

PRESENTED BY	Cmi Industries SpA
Interview with Dott. Corrado Bellotti Technical Director	**Gandola**

EXPONENTIAL GROWTH AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADAPTABILITY: GANDOLA'S EVOLUTION IN THE SPIRIT OF CMI INDUSTRIES

Beyond Mechanics, the Operational Partnership

In the landscape of the Italian food industry, the transition from an artisanal dimension to a multinational scale is never a linear journey, but the result of a constant tension between commercial vision and production capacity.

The encounter between **CMI Industries S.p.A.** and **Gandola** represents a paradigm of this balance. It is not a simple machinery supply, but a dynamic **case history** where technology must bend to unpredictable external variables: raw material fluctuations, packaging material tolerances, and the need for extreme format flexibility.

The interview, moderated by **Giuseppe Testa** (Marketing Consultant, CMI) with the support of Barbara and Kana, featured **Dr. Corrado Bellotti**, Technical Director of Gandola and historical memory of a company that has successfully transformed its bond with the territory and its



specialization in **hazelnuts** into a global competitive asset. The following analysis combines industrial growth data with field reality, outlining the trajectory of a leader in **spreadable creams.**

The Scale-Up: From 4 to 43 Million Euros (2003–2025), a percentage growth of 975%

Gandola's growth is not only a volumetric success, but a strategic positioning operation in the value market. Under Dr. Bellotti's guidance, the company has undergone a radical transformation that has redefined the concept of scalability.

Dr. Bellotti, Gandola's trajectory over the last twenty years is impressive. What are the numbers and the drivers behind this evolution?

“I’ve been in this sector since 1995, but the real turning point began in 2003. We’ve gone from a turnover of €4 million to a projected **€43 million by 2025**, doubling our production lines (from 2 to 4). Today, **90% of our production** consists of spreads: hazelnut, dark chocolate, white chocolate and pistachio, with a strong focus on **organic, vegan** and **dairy-free** products. We are not just manufacturers, but strategic partners for large-scale retailers: we manage brands such as **Eurospin, Conad, Coop** and **Lidl**, and lend our production capacity to high-end industrial products.

We have recorded a **15% increase in value**, a figure that demonstrates our ability to handle complex products, whilst maintaining a strong presence in central and southern Italy under the **Gandola brand**”.

In this context, how significant are external variables such as raw materials and global market dynamics?

"The market is on high alert. The price of **hazelnuts** has risen from €8 to €13 per kilogram; the major players in Turkey and America are keeping the market at a standstill. On the consumer side, we see a dichotomy: the US is pushing for bulk formats, whilst in Europe success is determined by quality and specialised formats, such as **180g** jars for pistachios. Our challenge is to remain competitive despite these price rises, offering a product that maintains the highest quality standards for both our organic and budget ranges."



The Technical Architecture: Efficiency in Increasingly Compact Layouts

The technological integration at Gandola must respond to a precise physical constraint: the optimization of a plant with a **restricted layout**. Here, the versatility of CMI lines becomes the enabling factor for managing a complexity of formats ranging from round 200g jars to oval ones, through to polypropylene containers.

How are the current CMI lines structured, and what are the technical specifications that guarantee your production continuity?

"We currently operate with **three CMI lines** purchased in 2014 and then in 2017. The process is a sequence of precision: we begin with an inversion star for **blowing** and cleaning the glass jars, followed by a **six-head dosing system**. The critical phase is capping.

We use polypropylene and polyethylene caps with an induction sealing system 'Nutella-style,' where the protective cardboard is heat-sealed directly onto the rim of the jar during screwing. It is a single-phase process that requires perfect synchronization."

Format changeover is often the bottleneck of production. How do you manage the time required for setup?

"It is a case of '**necessity becoming virtue.**' In a plant where space is limited, we cannot afford 15 dedicated lines. We have to be versatile. On a single line, we produce three different types of jars, including cups and ovals. Although two hours of downtime has an impact, the mechanical robustness of CMI machines allows us to recover efficiency once the line is up and running. The last installed line, dedicated to 200g formats, was specifically designed to reduce this downtime and maximize output."

The "So What?" Layer: From Mechanical Rigidity to Adaptive Intelligence

The true critical issue that emerged from the dialogue does not concern nominal speed, but error management. The variability of supply materials in particular glass exposes the limits of traditional mechanics.

Dr. Bellotti, you raised a fundamental point about material tolerances. What is the daily reality you face on the line?

"This is the heart of the problem. We receive glass batches from suppliers in **Bulgaria or Germany** that show tolerances of **+/- 2mm** on the same pallet. Rigid mechanics cannot handle this discrepancy: if the jar is slightly larger or smaller, the capping star does not center it perfectly, causing rejects or stoppages. At the moment, we have resorted to making **internal modifications to the stars** ourselves in an attempt to 'absorb' these variations, because the standard solution was not sufficiently flexible. This is where the supplier can make a qualitative leap."

This is a challenge that CMI is taking up through software and AI. What is the technological response to this feedback?

"The vision of Giuseppe Testa and CMI is clear: we can no longer be 'victims' of mechanics. The answer is the shift from pure mechanics to **Artificial Intelligence**. We are designing machines capable of 'understanding' the container they receive, collecting real-time data to adapt capping and filling parameters to the tolerances of each batch. The objective is to create a '**technological buffer**' that compensates for the inefficiencies of the external supply chain."

Beyond the technical side, there is the topic of Service and costs. What is your honest assessment?

"Technical support must be immediate. When a regulator or software locks up, I cannot wait days: a stoppage on the primary line is an enormous loss. "The activity of CMI Service is continuously improving; you have understood that Service is **an activity that must never become a bottleneck for a company like ours."** At the same time, there is the issue of spare parts: the price positioning of certain original components is often perceived as too high, but we are in continuous dialogue with CMI's ownership, which is allowing us to keep our partnership absolutely solid and long-lasting."

Future Vision: Glass and the Value of Field Experience

Looking at the next 3–4 years, Gandola sees **glass** as the material of choice for premium products a noble but difficult material to handle, one that will require increasingly "tolerant" machines.

What advice would you give to CMI's designers for next-generation machines?

"My advice is simple: '**get out of the office**.' Spend time on our plants, get your hands dirty with the real problems of production. It is in the field that you understand how a one-millimeter difference can make or break a production shift. Technology must not be self-referential; it must serve the reality of those who produce 2 million jars a month. If a client requests a **1 kg** format or a **180g** jar, the machine must respond with the same reliability."

Conclusion: An Innovation Built on Dialogue

The interview with Dr. Bellotti confirms that industrial leadership is not acquired solely through the purchase of hardware, but through the ability to establish a critical and honest dialogue with one's technology partners. The trust between Gandola and CMI is solid, but it is a trust that requires constant evolution.

