

Company



Automation & Robotics (A&R) can be defined as a medium-size company whose principal interest is the customer.

In 1983, Michel Montulet and I, both engineers, began the company by automating processes in the food packaging industry. Hazards of life helped us to enter the ophthalmic market. In collaboration with a Belgian lens manufacturer, we designed the first control & packaging unit for stock lenses.

Since then, the evolution of the company has been rapid: from a cellar to two business units in the Parc Industriel de Lambermont, from 5 people to 85, and from one machine to a complete manufacturing program; dedicated to prescription labs, manufacturers of semi-finished lenses and mass producers.

In a few words, A&R manufactures equipment for the control, pad printing, placement of the glazing block, engraving, packaging, sorting & logistics of lenses. After starting small to perfect its specialized technology, A&R is now proud to count among its customers the biggest names in the ophthalmic market.

More than 280 machines and 290 measuring instruments:

- Installed by our technicians
- Running in production environment, often 24 hours a day
- Efficiently in operation thanks to our After Sales Service

... all over the world.

Is it because of 20 years of hard work? Because of the new millennium? The reason is mysterious, but the results are quite real: we have completely reviewed our look! A new website has been created (the address stays the same: www.ar.be), and we are using new documents and envelopes.

Our wish was to get a refreshed appearance, without radically changing our image. Our logo, which we consider part of our identity, has only gone through a light modernization.

Beyond this new image, you have the same people, with the same common aim: total customer satisfaction, not only with the quality of our machinery and instruments but also the quality of the partnerships we create.

In order to preserve this favoured link, we have decided to edit a yearly newsletter, which will keep you informed about our evolution, our new products, and our participation at events. We also thought it would be of interest to our customers to add a short interview of a professional, to get his point of view on a particular topic, this year: the automation of an edging lab.



A&R Team = 85 qualified people

Various competences:

- Machinery design
- Software programming
- Specialists in optics & lighting systems...

Our new business unit develops vision & robotics systems to control transparent and reflective products in the automotive industry.

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Product news



FOCOVISION SR-2, reference instrument in the ophthalmic industry.

The FOCOVISION SR-2 is used in the production of semi-finished lenses, glass, and metal molds; but also in prescription laboratories to control the incoming semi-finished lenses. It measures the surface optical power by reflection on one point with an exceptional accuracy. The measured value can be expressed in curvature or in diopter.

The FOCOVISION by reflection has become a worldwide reference instrument throughout the ophthalmic industry.



150 Focovision SR running worldwide

High accuracy
Reproducibility
Precise & reproducible lens positioning
Simple & rapid auto calibration
Reliability
Instantaneous



MAIN ADVANTAGES

- High accuracy
(0.01 D for the base power, less than 0.01 D for the residual astigmatism of the instrument)
- Very high reproducibility
- Precise & reproducible lens positioning
- Simple & rapid auto calibration procedure
- Reliability : image quality control & automatic correction of dust effect
- Measurement time : instantaneous

Available in 2003

LENSMAPPER BY REFLECTION – Stand Alone Version and Machinery Version
Cartography of the convex surface of a n organic lens.
Measurement zone : 30 * 40 mm

Launch on the market :
Nov. 2003

INTEREST FOR : semi-finished manufacturers – molds manufacturers

Integration of the THICKNESS MEASUREMENT WITHOUT CONTACT on our machinery.

Launch on the market :
Nov. 2003

INTEREST FOR : high index lenses



Interview

For this first interview, Mr. Helmut Ahn, Sales Director, and myself were very pleased to be hosted by Grand Vision Lab (GVL, previously LRG) in Aubergenville, France; which can be considered one of the biggest edging & mounting labs in Europe. Mr. Paul Daenen, General Director and Mr. Philippe Blard, Manufacturing Director kindly answered our questions.

A&R: Mr. Daenen, could you briefly describe the activities at Grand Vision Lab?

Mr. Daenen: Our philosophy is to offer the best service at the best price. The satisfaction of the final customer is an important value. Every day, we follow our main aim, which is to **respect our obligations** (delivery time, quality, and so on). GVL manufactures RX lenses, adds hard & multi layer anti-reflective coatings and mounts the lenses into frames. Its main customers are La Générale d'Optique (127 shops), Grand Optical, Vision Express..., which are, however, not exclusively bound to GVL. On the other hand, we do not exclude



From left to right : Mr. Bourreau, Mr. Blard, Mr. Daenen, Mr. Ahn

any opening towards other co-operative or franchised opticians.

A&R: Do you think that the European market is ready to follow the American tendency, i.e. the centralization of edging & mounting operations in specialized labs?

Mr. Daenen: In fact, with the instruments available on the market, the "easy" mountings (mineral or organic lenses into classical frames) can be performed by the opticians after an elementary training. Furthermore, in the smaller shops the personnel are often available for this work.

Nevertheless, in larger shops, the sales

function is privileged and they are happy to subcontract this risky operation, especially for expensive lenses, which requires specific equipment and technical know-how (e.g. polycarbonate lenses, drilling ...).

A&R: Are the chains becoming more influential on the current ophthalmic market?

Mr. Daenen: We can distinguish two tendencies: the distribution structure creates its manufacturing structure (such as GVL) or the opposite. It is probably true that the chains will become more dominant on the market in the future.

A&R: Mr. Blard, you have one control & blocking unit (automatic placing of the glazing block) for single vision lenses (type MCBVPU), two control and blocking units for single vision, bifocal & progressive lenses (type MIBVP8) and some Focovision instruments. What are the most important advantages of automation?

Mr. Blard: **Quality, repeatability, precision, feedback.**

Thanks to the automation of our whole process (with A&R machines and automatic cells for edging), we noticed a better quality of the final product as the optical power has been strictly controlled, the block has been



very accurately placed, and our edging robots have also performed their jobs very precisely. In addition, the final jobs (mounted lenses) are checked a last time with the A&R Focovision including frame positioning system (ISO norms), prior to shipping.

The result is: fewer lenses returned by the opticians. The insignificant remaining returns are more due to cosmetic reasons, i.e. more subjective evaluation.

In case of failure in the process, it is more convenient to find its origin, as all data is maintained in the system

A&R: What is your conclusion?

Mr. Blard: Mr. Blard: The automation helped us to **offer the guarantee of a standard.** Thanks to the control of the process, we ensure a stable and continuous production flow, which constitutes an undeniable benefit for our internal organization and for the satisfaction of the final customer.

Sandra Fonticoli



Focovision SPF-1 with frame positioning

Event: MIDO 2003



For the 4th consecutive year, we will take part to the Mido Show in Milan. The decor of our booth has been completely reviewed, but the accustomed visitors should have no concerns they still will be hosted with Belgian beer and snacks!

Back to the main show interest: our machinery. This year, we will focus on fully automatic **identification & blocking unit for single vision, bifocal & progressive lenses**. Used in edging laboratories, this machine inspects the optical & dimensional characteristics and identifies progressive, multifocal & progressive lenses. The progressive lens can then be oriented according to the ink marks or according to the semi-visible marks on the lens and blocked at the boxing center.

Its simplicity, autonomy, and its throughput of 300 lenses per hour make this an invaluable addition to your process.



Also...

DVD display on various machinery

Also...

INSTRUMENTS DEMONSTRATED LIVE

FOCOVISION SR-2

Power measurement by reflection

FOCOVISION SPV-1

Complete manual control station with positioning assistance

FOCOVISION SPF-1

With frame positioning device

FAX-COUPON: + 32 (0) 87 31 04 06

Name :

Company/position :

Address :

City :

Country :

Phone :

Fax :

E-mail :

Please set up an appointment :

Friday, May 2nd

Saturday, May 3rd

Sunday, May 4th

Monday, May 5th

TIME :

Please send us some more information about :

See you on our booth D02 – Hall 17/II !