



# A MEETING OF MINDS!

NICK COOMBES VISITS ISTANBUL AND LOOKS BEHIND THE SCENES OF THE RECENTLY ANNOUNCED ESTABLISHMENT OF KOENIG & BAUER DURAN



**T**he announcement in December 2018 that German press manufacturer Koenig & Bauer had acquired an 80 per cent stake in Istanbul based Duran Machinery was one of the most interesting surprises to emerge from the graphic arts industry in some time. There had been rumours circulating, of course, because it was obvious that having such a pre-eminent position in package printing, along with its acquisition of Iberica die-cutters in 2016, left Koenig & Bauer short of one essential product line to be able to offer a complete package

of technology – a folder gluer. Enter Duran Machinery, with its well-proven and highly respected range of Omega machines.

The move brought extremely positive comments from both parties. Ralf Sammeck, CEO of Koenig & Bauer Sheetfed and a member of the Koenig & Bauer Management Board is very pleased with the new arrangement and stated, “Over the past few years Duran has set new standards and successfully strengthened its position among customers in the industrial packaging sector. Now, we are further expanding our worldwide presence as the printing press and die-cutter manufacturer with one of the broadest product portfolios available from one source.” Oktay Duran, Chairman of Duran Machinery, and now a Board member of Koenig & Bauer Duran commented, “We are proud to be a part of the great Koenig & Bauer Group and we are certain that we will achieve greater success in the global folding carton market with our new synergy.”

Interestingly, the first meeting of the two was well before the agreement process started and coincided with a great date in the Koenig & Bauer’s history – November 2014, exactly 200 years after The Times newspaper in London was first printed on Friedrich Koenig’s double-cylinder press. It is obvious that the similarities of both companies resonated well to develop into this agreement later on. “The sum is greater than the individual parts, but only when all parties bring good cooperation with matching characteristics to the table,” added Oktay Duran. “In our industry, a product of the highest quality is a must. It’s all about making a difference with the way companies approach their customers – and both Koenig & Bauer and Duran Machinery are well-known for this. It was interesting that during the discussions both companies understood that this expectation had to be fulfilled – it’s

what delivered the final agreement.”

And the signature, in December 2018, coincided closely with another significant date – that of the 100th birthday of Ali Duran, father of Oktay Duran, founder of Duran Offset and the mastermind behind Duran Machinery’s engineering of the first generation of machines that were named ‘Ali Baba’. He would have been 100 years old on 8th November, and in celebration of his birthday, Duran’s latest series of folder gluers is called ‘Alius’ – meaning ‘not like any other’ in Latin. The company sees this as a fitting tribute to the late founder of the company.

Reading between the lines, what becomes clear is the fundamental similarity of the two companies in terms of ethos if not of size. Both have a strong family base and an approach to business that places the customers’ requirements at the heart of technical development. Always the leader in carton press manufacturing, Koenig & Bauer has a reputation for designing and building highly bespoke machines that exactly match the demands of the users. The same goes for Duran, which tailors each folder gluer to specific requirements, rather than adapting a standard model. Over the years, this approach to the market



has built a long list of loyal users who view the two manufacturers more as cooperative working partners than machine suppliers.

Coming as a complete surprise, and so close to the Christmas/New Year holiday, the results of what the new arrangement actually means is only just beginning to dawn on the market. Koenig & Bauer Duran Sales and Marketing Director Pinar Kucukaras commented, "It was a primary condition of the agreement that the Duran management and sales and service teams stay in place for the continuity of our success. Now, together with the great Koenig & Bauer team, we are stronger, yet retain all characteristics that made us who we are as Duran Machinery."

As Koenig & Bauer Duran, our manufacturing and all service will continue to be provided from our premises in Istanbul, and our customers will continue their contact with the same people as before," added Apo Kucukaras, who will continue his duties as the Managing Director of the newly established company.



The first fixed date in the calendar for what will be the new Koenig & Bauer Post-Press Division will be Drupa 2020 in Dusseldorf. It is too far ahead for exhibit details to be known but converters can be assured that there will be a full working display of what is now the most comprehensive portfolio from one global group and all with a European manufacturing

base, including Koenig & Bauer Iberica and Koenig & Bauer Duran.

Patrick Masson, Koenig & Bauer Sheetfed Post-Press Business Director and Managing Director of Koenig & Bauer Iberica commented on the vision and future of this remarkable union. "Koenig & Bauer Group now offers all leading, major equipment for the manufacturing of folding carton and corrugated boxes. These three companies are now

working together to provide the best technical solutions, machines and services, to customers. The partnership uniquely combines competence in production, R&D, service, logistics, sales support and market expertise. We are ready to support our customers and are working on their future requirements."

It's too early at this stage to predict the exact nature of how this 'meeting of minds' will pan out, but clearly there are benefits on both sides and few, if any, disadvantages. For Koenig & Bauer it is a short-cut into the specialised market of folding and gluing with one of the best exponents of customised technology, while for Duran, being part of such a renowned and successful global group will bring development opportunities that could not be imagined as a private family business. And, for the converters in the market, it offers the best of both worlds, with specialist technicians serving their own specific requirements, whether it be printing or post-press. The good just got better, and into tomorrow's Industry 4.0 market, the packaging industry can enjoy the benefits of single source supply of the highest quality. ■

