

“In order to reach our goal we need to start working on the cause and not on the effect.”

GeicoTaikisha's J-Hive system, wins the Surcar 2015 innovation award - a step towards introducing the first energy-neutral paint shop by 2020 By: Jon Knox

An octagonal painting cell that reduces energy consumption by 22% compared to other systems on the market – and which is cheaper to install – has secured a Surcar Innovation Award for GeicoTaikisha for the second year in a row.

The Surcar Shanghai Award for the J-Hive – a “stand-alone low capacity and modular high capacity paint booths a smart and green solution for a lower cost of ownership” was made at the 29th edition of Surcar – an international conference on automotive body finishing. Surcar is the place where the key players are called upon to present, discuss, and evaluate new trends, technologies, and innovations in the car body painting market. In 2014 Geico Taikisha won the Jury and Technique awards at Surcar.

GeicoTaikisha's J-Hive system, which won the 2015 innovation award, is a step towards the company's vision of introducing the first energy-neutral paint shop by June 16, 2020 – what the company calls “Energy Independence Day”. The other two

awards presented at the conference were the Technology Award to BMW, and the Jury's Award to Jaguar Land Rover.

Automotive Industries (AI) asked **Daryush Arabnia, Corporate Vice President of Geico Taikisha**, what winning Surcar awards two years in a row means to the company.

Arabnia: Winning two years in a row makes us extremely proud. It means that the market perceives the value that we can bring. Our main goal is to be a partner for our customers, to be able to answer their needs, also needs that they might not even know they have. The fact that we win these important awards means that we are addressing our clients' needs, and that is the most important aspect for Geico Taikisha.

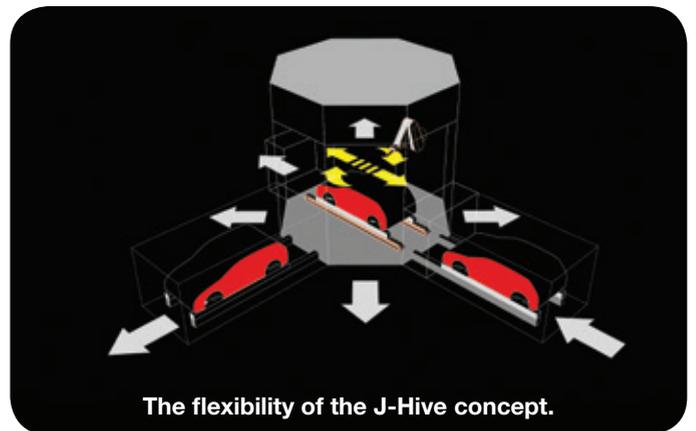
AI: And what does it say about Italian expertise?

Arabnia: Nothing new. Italy has always been a country with a reputation for innovation and adaptation. We are proving that, also in the field of paint shops, Italian people can add a higher value to the clients.

AI: What drives the innovation culture within GeicoTaikisha?



Daryush Arabnia, Corporate Vice President of GeicoTaikisha (left) and Antonio Zaza, Executive Director Sales & Global Key Accounts, with the Surcar Shanghai edition innovation award for “Stand-alone low capacity and modular high capacity paint booth: a smart and green solution for a lower cost of ownership”.



The flexibility of the J-Hive concept.

Arabnia: Our goal is to allow every single member of Geico Taikisha to think as an entrepreneur without the risk of being one. This increases the pride within Geico Taikisha. Every single member looks at Geico Taikisha as their own company and therefore gives their all to improve it.

J-Hive



The J-Hive paint cell is designed for small runs and niche vehicles.

J-Hive is an eight-sided cell designed for painting both the interior and exterior of a car body in one single station with a single painting robot. It is intended for low production lines, niche models, and retouch lines where requirement is that the whole body should be painted using less equipment and a smaller footprint than conventional paint shops.

In order to meet different customer requirements and application processes, J-Hive can be supplied in a various range of configurations. For example, the painting cell can use either solvent or water based paint (Primer, base coat, clear coat). It can also be used for cleaning or measuring.

Layout is flexible, with bodies being able to enter through one part of the hexagon and exit through another. This opens up applications such as using one station for cleaning or measuring, which then feeds two painting lines in order to optimize the production flow.

To save cycle time and improve the up-time of the system, the painting robot is synchronized with a rotating table on which the body is placed. This allows the robot to paint while the body is rotating. Movement can also be stopped to allow the robot access for specialised or intricate applications.

J-Hive can be supplied with different types of scrubbers. Dryspin and Drycar are the widely used ones, and they can be equipped with various systems to assist the filters exchange (manual, semiautomatic or automatic).

AI: What is the next milestone in your journey to Energy Independence Day?

Arabnia: We have been working hard for many years on decreasing the energy demand of the paint plant as much as possible. However, now is the moment to stop and start asking ourselves ‘why are we doing things the way we are doing them?’ In order to reach our goal we need to start working on the cause and not on the effect.

AI: Where can we expect to see breakthroughs?

Arabnia: I believe the great breakthrough will come not from our suppliers, but from the OEMs. The body materials will change, and depending from which materials they will choose, the process will have to adapt. We are already working on a different process in order to be ready once the time comes.

AI: What is the significance of the “Premio Next” award you received at the Best to Brianza Awards 2015?

Arabnia: It was a great honour and an emotional moment for me. However, this award increased my sense of responsibility towards the company and all stakeholders. It is like a new starting point where the final goal is to maintain the continuity of Geico Taikisha, respecting the community around it.

AI then asked Antonio Zaza, Executive Director Sales and Global Key Accounts at Geico Taikisha, what the company is doing to ensure that the technology developed in Italy is available globally.

Zaza: First of all, the technology must be compliant with the legislation in the country in which it is being installed. It must meet the necessary environmental, energy and any other technical

requirements. Geico Taikisha, with its global experience and knowledge, is capable of meeting all the requirements of the client and the regulators. Secondly, the innovative spirit of company is extremely attractive to customers, especially the Chinese, who are always hungry for new technologies.

AI: How well is the company doing in China?

Zaza: Over the past few years Geico Taikisha has built the biggest paint shop in China – the JMC – Ford plant, with two complete lines of paint shop in the same building for different models of passenger cars, SUVs and big commercial vehicles. ~~The most innovative one is QOROS plant and complex paint shop ever built in China and, at that time, in the world.~~ We have subsequently been appointed by FAW and more recently Geely Volvo to install two paint shops – one by the end of 2015, and the other in 2016. The fact that we are signing on new business means that we are doing a good job and that the results are being noticed.

AI: Where do you see the opportunities for future growth?

Zaza: Geico Taikisha’s name is well-known around the world as a reliable and technologically advanced company, which means that new markets are open for us everywhere. Recently we have had some strong successes in the German market. There are also opportunities in the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) countries. Another strong opportunity for the future will definitely be Iran, which has a huge backlog of technology to catch up on, due to the long-running political instability in the country. Of course, the removal of sanctions is a necessary precursor to getting involved. **AI**

