

Robart International supplies them all!

By Ton Rombout

“Our products are robust, durable and user friendly.”

- Robert Luik

Robart International has been a prominent presence at international trade fairs for sign and large format printing worldwide for a long time. You will occasionally come across these machines in the booth of a printer dealer or a factory that produces different types of media that require a rewinder or slitter, at national or international trade shows worldwide.

Winding, rewinding, cutting, slitting are typical buzz words associated with this company, which is based in Zevenhuizen (close to the harbour of Rotterdam). It also has a metal workshop in nearby Waddinxveen where the machines are constructed and assembled. “These products are easy to sell as people immediately recognise what they are and how they could be used within their own working environment to make their converting jobs more efficient and quicker. In regions such as the USA all the machines purchased at a show are sold to customers who bought the machines already. They remain there until they are distributed to the buyer’s premises.”

Heavy, solid, powerful and extremely accurate

A new product added to the existing (for 35 years) assortment of roll slitters and rewinders are the so-called RG-sheeters. “Heavy, solid, powerful and extremely accurate,” as Robert refers to them and again “machine built, with a full twelve month warranty and guaranteed continuous operation.”

The company has a global reputation for various existing quality products such as roll slitters and rewinders (“Dutch workmanship”), with short lines and immediate response to and

from the factory. Robert related that the new RG-Sheeter, which will produce sheets from the roll in exactly the requested length in centimetres/inches/yardage, is the next interesting and extremely useful machine for existing customers. However, it will also appeal to smaller companies that intend to cut HTV rolls for heat transfer directly into A4, A3, A2 sheets or different sizes.

Key data for the RG-Sheeter are as follows:

- * Full HTV roll loaded within seconds.
- * Ergonomic design, easy to position on a workbench.
- * Solid steel construction.
- * Maximum width up to 50cm/19.6”.
- * Electronic display with programmable number of sheets and chosen lengths required.
- * Automatic precision cutting.
- * Perfect for A4/A3/Letter/Yardage sheets.
- * Approximately 15 A4 sheets per minute, 900 sheets per hour.

This is a simple and inexpensive solution that will deliver sheets from your existing stock of Vinyl, Flock, Flex rolls in different widths and can be handled by a single operator.

Slightly changed business model

Robart International is a trusted point of call for most sign distributors and large format printing companies. Robert explained that the company attends a wide range of exhibitions: “Everyone knows us. We always used to distribute leaflets at these fairs and slitting machines could also be seen at stands of, for example, film suppliers. Nowadays, we have our own booth whenever possible or share a partner’s booth to showcase our products.” Robert continued: “Rewinders are mainly sold to distributors of flexible media and slitting machines to companies that supply media to sign makers or to sign makers themselves. With shorter runs becoming ever shorter because of the technological potential offered by new printers, demand for short-run films and other media has increased. If a sign maker wants to buy new stock and likes to be able to deliver customized products, they will require this type of slitting machine to make the necessary cuts with great precision, as well as the RG-sheeter to cut rolls of HTV media mainly for heat transfer to even A4 or A3 sheets. Ultimately that’s what it’s all about - these machines are extremely accurate, reducing the amount of waste to an absolute minimum.”

Potential market for the RG-Sheeter

“Who is going to buy the RG-Sheeter?” I asked Robert. He told me that this market is buoyant,



From left to right Robert and the team that developed the RG-Sheeter and other machines.



The RG-1650 Economic roll slitter.



Side view of the RG-1650V.

because in the Craft market selling for example caps and T-shirts with a specific print is a growing business at the moment, particularly in the USA (Amazon, eBay) and Canada and now also very popular in Europe. The print is applied using a smaller textile printer or heat-press. Many of these companies sell via the internet and can produce on-demand, without requiring a lot of storage space. In fact the sales chain is reversed, i.e. they sell first and then produce. "This implies that they need an RG-sheeter which is able to cut the media into much smaller pieces. We are now seeing that other markets in different parts of the worlds (Europe and Asia) are rapidly catching up with the 'early adopters'. Customization is again a buzz word in this area."

Towards industrial processes

The sale of equipment such as larger rewinders and roll slitters should of course not be forgotten either.

Robert explained: "We have been able to connect slitting machines automatically to unwinders and rewinders since 2011. Nowadays they can be found in countries across the globe, serving diverse foil suppliers and larger sign and wide format print production companies. Some textile manufacturing companies buy their own machines."

He continued: "Latest news is that we now actually built a completely custom made rewinding and slitting unit into a production printer, which we feel is a good example of Industry 4.0, an industrial machine. Markets continue to develop. Although self-adhesive films are still common in the sign market, roll slitters can also cut textile, paper, membranes, PVC banners as well as magnetic, reflective and window films, and much more. Moreover, widths continue to expand, initially from 1500 mm to 1650 mm and 2100 mm, but we can

also cut 3300 mm, which is particularly useful for sail cloth used in tents, trucks, etc. It is clear that cutting is becoming an actual industrial process for sail makers and sign companies."

Robert added: "However, we don't compromise on quality. All our machines are CE standardized and built to our exact specifications."

Robert studied Commercial Economics and joined his father Pieter's company in 2008. He

took on the entire shareholding, becoming Managing Director of Robart International in 2011. Pieter now operates in the background assisting and advising. •

For more information visit: www.robartinternational.nl



The RG-Sheeter is a user friendly, smart machine.

Smart machines