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## Welding complex tailored blanks

**Livonia, MI**—You don't have to act like a robot to operate Soudronics' new non-linear tailored blank welder. But if you do, you can. Soutrac, the latest in a line of laser blank welders from this Swiss company, was introduced to the North American automotive market in a series of open house sessions (see page 32).

The robot in question, called Macchina, ran the Soutrac through its paces, demonstrating a proprietary gap-closing system that ensures quality welds when gaps reach 0.4 mm. This is accomplished by a seam-tracking and gap-measuring camera. Information from this camera sets a wire feed device into action supplying the correct amount of wire to fill the gap.

A state-of-the-art Souvis 6000 system monitors the quality of every laser weld by inspecting weld geometry and detecting any solidification irregularities. The operator is notified of any substandard weld conditions and a complete record of every step in the weld is maintained.

Soutrac offers users high system uptime so that tailored blanks can be produced at low cost. Soudronic engineers can monitor Soutrac from their desks. Also contributing to this low operating cost is the requirement for a single operator, ably demonstrated by Macchina, who needed only occasional help from a forklift operator who fed blanks to a robotic de-stacking station.

According to Soudronic, orders for Soutrac are in hand and will be delivered in Europe the second half of this year.

Bruno Kaegi, Soudronic president, says, "We are excited with the prospects of selling this new system because automakers today demand quality levels higher than ever before. So important is quality control that every part and

all welds are tracked 100 percent from start to finish. This is built into Soutrac.



Maccina demonstrates the Soutrac laser blank welder.

To learn more about this new tailored blank welder, access Soudronic's website [www.soudronic.com](http://www.soudronic.com). **-DAB**