

show season led to a further 11% jump in sales during the last four months of 2018.

"OEMs are still running very well, producing boats that were ordered last season, and this will probably continue until the beginning of summer," he says. "The boat show season started well in early September, despite losing some enthusiasm towards the end of the year."

Osculati is one of Europe's leading nautical accessories firms with around 22,000 items in its catalogue. The company is also a manufacturer, producing over 7,000 items that were developed by its in-house Design & Engineering team. Last year saw the launch of its 'clever deck fillers' made from composite and stainless steel, and a recess fit emergency ladder that complies with ISO 15085 standards.

INVESTING IN THE FUTURE

"The aftermarket is still OK," says Osculati. "We'll have to see whether the political situation will affect confidence. I personally don't expect 2019 to be any better than 2018, which has been a very good year in general, but we obviously strive for the best. This year the major investments of Osculati will be, apart from products, in logistics and improvement of a new state-of-the-art B2B ecommerce system."

Antonio Mancini, one half of mechanical and hydraulic steering systems specialist Mavimare & Mancini, told *IBI* that 2018 was a year of stability. At last year's METSTRADE Show in Amsterdam, the company launched a new tilt mechanism for its mechanical helm and hydraulic helm pump, featuring a compact design for easy installation. Around 80% of MaviMare's products are sold on the aftermarket, mostly for boats of up to 14m.

"Year after year, hydraulic steering systems are becoming more sought-after than their mechanical counterparts," says Mancini. "Consumers today are more informed about the significant benefits of hydraulic steering systems in terms of safety and performance, so more and more people are asking for hydraulic steering for small engines like 40hp, 50hp and 60hp."

Mavimare is largely export-focused, with sales outside of Italy accounting for around 80% of the business. Regions showing the most growth are South America and Asia (Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia), as well as Australia.

"Our 2018 domestic sales were up 5% compared to the previous year, so things are going better year by year in Italy," Mancini adds. "Let's hope that with the new change in government, there will be no change in this trend." **IBI**



▲ Osculati's new range of 'clever deck fillers' are made of composite and stainless steel

TRANSFLUID GROWS ITS 'GREEN' CREDENTIALS



▲ Transfluid's HTM700 hybrid module

POWER TRANSMISSION SPECIALIST Transfluid SpA boosted its 'green credentials' last year when it acquired IDTechnology, owner of the Bellmarine brand of electric drive systems from the Netherlands. The acquisition, says Transfluid's Elisa Pavesi, helped lift turnover considerably and should provide a steady source of income going forward; the company now offers solutions that cover all the needs of electric and hybrid powertrains for boating and vessel applications.

"Bellmarine will benefit from Transfluid's worldwide network of branches and distributors, and its expansion to new markets and territories," Pavesi explains. "Transfluid, on the other hand, can now offer smaller, 'pure electric' propulsion systems along with its already well-established range of hybrid solutions."

Transfluid has been producing power transmission equipment for 60 years, with a well-established network of subsidiaries and distributors across all continents. The company recently developed its range of hybrid and electric propulsion systems, and has started the design and production of permanent magnet electric machines too.

Bellmarine, which has a strong reputation for electric propulsion in northern Europe, will continue to operate from The Netherlands while maintaining its own distinct brand identity.

A PERFECT MATCH

The marriage between the two companies now enables them to propose electric and hybrid solutions suitable for any kind of marine, inland waters or off-shore applications as well as a range of propulsion power.

According to Pavesi, 2018 was a strong year for Transfluid. "Demand for hybrid technology in the pilot boat market seems to have taken off," she says, citing the UK's Port of London Authority and Southampton Harbour as two clients that recently took delivery of new pilot boats with Transfluid hybrid systems onboard. "This happened after another important customer chose a hybrid solution for two new vessels in Eastern Russia. We believe this is just the starting point for a great future market."