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CIRCUITS FOR DISCREET BAITING IN HISTORIC VERONA

Preserving the beauty of historic Verona, Italy, while maintaining effective pest control is a delicate balancing act for the city's municipal services company.

"Our scope is to preserve our historical and architectural heritage while doing pest management with the least impact on those sites as possible," points out Marco Bonamano, Pest Control Manager, AMIA VERONA (Multiservice Company of Environmental Hygiene), which provides pest management for the district of Verona, along with recycling, waste management, and other municipi-

pal services.

A UNESCO cultural site, Verona attracts tens of thousands of visitors each year. Founded in the 1st century BC, the city is rich in early Roman remains – the Roman theater, the Amphitheatre Arena (second only to the Coliseum in Rome), and the Ponte Pietra bridge, to name a few.

Within the heart of Verona are outstanding cathedrals, palaces and other architectural structures, spanning nearly 20 centuries of European history. And, of course, today's biggest draw for love-struck tourists is the

House of Juliet, a medieval complex where Shakespeare's hero, Romeo, wooed the lovely Juliet beneath her fabled balcony, which was added to the small palace in the 1930s.

Unique Problem for Pest Control

The plethora of historical and architectural treasures presents a unique problem for Bonamano and the city's four technicians, namely, downplaying the visible signs of pest control, especially in high tourist areas.

"People don't want to know there are rodents," stresses Bonamano who, nonethe-

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less, has roughly 2,000 rodent bait stations – typical, black square boxes – positioned throughout Verona.

Yet, rats are an inevitable presence, according to Stefano Murari, a sales representative for Colkim, the Italian distributor working with AMIA.



“Although the management of municipal waste and street cleaning are optimal, rats are inevitably present,” Murari points out.

The main problem is Norway rats, which use the city’s sewer system with its numerous underground connections dating back to Roman times. The sewers run for several miles along the banks of the Adige River, forming an “S” through the center of Verona.

“Rats are attracted by the easy ability to find refuge from the periodic flooding of the Adige River,” Murari pointed out.

Tree-dwelling roof rats also pose problems in Verona’s many gardens and parks.

Verona - First Italian City to Use CIRCUITs

To address Bonamano’s concerns, Colkim’s Sales Director, Adriana Lombardi, arranged for Bonamano to meet with Murari and Bell’s Southern European Manager, Arnaud del Valle, to test Bell’s PROTECTA EVO CIRCUIT Bait Station in historic Verona. The bait station looks more like a utility or cable box than a typical bait station.

At their initial meeting, the reps shared with Bonamano the results of a study from Lyons, France, where the CIRCUIT had successfully put an end to costly weekend “bait station bashing” along the city’s popular tourist pier. (See *Bell Report*, Oct.-Dec. 2013)

“We don’t have problems of bait station bashers, but it’s always difficult to place black square rodent bait stations in Roman and historical buildings without affecting the charac-

ter of the environment,” said Bonamano who decided the grey CIRCUIT was “the ideal bait station” to test in the most famous places in town.

“With Verona as the first Italian city to use the CIRCUIT, AMIA wanted to give us the opportunity to set up CIRCUITs in every tourist spot in Old Town Verona,” noted del Valle, who also arranged the Lyons study.

On September 3, 2013, Bonamano and his technicians met Murari, Lombardi and del Valle at 6:30 a.m. to place CIRCUITs in 19 pre-selected locations throughout Verona. Covering nearly 15 km on foot, they worked for six hours, placing CIRCUIT Bait Stations in difficult-to-treat and high tourist sites.

“All bait stations were fixed to the wall to

treated against rats and mice,” del Valle noted.

To test bait preference, the team baited with either 28g NOTRAC BLOX or 20g SOLO BLOX. For monitoring rodent activity in places such as the Roman baths, they baited with non-toxic DETEX BLOX.

In the weeks that followed, AMIA technicians checked the stations for rodent activity and bait consumption. If bait consumption was high, they rebaited every three days. With moderate consumption, stations were inspected weekly, dropping to once every 10 days for low consumption. Stations with no bait consumption were checked biweekly.

By November, with bait consumption rates as high as 100 percent in one case, AMIA was



Verona’s Roman excavations, ancient architecture and popular Juliet’s balcony with lots of tourist traffic are excellent examples of how well CIRCUIT blends in the panorama.

sold on the effectiveness of the station.

“With CIRCUIT, we are using effective rodent control, discretion and security at the same time,” Bonamano concluded. “Using CIRCUIT, it is the best way for us to place bait stations in huge tourist areas.”

AMIA was also favorably impressed by the potential cost savings on overall service offered by the CIRCUIT, plus there was no damage to CIRCUIT bait stations, despite being placed in heavy tourist areas.

What’s more, in the fall/winter check, technicians noticed a significant increase in bait consumption in the CIRCUIT Stations.

“To their surprise, this revealed unsuspected infestations in old town areas, previously considered or believed to be “infestation-free,” noted Colkim’s Lombardi. ■

take advantage of the ‘masking effect’ that characterizes them,” Murari pointed out.

They also placed CIRCUITs in high rodent/high tourist areas, such as Juliet’s balcony, Dante’s plaza, and the Verona amphitheater.

“Now, for the first time, these places are

Montecassino Abbey and Valley of the Temples test CIRCUIT Bait Stations

Visitors to some of Italy's most popular tourist attractions may be surprised to see what looks like utility boxes amidst ancient structures. That is, if they notice them at all.

With successful results in Verona, Bell's Italian distributor, Colkim, is now working with other customers in Italy testing Bell's PROTECTA EVO CIRCUIT Bait Station in tourist locations and public venues.

"You can make effective rodent control without disfiguring the landscape or the beauty of a location," said Fausto Giuseppe Oliva of CESAN, Compagnia Europea Sanificazione, a pest control company in Cassino that recently placed four tamper-resistant EVO CIRCUITS in the renowned Montecassino Abbey, the first Benedictine monastery, established in Montecassino.

"We like PROTECTA EVO CIRCUIT for its innovative design and its installation versatility," noted Oliva of the unique, grey bait station that looks more like a utility or cable box, complete with connector tubes, than the traditional black boxes.

The CIRCUIT, Oliva finds, works especially well in places requiring "special discre-



tion," like the Abbey, a top religious destination for tourists, where black rats and mice have been a problem for over a year.

In December 2013, Oliva, along with Colkim's sales manager, Adriana Lombardi;



sales rep, Fernando Pasqualucci; and Bell's Southern European Manager, Arnaud del Valle, travelled to the Monastery where they placed two CIRCUITS filled with the rodent bait, NOTRAC BLOX, in the Abbey's sepulchers that hold the sacred relics of St. Benedict, who founded the monastery in 529, and his sister, Saint Scholastica.

"We wanted to fight against the rats and save the two saints," said del Valle.

Over the next year, a CESAN technician will regularly check the CIRCUITS for rodent activity and service accordingly.

Limiting Visual Impact in Valle dei Templi

Further south in Agrigento, Sicily, Edmondo Delfino of ECO-SICULA is conducting similar trials at the Valley of the Temples, *Valle dei Templi*, a UNESCO World Heritage Site with outstanding examples of Greater Greek art and architecture.

Delfino wants to limit the visual impact of rodent control in this popular archaeological site that is experiencing a severe and long-standing rat and mouse infestation.

"The problem with historical areas is the difficulty and, often impossibility, of placing fresh bait," he noted.



Photos: Using CIRCUITS to discreetly place bait in the renowned Montecassino Abbey.

Delfino's technicians installed 15 CIRCUIT bait stations filled with SOLO BLOX.

"We perforated walls for installation without using silicone and placed the bait stations with the cooperation of the Park," Delfino explained. For the next three months, technicians checked the stations bi-weekly.

"The CIRCUIT project has satisfied us as it gives us the opportunity to place bait stations, limiting the visual impact," he added.

Del Valle, who works with Bell distributors and their customers on these trials, stressed that "even in places difficult to treat with baits, CIRCUIT is the only bait station to offer discretion, security, effectiveness, and respect of the historical heritage." ■

Bell's Bromadiolone products move forward in Europe

Bell Laboratories has completed applications for "mutual recognition" of its bromadiolone-based products in 18 European countries.

Bell's International Registration Specialist, Torill Holm, sent off the necessary materials at the end of March to keep Bell's bromadiolone-based BLOX and pelleted products authorized for sale in Europe.

"The European Biocidal Products Directive/Regulation required that all currently marketed products go through a re-registration process," noted Bell's Director of Regulatory Affairs, John Lublinkhof. "This has been a long, on-going process which essentially began in 1998."

Bell has applied for "mutual recognition" in all European countries where the company holds registrations for its bromadiolone products, sold under the CONTRAC, NOTRAC and TOMCAT brands.

"Once each country has reviewed and approved the applications, there will be new label language for all existing products, along with additional precautionary statements and certain restrictions," Lublinkhof added. "These will differ from country to country due to label limitations imposed for such products."

Also, each country will have labels in its own language. Bell will prepare product labels in a total of 13 languages. ■

Dinah Elliott retires after 35 years in customer service

In 1979, a young woman, tired of working at a local insurance company, applied for a receptionist job at a small, but growing, manufacturing company.

The owner of the company, Malcolm Stack, knew a dedicated worker when he met one and hired Dinah Elliott on-the-spot as Bell's first full-time office person.

That was 35 years ago, and when Dinah retired at the end of March, a bit of Bell's living history walked out the door.

"Dinah was one of the original, long-time employees who helped the company grow to its prominence in the industry today," noted Linda Hughes, Stack's daughter and Bell's current owner.

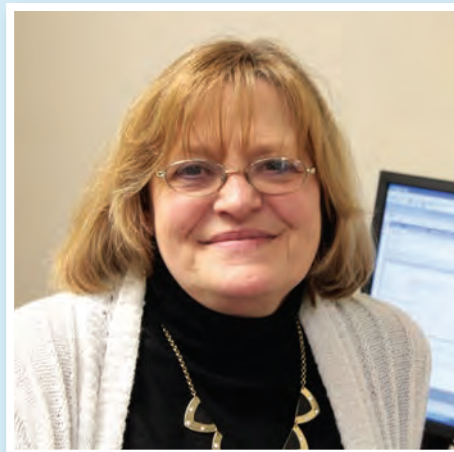
In the early days, Dinah answered phones, took orders, sent out mailings and managed schedules for Malcolm and a couple other employees who were busy selling Rodent Cake and PCQ to Bell distributors.

Customer service suited her and, as business grew, so did the office staff she managed. When Bell acquired its sister company, Motomco, in 1984, Dinah frequently travelled to its Florida headquarters to train and supervise its customer service staff.

She also handled registration of the company's trademarks, and eventually focused completely on Motomco accounts.

While she has seen tremendous change at Bell, what has struck Dinah most is "our commitment to our customers."

"We have high integrity and I like being



part of that. We stand behind everything we do. When you go home at night, you have a good feeling about what you've done during the day," she said.

Dinah also holds Bell's founder in high esteem. "Malcolm was such a good mentor," she said of Stack who passed away in 2006. "He always greeted you in the morning and, if he didn't see you, he made a point of coming up later. It was important."

And, in what is now part of Bell's lore, she recalls averting a near disaster when Malcolm's tie was caught in the company's first paper shredder.

"He was hanging onto his tie, trying to pull it out," she recalled. "'Shut it off,' Malcolm shouted, so I got down on the floor and pulled the plug."

Bell employees joined Dinah at a retirement luncheon where, along with well wishes, she received a trip and Bell mementos. ■

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