

The Editorial

Ph Francesca Giari

100 YEARS

Giovanni Laviosa

On the occasion of the one hundred years since the founding of Laviosa, my first thoughts go to the people whose lives have intertwined with our company. I have known many of them, some better than others and from many I learned just how much I missed him at the start: My father was a constant example of vision, loyalty, tenacity and courage. I believe a family enterprise must nurture

what comes naturally; the medium-term vision and the rapidity with which it adapts to change – the very guidelines laid down by my father himself. As soon as I started working at Laviosa, I went to France for two years, where a new plant was being built at Portes-lès-Valence. I had no technical skills at the time; I'd studied economy. But with me from Li-

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verno came a small team of technicians: Nedo Giannini and Pierluigi Grossi, without whom my father never made a move on any new plant.

At the workshop in via Galvini, Livorno, were Fabrizio Bernini and Carlo Patricelli.

And with his new wife and toddler, Alessandro Bertini accepted the new job of fitting out the testing laboratory which was indispensable to our production processes.

One evening, as often happened, we were all out to dinner with Giuseppe Carluccio recently arrived from Puglia and his wife-to-be Crisitie, our secretary from Holland.

At one point, Fabrizio Bernini turned to me and with a serious air said, "You know, I reckon you could have a future in this company".

We all laughed but that evening at home I thought about what he had said and often it has come back to me over the years.

It was a humorous way of asking an important question - are you sure you deserve the respect of others given your seamless trajectory in this firm?

Often, I have asked myself that same question and I have endeavoured to merit the responsibility I inherited; being modest helps as does not taking anything for granted.



Ph Biancamaria Monticelli

For Laviosa, the coming years will depend on many things but first and foremost they will depend on the people who live the reality and I am sure that those people will carry us forward, through different contexts but always inspired by values built over time: honesty, belief and courage.

Ph Biancamaria Monticelli





The Editorial Staff

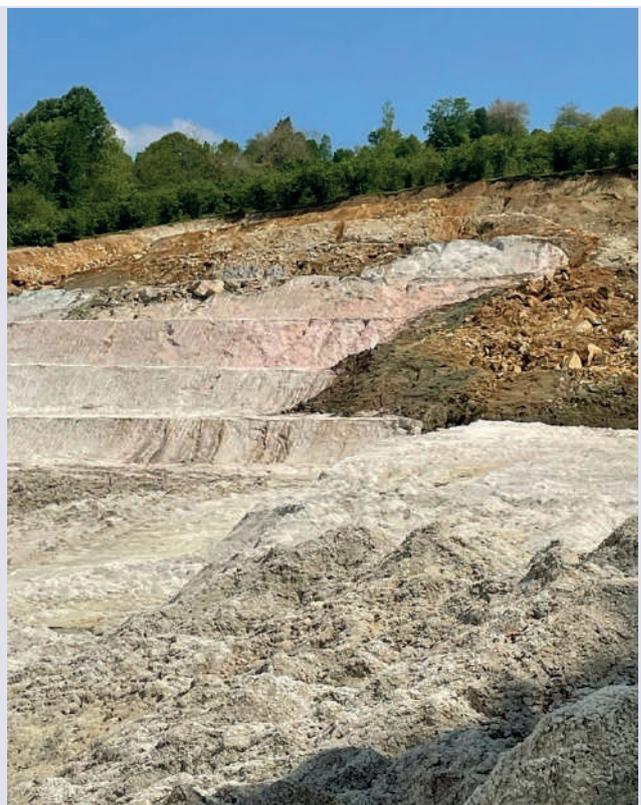
The determination to do

Antonella Alboni

For the 100th birthday of Laviosa, celebrations abound in Livorno and around the globe.

The history: in the 1920s a Genovese family in the maritime business decided to widen the scope of their activity beyond the port of Genoa. The founding member had had 3 children and after handing management of Genovese operations to his first son, he sent the second and third to the ports of La Spezia and Livorno to do the same. Ernesto Laviosa, the third son, settled in Livorno in 1922 where he started maritime operations, later developing the business to include the processing of imported minerals.

This marked the birth of an industrial enterprise which grew thanks to its specialisation in the processing of particular clays called bentonites, destined at that time for use in a variety of industrial sectors. Discovered and developed in the American mid-west as an additive in oil drilling, and later adapted in Germany to the process of moulding cast iron mechanical parts, bentonite became the core business allowing Laviosa to launch and grow its mineral mining and processing activities in countries around the world. The Centenary cannot be a personal celebration. It's a moment which isn't suited to the individual. Celebrating a centenary goes beyond the purely individual, extending into time and between people, it belongs to the collective, to generations and eras. This is how we come to talk about those values which unite different generations, even if they



Ph Mine in Turkey

are rooted in specific epochs: the values of integrity, mutual respect and professional dedication.

Preserving fundamental values becomes even more important in a group which is growing globally and is thus in touch with highly diverse cultures and environments. In just such a context it is essential to define and to uphold those personal fundamental values with determination.

And so the Laviosa Group is celebrating its centenary looking to future generations in the hope that they may build their own future through their work, celebrating those same personal, founding values, understanding them and making them their own.

TO MY YOUNGSTERS

Ingegnere Ernesto Laviosa dedicated affectionate thoughts to those he called his “youngsters”: his son Giovanni and his grandchildren Olimpia, Ernesto, Umberto and Francesco.

Interview: Umberto tells his story

In the following lines,
I invite one of them to speak.

I well remember when, as a child, I would come to see my father and my grandfather Ernesto at the office and sometimes we would visit the plant together. I cannot visualise all the details of the factory tours but I can perfectly remember that the main aim of the day, like managing an important project or receiving a purchase order today, was to get

myself a delicious hot chocolate from the vending machine and pour in a couple of those small, packets of condensed milk, that my grandfather's assistant guarded in a small fridge, in his office.

25 years have passed since then. Now I work alongside my father and my sister and we can count on the passion, ex-

Ph Salvatore Gioia

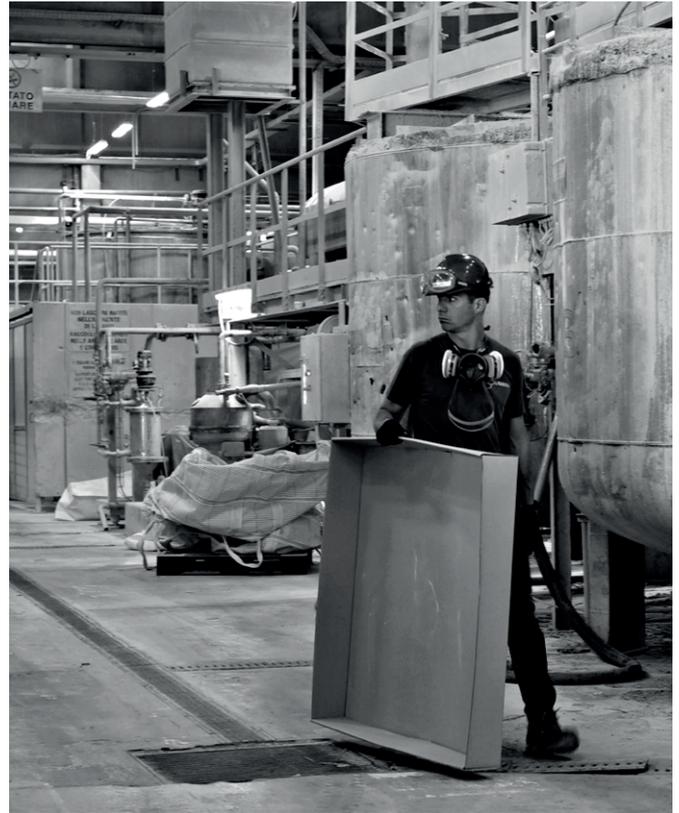


perience and the complementarity of 369 colleagues who have unfailingly supported us in our mission, throughout numerous challenges. We are here today, not only because of our intuition and effort but also and especially thanks to them.

Thanks to our Centenary and to the vision and values my grandfather passed on to my father, which he in turn preserved, nurtured and passed to his own children, I now have the opportunity to share my memories. Investing in the firm is a longstanding, guiding value which we intend to continue in order to ensure that the future of Laviosa is solid.

With the same passion and spirit, to my children and to my children's children I want to offer that delicious hot chocolate, from a more modern, ecological and rapid machine while still admiring the same skies and the same hills and keeping the stars in our sights so as to build an ever stronger and sustainable future, uniting tradition and innovation.

Ph Nelita Specchierla



Ph Simona Moranino



From the Ingegnere's Laviosa to the Dottore's Laviosa

Eugenio Scaramuzzi

One hundred years have passed! A long time; at least 3 generations. We are in fact, coming to the end of the third and beginning the fourth.

I have witnessed nearly one quarter of these years. Years of great transformation, not only of Laviosa but also of the society we live in: we have seen a revolution (and maybe more than one) of how we work and of our customs and social values. I had only just got to know the Ingegnere's Laviosa after a year working under the previous management, when a new partner arrived and a new adventure began with a radical reorganisation led by the group of "forty-something" executives who ran the Dottore's Laviosa.

We had to roll up our sleeves. We did have help.

Top consultants and management advisors were brought in

while at the office we worked with mutual respect and support, constantly adapting the organisation to the different needs that the context imposed.

The list of everything that was done, is long. We would need to go through the archives to reveal everything in detail. Just to give an idea of what change means, I remember that when I started work at Laviosa, we had typewriters in the office which we used with carbon copy paper, telex and fax. Email didn't exist, nor did collaborative electronic agendas, smartphones or social networks. On our desks we had in-trays and out-trays and messages were hand-written and left on a colleague's desk.

And in the warehouse, Scutti was in charge. As he chewed his gum and armed with pen and paper, he would tour the



Ph Archivio Laviosa



Ph Archivio Laviosa

plant before sending out purchase orders. And I remember there being times when we would be "out of stock" – nobody then had ever heard of "just in time." Is this what we might call a "different world"?

Today Laviosa is robust and still growing. Like all successful companies, it keeps a strong hand on the tiller because there are stormy waters ahead driven by the headwinds of social, macro-economic and political change. What's the forecast? Better just batten down the hatches.

We need to look ahead, with new, more sophisticated and proactive technologies on board.

We have entered the era of the meta-verse and cryptocurrency.

I surrender. Dear fourth generation... you have mail!



Ph Stefania Storace

Celebrating the Centenary of Laviosa: a moment of great emotion

Piero Starita

A stream of memories flows from my mind; memories of 36 years of uninterrupted work, intense and consuming; memories enriched with those of the older generation I got to know when I started, added to those of the Ingegnere, in particular of the post-war reconstruction years – the works in via Marco Mastacchi, the construction of the plant in the port area, dreams of the sea view. I remember the experience of Dr. Novelli, the dreams of Dr. Rinaldi, the worries of Mr. Biestro. There are memories of hard times and of great satisfaction. I can remember the enthusiasm of the geologists and the Mediterranean scent of the Sardinian mines, the wildlife, the winter mud and the summer dust.

I was 34, my first daughter had just been born and foundry

was the market of reference for the Laviosa company. Yes, foundry, where the Laviosa name was known and respected throughout national industry from Fiat to Agip.

Bentonite: the name Laviosa is known and respected in the mining sector around the world and it has been so satisfying to hear people from far-flung climbs say "Yes, of course... Laviosa, Italy!"

Then there are the many, many memories of working with Giovanni and the arrival of Eugenio, at a very tough time and slowly, slowly the building of an understanding built on respect and on trust.

I think of our numerous customers who have been a solid asset which Laviosa has been able to rely on.

Ph Nelita Specchierla



And our several suppliers and stories of our solid relations built on shared respect and trust.

There have been many changes too but always going hand in hand with lasting values, people and relations.

And finally there are the many people; it is impossible not to build strong bonds with the people and therefore friends you have worked with over so many years

And there has been so much satisfaction, even joy seeing young people join the company over the years, watching them build their lives through their work with Laviosa. That satisfaction extends to passing on knowledge and building relations.

The Centenary should not be a personal celebration. It's a moment which isn't suited to the individual. Celebrating a centenary goes beyond the purely individual, extending into time and between people, it belongs to the collective, to the generations and the eras of an ever faster evolving world.

This is where the question of values comes in to play, the values that bind generations across diverse historical eras.

Celebrating a centenary may appear to be an act of looking back in time but my wishes are for future generations, that they may find the founding values of Laviosa in their work and professional relations, understand those values and make them their own.



Ph Federica Venturi

Ph Nelita Specchierla



ONE HUNDRED YEARS

Antonella Alboni

These few words speak of events which, when seen in the context of the average length of a human life, demonstrate exceptional character. A centenary touches us more deeply than a millennium.

Our minds relate to things they can reach, rather than to things of a historical, evolutionary or cultural dimension but which are intangible and beyond the realms of hope.

We can all hope to live to one hundred years of age, yet nobody in their right mind wishes to live to a thousand.

Medicine and anthropology have identified the so-called "Blue Zones" where a higher proportion of centenarians live, listing a number of reasons – known as POWER NINE – which would explain this longevity. One of these oases can be found in Italy, more precisely in Barbagia, in Sardinia.

Parallel studies were established to take a closer look at centenarian companies.

Let's start by highlighting a rarity: in 1958 on average a company survived 61 years. Today, this figure is no more than 18 years.

The success of a centennial enterprise can be found in a few, distinct factors based on solid and traditional values, linked to continuous and courageous development.

In practical terms, it seems that the secret lies in maintaining the identity of the enterprise also throughout essential and continuous change.

It is necessary to project that identity outside the boundaries of time and geography, with a wide-rang-

ing vision and the aspiration to develop through societal impact, that goes beyond mere profit.

A successful company is humble when faced with outside influences, it is self-critical and accepting of opposing talents which can create situations of contrast in the short term but which with time, can throw up creative energies that could not have emerged without the presence of conflict.

Another element common to centennial enterprises is continuity in management.

Even in times of change at the top, the transmission of understanding is preserved, guaranteeing the safeguarding of inherited knowledge.

Moreover, in centennial **enterprises, winning teams change!** It may seem absurd: successful firms retain a strong identity and values while mov-



Ph Archivio Laviosa

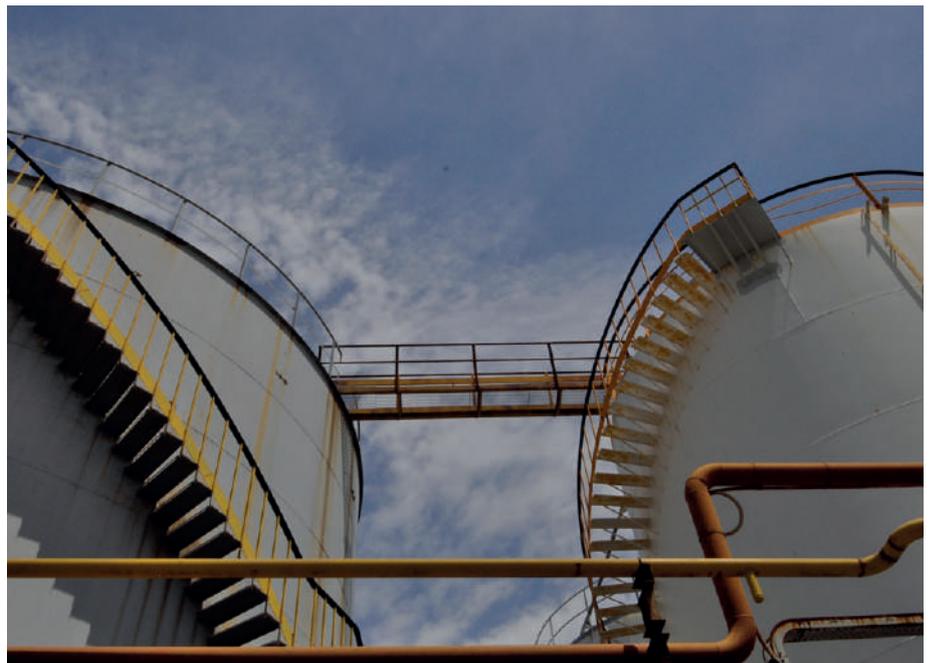




Ph Archivio Laviosa

ing with the times and they have the capacity and the audacity to adapt to change thanks to the solidity of their foundations.

The subject is vast and widely discussed and these few lines do not pretend to give an in-depth view. However, I would like to invite you to read the extract of the interview with Ernesto Laviosa, published in the Culture Section where you will find in the words of the Ingegnere, all the principles and values that guided his entrepreneurial journey, reflecting those recognised by workers as being at the heart of the longest-lasting enterprises – also known as Centenarians!



Ph Alessandra Mangione



LAVIOSA MINERALS





THE PROCESS OF THE INTERNATIONALIZATION

INTERVIEW WITH ERNESTO LAVIOSA

The interview

Antonella Alboni

Preface

The long interview with Ernesto Laviosa, by the late Vittorio Marchi, is a contemporary story both in its intuition and vision of the industrial world, yet preserving a sense of nostalgia for the path travelled and the challenges faced. Moreover, by the end, the feeling is that the successes are important but that the Ingegnere Laviosa enjoyed "the journey" that led him to success on an Italian and European scale.

His eye is fixed on the unease of the post-war period and on the adventures along the roads of the Cisa pass at that time but his spirit is light and full of the enthusiasm that characterised the post-war era, regardless of obstacles of all types being faced every day.

The professional sphere widens to intertwine with family history and the story becomes intimate: this is not an aseptic list of events, it is the story of a man and his life

From the Interview

I am writing these few pages in memory of Ernesto Laviosa the "Ingegnere", a title he found gratifying, characterising his "technical" nature, his need to discover *how any object is made inside*.

Born in Livorno on 17th August 1925, he graduated in Industrial Mechanical Engineering on 19th December 1949 and received the 50-year graduation anniversary medal in 1999.



Ph Archivio Laviosa



This was the discipline most suited to Ernesto Laviosa, his thesis was dedicated to a project for a motorcycle and he was deeply interested in the gas turbine, which he had the chance to study further in England with Professor A. Juose, an expert on the subject. Yet life often does not give us exactly what we desire and because of his father's poor health, he was brought back down to Earth, accelerating the end of his academic studies. Apart from his personal preferences, the Ingegnere reminds us that at the time he was at university, Economics was not valued as a subject and an engineer adapted himself to running a company through the phases of development, construction and management.

From the interview with Vittorio Marchi, emerges a personality belonging to a generation educated to respect basic rules, underlining the necessity of overcoming the inevitable doubts that come from choosing a direction, giving rise to the "emptiness" created when there is a decision to "take action". This "determination to do" was, for Ernesto Laviosa, *the principle characteristic distinguishing those who choose to work independently and therefore accept entrepreneurial responsibility*. The word responsibility can be heard often from the Ingegnere, along with *calculated risk*, which formed the basic pillars of his life. *What kind of an entrepreneur would I have been, if I hadn't taken risks?*

In the interview we find much more: first and foremost a nostalgia for the life he lived intensely and the will to relive it in order to pass it on to future generations, *to my youngsters*, his son Giovanni and grandchildren Olimpia, Ernesto, Umberto and Francesco, to his wider family and *to all those who will remember me*.

Looking back on this life, sometimes sweet, sometimes painful, Ernesto Laviosa gives the final account of personal events woven in with the professional and the war and post-war years of his youth are very significant.

My generation had its youth and the youthful abandon of an eighteen-year old, taken away. I had to live in hiding for practically two years, between the fears of my family and the brutal reality of the immediate post-war period. We were never "young" but for those of us who had the strength to react and fix objectives it was a time which forged character.

He speaks affectionately of his father Carlo, "Sor Carlo", known for his intelligence and friendliness, whose life was led with simplicity: *sociable and a lover of life*.

It was in 1922 that Carlo Laviosa settled in Livorno, establishing his company the Agenzia Marittima (the Maritime Agency), through which he imported and sold coal. From England he also imported raw materials for the refractory industry, foundries and ceramics. From its origins linked to its commercial activities, the Agenzia Marittima subsequently extended its scope to include maritime travel.

My father had a deep understanding of the maritime business and of the issues facing ports but thanks to his experience as an importer he was also able to see the opportunity for new developments in the foundry industry and so in 1933 he began producing "Nero Minerale" or micronized coal, graphite and other products which until then had been imported mostly from Hungary and were not produced in Italy. My father was an entrepreneur looking for whatever was new, disinclined to staying still, which was for him, simply a moment for making new ideas.

The Ingegnere stresses the importance of work for his father and his love of work, *of which he had a military yet social conception*; rigour in the workplace coupled with friendliness towards others and great attention to social behaviour.

Ernesto Laviosa's words are full of esteem and affection for his father and he remembers how, in times of difficulty, he thought of him and of what he might have done, in his shoes. This is the introduction to a journey which began in 1922 and has continued to date, 2022, the year in which we celebrate the Centenary together, re-reading the Interview with Ernesto Laviosa which was never a eulogy to his commitment but rather the desire *to share the sense of responsibility that is typical of the entrepreneur*.

The Post-War Period

It took courage!

There was no alternative. We all had courage: it was necessary to start over in order to survive. Becoming aware of this was the first step to maturity.

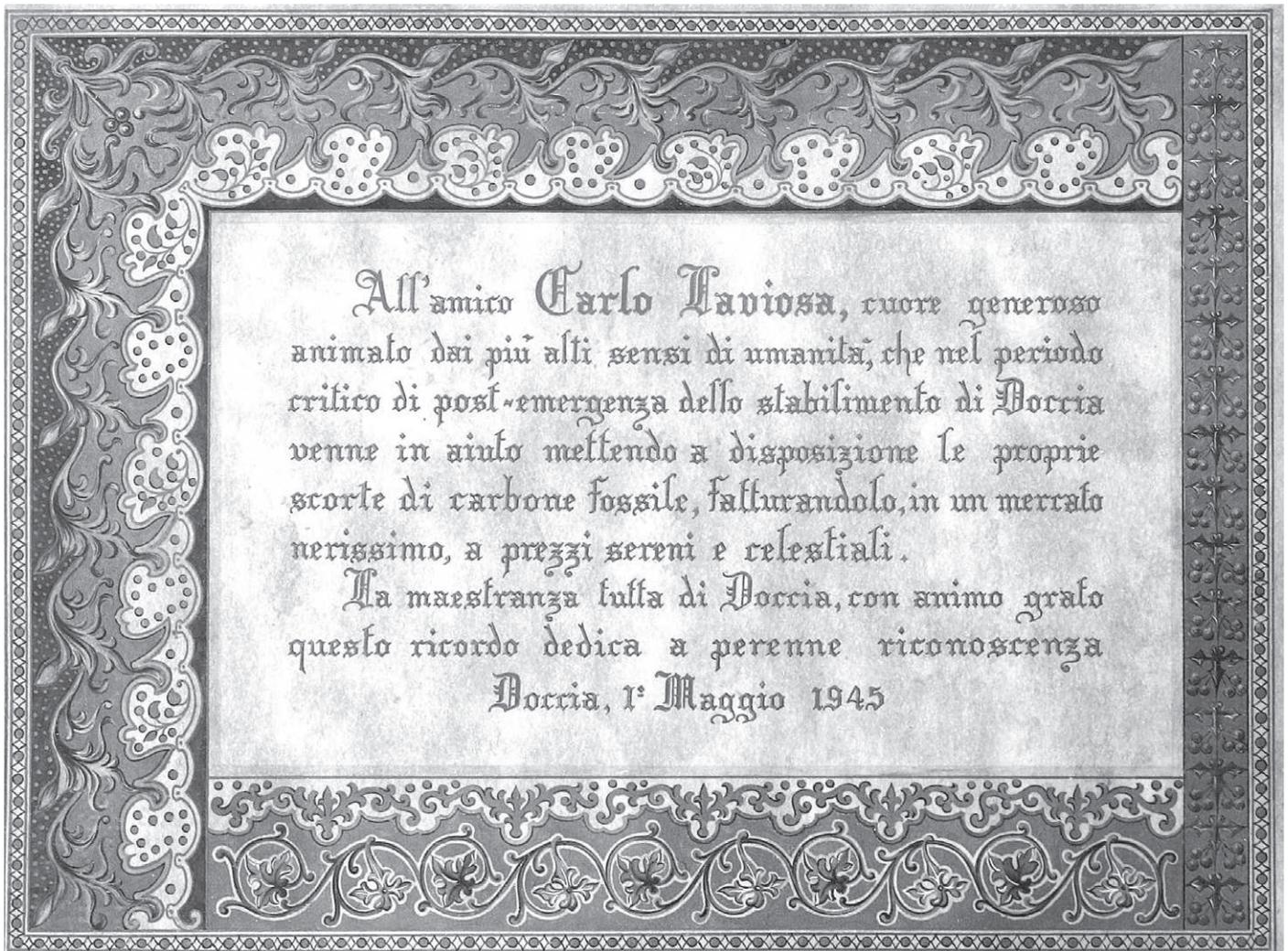
Operational difficulties were manifold, in every professional sector. The Carlo Laviosa company joined the Società per la Ricostruzione which carried out important works for the civil engineering entity Genio Civile, such as building the road link connecting the "Aurelia" highway to the Tuscan coast.

Ernesto Laviosa remembers a father who, during this difficult period, imparted confidence and faith in the future, bringing him closer to a world of work *driven by the desire to anticipate a new day*.

Until 1950, the company had only produced micronized coal, but then bentonite was launched. At that time, the Agenzia Marittima was suffering from a considerable reduction in traffic and so Ernesto Laviosa turned his attention to industrial manufacturing.

In the domain of iron foundries, bentonite was necessarily associated with the micronized coal already in production, thus it was simple to link the sales of both.

Bentonite had been known since ancient times: the Romans used Sardinian clay to treat wool and Greek clay to make detergent.



Ph Archivio Laviosa

Pliny also refers to its use in pharmacy. Driven by the need to develop self-sufficient sources of raw materials, without taking costs into account, Laviosa understood the importance of some white soils found on the island of Ponza and studied their specific use for foundries, coming up with "Bentocol."

The treatment of unrefined bentonite from Ponza, gave rise to the production of "synthetic soil," freeing national foundries from the need to import the so-called "French soils" and the American bentonites.

This exclusive product entered the technical market and its use soared when FIAT began to utilize it.

Carlo Laviosa passed away on January 3rd 1953. His humanity and lively intelligence were evident in the outpourings of affection from the port and plant workers, as well as from all those who knew him.

On 25th February 1960 the Carlo Laviosa company became "Industria Chimica Carlo Laviosa s.p.a." with an aim to manufacturing micronized coal, bentonite and ferroalloy graphite moulds, along with similar products, that I had been developing.

The company name was changed to reflect its activity more closely.

Naturally, after the passing of my father, it was my turn to take on responsibility for the business of the Agenzia Marittima and the other activities.

The number one focus of our company was applied research, the role of which was key to the extent that in the casting sector, where research was concentrated, we are at the cutting-edge.

There wasn't a scientific congress in our sectors that we didn't attend both through our relations and our new products. We would also have entered the resins sector if external factors hadn't stopped us.

The Ingegnere recounts Industria Chimica's first steps with great nostalgia.

Today, I feel the responsibility that I wasn't fully aware of at that time. We become manufacturers every day and we are always running behind time. Factories are built with work and with research but the environment is also a determining factor, attracting or repelling investment.

...the geographical position is of course important but the environment must be adapted and set up, thus indicating that there are agile territorial opportunities and processes that won't impede speedy investment or impact the courage it takes to build a business.

The Dreams

As for my character and my dreams...I wanted to be in shipping.

In his interview, the Ingegnere reveals his infatuation with shipping, never discouraged by his father.

It was the ultimate challenge, the shipping owner has a vast market, competing with the whole world.

What is revealed in this passion is the desire to be put to the test, without limitations. Ernesto tells the tale of his 9,500 tonne ship the Carlo Laviosa, in distress in the port of Bari.

The ship was believed to be a write-off but the Ingegnere was exactly that, an engineer! He wanted to see the damage for himself and so was lowered down, head-first, from the cylinder head.

It was like entering an oven only just switched off, even if that piston had been stopped for days to cool the cylinder which was also connected to the triple expansion engine. Fortunately, only the piston was broken.

Was it courage? As the proverb says – necessity makes a virtue.

The shipping activity ended in the year 2000 and we can read words of regret and sadness for not having persevered.

The 70s

Works on the plant in Via Galvani started in 1965 and coincided with the arrival of Dr. Giovanni Novelli. *His studies on bentonite gave rise to its multiple technological uses, to which we owe our notoriety in the chemical industry.*

The growth of the company depended on research and our capacity to develop new products, through building intellectual strength, collaboration and the industrial strategy

of the company. From our beginnings with micronized coal, we widened our field of interest to include bentonite and coated sand and other foundry products but we needed to develop more products and at the same time ramp up production.

It was at this time that the supply of clay from the island of Ponza ended and the Ingegnere looked to Sardinia, in the belief that the island had resources. The collaboration with the geologist Professor Pietracaprina was productive and in the following years, twenty-five bentonite quarries were brought into production.

At the new plant in via Galvani, it was possible to start production of a series of researched products: granulated and micronized carbon, Depol, dried bentonite, silica sand, Chromite and Barite, thermo-resistant resin-coated sand, sodium carbonate and Deso-moulds, amongst others.

The new plant was working to full capacity. Hand-in-hand with the progress made in the art of smelting, it was also in the process of making a significant jump in terms of manufacturing and commercial quality.

"Premix" was born, a combination of bentonite, micronized carbon and other minerals for moulding...and by the mid-70s "Premix" had hit its peak in terms of development.

Laviosa was the number two producer of foundry products in Europe. That success had to be maintained and consolidated. No business can survive by resting on its laurels.

These were intense years in which the company focused on cost limitation. The Sardinian bentonites imported by the company contained 30% water, while the final product contained on 12%.

In 1972 Ernesto Laviosa founded Mineraria Chimica Sarda (MI.CHI.SA) where bentonite was treated, ready to be refined, "activated" and dried with a water content of only 12%, ready therefore to be shipped to Livorno or directly to customers.

With these opportunities new markets were born. Bentonite which maintained a strong price was being sold to factories in Northern Europe and supplies were negotiated also on the Atlantic coasts of the United States and Canada. In addition to the quality factor, that of quantity was now coming into play.

Expansion brought about the creation of a geology department to support the new bentonite plant and all the new markets that were opening up thanks to the fact that it was now possible to load the ships directly in Sardinia.

It's understandable that quantity took priority. Every improvement reduced costs and led to increased production and sales.

1973: the year of Greece. Years of research revealed sources of white bentonite that were direct competition to American bentonite.

What distinguishes it from other clay bentonites, is not just its colour but also its physicochemical properties, such as its superior water absorption.

Thus the "Società Mediterranean Bentonite Co", was established with its HQ in Pireo, managing the Greek quarries while treatment took place in Livorno.

Thanks to its characteristics this commodity was suited to products with a higher added value, destined for various industrial sectors.

The demand for white bentonite soared and Greek production was not enough to satisfy it. And so it was necessary to look elsewhere and attention turned to Turkey and Morocco.

Laviosa France was born in 1979, in Valence, as a response to German competition which had set up a plant in Northern France.

France does not possess bentonite resources on an industrial scale and this was an opportunity.

The Group already exported to the south of France, via land: with Laviosa France the idea was to use a different type of transport via sea and river, pushing down prices and offering a competitive product.

The Rhône is navigable until Lyon and thus Sardinian bentonite was able to be transported via sea and river routes from Oristano to the centre of France and on the return trip grain from the Rhône Valley was transported to the Mediterranean.

The plant began operations in 1982 and was soon running at full capacity.

Agenzia Marittima

In 1922, Carlo Laviosa, father of Ernesto, founded the Agenzia Marittima (The Maritime Agency) in Livorno managing the ships transporting coal, its sale, unloading and shipment.

In 1930 the Tripovich company was established for regular freight services in the Mediterranean.

The Garibaldi company followed in 1935 for services to West Africa and the Far East.

Sadly, the onset of war in 1940 brought all services to a halt, only resuming at the end of the conflict.

It was then that the Agenzia Marittima acquired the "Group of Dutch Companies" which operated in the Persian Gulf and in the Far East, along with the "Navegación de Exportación Agrícola Española", serving the Western Mediterranean. On the reopening of routes to the United States, the Agenzia bought other companies, including Stare Marine (USA).

In the 70s, numerous full-container companies went through

the Agenzia Laviosa, then moving to focus on a small number of companies with ships capable of transporting thousands of containers.

The companies working through Laviosa did not follow this policy and soon the Agenzia found itself in trouble. It was then that the opportunity to acquire the shipping lines Tirrenia and Adriatica, arose.

1990 saw an increase in competition in the container sector. While the workload in coal was diminishing, loads of bentonite, silica sand and barite for the Laviosa industry were growing, just as those of coke, chromite sand etc were rising for other industries.

When the Livorno Ports Authority brought about the creation of an entity to manage the off-loading of bulk onto the Orlando, the Agenzia, one of its principal users, became a major collaborator.

Ingegnere Ernesto Laviosa became a long-standing President of the maritime department of the Chamber of Commerce.

I felt a great sense of responsibility during this period, wanting to make myself useful as a modern entrepreneur despite a lot of resistance to innovation in the ports sector.

I loved working in the maritime world because the Agenzia was my first commitment and remained so over the years.

Although I've given a lot of space to my industrial activity, I have always paid lots of attention to the Agenzia which gave such entrepreneurial satisfaction, even without heavy investment.

The 80s and 90s

In 1985 we celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of Laviosa Industria Chimica.

Three years earlier in 1982, Finanziaria had been founded. Giovanni, Ernesto Laviosa's son, being a board member.

During that period another company entered the group – the Sardinian CE.DI.SA. based in Cagliari, which with its mineral reserves of kaolin clay, allowed the company to expand its production to include zeolites, litter absorbents and substitutes for micronized carbon.

Over the years historical, cultural and social structures change and companies have to keep pace, constantly adapting.

For the Laviosa Industrial Group, research has always been its strength, an essential element in the manufacturing system, always a key to our competitiveness.

The strength of our business could be found in maintaining the value of our products and creating maximum





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specialisation in their industrial and domestic usage, while preserving a high level of business competitiveness in terms of quality. This meant non-stop research and an up-to-date laboratory.

In 1985 another 45,000 sq.m plant in via Leonardo da Vinci joined the fold, permitting the group to focus on products needing space in order to be manufactured: cat litter, Bentec, panel deposit and sulphuric acid.

In the meantime, the in-house research laboratories had identified bentonite, rather than urasite, as being the ideal substance for animal litter, allowing for massive use of bentonite also in this sector.

The Group's multiple manufacturing activities in the 90s saw the need to source materials from further afield, including from India.

And so we needed to define a new strategy.

On the one hand, this meant ceasing production of mineral resources no longer needed and on the other, concentrating activity in sectors where the Group was most successful and specialised.

The biggest producer of industrial use minerals in the Mediterra-

nean, the Greek company Silver and Baryte Ores co., quoted on the Athens stock exchange and with plants on the island of Milos, took a 35% stake in Laviosa Chimica Mineraria, with an aim to providing us with the largest proportion of our supplies.

Thanks to this restructuring, the Group became one of the biggest manufacturers of bentonite for all uses, from the bentonite carpet and animal litter, to organo-clays, foundry, drilling, wine and water clarification and organo-bentonites.

The Legacy

The interview with Ernesto Laviosa is a book full of events, thoughts and reflection but most of all it is full of life and vital energy.

This did not surprise me. It is line with the driving force that guided Ernesto Laviosa, entrepreneur – *the desire to do.*

The vision at the end of the book is optimistic, with belief in the future of Laviosa, a group which has traversed European history, developing and growing constantly, over the years.

The Ingegnere has great regard for all those who have worked in his companies. He underlines this throughout the interview: he was successful in everything he did, also thanks to the people who supported him, each in their own way, by delegating and sharing responsibilities and remembering them with affection and gratitude. Amongst his regrets, is the fact that due to his engineering background, he led the company more from a technical stance than from a financial one.

As we near our conclusion, I would like to highlight the strengths that Ernesto Laviosa insists on in his life as an entrepreneur, including:

- My son Giovanni, who, at the end of his studies, took on his responsibilities with dedication and skill.
- We have all endeavoured to be fair with everyone and we have understood the moral strength of our behaviour.
- Businesses are not sources of income to support superfluous needs.

- Entrepreneurs must lead a life of achievement without extravagance.
- Profit is a driver of social progress, losses are a destruction of assets.
- Investing profits legitimises the moral right to run a business.

And to conclude: Life is also full of mistakes, yet if we could live those lives again, we would probably avoid none of them, instead we would make more.

Experience is wisdom, even if past events often are not enough to protect us. It takes great care and modesty, but when the time for thinking is over, we must "act".

The sequel to this "story" belongs to Giovanni and to his children.

Al Dott. Ing. Ernesto Laviosa

che proseguendo sulla via tracciata dal Padre, con incessante impegno e coraggioso spirito imprenditoriale ha realizzato il moderno stabilimento di via Galvani,

*le maestranze, gli impiegati, ed i più stretti collaboratori
dell'Industria Chimica Carlo Laviosa S.p.A.*

dedicano un pensiero riconoscente, fiduciosi che il clima di costruttiva collaborazione che ha caratterizzato i trentasette anni di attività dell'Azienda possa costituire la migliore garanzia per il futuro.

Livorno, il

6 Giugno 1970

