

INSIDE PARMALAT
MANY KNEW, NO ONE
TALKED. WHY? (P.16)

DAVOS A CHANGE IN
ATTITUDE TOWARD
AMERICA? (P.20)

THE EURO MORE
THAN THE DOLLAR
SCARES EUROPE (P.57)

The McGraw-Hill Companies

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HIDDEN CHAMPIONS

Antonio Zamperla

Altavilla Vicentina, Italy

Manufacturer of amusement-park rides

Secret of Success:
 Ability to customize rides to adapt to the culture of each customer



2003 SALES
\$69.5
 MILLION

ITALY'S ZAMPERLA FAMILY entered the amusement business more than a century ago as circus impresarios. Today, Antonio Zamperla, along with its affiliates, is one of the world's top five producers of amusement-park rides, with annual sales of some \$70 million, and control over 17% of a \$400 million global market.

Founded in 1960 in Altavilla Vicentina, Zamperla made its name by turning

rough rides like bumper cars into gentler versions geared for kids. Today, says CEO and President **Alberto Zamperla**, 52, son of founder Antonio, the Italian company is the largest provider of rides to Walt Disney Co. worldwide. Zamperla machines can also be ridden at Six Flags,

Universal Parks & Resorts, and Warner Brothers parks in the U.S. and more than a dozen other countries.

The company offers more than 50 original attractions ranging from the \$95,000 "Mini Avio," which sends young aviators up in tiny planes, to a \$3.8 million "lie-

down" roller coaster called Volare. Annual sales have increased over 40% in the past five years, despite the global tourism slump and the slowdown in Asia, a key market. "At a difficult moment for the market, we said let's get even more aggressive," Alberto Zamperla explains. "It's a moment for acquiring share."

Zamperla's chief executive takes particular pride in his knack for adapting to different cultures.

Human figures are a no-no in the Muslim world and the Asian market has only gradually developed a taste for thrill rides. But cultural adaptation can bring big rewards. In Saudi Arabia, where amusement parks have separate sections for men and women, "instead of one machine, [we] sell two."

—By Francis X. Rocca in Rome

VERY AMUSING
 The Disko roller coaster



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SPECIAL REPORT (P.42)



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