



# “Wheat, flour and ...” ... crazy people

## Walking the Italian way in Cortona and Siena

by Roger Gilbert, Milling and Grain

**200-plus milling plant owners and their partners ascended on Cortona in Tuscany, Italy between September 15-17, 2017 to attend Ocrim’s 7th annual ‘Wheat, flour and ...’ one-day conference which this year partnered with Paglierani and Bonifiche Ferraresi.**

**T**o ‘Walk the Italian Way’ - the company’s widely-promoted motto - attending delegates had to shake off convention and accept that this was a time to relax and enjoy the art, architecture and environment that is truly Italian away from the normal tourist attractions, although the final day, Sunday, ended with a walking tour of Siena and lunch in one of its back streets.

The programme welcomed 200 delegates to the Centro Convegni Sant’ Agostino in Cortona on a bright but cool Saturday morning in mid-September, 2017 with coffee.

An introduction by Ocrim’s CEO Alberto Antolini talked about Italians being ‘crazy people’ in the best of the three Italian meanings of the phrase; the phrase that captures Ocrim’s uniqueness in terms of dedication, enthusiasm and an odd-ball way of looking at the world.

In a quiet moment Mr Antolini even suggested the word missing from the event’s name of ‘Wheat, flour and ...’ after all these years might well be, ‘crazy people’.

A video shown during the conference of the people who work within OCRIM, Paglierani, SACMS, GHIGI and San Marino baseball team players which focuses on individual faces, shows expressions ranging from puzzlement and quizzicalness to humour and delight through to a proudness and dedication that shines through. These people are passionate about what they do.



Marco Galli



Stefano Mazzini



Fabio Vuoto



And the choice of venue for this one-day global milling conference and get-together was in an old monastery, within the walls of a hilltop village that has changed little over the past couple of centuries.

Overshadowed by marble, masonry and mosaics and tapestries of saints and priests, a range of speakers talked about the latest technological developments in the production of today's staple foodstuff, flour.

At the heart of the day's presentations was that delivered by Dr Lutz Popper of Mühlenchemie on 'Flour Improvers - basic information on enzymes and maturing agents'. It was a way of showing how machinery has to play an essential role in processing and preparing grain for its transition into flour and then baked products such as bread and other cereals-based foodstuffs.

That was followed by Fabio Vuoto's look at Ocrim's metering systems.

After a relaxed buffet lunch and a brief walk through the township to take in the views over the valley, the afternoon offered three more presentations rounded off by a general debate and a virtual reality experience where delegates could examine the insides of a virtual roller mill.

Milling and Grain will be reporting on the Mühlenchemie presentation plus 'Sanitation - the new frontiers' by Marco Galli and the 'BioStoneMill - the evolution according to Ocrim' by Stefano Mazzini in our November edition of the magazine.

Videos of interviews with both Alberto Antolini and his brother Sergio, plus others from the event, can be viewed on the Milling and Grain Facebook page. [🌐](#)



**Alberto Antolini**

OCRIM, CEO and Member of Bonifiche Ferraresi's board of directors

The concept behind Ocrim is... art. It's easy to talk about milling machines. It's all about flour, although that's not easy in itself. It is applying the concept of business to milling that's difficult. Milling starts from art. Which it was in olden times: Today it is not easy to be in a new century and to progress milling technology.

We started with a renewed Ocrim company at the beginning of 2000s. The concept was that we wanted to stay in this country, because it's our country, our story, our past and our old men of the past that must remain connected to us.

That was the concept of my family and what is important to the Ocrim family today.

We have found a variety of people ready to go this way, ready to demonstrate to the world what industrial milling from Italy can do.

I think this place is magic because it is one part of Italy seen by the world. We are like that, we are a big family. We will sit and talk with our customer about milling and flour and the problems of the world because each country has its problems connected to the market, or to the season, or to the weather, or to a lender. We talk friendly, we will stay with our customers for a long time. Our experience from around the world tells us we must be open to everyone.

We have plans in the USA, which is a big adventure because we now have two very big contracts. It is easy for us now because we sit at the table and speak the same language and the dream is the same. Without such customers it is more difficult to arrive in a new country and express that dream in milling technology.

**Sergio Antolini**

OCRIM Vice President – Paglierani, CEO

At 91 years old, Paglierani is the oldest company with the same family controlling the company. Of course we are now very active worldwide, but we are becoming more active when we enter into the milling side of Ocrim.

Along with Ocrim we are developing new equipment relating to packaging. With Ocrim we are developing new ideas, for example now the stone mill that was presented at the conference is the result of the cooperation between Paglierani and Ocrim.

Paglierani entered into Ocrim 20 years ago as a shareholder. We kept the owners 10 years ago and we started managing Ocrim. Over the past 10 years, we seen turnover go from 40 million Euro, when 40 percent of the manufacturing was in the company and the rest was spread around to a turnover of over 110 million Euro, with internal manufacturing close to 70 percent.

All is done in our works. It means we are no longer subcontracting, all is generated on the 'territory', so we design, manufacture, deliver and commissioning. All this is happening onsite.

Everybody thinks new innovation starts from the high-tech countries. This is not totally true because of course we have to learn from third countries as well, in terms of the use of equipment, reliability and efficiencies, which are very important in those countries where people are not well informed.

Our new BioStoneMill from Ocrim has four applications for this new innovation. One application is to look to our in-country customers in agribusiness, the farmers, to grind cereal on the spot for the agribusiness itself. This will allow farmers to grind and sell their wheat, or their cereals, on the local market.

Another option is to add milled flour from the milling process to another product produced in a third country; which of course needs to be ground locally. Finally, there are the mills themselves that can adopt this new technology.

