

## Rimini unravelled at popular SIB Show

The SIB Show has given visitors an exclusive insight into the Italian pro audio market, which is growing from strength to strength

**ITALY:** The 20th edition of the biennial SIB International Show of Event & Entertainment Technology was held from March 11th to 14th at Rimini's cutting-edge Expo Centre on the Italian Adriatic, along with the Disma Music Show for the MI trade.

According to figures issued by official auditor ISF (an audited attendance being one of the elements introduced this year), the two events attracted a total of 63,585 visitors, an increase of 2.3% on 2004. Foreign visitors totalled 8,950, a figure described by the organisers as "particularly important, as it strengthened and re-launched the expo's leading role".

Key pro audio trade members gave PSJVE an exclusive insight on Italian products, market trends and where clients are investing.

Three manufacturers explained the changing profile of "Audio Italiano" at home and abroad: Giorgio Biffi (Outline), Arturo Vicari (RCF and dB Technologies) and Mauro Zazzini (FBT), all of whom confirmed that the fall in Italian clients' preference for foreign brands was definitely due to Italian equipment's improved quality:price ratio.

Vicari, who debated TT+ at SIB before he took it Frankfurt (see p46) enthused, "The export situation is even better - in many countries in which we had limited sales, we're now competing with top pro audio brands, often doing even better than we'd forecast. For example, in



Technicians, sound engineers and rental firms are drawn to SIB now that Italian products are making their mark internationally

France, our sales figures in the last year have risen by almost 150%, and in the UK by over 100%. This may be due to the fact that we sold very little previously, but it's also true that quality Italian-made products are much more willingly accepted now."

Biffi added, "Our products are used on high profile events widely covered by international trade press and at SIB 2006 technicians, sound engineers, rental firms and competitors were on our stand to find out more about them for this very reason."

Zazzini said it was an uphill race, but: "In spite of competition from products manufactured by US and European firms in China and an unfavourable dollar exchange rate, last year FBT worldwide export figures rose by 13%."

Both Biffi and Zazzini confirmed

Eastern Europe as their firms' most interesting market at present, while Biffi also confirmed interesting figures in Asia.

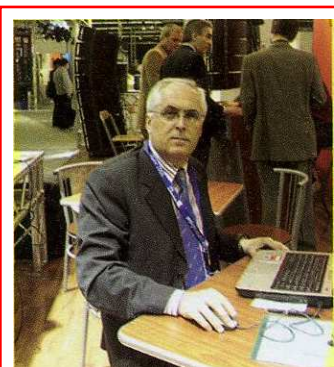
Asked whether if they'd succumbed to the temptation to use Chinese manufacturing facilities, Biffi emphasised that no Outline products are manufactured in China, Vicari stated that, apart from some accessories and metal parts bought in the Far East, all RCF products are Italy-made and, as far as FBT was concerned, Zazzini revealed, "We currently manufacture all our products in Italy, but intend manufacturing some items in China for the MI market, where price is all-important. These, however, won't be marketed under the FBT brand."

Regarding the organisers' decision to keep SIB biennial and in the same

slot in the calendar, but switch over to 'odd' years as of next year, 2007, all three are convinced that the Rimini expo is missing out on an opportunity for a higher profile and that the dates should be changed.

Biffi explained that the reasons for moving SIB to its current March dates no longer exist, "Originally SIB was a club-oriented show and Frankfurt mainly MI. Then, SIB was brought forward from May, because Italian lighting manufacturers weren't able to exploit new products' potential pre-summer sales to clubs and rental firms - this situation has completely changed and both shows now have much the same visitor target."

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Giorgio Biffi of Outline finds competitors visit his stand to find out what's new