

DAYS OF EXPANSION

TAB-Austria extends itself as it nears 50

THESE are days of expansion at the Linz-based touchscreen games giant TAB-Austria. The company, which last year celebrated its 45th anniversary, since Siegfried Dattl Senior, an Austrian operator, turned his hand to manufacturing, is now more diversified than at any time in its history.

Dattl's son – also Siegfried, but 'Sigi' to his friends – is running the 170-staff company these days and overseeing a sales operation which stretches right around the world. That company still has as its core business the production of touchscreen amusement and internet terminals – the famous Silverball series – but additionally these days produces a Virtual Pinball game, the Max Fire digital jukebox, the Golden Island gambling terminal and turns out hundreds of high-technology sports betting terminals for third parties.

That latter business hit new heights last year with a giant contract for betting terminals for fellow Austrian company Global Draw, an initial 9,000-unit deal which has been ongoing to the pitch where so far about 12,000 have been produced.

It did, however, have the added benefit of enabling Dattl to expand his core business. This year has seen new staff taken on to program software for Silverball, Virtual Pinball and Max Fire, strengthening that segment of the business in key areas. Assembly line staff additions were also inevitable with the extra pressures in the factory, building terminals for the UK, the Czech Republic and Mexico.

"We managed to absorb the extra work in our production department without taking on further factory space," said Dattl. "We reconfigured the layout of the factory floor to effectively give ourselves another 5,000sq.m."

For the Silverball, Virtual Pinball and Max Fire sales, TAB-Austria has a team of sales people based at the Linz factory supplementing a string of more than 40 distributors in different countries.

The Golden Island gambling terminal is principally being sold in Germany and to eastern



The iconic TAB Silverball Cosmo

Europe – the latter in the format of a bartop unit. Understandably, Golden Island features strongly in Croatia, where TAB-Austria has a casino licence and in Turkey. But as well there is mounted cabinet Golden Island Fire or upright terminal Golden Island Nevada (the official licence was given only a few days earlier) for the German market. Software for the cabinet includes a multiplicity of uses, as a gambling device offering roulette, keno, poker and two different slot games.

But TAB-Austria is best-known for Silverball, which has gone through innumerable cabinet changes and software updates over the past 25 years. Every uplift in technology seems to have been incorporated into Silverball. Virtual Pinball was a departure from the expected line for TAB-Austria which took the industry by surprise five years ago. Just as surprising was the adventure into jukeboxes with Max Fire five years ago – another experiment which proved that the company has the foresight to pinpoint successful products at a very early stage.

Dattl said that there would be "another new product - a fifth TAB-Austria product and completely different" later this year. "We always try to create something innovative. It may well come in time for the London Preview in October. Until then, we will produce yet more new software for Silverball."



The Golden Island Fire, a version of the TAB terminals range which is only used in Germany

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