



Italian historical trademarks

The century-long journey of Valente's industrial rails

Associazione Marchi Storici d'Italia

Its long history began in 1919. Since then, the race along the rails of Valente S.p.A. has continued swiftly and without interruption. For 106 years, the company has worked from its factory in Lainate, just outside

Milan, producing and distributing every type of rail. These rails are not used only – or even mainly – for traditional railway systems, but for applications far beyond what one might imagine. Valente's rails

are found in ports, underground tunnels, and mines. It is a Made in Italy success story that has carved out a place in the global market by focusing on a highly specialized niche with worldwide demand. Just looking at ports alone, the potential is enormous: more than 90% of international trade moves by sea, which means ports must constantly become more efficient.

When the company was first founded, the horizon was not nearly as broad. The founder, Vincenzo Valente, initially focused on the most traditional use of rails – railways. He used to describe himself as “a Neapolitan industrialist who never failed,” and he was right. The company came close to shutting down in the 1980s but never capitulated and never laid off employees. Inste-

ad, under the leadership of Alberto Menoncello it returned to prosperity. Menoncello could be described as “a forward-thinking Milanese.” A graduate of Bocconi University with a master’s degree from Harvard and a background in finance, he had no experience in the steel industry. Yet a quick look at the company’s accounts convinced him that Valente could be saved by focusing on long-standing clients and developing an increasingly specialized business strategy.

That was when the key insight emerged: concentrating on rail-based handling systems for large lifting infrastructures in commercial ports. This choice paved the way for Valente’s revival, restoring the company’s financial health and making the maritime economy its core busi-



ness. Today Menoncello leads the company as CEO and chairman, alongside his son Luca, who serves as general manager.

Valente-branded tracks and transport systems are used to move tunnel-boring machines forward underground, carry concrete and materials used to reinforce tunnel walls, and transport workers, machinery, and goods in complex environments in Italy and abroad. In 2024, the company completed projects in 18 countries. Its international debut came with the supply of rails and wagons for the Channel Tunnel, a milestone that also established Valente as a leading company in the tunneling sector. Other key moments included its involvement in the Turin-Lyon rail project and work at the Imetame port in Aratù, Brazil, between late 2024 and early 2025. Since then, in addition to upgrading several Italian ports, the company has seen a rise in demand, particularly in North Africa and Saudi Arabia. New projects could soon arrive from Central America as well. The goal is to increase exports from the current 30% of revenue to 45% within the next three years, focusing on Europe, the Gulf region, India, and sub-Saharan Africa.

The company is also active in the mining sector, both in extraction

operations and in the restoration of former mines for tourism. Valente is currently involved in projects to modernize mining infrastructure in Sardinia and in the creation of rail-based routes designed to bring visitors through the spectacular underground landscapes of former mining sites.

Valente remains a small Italian company with big ambitions. Revenue reached €11 million in 2024 and is expected to rise to €15 million by the end of the year. But the company does not need to be a giant to compete globally. The number of competitors in this highly specialized field is extremely limited, and success depends on reliability. Here Valente holds a strong advantage: it combines more than a century of experience with a continuous commitment to excellence and innovation. For some of its applications, such as the development of rail fastening systems, the company collaborates closely with the Politecnico di Milano. Even as advanced technologies continue to evolve, they have not changed the essence of this century-old company. At its core, Valente still relies on craftsmanship – while keeping a close eye on digitalization and artificial intelligence as new opportunities for growth.

