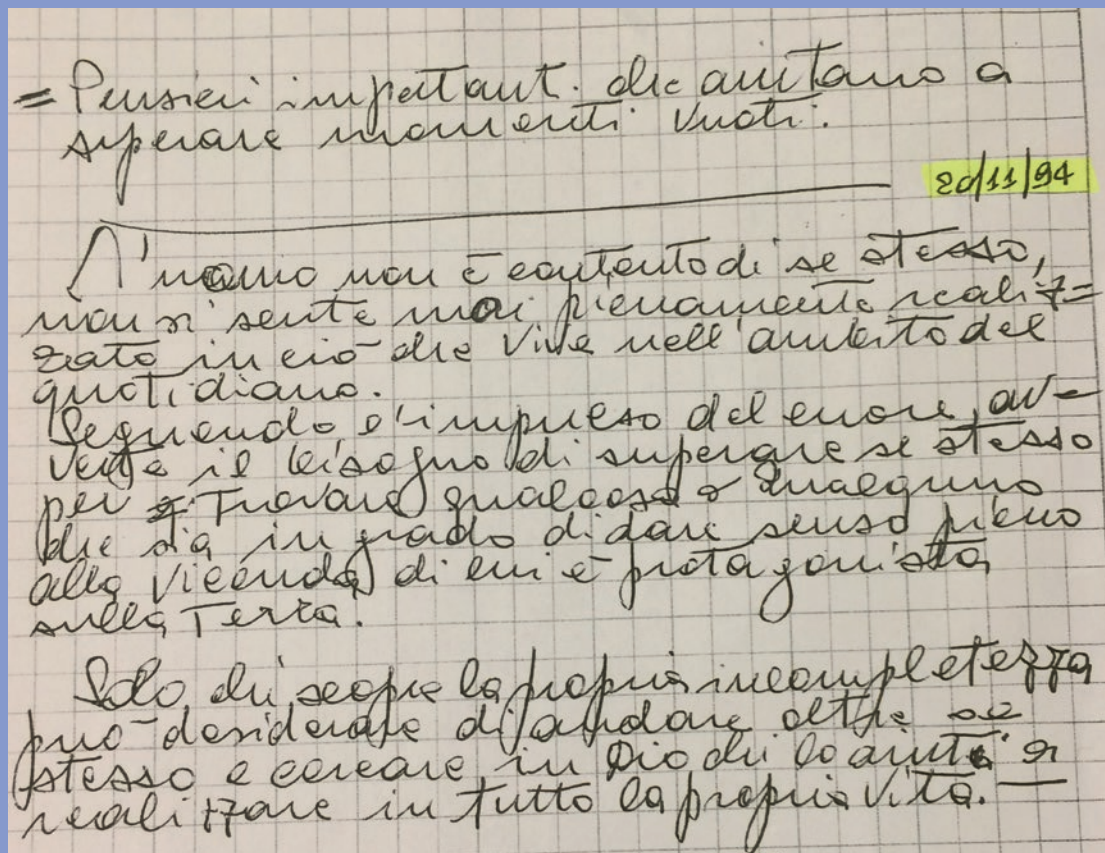


supported by engineer Viale, in 1994 he conceived a new model to replace the Stellare: the D900.

The D900

The D900 marked a huge shift in the universe of scialytic lamps: from multi-parabola to single bulb. Indeed, the new creature had a single halogen bulb at the center, with a switching mechanism to an emergency bulb in the event of burnout or malfunction. The solution brought both improved shadow attenuation and lower energy consumption per unit of light. It would become the showpiece of the RIMSA product portfolio.





The search for God

In November 1994, the same month that the D900 was designed, Gaetano penned a note that gives us a glimpse into another dimension of his complex soul. He was not a man whose only concerns were house and work, as one might think at first glance, he was also given to meditation, engaged in a quest for God. The note is titled “Important thoughts that help get through empty moments”. The words express the undying need to pursue something beyond earthly life, a sense of urgency, almost a torment, something that had also enriched and elevated the existence of his father, Palmino, and his grandfather Antonio.

Man is not content in and of himself, he never feels fully fulfilled

in what he experiences in his daily life. Following the impulse of his heart, he feels the need to get beyond himself, to find something or Someone that is able to give full meaning to the series of events in which he is protagonist on earth. Only he who discovers his own incompleteness can desire to go beyond himself and seek in God He who will help him fully realize his life. Gaetano was never particularly garrulous in his daily family life. He liked to joke around a bit, but without ever letting things go too far. “I remember his as a loving father,” says Carlo, “but he would tend to convey his thoughtfulness through gestures rather than words.” His children drew a lesson from this character trait. “You had to understand on the fly what you needed to do, at home as at work and in life.”



The company remained in family hands, like much of the Italian business community, but with a new international thrust and an increasingly watchful eye on finances. In practical terms, this meant looking ahead without overreaching. “We started reassessing our commercial and investment policies,” says Carlo, “because we didn’t want to depend on the banks anymore. We were always on time with payments to employees and suppliers, but not all of our customers could say the same. Although it pained us to do it, we decided to cull those who were insolvent. In the immediate term, this meant giving up some of our income. To compensate, at least partially, for this drop in revenues we decided to adapt our price list to our characteristics: we were a production enterprise, not one that imported goods manufactured in China or elsewhere. We guaranteed service that should rightfully be monetized. This was clear to all of us, but it was necessary to explain it to the customers with whom we had chosen to continue to work.” This urgency gave Carlo the opportunity to fully unleash his

personal aptitudes. His commercial acumen is now well known. At RIMSA they say that he knows how to charm customers. This ability is not simply a matter of applying summary sales strategies that look good on paper, it comes from in-depth knowledge of the product and from a natural gift for human relations. “I have always found it easy to forge positive relations and I love illustrating every detail of what we have to offer.” Oftentimes Carlo is complimented for his contagious enthusiasm in explaining the work method in Seregno before receiving the actual order. Speaking earnestly in clear and simple terms, he explains the true added value of equipment bearing the RIMSA label. His commercial talent is a gift and another arrow in the company quiver. In Mumbai as in Tokyo or any other corner of the earth, there is always a purchasing manager in some company who has been won over by Carlo’s sincere passion.

Competition and cooperation

Gaetano Longoni proved to be farsighted in his relations with his children, giving them the space and freedom they needed to grow. “I believe this attitude of his was inspired by memories of the difficulties Father had had with Nonno,” comments Paolo. “He told us that his proposals for changes were often rejected, sometimes before he could even completely explain the idea he had in him mind. After coming through an experience like this, it is understandable that he didn’t want his own kids going through something similar. Instead he showed understanding and openness, which is not to say that we didn’t have moments when we clashed. But we are very grateful to him, because by being strict he was able to instill in each of us a very strong sense of responsibility.” Carlo adds, “Nonno, on the other hand, was very inflexible. When Father joyfully told him that he had succeeded in building the first scialytic lamp, Nonno’s first comment was: ‘You beat me to it!’” Palmino was like that. His desire to be the front man drove him to feel a rivalry even with his son. It was a stimulating, healthy com-



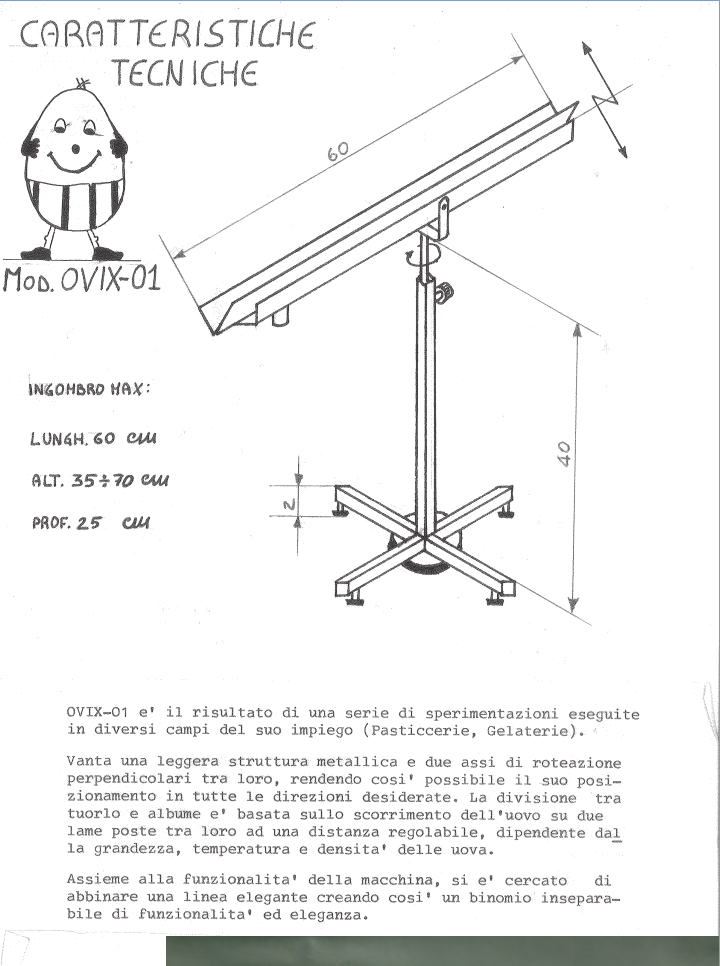
Gaetano holding Paolo with his arm around his second child, Anna

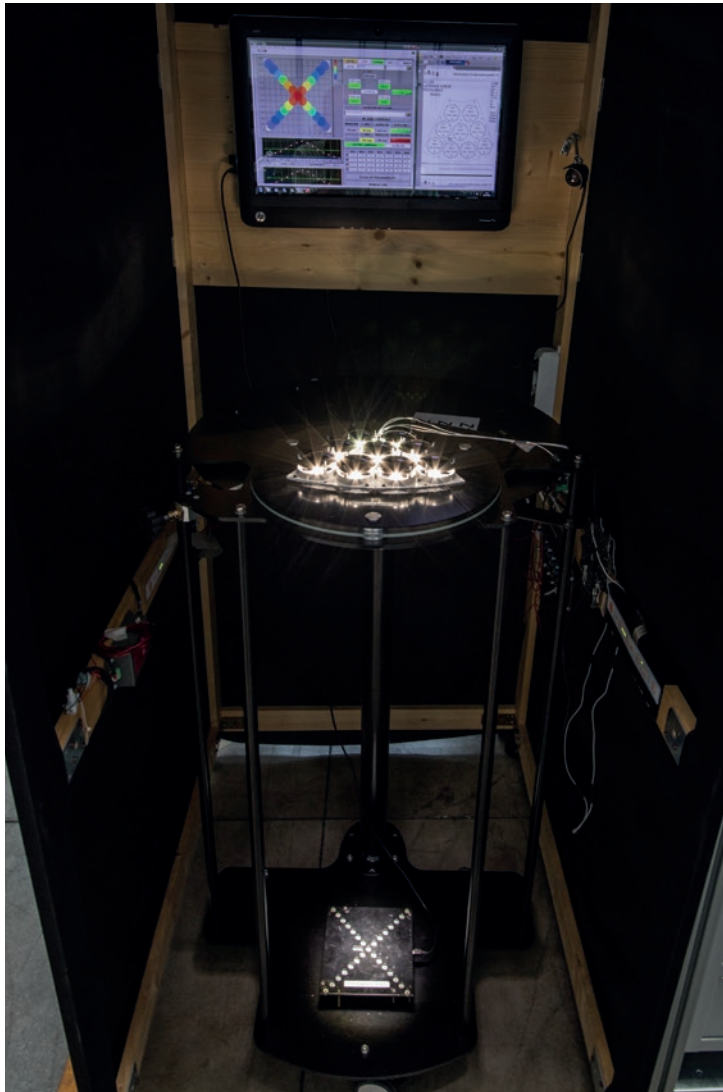


petition, which certainly spurred Gaetano on to give his best, but at many times it was also a source of tension and frustration. The two were sharing the same arena, the arena of invention. This arena would later be shared by Gaetano and Paolo. With respect to Carlo, the younger son was given more freedom to choose his own professional path. “Father always urged me to do the things I liked,” recalls Paolo. “Among the many problems that come with generational turnover in a company, we must not overlook the question of expectations a parent has for a child. In my case I recognize that I was not pressured, and that has been a very positive thing for me.”

An inventor at heart

As a boy, Paolo Longoni immediately exhibited a noteworthy yen for research and experimentation. The home environment was rich in stimuli and examples, initially with his grandfather and later with his father. It was the ideal place to observe how inventiveness could give shape to things. Paolo’s desire to invent things and find new solutions is highlighted in a number of creations of unquestionable originality. They range from a snowmobile built in the true spirit of a tinker in a few hours one night after a big snowfall by attaching runners to a scooter and the cradle he designed when his nephew Glauco was born. Still more singular is the Model Ovix-01, a device for separating eggs. In the brief description that accompanies the drawing, the young Longoni wrote: “I have sought to combine the functionality of the machine with an elegant design, thus creating an inseparable dyad of functionality and elegance.” These are the same principles by which he would design the scialytic lamps years later.





Paolo doggedly pursued his passions, which for reasons he alone knows took him first to the Politecnico di Milano before leading back to the RIMSA workshop. “Obviously my choice of studies was well received by Father, who nevertheless downplayed his pride with a bit of irony. When someone asked him about it he would usually respond: ‘Yes, he’s studying engineering, but he’s a dunce.’”

Actually, Paolo wasn’t entirely sure what to do when he completed high school. “I was tempted by the idea of enrolling in medical school,” he confesses. In the end engineering won out, but it was biomedical engineering. By opting for studies in the overlap zone between science, engineering, and healthcare, Paolo created the ideal premises for becoming a key player in the family business. In 1998, after graduating from the university, he set off on the path blazed by his brother.

Now the team was complete. Gaetano had the support of both his sons. “The passing of the baton from Father to me was easier than that from him to my brother,” affirms Carlo. “They were two similar minds, both inventors, and it was thus impossible to exclude some feelings of rivalry. But Father always showed pride in Paolo’s intuitions, he was never jealous.”

This sense of pride and belonging produced a close-knit, dynamic team. “This is our strength,” expounds Paolo. “We resolve every problem thanks to the group’s competencies and experience. We often get visits from our customers – perhaps they are the managers of companies with thousands of employees – and see the expressions of amazement on their faces. They are dying to ask us a question, you can see it in their eyes: how do you manage to do everything with only about forty employees?”

Carlo elucidates: “We are able to fill orders of four hundred lamps in one month. How do we manage? It’s simple. When one person is giving his all, the others all follow suit.”

It is all rooted in the rules that have guided RIMSA for 80 years, in the valorization of its people. In the modern-day company, the keywords are still trust, pride, and sharing. Trust in oneself and in others, pride in belonging to an enterprise with a long tradition, sharing of knowledge. Everyone has the opportunity to contribute to improving work procedures and thus the final product. “Carlo and Paolo’s desire to grow is contagious,” says Gianni Consonni. “We are all swept up in their dynamism, which spurs us to be very demanding, demanding of ourselves, first and foremost. We are never satisfied, we keep looking for a better solution.”

“You must draw a lesson even from negative experiences,” emphasize Carlo and Paolo, strong group motivators. “This is the only way to transform something negative into something positive. There is an enormous market before us, if you miss one chance another always opens up, maybe one you hadn’t even imagined but in the end it may turn out to be even better than the one you missed.”

Everyone makes progress together in Seregno. “Those who work with us have to like it here and do well – no, they have to continually improve,” dictates Paolo. “Our industrial strategy grows out of this objective: on the one hand efficient and effective organization and technology, on the other, a focus on people, a spirit of sharing.” This energizing atmosphere is palpable from the outside. If customers are charmed by Carlo’s overflowing energy, suppliers and partners are taken by his brother’s resoluteness.

“Our desire to engender empathy and forge synergies does not end



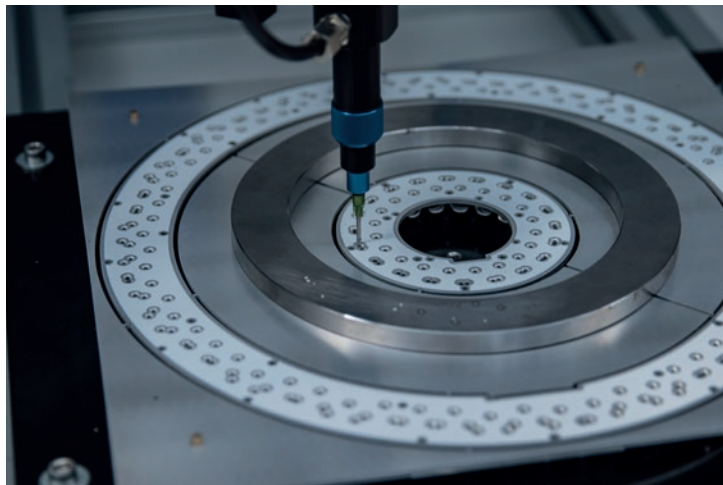
in the sales department,” explain the Longoni brothers. “It begins earlier, in the product conception and manufacturing phases. The work we do with universities and all our external collaborators is guided by the same intent: work as a team. We try to cultivate relations marked by trust and cooperation with everyone.”

Success smiles upon the bold

Working in tandem, Carlo and Paolo immediately formed a perfect duo and at the turn of the new millennium piloted yet another transformation in production and sales policies to keep in step with the times. The first thing was a renewal of the dialogue, initiated by their father, between the business and the academic communities, between the manufacturing world and the research lab. The search for new collaborations led to relations with a team of professionals that brought a number of big names in architecture and design into the RIMSA sphere of action.

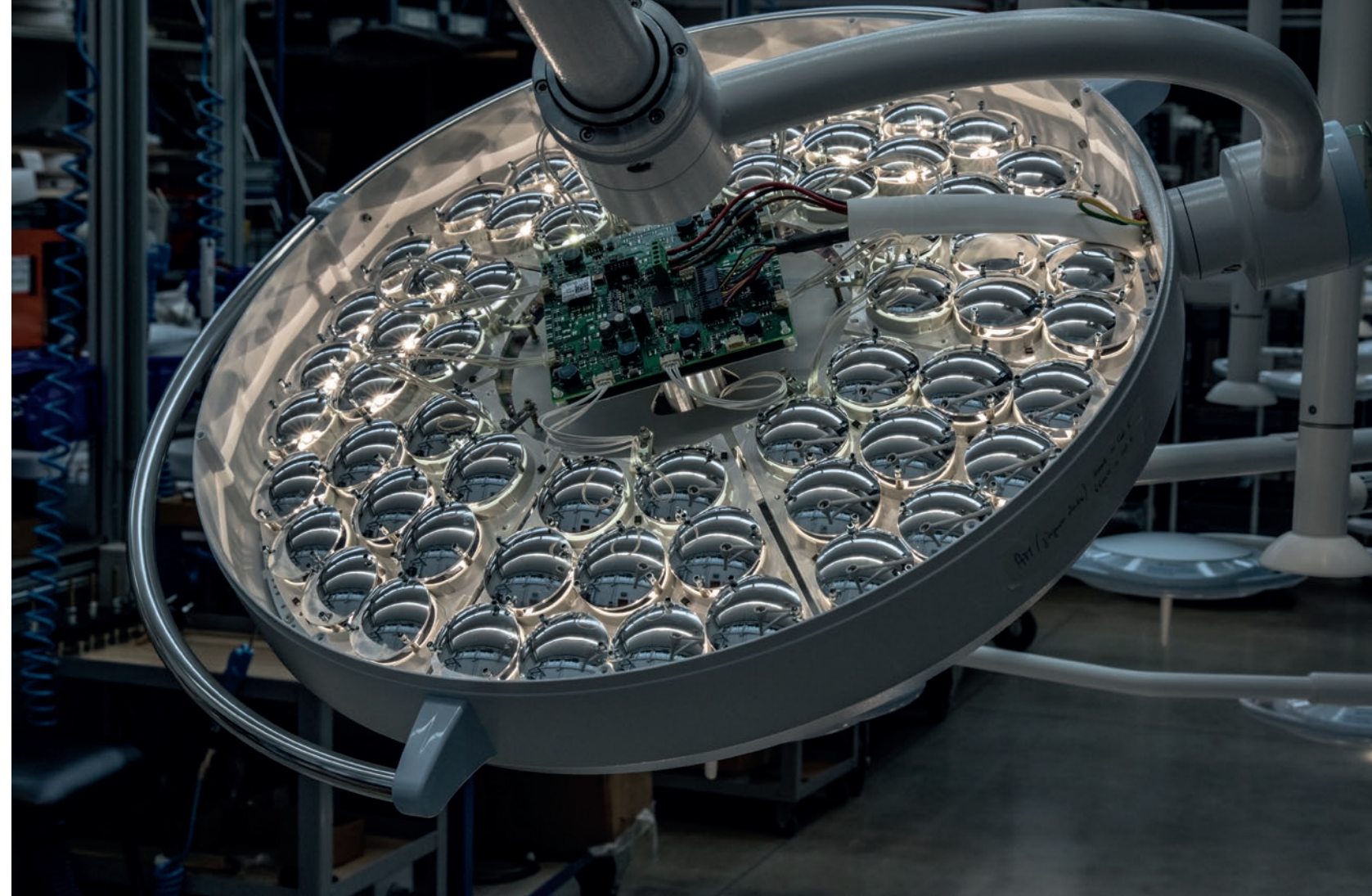
Gaetano kept his hands firmly on the tiller. He observed and approved, sometimes dissenting. At the beginning he had a hard time accepting the addition of new people into the process of designing his products. After all, the company had grown greatly with his recipes. Why rethink everything? And above all, why undertake added costs – such as, for example, the cost of studies to revamp product aesthetics – at a time when the game being played by international competitors was to undercut prices? But Gaetano had always proven to be a man of great intelligence and foresight, and so slowly but surely he learned to recognize the value of his two son’s intuitions and in the end to approve the extra care dedicated to visual design.

Now RIMSA had everything it needed to create something sensational. The time had come again for a bold new venture, to defy obstacles, which principally took the form of limited financial resources. What was needed was a groundbreaking idea that would present a truly revolutionary product to the market, not only new forms.



In 2002, the minds and pencils of the Longonis produced PentaLED, the world’s first LED scalytic lamp. It was the perfect expression of teamwork. The germ must be retraced to a chance encounter. During a business trip to France, Carlo met a person who talked to him about new and powerful LEDs. As soon as he returned home he told his brother, who immediately began to investigate. That spring he learned of a major conference organized to present the new technology. But it was more than a conference, it was a revelation! Suddenly they saw everything in a new light (pun intended!). But let’s take things in order.

Paolo immediately grasped the enormous potentials of the new technology while listening to the conference speakers. The following day he related everything to his brother and father. The challenge was instantly evident. Yes, the objective was truly ambitious: no one on the face of the earth had ever attempted it,



or at least no one had succeeded. Everyone at RIMSA believed in the project. They began by identifying the most effective LEDs and then proceeded with design. It took hours, days, weeks of study and experimentation, test after test. But the more time went by, the more the Longonis were aware of the fact that this was the occasion they had been waiting for. The Seregno factory was about to produce something that no one had seen before. Everyone had to pitch in, the most important thing was to believe in it. Under the watchful eye of his father, Paolo dedicated body and soul to the project, which was transforming into an incredible promise. “Father always said that it was my lamp,” he confides, “but that’s

not exactly the way it was. The thing I developed was still a primordial product, it projected an aberrant light. He was the one to improve it by working directly on the quality of the LED, which at the time was still rather poor.”

Anyone walking along Via Monte Rosa in that period must have seen the sky glowing with the energy bursting from the rooms where the new lamp was taking shape. “At noon, before I went home for lunch, I took a peek in the laboratory,” relates Sergio. “I saw Gaetano and Paolo hunched over prototypes and drawings. They had been there since seven o’clock in the morning. When I returned from lunch they were still there in the exact same position.”



Chapter 4

LIGHT ON IDEAS

The LED revolution starts in Seregno

Pentaled was the fastest project in RIMSA history. The study phase began in early June 2002, the patent dates to September, and the first prototype was presented, with all imaginable pride, at the Medica fair in Düsseldorf in November. The visitors expressed a mixture of admiration and puzzlement: no one yet believed that an operating room could be illuminated without the use of traditional halogen lamps.

Marketing the product turned out to be quite complicated. It would only be a couple of years later, when the market colossi introduced their models, that sales took off. It's called the power of marketing. In other words, what was needed was the advertising power that only large multinationals could muster to convince end users of the value of the new lighting method. "It was not a simple transition," comments Paolo, "but even though we were not the first to market the product, we are nevertheless proud to acknowledge that the giants in the sector recognize our paternity of the use of LED lighting for medical applications."

The Pentaled series has undergone various modifications over the years: models of different sizes were introduced to meet all the various types of applications in the clinical environment, and the lamps were enhanced with such technical features as automatic focus, high-definition video camera, and WiFi connectivity. Furthermore, alternative control systems were added such as remote control via device or wall-mounted screen.

Pentaled

Invented in 1962, for many years LEDs were used only as indicator lights and in seven-segment displays because of their low light output. This problem was still not entirely resolved in the early years of the twenty-first century, but major improvements were in the works and would soon allow widespread use of these small light sources. It was in that period that RIMSA got the idea of using this technology in a medical lamp. This led to the development of Pentaled, its name describing the fact that it is composed of five parabolas. The innovative product conceived in Seregno used lateral emission lighting devices manufactured by Lumiled. These were the only light sources on the market at the time that could offer sufficient lighting power.

2002: Pentaled, the world’s first LED medical lamp

RIMSA

PENTALED

PATENTED

50.000 LUX 5.500K COLD LIGHT

RIMSA USING THE REVOLUTIONARY TECHNOLOGY HIGH POWER LED SOURCE LUXEON, DEVELOPED PENTALED, THE FIRST SURGICAL LAMP 100% COLD LIGHT.

HALOGEN BULB AND MERCURY LAMP ARE GOING TO BE REPLACED IN A VERY NEAR FUTURE BY LIGHT-EMITTING DIODES (LEDs).



LIGHT EMITTING DIODE (LED)

THE LED IS A SEMICONDUCTOR-BASED LIGHT SOURCE MADE OF THIN LAYERS OF SOLID MATERIAL. IN EACH OF THESE LAYERS THERE ARE DIFFERENT KIND OF ATOMS, WHICH FORM TOGETHER AN IRREGULAR GRID. IN ONE OF THOSE LAYERS (N-LAYER) SOME ATOMS DO HAVE A FREE ELECTRON. THIS ELECTRON CAN MOVE FREELY THROUGH THE ATOMS. IN THE OTHER LAYER (P-LAYER) THERE IS A SHORTAGE OF ELECTRONS.



WHEN ELECTRICITY IS APPLIED TO A LED THE FREE ELECTRONS MOVE FROM THE N-LAYER TO THE P-LAYER. BECAUSE ELECTRONS CAN ONLY MOVE IN ONE DIRECTION THIS MATERIAL IS CALLED A SEMICONDUCTOR. WHEN A FREE ELECTRON ENTERS A 'HOLE' INSIDE THE P-LAYER ENERGY IS GENERATED. THIS GENERATED ENERGY IS LIGHT.

THE COLOR OF THE LIGHT IS BASED UPON THE TYPE OF ATOMS AND THE WAY THEY ARE ORGANIZED. THE COMBINATION OF INDIUM, GALLIUM AND NITRIDE (INSGAN) MAKES IT POSSIBLE TO



Plastic Lens
Silicone Encapsulant
InGaAl Semiconductor Flip Chip
Solder Connection
Silicon Sub-mount Chip with ESD Protection
Heatsink Slug
Gold Wire
Cathode Lead

ADVANTAGES

- IR FREE • UV FREE • FULL DIMMING WITHOUT COLOUR VARIATION • INSTANT "ON" AT FULL BRIGHTNESS AND COLOUR
- LOW VOLTAGE EMPLOY • 5500 K
- 50.000 LUX AT 1 MT. WITH ONLY NO.5 x 5W LEDs • ALUMINIUM

HORIZONTAL ARM, EASY TO INSTALL
LIGHT MOVEMENT • CONTROL PANEL
WITH SWITCH AND LIGHT REGULATION
FUNCTIONS • CRI 75 • LUXEON V
ESTIMABLE LIFETIME 1000 HOURS WITH
VERY LIMITED DEGRADATION

LUXEON V WITH 5 WATTS OF POWER IN WHITE AS A LONG-LIFE VERSION IS UNDER RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT TO INCREASE ITS LIFE AND CRI PERFORMANCES.

WHITE HIGH POWER LED LIGHT IS FREE FROM UV AND IR. THE COLOUR RENDERING INDEX (CRI), LUMINOUS FLUX AND EFFICACY OF HIGH POWER LEDSHAVE IMPROVED SIGNIFICANTLY IN THE LAST 10 YEARS. IN ADDITION, THE INTRINSIC ELECTRONIC CHARACTERISTICS OF LEDs ARE LOW FOR FULL DIMMING WITHOUT COLOUR VARIATION, INSTANT "ON" AT FULL BRIGHTNESS AND COLOUR, DYNAMIC COLOUR CHANGING. ADDITIONALLY, HIGH POWER LEDs ARE EXTREMELY ROBUST AND RESISTANT TO VIBRATION AND SHOCK, SO THEY WILL NOT BREAK OR BURN.



Ministero dello Sviluppo Economico
D.G.P.P.C.
Ufficio Italiano Brevetti e Marchi

ATTESTATO DI BREVETTO PER INVENZIONE INDUSTRIALE

N. 0001340084

Il presente brevetto viene concesso per l'invenzione della domanda sotto specificata:

num. domanda	anno	C.C.I.A.A.	data pres. domanda	classifica
002026	2002	MILANO	24/09/2002	F21V

TITOLARE/I RIMSA P. LONGONI S.R.L. SEREGNO (MI)

MANDATARIO PETRUZZIELLO ALDO

INDIRIZZO RACHELI & C. S.P.A. VIALE S. MICHELE DEL CARSO 4 20144 MILANO

TITOLO LAMPADA SCIALITICA CON SORGENTE LUMINOSA A LED.

INVENTORE/I LONGONI PAOLO

The basic idea, the very essence of the lamp, i.e. the non-direct light reflecting off the parabola, has never been modified. “This characteristic,” says Paolo, “designed with the simple purpose of eliminating glare and ensuring greater comfort to the user, is found in all models. Beyond a shadow of a doubt it affirms our uniqueness.” The principle found concrete expression in the use of a precisely calculated ellipse to reflect all of the light emitted by the LEDs to one point on the operating table. This brings numerous appreciable benefits: glare is eliminated, the lighting is three dimensional, shadows are attenuated, and the illuminated area is circumscribed, preventing uncontrolled zones of light.

“When I am at trade fairs I walk around looking at the products of others,” comments Andrea Uccelli, “and I often find the quality of the light unpleasant. This never happens with our lamps.”

A direct lighting system is simpler to produce because it doesn’t require any studies of optics and light reflection. It is thus also cheaper to manufacture. However, direct lighting does not offer the characteristics and advantages of indirect lighting. In addition to providing a cool, comfortable light with depth – which are essential features given that the surgeon is constantly interacting with the device during the operation – the Pentaled also saves energy. While not having a significant impact on the overall operating costs of a clinic or hospital, it does mean lower temperature in the dome where the lamp is mounted. This means that the LEDs will be reliable for a much longer period of time with respect to other light sources.

RIMSA has never sought shortcuts. Maximum quality and innovation have always been the overriding goals. The choice of indirect lighting was not the simplest route, but it was certainly the most valid.

Paolo rejects any question of genetics, but one thing is clear: for at least three generations the Longonis have dedicated themselves to hard-driving research. “The chance to breathe a certain atmosphere may have helped, but the results we have achieved – whether few or many, ordinary or sensational – are exclusively the result of dedication. Any other speculation only serves to feed myths.” The sobriety of the owners is shared by employees, who limit themselves to terse comments, like Pietro and Andrea: “Carlo and Paolo inherited intelligence and tenacity as well as a great, great desire to grow and improve.”

The design phase



Heart in Brianza, gaze on the world

In addition to winning them enviable primacy, Pentaed provided RIMSA with a high level of international visibility and brought about deep changes in company strategy. “Instead of having to keep up with the new products introduced by our competitors,” says Carlo, “we found ourselves in a leadership position, which we were able to leverage to expand the portfolio of accessories in our catalogue and press ahead with refining the aesthetics and design of our products.”

In 2005 the headquarters were expanded once again to achieve their current dimensions, and a further impulse was given to the internationalization effort. The production space grew, the market expanded, but the attitudes in Seregno remained unchanged. Single-mindedness and a desire to work, even on holidays if necessary. Their heart in Seregno and their gaze fixed on the world.

The commercial department increased its intercontinental travel schedule, succeeding in laying the groundwork for commercial relations that now extend to ninety countries. RIMSA’s strong suit became customization. Thanks to intense and fruitful dialogue between the design office, the production department, and the sales department, the company was able to offer each customer tailor-made solutions, even to build dedicated models. This was seen as a necessity by the commercial office. The designers accepted it quite willingly, embracing the customization policy as an ongoing test. The two departments still reckon with one another, almost challenging each other, but both pull in the same direction. Where the marketing department requests individual, dedicated solutions, the designers come up with equally innovative responses, more con-



cerned with the tiniest details than with economics. At that point it is up to the commercial staff to develop appropriate sales strategies to illustrate the uncompromising quality of the product.

“We are still a small business if compared to certain international giants,” comments Andrea Uccelli, “but it is precisely thanks to this characteristic that we are able to monitor the appeal of our lamps among our customers. Those among us who have direct contact with the market keep their feelers out and immediately refer any customer comments to the designers. That way we are able to intervene promptly to bring any needed improvements.”

Pietro Tagliabue adds, “We must also not forget that there are very few companies that start from raw materials and build their products from beginning to end. Many of our competitors do nothing more than to assemble pieces manufactured elsewhere.”

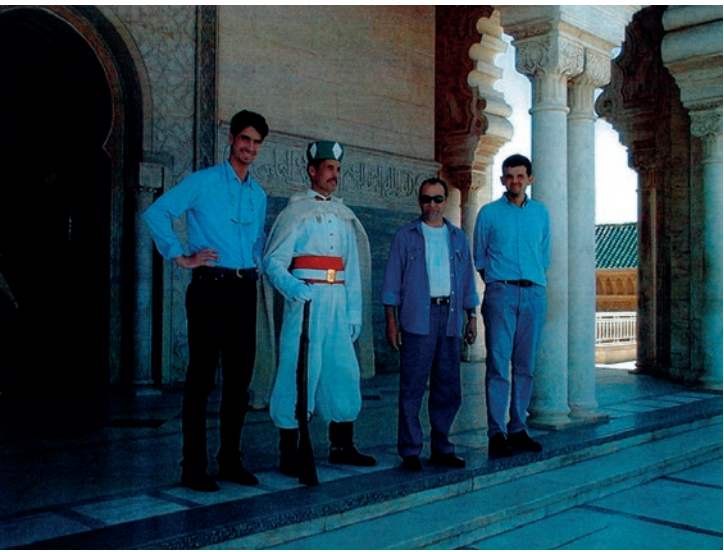
In January 2008, the newspaper Corriere della Sera published a large feature dedicated to Italian small and medium businesses that have built their success on technological research. RIMSA stands out among the stories they tell. The company is presented as “a Brianza enterprise that has created a sort of revolution in the medical field by introducing LED illumination.”

However, the people in Seregno have always avoided the lime-light. Flattering stories in the news fill them with pride, but do not distract them from the primary objective, which is that of con-



tinually improving the product portfolio. Many improved features have been introduced thanks to direct experience in the operating rooms, long and regular discussions with doctors and surgeons, and also observing surgical procedures first-hand. “They are invasive but very useful experiences,” explains Paolo. “Observing the use of one of our lamps in practice helps us understand what could be modified, especially regarding ergonomics.”

After RIMSA entered the scialytic lamps market, they have always sought direct contact with healthcare facilities and professionals. The oldest on the staff still remember the trepidation when the first A300 was installed in the operating room at the Giussano hospital or when the Stellare was installed in the birthing room in Carate Brianza.



Pentaled 12

The people at the Seregno factory have never stopped working hard and innovating their products. Over the years, more attention was dedicated to aesthetic design in the growing conviction that, as well as being a technically excellent product, the lamps also had to have an attractive form. The technical design process for the Pentaled 12 lamp began in 2008 with a prototype exhibited at the Medica fair the following year. It was the first product RIMSA had made using thermoplastics, which threw open the doors to the U.S. market.

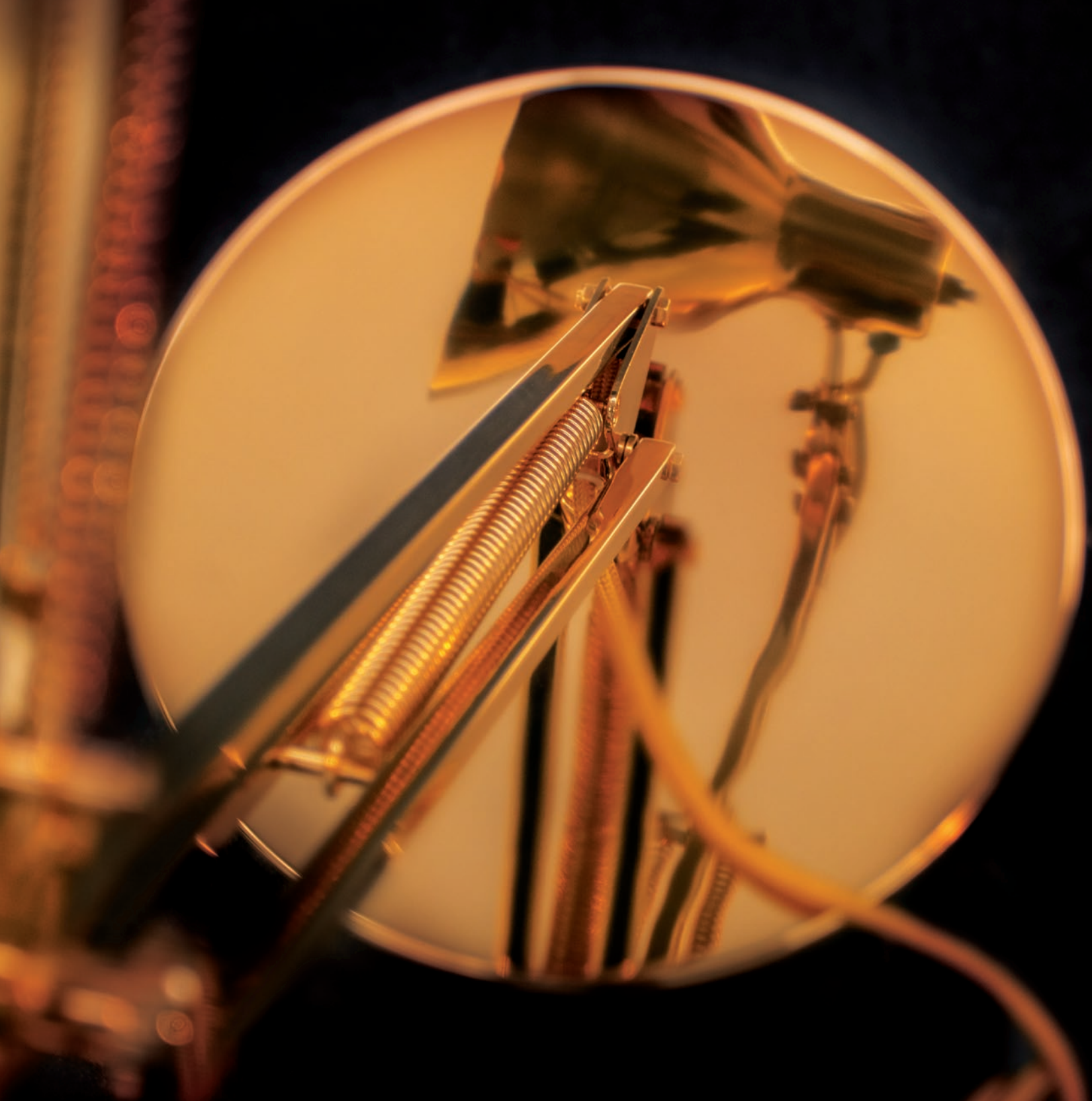


The company was leavened in the warmth of the family's hands and grew in strength thanks to the synergy and empathy developed with suppliers and customers. Relations with the latter often became friendships, going beyond the purely professional. "In any human activity, including business, human relations are a determining factor," says Carlo. "Father taught us to make each meeting a pleasant encounter. Still today, when a customer comes to visit, we make every effort to be hospitable. We know we offer excellent products, but we also want our customers to return to their countries with fond memories of all of us and of Italy generally. And so we never forget to take them on some pleasure tour so that they can become acquainted with the things of beauty in the area around Seregno: Milan, Monza, Lake Como. These are the moments when we consolidate our relations and create the premises for an ongoing partnership based on reciprocal knowledge and respect."

Even when they are traveling the world and thus playing the role of guests, Carlo and Paolo never belie the seriousness of their entrepreneurial tradition, but they also appreciate the convivial aspects of the encounters. "Whether we are in Japan, Cuba, or Mexico, we are always curious to become acquainted with the local customs and traditions, and we bring elements of our own culture to enliven the exchange of knowledge. And we're not putting on an act, that's the way we are naturally. We are happy to embrace all the occasions of this nature offered in our line of work."

The episode of the "golden lamp" is a clear example of their way of interpreting their role as entrepreneurs. "We were invited to Tokyo for a party celebrating the 60th anniversary of Tokibo Japan, an important retailer selling our products," recounts Carlo.





“We did not want to present ourselves with an impersonal gift. And so we had a glass plate made featuring an heron whose wings transform into the colors of the Japanese and Italian flags, and a lamp completely immersed in a gold-plating bath. We made three of these: one for the owner of Tokibo, Mr. Sata, one for our showroom, and the third for the desk of my son, Glauco.”

The pleasure of sharing

The convivial nature of the company is a trait that has distinguished RIMSA's way of doing business since its inception. It grew stronger under Gaetano's leadership and continues to guide the actions of Carlo and Paolo. But it is more an ethical stance than a managerial choice. In Seregno know-how is also developed through empathy, interest in listening to the other, a sensitivity for the interlocutor so that you can understand their needs and experience and find a way to link your way of operating with theirs.

The pleasure of sharing experiences finds expression both in internal company dynamics and in external relations. One of the time-honored traditions is dinners to celebrate important anniversaries: 25, 30, 40, or 50 years of work at the company. And extraordinary events have also been organized, such as the celebration of RIMSA's 80th anniversary in 2016 with all employees invited to the Formula One Grand Prix in Monza.

Special attention is also dedicated to relations with customers, with whom the Longoni family forges harmonious relationships. Many memories have accumulated over the decades of work, with some more recent episodes immortalized in photos. Sometimes work relations give birth to genuine friendships, as expressed in the invitation to Carlo and his wife to take part in a surprise party in Lima, Peru to celebrate the 60th birthday of Felix, an important Peruvian customer.

Their visitors, the Longonis are hospitable and generous hosts. When Avic, who lives in Manila, the capital of the Philippines, was on a business trip to Seregno, he did not miss the chance to take in some of the beautiful Lombard landscapes. They took him to



Bellagio, where he was particularly struck by the magnificent panorama and by the unique atmosphere of the gardens at Villa Melzi. Two French customers, the Bourbons, husband and wife, were taken on a tour of the local points of beauty: first the city of Milan, with its famous monuments and elegant avenues, and then the enchantment of Lake Como. During a boat outing, an unexpected wave splashed Dany, the wife. Although she took it all in good humor, as soon as everyone disembarked in Como, Carlo insisted on buying her a new dress—Made in Italy, of course!



Tests of character

Among the many collaborations enriching the history of RIMSA, one of the most fruitful was unquestionably the work done with the University of Padua, which has brought satisfaction to both parties since 2010 and has allowed RIMSA to hone its competitive edge. “I was visiting an electronics fair,” recalls Carlo, “when I saw a light analyzer at the university’s stand. I talked about it with Paolo. We needed an in-depth study of the lighting controller, color index, and the illumination curve of one of our lamps.” The fear, as usual, regarded cost. “We discussed the issue with several researchers and were able to find a way around the financial obstacle.” And fate also played a role here, because sales of the Pentaled 12 lamp were taking off in the United States, ensuring the financial resources needed to fund the project.

“We are the only Italian company that produces lamps for operating rooms. In the whole world there are only about fifteen manufacturers,” explains Carlo. “Our main competitors are U.S. and German multinationals. Our history has a bit of the David and Goliath story to it. The cooperation with the University of Padua, which boasts incontestable qualifications and history, paved the way for a significant leap ahead.”

Paolo confirms the benefits of the partnership: “The previous attempts to establish relations with other universities, some closer to us geographically, failed because of excessive bureaucracy. In this case, we managed to find a way to work together effectively and it has borne a great deal of fruit. The commitment of the engineers Nicola Trivellin and Diego Barbisan and their collaborators, combined with our competencies, has made it possible to achieve



excellent results in developing tailor-made instruments.”

In March 2012, Gaetano Longoni passed away. He was 74. He had spent most of his years bringing prosperity and growth to the company his father had founded. It was an immense loss for everyone. “He was an extraordinary person,” recalls Giovanni. “He had a keen gaze that at times was intimidating. But he had a truly big heart, we all owe him a great debt.”

He always sought to dialogue with everyone, he always sought a meeting of minds, never a confrontation. One of the most moving memories was related by Sergio. “I started working on my own in the 1980s; practically speaking I was an outsourcer for RIMSA. Mr. Gaetano gave me the courage to take that step by telling me: ‘If you ever want to come back, you will always find the door open.’ Twenty-five years later I presented myself again on Via Monte Rosa and he repeated the same phrase. And then, without adding much, he turned to Carlo and said: ‘Prepare all of the necessary documents, Mr. Bonfanti is going to be back with us starting Monday.’”

There is also a note of transport in the words of Giovanni: “I will never forget the kindness and help he gave me both when I needed medical care and when I decided to buy a house.”

This spirit of solidarity never failed, even in the sadder moments that are inevitable in the life of every family. Every employee still has a vivid memory of Maurizio Mariani, who died when he was only 48 years old after having spent more than half his life with



RIMSA. During Maurizio’s illness, Gaetano left the factory at six in the evening to go spend time with him in the hospital. And after his premature death, he kept a photo of Maurizio in his office, as if he had been a son. On the day of his funeral, Gaetano saluted him like this: *Dear Maurizio, after so much time spent together, we could not fail to heed your entreaty not to leave you alone.* “It was a tough blow for all of us,” adds Gianni Consonni. But the strength of character always triumphed, even in moments of misfortune.

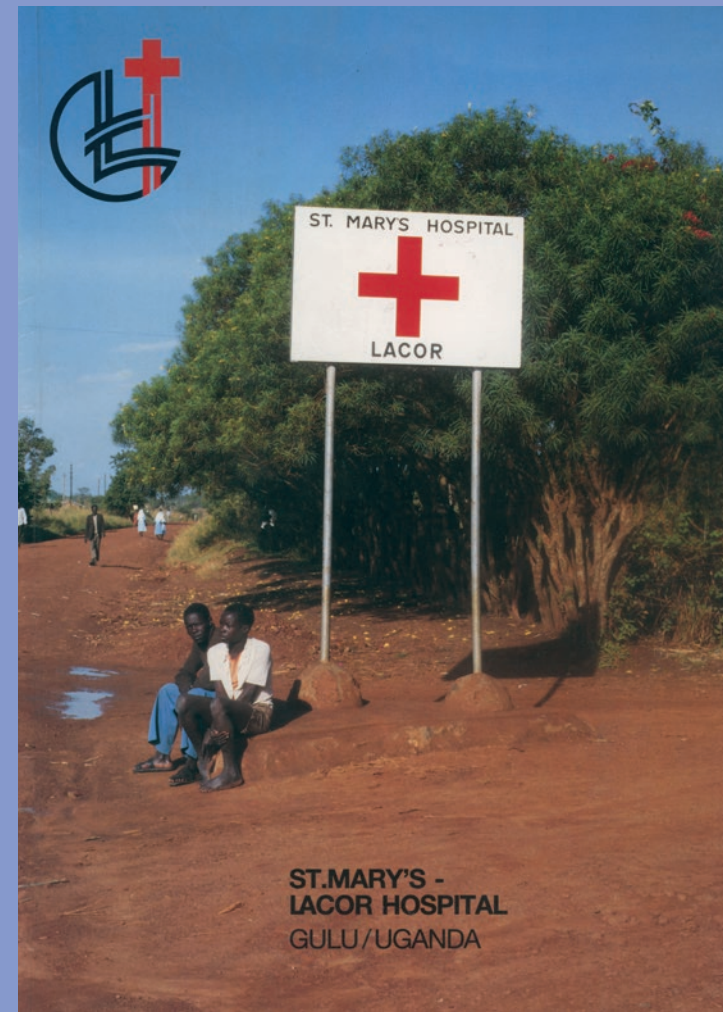


Social responsibility: protagonists within and without

Corporate social responsibility is a major theme nowadays. The business community is increasingly concerned with and responsive to issues affecting the collectivity. RIMSA can boast a very solid tradition in this regard. The Seregno company has implemented a truly great number of initiatives outside of its production facilities. They range from sports to healthcare services, and all of them were undertaken with the intention of strengthening the bond with the local area, of which the company is an expression, or of offering help to those in need. In the early years of the company, its social commitment was closely intertwined with the family spirit that has always animated it. A prominent example is the creation in 1976 of a company cross-country team to compete in races in Brianza. Trained by Gianni Consonni, the team included not only employees but also their family members. More than a quest for glory, it was a desire to enjoy moments of recreation and being together that inspired the team of runners. But that does not mean that there were not some quite respectable performances, thanks particularly to Viviana Frigerio's husband, Mauro Ballerini.

Staying on the subject of sports, RIMSA was also one of the most faithful supports of *Courir pour la Paix*, an amateur French bicycle race whose name (*Riding for Peace*) already expresses the main mission: affirm the universal value of peace. The event was promoted by a Japanese man businessman who later became a RIMSA customer. He wanted to spread the cult of a statuette of the Madonna found in 1945 among the rubble from the atomic blast that devastated Nagasaki. Renowned cyclists such as Francesco Moser and Bernard Hinault have taken part in the event.

Another important page in the Longoni family's social commitment is the support offered to Piero Corti, from Besana in Brianza, and his Canadian wife, Lucille Teasdale. Piero is the brother of Eugenio Corti, author of the epic novel *Il cavallo rosso* (*The Red Horse*), a dense, partially fictionalized account of the events that shook the world between 1940 and 1974. Both physicians, Piero and Lucille practiced their profession for many years in Kampala, Uganda, during the years of a bloody civil war whose dramatic effects persist to this day. Thanks to the donations from Italy, Piero and Lucille were able to help many men, women, and children. The Gruppo Solidarietà Africa, an association based in Seregno under the leadership of Paolo Viganò, chief of infectious diseases at the hospital of Legnano, is another beneficiary of RIMSA funding.



Another medical initiative benefiting from RIMSA's generosity – this time in Italy, in Monza to be exact – is the project “Dai! Costruiamolo insieme!” (Come on! Let's build it together!), a project promoted by the Maria Letizia Verga Committee to build a new center near the San Gerardo Hospital dedicated to research and treatment of childhood leukemia. Carlo and Paolo Longoni, together with their mother, Augusta Cogliati, and their sister, Anna Longoni, contributed to the construction of a fully equipped room for blood donors. Located in the area dedicated to outpatient care, the center was named after Gaetano Longoni. The Maria Letizia Verga Center, an example of excellence in Lombardy, Italy and the

world, built through synergy between the private and public sectors, was inaugurated on April 18, 2015. It consists of four aboveground floors for a total floor area of 7,700 square meters. It houses the world's largest research center on childhood leukemia and blood diseases, a new center for bone marrow transplants, an inpatient ward with single rooms, an outpatient facility, a reception area, and common areas to improve the quality of life of the patients and their families during treatment and inpatient care.



In the name of the Fathers

The RIMSA story has a clear religious undercurrent that is glimpsed in gestures and relations. The Longoni family has always had a very clear idea of the importance of being part of a broader community that encourages each individual along his or her path. At the most delicate junctures they were never without the comfort of a wise word or a genuine communion of spirits.

In the 1940s and '50s, Palmino could count on the support of Monsignor Enrico Ratti, the former parson of Seregno in the first half of the twentieth century, in addressing the thorny issue of the property loss in Albania as a result of the war. In 1964 Palmino gave a pantograph lamp to Pope Paul VI as a gift.

Gaetano was particularly inclined to building a bridge between the human experience and a spiritual dimension. This quest was centered on his desire to create an enterprise where people could both hone their intelligence and cultivate their souls.

The search for God was seen by every generation of the Longonis as the only path that can lead to personal wholeness. The family has always been accompanied on their spiritual path by caring and faithful men of the cloth. We have already mentioned father Mariano Ambrosini. His friendship with Gaetano was distinguished by a spontaneous spirit of brotherhood, the two providing mutual spiritual and personal support. Although he spent much of time at his mission in Mexico, father Mariano was a long-term traveling companion on the family's and the company's path. It was he who celebrated Paolo's wedding. Years before that, Carlo and his wife had visited his mission on their honeymoon. Father Mariano provided spiritual support also in the more difficult moments: he



said Mass on company premises in memory of Maurizio Mariani, who died at an early age after many years of work at RIMSA, and to commemorate the mothers of two long-time employees, Gianni Consonni and Ettore Cobelli. After Gaetano passed away, father Mariano's closeness brought consolation and encouragement to the family and the entire staff of RIMSA.

Another priest who maintained close relations with the Longonis is don Lino Magni, parson of Santa Valeria for over thirty years. He saw the company grow and prosper since the late 1970s. He too was a steadfast spiritual guide in daily life, and all the more so in moments of grief.

The most recent episode evoking the climate in which the company story has developed dates to February 2016, when monsignor Patrizio Garascia, the local episcopal vicar, visited the factory after choosing RIMSA as the ideal representative of the industrial fabric of Seregno.



N. 101		Mons. Patrizio Garascia									
nome		20/26									
mese		FEBBRAIO									
giorni	mattino		pomeriggio		registrazione		data	ore	temperatura	vento	altitudine
	entrata	uscita	entrata	uscita	extra	data					
	1	2	3	4	5	6					
	7	8	9	10	11	12					
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20				

The only choice is to lead

Carlo and Paolo now found themselves alone at the helm of RIMSA. By then they both had acquired rich and varied experience and could count on the support of many loyal traveling companions who were the keepers of the company history, and younger employees who had grown and developed in the company womb. However, Gaetano had been the face and the soul of the company for the past five decades. Going on without him demanded strength of character and undaunted determination. They received enormous support from the entire staff, who demonstrated their unbreakable bond with the company.

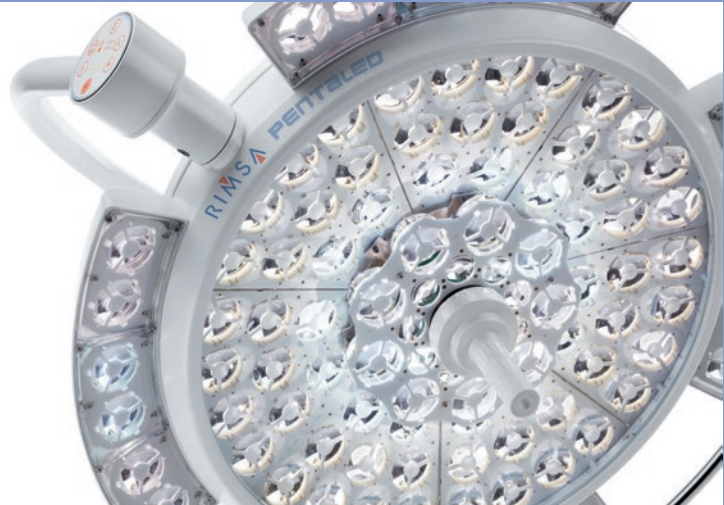
Everything was in order, they were ready to chart the near future. They had to show the markets that there were no tremors running through the company, no one need fear sudden upheaval. RIMSA embarked on new challenges in the hands of the third generation. They faced a task that was anything but easy, as is always the case when one has to measure oneself against a man who had written the lion's share of the history of his company. They knew this, but they faced the challenge with an easy mind, because they knew they had an extra weapon in their armamentarium, and it was precisely one passed on to them by their father: style. "We have to carry on what he was doing," they continually told each other, nourished by their many years of intimate engagement in the company works.

But they immediately had to get to work to address a daunting issue. Everyone had known for some time that the PentaLED series, in spite of continual improvements and developments, could not go on satisfying the needs of a shifting market forever.



The PentaLED and PrimaLED series

Inaugurated in 2002, the PentaLED series continued to be enriched with new models. With the 81, 30E and 105, the top of the line, extremely high levels of performance were achieved in an incredible lightweight and visually elegant product. Tris-LED, PentaLED 12 and 28 ensured unparalleled performance in out-patient facilities and for minor surgery. Saturno-LED, PrimaLED, and the Observa line provided an excellent response to the needs for clinical observation.



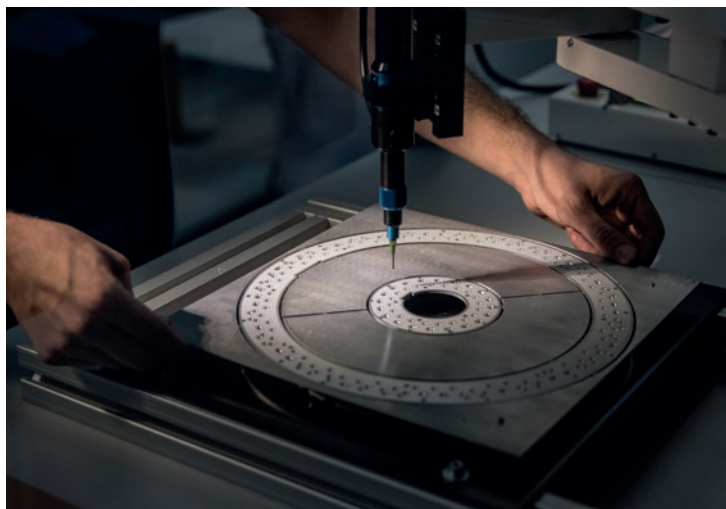
In Seregno the decision was made to embark on a new model. Again the bar was raised. PentaLED was an exemplary line in many respects, but there was a lot of handwork in the production process, which made it very complex. Now the search was on for a fully industrial solution, without betraying the tradition of indirect light and total quality of construction.

The Longoni brothers decided to address this new challenge in collaboration with the University of Padua, leveraging the friendly relations that they had established. The initial design phase was a parallel, two-pronged effort in the company workshops and the university laboratories. One day Carlo and Paolo got a phone call from Padua: “We need to see you as soon as possible,” said the caller, “we have a solution we want to show you.”

Everyone liked the idea right from the start. “It completely excited us,” explains Paolo. “As soon as we saw it, our first thoughts were of something Father had said: ‘the laws of physics were determined by man, man can make mistakes.’ Without a moment’s hesitation we entrusted them with the task of building a prototype of the new system of illumination.”

Putting the new lamp into full industrial production was not so immediate. Paolo and the other technicians at the Via Monte Rosa facility had to squeeze out every last drop of their design talents to transfer the technology of the prototype into a finished product. There were many problems to solve: from the circuit board to the choice of glass for the dome, from the cooling system to the integrated video camera. While the passage from conception to realization had been exceptionally fast for the PentaLED line, this time serial production demanded a great deal of time. But at RIMSA no one ever gives up. When a problem arises they immediately start

to work on a solution. It is certainly not easy to gain a leadership position, but it is much more difficult to hold it. The members of the third generation know this well. And so, without taking unwarranted risks or shots in the dark, but applying themselves doggedly with a good dose of perspicacity, they again created the conditions for the history of their company to repeat itself according to the proverbial dynamics of progress, consolidation, and new challenges. And all of this with an objective that the Longoni family has never tired of pursuing: produce products of excellence to continue their entrepreneurial adventure as leaders. After long and exhausting effort, in November 2015, they unveiled their new lamp Unica at the Medica fair in Düsseldorf.



Unica

Indirect light, fulcrum of the Pentaled series, is also incorporated into this latest-generation operating-room lamp, featuring “2R” technology, dual reflection light alignment. The light rays pass through an aspherical lens and are projected onto a segmented elliptical mirror, which reflects them onto a second, smooth-surfaced mirror and from there to the operating table. This last beam of reflected light passes through a screen having a precise roughness index that stratifies and aligns the rays. The broad light emission surface and the unbroken circular form of the mirrors provides shadowless light even when more than 75% of the light source is blocked by the surgeon’s body or that of an operating room assistant. Furthermore, Unica is designed to enhance the color index, helping the human eye to distinguish the different types of tissue, thus accelerating the operation itself, reducing fatigue, and enhancing precision.



An unexamined life is not worth living

RIMSA is solidly in the hands of the Longoni family. The company is now able to operate in a complex and highly competitive market thanks to the extensive use of new technologies, modern workshops, and efficient operating procedures. “Being well acquainted with the team spirit between Carlo and Paolo and their desire to develop the ideas inherited from their father,” comments Gianni Consonni, “I believe that RIMSA is destined to grow much more until it becomes one of the finest family-run businesses in Italy, particularly in the field of technological innovation.” Such important achievements can only be achieved through careful management, meaning first of all investments to ensure the ability to create an advanced product that conforms to the trend in user needs. But this is not all it takes to survive on the market and hold a position at the forefront. Nor are cutting-edge equipment and capital the key. And is also not enough to be present throughout all phases of research, development, and production, to care for the product as if it were a living creature. Two things must be added to this, two virtues that have always found at home at RIMSA: intuition and passion.

It was intuition that allowed RIMSA to reinvent itself time after time, from a typewriter repair shop to a factory for pantograph lamps, then industrial lamps – where it continues to be active – and then scialytic lamps, which are now the object of most of the company’s efforts. And then there is passion, but it is almost superfluous to talk about it. Carlo and Paolo do not love the lime-light, they follow in their father’s and grandfather’s footsteps not only at work, but also in their personal lives. They almost seem to reject the idea that there is anything exceptional about their business. They work with passion and want only to be able to go on doing so. Paying attention to every detail, innovating, and seeking

the customer’s satisfaction are all ingrained so deeply into their way of working and living that talking about them seems almost to border on ingenuousness. They almost seem to be wondering: why in the world should a family that does nothing more than to produce lamps for operating rooms arouse such curiosity? The innermost and most minute part of this whole story is kept within the walls of the epic workshop, which has remained virtually unchanged all these years. The pictures hanging on the walls not only retrace a good deal of the company’s history, but also moments in the life of the Longoni family. There are photos from the distant past, photos from Albania, and others that show Gaetano with customers or employees, or in scenes of family life. Sketches and drawings testify to the intuition and creativity that guided Palmino and then his son. “There’s a detail that helps you understand the RIMSA story better,” reveals Carlo’s son Glauco, the fourth generation. “It’s preserved on a sheet of paper on which grandfather wrote: ‘una vita senza ricerca non è degna di essere vissuta’.” The English translation of this famous line uttered by Socrates in Plato’s Apology is “an unexamined life is not worth living”. In the Italian translation the concept of “examining” is captured by the noun “ricerca”, which also may be translated as “research” or “quest”, and the quote was deeply meaningful to Gaetano precisely for this reason. While his quest did involve inner examination, it also extended to outward research, the examination of technical issues to find new solutions. Gaetano lived for this quest, expressed in just a few, lapidary words in Italian that sum up – as Gaetano’s grandson explains – “the spirit, tradition, and essence of RIMSA.”

We often read that Italian companies spend significantly less on research and development than their European and international counterparts. There are various reasons for this, but they can generally be attributed to the size of the companies making up



Italy’s industrial fabric. In most cases they are too small to have the financial resources and farsightedness to invest in their sector, which is an increasingly determining factor in remaining competitive. The RIMSA story is the exception to the rule. Its eighty years of history have been characterized by the common denominator of research, to which Palmino, Gaetano, and now Carlo and Paolo have dedicated themselves with care and passion. Each one has followed his own path, but all along the same trajectory, that which leads from Seregno to the rest of the world, transforming a small workshop into Ricerca Medica Soluzioni Avanzate (Advanced Solutions in Medical Research), the new RIMSA.

There is an invisible thread running through all the phases in the company’s life, uniting Palmino’s outstanding genius to the equally acute but rigorous method introduced by Gaetano and continuing to this day. Each one of these phases has been distinguished by a generation of Longonis, and every passage of the baton has marked a major turning point. The decision to tell this industrial saga is sustained partially by the desire to fulfill a duty of recognition to those who have believed in them and their pioneering intuitions. In Seregno they will go back to designing the future and cultivating new dreams – as they have been doing for eighty years.







A heroic undertaking: RIMSA in cartoons

Maria Silva

RIMSA's commitment to social responsibility has led to a novel way of retelling the salient moments in the life of the company. It all got started during a meeting between Carlo Longoni and Maria Silva, an illustrator from Seregno, daughter of Agostino Silva, pediatrician and vice president of the nonprofit Associazione GSA Onlus, which has been dedicated for years to promoting healthcare initiatives in Africa. Maria received a degree in Illustration and Multimedia Animation from the European Institute of Design (IED) in Milan, and has found a playful way to represent some of the episodes that are emblematic of RIMSA's eighty years of history. The result is four fanciful and amusing cartoons with dynamic lines and lively colors that recount actual events. The first is dedicated to the canine messenger that carried Carla's handwritten memos of telephone calls to her husband, Palmينو, in the workshop. The second narrates the hiring of the young Gianni Consonni, whose face eloquently expresses the astonishment at the opportunity he has just been given. The third features Gaetano at the work table, intent on designing a new lamp in the middle of the night. The last has as its protagonists Carlo and Paolo, who are playfully imitating their grandfather and father, creating their first model, the CP lamp.



The canine messenger
episode narrated on page 21



The first employee
episode narrated on page 28



A night's invention
episode narrated on page 48



Carlo and Paolo's first lamp
episode narrated on page 74



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