

Publication for the
Peening, Blasting,
Cleaning and
Vibratory Finishing
Industries

Separate Print

www.mfn.li

Vol. 23
November
Issue
Year 2022

Publication for the
Peening, Blasting,
Cleaning and
Vibratory Finishing
Industries

Metal Finishing News
INTERNATIONAL
MFN

Distributed in North & South America, Europe and Asia

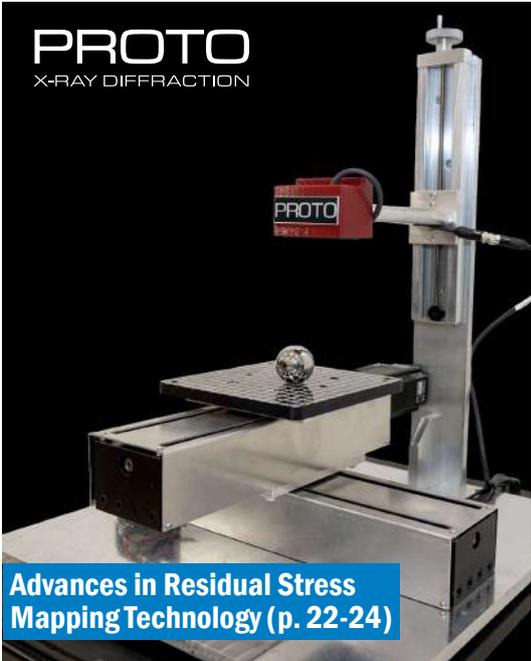
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**Interview With Bill Cousineau,
CEO Americas at Winoa**

**Focus On Customers: Expansion
Projects Are Numerous In America**

winoa

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Focus On Customers: Expansion Projects Are Numerous In America

MFN had the opportunity to talk to Bill Cousineau. Following its development and growth plan in America, focused on the expansion of its offer and on digitalization, we had the opportunity to talk with Bill Cousineau, CEO Americas, to learn more about their projects and strategies.

(?) MFN: Hello Bill, several important projects are in progress in the Americas, can you tell us more?

(!) B. C.: My first year with Winoa has been focused mainly on a reset in the Americas and aligning the Americas with our Global Strategy and other initiatives.

We recently expanded our Offer Agenda with the acquisition of Peerless Metals. This acquisition not only resurrects our manufacturing presence in the USA, it also expands our portfolio into low-carbon and cold-forged steel abrasives. These new product lines, in addition to our well-established high-carbon product line adds key elements to our portfolio, positioning ourselves as Leading Solutions Provider of Innovative Surface Treatment Products, Services and Technologies,

Prior to the acquisition of Peerless, we opened our new Technical Centre in Pittsburgh PA in April. This Technical Centre supports our Customer Focus approach and allows us to test customer parts with the exact equipment and machines they are using today. The Tech Centre gives us a platform to not only demonstrate various solutions for our customers, it is also used for training of our ever-changing customer base as well as our new hires in Technical Sales and Service.

Another key pillar of progress in the past year has been the launch of our Digitalization initiative. Winoa has been a world leader in steel abrasives for more than sixty years. Moving into e-commerce in Brazil and Mexico is quite exciting as it has allowed us to expand our portfolio into other products in addition to our steel abrasives. It has also



Figure 1: Bill Cousineau, CEO Americas at Winoa



Figure 2: Low-Carbon Cast Steel Shot

given our customers confidence that we will continue to be the world leader for decades to come through innovation, creativity and listening to the voice of our customers.

(?) MFN: The acquisition of Peerless is certainly one of the major investments. Why did you acquire Peerless?

(!) B. C.: The acquisition of Peerless was a key element of our Strategic Approach in North America. Not only did it bring a brand-new manufacturing facility in Detroit, Mi but it added to our manufacturing capabilities, allowing us to expand our offering. For me, the acquisition was extremely important as it aligns with our "solutions provider" approach to market.

We are now the only steel abrasive manufacturer in North America capable of manufacturing high-carbon, low-carbon, cold-forged nuggets and strategic blends. The combination of



product lines gives our Technical Team many more options when developing engineered solutions for our customers. We also have to remember that Peerless has been around for six decades as a well-respected supplier of cold-forged nuggets before investing into low-carbon technology. The integration of two leading steel abrasive companies brings additional strength and competitive advantage to Winoa in North America.

(?) MFN: You talk about low-carbon manufacturing. If I'm not mistaken, will this be new to promote low-carbon products for Winoa?

(!) B. C.: You're not mistaken at all, low-carbon manufacturing is most definitely new to Winoa. For now, low carbon will remain a regional strategic initiation in the Americas as we continue to learn more about the benefits and applications of low carbon.

Our Low-Carbon (Bainite) shot has the ideal microstructure for blast cleaning in specific applications. Winoa/Peerless shot is composed of upper and lower case Bainite, with a final hardness of 44-46 Hrc as-cast, with a smooth internal micro-structure, with higher shot-life in many cleaning applications.

These characteristics are especially significant to customers with exacting requirements, such as those in aerospace, rod and bar and other demanding surface preparation applications.



Figure 3: Ultrasoft Shot, metallurgically enhanced soft steel media

« **The Tech Centre gives us a platform to not only demonstrate various solutions for our customers, it is also used for training of our ever changing customer base as well as our new hires in Technical Sales and Service.** »

Bill Cousineau, CEO Americas at Winoa

(?) MFN: Does Peerless manufacture other products that increase your offer?

(!) B. C.: Winoa/Peerless also manufactures cold-forged nuggets. They are a non-SAE air-blast product used in concrete, grout and other applications.

In addition to our cold-forged product line, Peerless also brings Ultra-Soft Shot. Our Ultra-Soft Shot is a metallurgically enhanced soft steel developed for use in abrasive blasting applications where little or no damage or change to the surface can be tolerated. Ultra-Soft Shot can be used in conventional blast cleaning machines, both air-blast and airless, with no equipment changes or special adjustments to the blast machine. Because this media is so very soft, it nearly eliminates wear-and-tear on blast machines and their components. Because Ultra-Soft Shot can be used in standard blast machines, this allows us to mass-finish parts that are now being finished one-at-a-time in an air-blast cabinet.

(?) MFN: You have opened a new technical center in the USA. Can you tell us more?

(!) B. C.: Winoa Americas now offers a full range of abrasive products with an expanded portfolio. The Technical Centre not only allows us to demonstrate the performance of various products/solutions for our customers., but gives us expanded innovation and creativity as well, when designing new solutions for our customers.

The Technical Centre is also the mainstay of our service division, W Care. This includes consultation, optimization, repair and maintenance of surface preparation equipment and processes. W Care is designed to make it easier for customers and users to maintain and improve their surface preparation system & operation.

(?) MFN: In a previous interview, it was mentioned that Winoa was developing



Figure 4: Winoa USA Technical Center Opening Ceremony

online e-commerce sites in Mexico and Brazil to better serve their customers and distributors. What is the situation today?

(!) B. C.: E-commerce is an extremely interesting initiative that allows our customers to choose from an extensive offering of products and services through the convenience of the internet. It's been nearly one year since the launch of e-commerce in Brazil and Mexico. Both regions have recognized a great deal of consumer traffic over that of traditional means of selling. By utilizing several online touchpoints such as social media forums and Google search, we have reached out to niche customers that we wouldn't have been able to contact otherwise.

E-commerce has also provided us with a treasure trove of new customer data. This data is used by our analytical team to help expand our e-commerce offering, optimize the customer journey and finally even better service our customers.

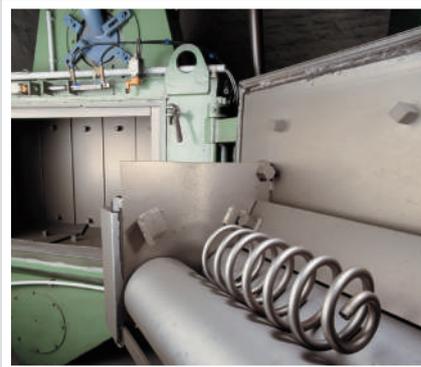
Given the success to date in Brazil and Mexico, the Wino Group is expanding e-commerce into other countries throughout Europe and Asia.

MFN would like to thank Bill Cousineau for this interview!

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