

Fidia's New Gantry Milling Machine Now Being Built in Michigan



Brian Kerkstra, Paragon Die & Engineering Manufacturing Engineer, shows Fidia's 60 ft. long Y2G twin spindle gantry 5-axis CNC milling machine, one of the four Fidia machines that Paragon has. There are dual controls at each end of the machine so it can be operated from each end.

At a recent open house at Paragon Die & Engineering's state-of-the-art mold, fixture and contract machining facility in Grand Rapids, MI, Italian-based Fidia demonstrated its new GTF/Mv3 high-speed gantry milling machine for 187 customers



Fidia's new flagship C40 control has a dual screen with ViMill Look Ahead virtual milling software and a four camera system to see inside the machining area when the doors are closed.

and potential customers over a two-day period. Delcam was also a part of the demonstration program having partnered with Fidia to provide the PowerMILL CAM software that, with Fidia's ViMill interface and the Fidia machine control, simulates the machining operation based on a generated CAM program that detects and avoids any possible collisions or any unexpected movements between the part, tool head

or the machine.

"This is the first Fidia GTF/Mv3 high-speed gantry machine here in North America with the unique collision-free controls, and it was built right here on Paragon's floor from the ground up," said Dr. Giuseppe Morfino, CEO of Fidia, at the open house. "Paragon has been one of Fidia's best customers in America. It now has four of our milling machines, including the largest Y2G twin spindle gantry we have ever built. When Paragon's President, David Muir, began the discussions about purchasing the new GTF/Mv3 he was concerned about the lead time for delivery, and we came up with the unique plan to build the machine here in its Grand Rapids facility. We were able to change the delivery time frame of 10 months to having the machine up and running in seven months.

"The machine castings were poured in Ohio, delivered to Paragon and machined on its big boring mills. Paragon is well known for its large and very accurate molds, fixtures and contract machining know-how, so the machining capa-



David Muir, President, Paragon Die & Engineering, left, said, "The Fidia milling machines represent a significant leap forward for Paragon as we supply industries like aerospace, alternative energy, automotive, heavy truck and nuclear that demand highly precise molds and machined parts that are also very large."

bility was already here. We sent over a team of Fidia installation technicians and also shipped over a number of important components including the ram, the 5-axis milling head and the controls. Working with the Paragon plant staff, the machine build process worked smoothly and efficiently. As of today, we have more new machine orders for North America that we will be building here for sale elsewhere. Paragon Die & Engineering is going to be our machine building source, right here in Michigan," said Dr. Morfino.

Paragon President, David Muir, took time to explain how the collision-free capability of the machine controls

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Paragon Die & Engineering's 135,000 sq. ft. facility in Grand Rapids, MI, houses upwards of 40 machine tools and presses including six 5-axis CNC mills, two 3,000 ton presses and a 60-ft. long Fidia twin spindle 5-axis CNC milling machine, the largest Fidia has ever built.

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ultimately evolved. He said, "We were at EMO in 2013 talking to Fidia about the GTF/Mv3 and I was explaining that today we do not have the experienced toolmakers and machinists that we once did, and our molds and fixtures are large and we cannot afford to make machining mistakes, so what can we do? Actually it turned out to be quite easy. We walked down to the Delcam booth with the Fidia people and we came up with an idea for a new software plug-in with Delcam's PowerMILL CAM software that linked Fidia's ViMill software and its controls, so the operator can simulate the machining program before it ever starts."

"To a degree, there has always been a leap-of-faith when

it comes to hitting the 'Go' button on a machine tool. But if you have the ability to accurately view the toolpath from the code without it seeing any collisions or gouging of the part you know you can run the machine with confidence, and that's what we have achieved at Paragon Die & Engineering," said Mark Codagan, Delcam's V.P. of Sales for North America.

"Fidia, Delcam and Paragon Die & Engineering have truly demonstrated how success can be achieved by combining the synergies of three great companies towards a common purpose, that is collision-free high-speed CNC milling," said David Muir.

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