

Our carbon earrings weigh just 7 grams

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You can fall in love also with a material, until it becomes the centre of your work. In the case of **Massimo and Stefania Banfi**, of **Tecnomax**, in Busto Arsizio, the material was carbon fibre, whose main characteristics are low weight and high resistance.

“My husband knows carbon like the back of his hand,” says **Stefania**. **Massimo**’s familiarity with this material dates back about thirty years, to when he had just returned from military service, and had gone to work for a company specialised in it. It was love at first sight.

The company eventually closed down, but from its ashes, another three companies rose up, on the initiative of a number of employees. They were the classical **spin-offs**.

“I was an employee of one of these,” says **Massimo**, “and at one point, 11 years ago, I thought I’d set up on my own, because I was already working for the top company in motorboats, producing rear-view mirrors and steering wheels. From employee, I became a supplier for one of the biggest partners of **Agusta – Westland**, and I am a direct supplier of the composites department of **Agusta** and **Ferrari**.

The global crisis did not scare the Banfis. On the contrary, the couple turned a difficult situation into an advantage. “With the crisis, there was a downturn in orders,” says Stefania, “and the time we had available increased, so **we put our brains to work**. It’s amazing how it goes: you throw in an idea and immediately get five more. Before, it was hard even to think. We do everything: we adjust bicycle frames, we create parts for motorboats, and we’ve got a lot of other projects in mind.”

The Banfis are “**serial entrepreneurs**”, they have the ability to spot new businesses and are not afraid to try them out. Massimo looked at his son’s radio-controlled car and immediately invented a **light, practical, battery holder**. Enthusiasts who visit the circuits saw the new “item” and asked where they could buy it. “From me,” Massimo replied proudly.

Stefania thought about how heavy women’s **earrings** are and created an original, very light (**only 7g**), three-dimensional set, out of carbon, of course. They are different from the ones commercially available, which are “flat and drowning in metal.”

These two artisans find, from within, the energy to tackle the economical crisis. “We’ve found alternative ways, and we’ve created a **special trademark for our jewellery**,” Stefania explained. “It’s a map of the world, with country borders and Italy highlighted with the Italian flag.”

For Stefania and Massimo, **optimism** is their best weapon; they believe in the cooperation of

colleagues and, therefore, in networking, achieving critical mass through genuine collaboration. “We’re very active, and we’re very close to those friends of ours that do the same job. We help each other, and we stick together, as **Giorgio Napolitano, the President of the Republic** asked us to. In this way, we can overcome the crisis because, if I give work to others, they, in turn, will give work. We have to start this virtuous mechanism, and it’s only possible if everybody does something.”

Tecnomax are bringing their creations to “Ville Ponti”, in Varese, on **22 and 23 October**, to the Artistic Craft Exhibition.

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