Robotic grinding and polishing of premium designer kitchen and bathroom fixtures

When Hansgrohe AG in Shiltach placed a large order with SHL Automation in Böttingen for eight robotic grinding and polishing systems, the two German companies further cemented their longtime affiliation. Based on the experiences and shared accomplishments over their successful 20-year partnership, Hansgrohe is again relying on the expertise and innovation of SHL in the area of robotic grinding and polishing for their premium designer kitchen and bathroom fixtures. This deployment represents the culmination of close cooperation on development using Hansgrohe as an early tester. The new robotic grinding and polishing systems feature a highly flexible design for efficient processing and can be employed universally for various product families. This is due to using compatible robot systems with modular assembly of the individual units with standard SHL components. The robotic grinding systems are composed of industrial robots, SHL DKS dual contact wheel grinding machines with DPE turning and positioning units, and SHL UBM universal machining units that are also used for grinding. The robotic polishing systems are composed of industrial robots, SHL DP 1000 double polishing machines with DPE turning and positioning units, and SHL UBM universal milling machines that are also used for polishing. These systems also include SHL hand milling machines for performing manual regrinding and polishing close to the production line.

By placing its order with SHL, Hansgrohe sent a clear signal that it wishes to develop the partnership between the two companies, both located in the German federal state of Baden-Württemberg. This strategic alliance, meanwhile, also stretches to North America. Hansgrohe North America will soon use a robot machining station from SHL to polish its bathroom fixtures. Both Hansgrohe North America and the SHL subsidiary, SHL Inc., have their headquarters near Atlanta, Georgia.

SHL – automation with robots

Founded in 1989 by partners Seelmann, Häring and Lehr, SHL Automation AG is a successful maker of robot systems. More than 60 employees at its Böttingen site handle the design, manufacture and programming of robot systems, as well as their implementation. To date, with more than 1,100 robotic grinding and polishing systems produced, SHL has become one of the biggest customers – after automotive manufacturers – for robot suppliers. SHL’s clients come from various sectors with an emphasis on grinding and polishing a variety of products, including fittings, medical technology, building hardware, home appliances and the automotive supply industry. In order to serve its diverse client base, SHL offers a product range that includes a...
wide array of standard and customized grinding and polishing machines that are developed and manufactured in-house. Each machine constitutes the center of its highly productive, robot-guided grinding and polishing station. The facilities in Böttingen feature more than 50,000 sq. ft. of hall and office space for the company’s various departments, including development, construction and software; production, system assembly and warehousing; and sales and administration. The facilities also house a large technology center for customer presentations, producibility tests, customer training and customer service. In the Service department, 14 specialists work to ensure that the robot systems offer maximum technical availability and can provide high productivity around the clock.

About Hansgrohe – the original from the Black Forest

Over its 109-year company history, the Hansgrohe company – with its head office located in the Black Forest in Schiltach, Germany – has gained a reputation as a leading innovator in design and technology in the kitchen and bath fixtures industry. With its faucets, shower heads and shower systems, Hansgrohe AG creates original products that help make bathrooms more functional, convenient and beautiful. Hansgrohe’s fittings can be found in many prestigious locations, including on the majestic Queen Mary II cruise ship, in Terminal 5 of London’s Heathrow Airport, in the Burj Khalifa in Dubai – currently the highest structure in the world, in the German Chancellery in Berlin, in the luxurious apartments of the Yoo building in New York, and at the University of Masdar in Abu Dhabi. With its Axor, Hansgrohe, Pharo and Pontos brands, the company earned revenues in 2009 of about EUR 610 million (2008: EUR 668 million). The Hansgrohe Group currently employs about 3,200 people worldwide, with about two thirds of them working in Germany. The company operates production facilities at six German plants, as well as in France, the Netherlands, the United States and China.