

# South Tipp TODAY

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## The Suirway forward with Baumann sideloaders

By **Bernie Commins**

Carrick-on-Suir company Suirway Forklifts celebrates its one-year partnership with international sideloader specialist company, Cavaion Sideloaders Baumann.

An Italian/Tipperary alliance may seem an unlikely occurrence but for James Coleman, the managing director of Suirway Forklifts based in Mill River Business Park, Carrick-on-Suir, this is an amalgamation which has proven to be very successful. Twelve months ago the well-established forklift company secured an extremely lucrative deal, buying the franchise for the importation and distribution of Baumann sideloaders in Ireland.

Cavaion Sideloaders Baumann is a family-run business which has been in operation since 1969, slowly growing into an internationally renowned company employing 100 people in its Italian headquarters located in Cavaion beside picturesque Lake Garda. The company export their state-of-the-art, in-house designed sideloaders to 55 industrial countries worldwide; it is the world-leader in the manufacture and exportation of sideloaders.

Last week the president and owner of the Italian-based company, Wolfgang Baumann, travelled to Carrick-on-Suir to meet the staff of Suirway Forklifts and mark the first anniversary of a very successful year.

After visiting trade fairs and researching the Irish market for the best part of a year, Mr. Baumann said that he felt confident that Suirway was the best choice.

"We looked for the best company for a long time and we decided on Mr. Coleman and his company Suirway Forklifts and his very competent and professional staff.

Each machine is only as good as the trained staff and the aftersales. Here we have a very, very good and professional partner," said Mr. Baumann.

Suirway Forklifts have been a household name in the southeast for 25 years selling Toyota forklift trucks and providing machinery for hire. Mr. Coleman who has 22 years experience in the forklift business, discovered that there was a niche within this market that was not being catered for in Ireland.

"We had a share of enquiries from many of our customers for sideloader equipment, so we purchased some new Baumann equipment for rent and for sale," said Mr. Coleman.

These particular forklifts are specialised pieces of equipment used for carrying long and awkward loads in the building, steel, and timber industry and after discovering the demand that existed for these machines, Mr. Coleman endeavoured to collar a franchise, becoming the sole importer and distributor of the machines in the country. It was a lengthy process which required much consideration.

"We had many telephone conversations with Baumann, we had a visit from two of their managers, we then went to Lake Garda where they are located and convinced them that we were the people to import them into Ireland and

equally they convinced us that they were the people to supply that product to Ireland and we have had a very successful 12 months," said Mr. Coleman.

"We had set ourselves a target for 10 machines for Ireland for the first 12 months and we imported 25. We can see that market growing more," explained Mr. Coleman.

The company is currently setting up a network of distributors around Ireland. They have selected five prospective dealers in Dublin, Cork, Galway and Donegal who will handle the imported machines along with Suirway Forklifts, giving local service to customers nationwide.

This venture has required a great deal of training for the staff of Suirway Forklifts; all of whom have had the opportunity to travel to beautiful Cavaion near Lake Garda for training courses.

"We have taken a lot of time and effort to train our service engineers and our sales staff to provide our customers with the right product to suit their needs and also to provide them with a level of back-up service they want. In other words when we get their we fix it, we don't just look at it. We have six more service engineers going back there for a second two-and-a-half day course in the coming months," he added.

This feat has also increased staffing numbers at Suirway as three extra service engineers have been employed in the past year. More jobs will also be created nationwide as Baumann sideloader distributors are officially launched around the country in the coming months.

According to Mr. Coleman, Baumann are one of the most patriotic, committed and loyal companies that they have ever dealt with in the world.

One of the most important elements of the Baumann company is the fact that all machinery is designed and built in-house, so that when you require back-up and parts, you are only dealing with one company. They are renowned for their ingenuity and expertise in designing anything that is required by a potential client. It has recently designed and produced a four-wheel, multi-directional sideloader called the Foxx. The company has also entered into a partnership with Lufthansa, designing a special sideloader for the Airbus 380, transporting people to and from the plane.

When asked about the secret of his success, Mr. Baumann smiled and said: "That is easy. Innovation, quality, hard work, good staff and good, long, quality partnerships."

"It's very easy after 40 years," joked Mr. Coleman.

The future looks very good for Suirway Forklifts and Baumann sideloaders; they have the number one market share in Ireland and are number two worldwide per market share only after 12 months.

"We see a great future with this partnership and the product. Both Baumann and ourselves are of the same mindset as regards the future," said Mr. Coleman.



Pictured at Suirway Forklifts celebrating the first anniversary of the Italy/Tipperary collaboration were all the staff of the company with Mr. Baumann and Mr. Coleman.