

MAKITA CELEBRATES 100 YEARS



Celebrating 100 YEARS of Innovation

MARKING A CENTURY OF INNOVATION, MAKITA IS JUST WARMING UP

In our last issue, I talked about business longevity and the extraordinary obstacles companies must overcome to survive to 100 years of age. As examples, I cited our distributor cover story and Makita, which marks its 100th year of business in 2015. I was privileged to attend the company's U.S. celebration and it gave me a new appreciation for Makita's cross-cultural business model, spirit of innovation and dedication to enduring service to its customers and employees across the planet.

Set at the Terranea Resort on the Palos Verdes coast of Los Angeles, Makita hosted nearly 400 U.S. distributors to commemorate its corporate centennial and to thank them for their loyal support over the decades.

Over three days, the five-star oceanfront resort provided a lush backdrop for the festivities, which included dinners, sea kayaking, paddleboarding, spa sessions, seaside painting and wine tastings, pool lounging, hiking, shopping and golf at the nearby Trump National Golf Club.

Throughout the event, Makita's history played a central role. Presentations and exhibits reviewed the company's

birth in 1915 as a small electric motor sales and repair company. It followed the company from its first power tool, a handheld electric planer, launched in 1958 and highlighted Makita milestones, including its first cordless drill in 1978, its first pneumatic tools in 1981 and its first Lithium-ion powered tools in 2005.

The main event, the official celebration dinner, featured presentations from Makita's chairman Mike Goto, president Jack Hori, director Muni Goto, and a "Kagami-Biraki," a traditional Japanese sake ceremony. The ceremony involved the tapping of special barrels of sake, from which each attendee was served a portion in a hand-made Japanese cedar "Masu" cup.

During the celebration dinner, Rich Chapman, senior vice president of sales, noted with pride that Makita has been manufacturing power tools in the United States continuously since 1985 — and has never left.

You only turn 100 once, so Makita pulled out the stops for celebrations across the planet this year. We were invited to the U.S. bash and its seaside location and surprise visit from Martina McBride made it an event worthy of a century of success.



At left, Makita's Adam Livingston demonstrates the impressive new cordless rebar cutter. Below, Andrew Camp gives us a sneak peak at all-new cordless nailers, staplers and auto-feed screwdrivers set for release next year.



Keeping "the big surprise" a secret was no small task, but Makita successfully kept the audience in suspense until the end of the celebration dinner, when country superstar Martina McBride and her band delivered a thrilling 90-minute concert.

As amazing and lavish as the entire event was, it is even more noteworthy that it was just one of more than three dozen similar events held this year all across the globe in major Makita markets from Asia and Australia to Europe, Africa and Canada.

But that is not to say there were no products here. As if to let its loyal distributors know that even after 100 years, "You aint seen nothin' yet," Makita introduced several innovative new products and entirely new product categories including more brushless tools, new 12V cordless platform, new 18V and 12V Lithium-ion batteries with LED charge level indicators, new 18V X2 cordless tools powered by two 18V batteries, four-stroke gas-powered landscaping tools and professional lasers and distance measures.

That's right, we said lasers. The new measuring tools include a versatile Self-Leveling Combination Cross-Line/Point Laser, the model SK103PZ, and two laser distance measures, the 164-foot-capacity model LD050P Laser Distance Measure and a 262-foot version, the model

LD080P. You can read more about these tools in our Industry Update on pages 166-167.

Makita is also expanding its 18V X2 LXT dual-battery platform with a new brushless blower which delivers air at up to 120 mph and 473 cfm. The 18V X2 format also includes a new two-speed string trimmer, the model XRU07Z. Using two 18V LXT 5.0-Ah BL1850 batteries, this unit can deliver up to a full hour of runtime on low. Another addition for woodworking is an 18V X2 (twin-battery) 7 1/2-inch miter saw, with a crosscutting capacity of up to 2 1/16 x 11 3/4 inches at 90°.

Other noteworthy new products include the model DML805 18V LXT Lithium-ion LED flood light, which

operates as either a cordless or corded unit. It throws 750 lumens on high mode or 450 lumens on low and has a capacity of up to 8.5 hours on high with a 5.0-Ah battery. It can be used as a standalone unit or mounted in pairs on a tripod.

The LXT 18V family also adds a new model XSC02Z brushless metal cutting circular saw which, with a 5 7/8-inch blade, can cut two-inch conduit in one pass — a huge boon for electrical contractors.

Makita will raise more than a few eyebrows with its new 18V LXT Lithium-ion cordless Rebar Cutter. The model XCS01Z easily handles rebar from 1/8 to 3/4 inches in diameter — up to 60 grade #6 rebar. It has a 360-degree rotating cutting head and long lasting cutting blades that can deliver up to 4,000 cuts before needing replacement.

These are just a few of the impressive new tools we saw at Makita's 100th anniversary bash. With a staff of nearly 1,000 engineers worldwide, we can look forward to many more great products to be on the way to Makita distributors. As Makita's year-long, globe spanning celebration of "100 years of Innovation" draws to a close, we can only look ahead and wonder what the next century will bring. We expect great things indeed. **CS**