The company HoffmannGlas has started up a Forel insulated glass line in its Halle /Peißen plant – this is the first one anywhere in Germany. At the same time, an automatic edging machine, also from Forel, is being integrated into an existing insulated glass line that is designed for jumbo dimensions, that is, large-format shaped sheets. This is how the HoffmannGlas Group can offer its customers, especially those in the demanding project business, even more services in the future. All of the new systems are controlled by A+W interfaces.

HoffmannGlas Group's Halle/Peißen plant: the focus is on the demanding project business.

HoffmannGlas: Investment in State-of-the-Art Machine Technology

For the last six months, the new Forel insulated glass line and edge grinding machine have been doing their work reliably.

Software partnership for more than 20 years: Thomas Queitsch (right), Managing Director of Hoffmann Glas and Manager of the Halle/Peißen plant in conversation with Heiko Schuh, A+W Sales Manager Central Europe and software advisor for Hoffmann Glas.

For the successful and flawless integration of the new Forel technology, it was helpful that A+W and Forel have been working hand-in-hand for years on the development of state-of-the-art interfaces. Managing Director Thorsten Hoffmann: "A+W is a reliable partner that continues to enhance its products and offer new solutions. A+W has many interface solutions with other providers and it works exceedingly well with all machine partners." Soon, another Forel line will be started up at the company's main location in Peine.

Now that the cutting technology and optimization software at both plants have been modernized completely, the Hoffmann Group is equipped throughout with state-of-the-art production technology. The high-performance lines with Viprotron quality scanners make a contribution to quality assurance. This independent full-range producer and glass wholesaler has thus reinforced its capabilities in insulated glass manufacturing, especially for project business.

The Peine plant is also equipped for finishing technologies such as CNC grinding, sandblasting, digital printing, laser processing, and UV adhesions: thus the HoffmannGlas Group also addresses all of the needs of the interior sector.

HoffmanGlas supports all customers from glass workers to facade builders; the focal point, especially in the Halle plant, is on the demanding project business. In this context, the group's current investments make sense: "The demand for ground insulated glass is increasing," explains Thomas Queitsch, Managing Director and Manager of the Halle plant. "With the new edging machines," according to Queitsch, "we can produce seam edges, bevels, and polished edges even for coated glass. We now offer triple-glazed insulated glass up to a thickness of 80 mm."

In the project business, HoffmannGlas supports the whole process from initial consultation for technically-demanding projects to production and delivery, on through to installation – here, HoffmannGlass is a sought-after partner, even for the most complicated installations. In Halle this task is handled by the in-house ten-man team in the Glass Construction department with its extensive installation equipment.

Data exchange in real time: plant-spanning communication

Three locations – one fully-networked system: Since 1992, the HoffmannGlas Group has been using A+W Enterprise for order processing and company controlling; this is a database-based ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) system that is especially well-suited for the control of companies with several locations. HoffmannGlas works with a central server that is connected to all three branch offices via fast dedicated lines. Thomas Queitsch: "With this modern design, A+W Enterprise is the reliable basis for all of our corporate logistics."

High-tech cutting environment

Anyone who wants to offer all types of commonly-available performance glass and simultaneously have proper throughput needs an automatic compact warehouse with quick feeding, the latest cutting technology, and efficient and economical residual sheet handling in cutting. At HoffmannGlas, HEGLA portal conveyors supply the high-performance cutting tables in its Peine and Halle plants; the tables are mostly HEGLA ProLam combi tables with Remaster, where the residual sheets – Float and VSG – are stored directly between operations and, controlled by the A+W Realtime Optimizer cutting control computer, are fed into the ongoing optimization.

Using this system, batches that have already been optimized for one cutting table can be redirected to the other one. This way the machine operator can put aside a VSG batch so that a rush float

Flexible batch formation, intelligent residual sheet utilization: from the compact warehouse with more than 100 types of glass, the stock sheets are fed to the float and combi cutting tables controlled by the cutting and control computer A+W Realtime Optimizer. Depending on the situation, it is possible to re-plan in real time, e. g. for rush orders and reproductions. The HEGLA residual sheet manager Remaster is incorporated into the A+W production control and thus makes the first cuts available automatically.

Marion Unbekannt, responsible at Hoffmann-Glas Halle for work preparation and IT, has been an expert contact person for A+W for many years.

batch can be cut on the ProLam: this is exactly the great flexibility that HoffmannGlas needs in its production processes.

The storage organization after cutting planned with A+W Production is the first step towards clean insulated glass production logistics: controlled by the software, all glass is available at the right time in the right sequence, from the washing machines to the insulated glass lines. However, the logistics are much more complex.

Software-optimized production flow

Given the fascinating machine technology in cutting and insulated glass production, it is easy to overlook the sophisticated, continuous software control without which the state-of-the-art multi-site production like that of HoffmannGlas would not be possible. The intelligence of the whole production network determines whether the individual machines can be used up to their maximum capacity without bottlenecks and unnecessary downtimes.

Everything starts with intelligent planning in the A+W Production production system. In the course of backward scheduling, the order items are scheduled according to their manufacturing depth. This means, that depending on the necessary start date for production, orders are taken apart and put back together. Production lots consist of different customers' items and are only put back together by the dispatch logistics at the end. Bar code production labels control the sheets through production, consistent plant data collection allows precise sheet tracing and status updates, which are reported directly back to the database. Thus it is possible to know at all times which sheet is where, which processing has already been completed, and what the next production step is.

The greatest power of innovation – and still better customer service

In order to maintain delivery reliability and provide the best customer service, especially in the demanding project business, the Group relies on quality and innovation. Heiko Schuh, A+W Software GmbH: "HoffmannGlas has been an A+W customer for 24 years. Along the way, we have learned that this corporate group always cooperates in the innovation network with mechanical engineering firms and with us as software partner, and with a sense of proportion, it has always made the right investments."

Therefore, the Hoffmann Group is in a position to react quickly and flexibly to market changes. The constant process of innovation reinforces the group's spectrum of services and underscores its consistent customer orientation on an ever-more-competitive market.

▶ Contact: **www.hoffmannglasgruppe.de**

Hoffmann Glas produces, delivers, and installs large-format special sheets properly and reliably – up to and including sheets with jumbo dimensions.