

**EFTTA TARGETS
NON-MEMBERS**

An open letter from
Jean-Claude Bel p43

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March 2012 Issue 26

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**Sébile's plans for
Europe and US**

Exclusive interview with
Patrick Sébile p38

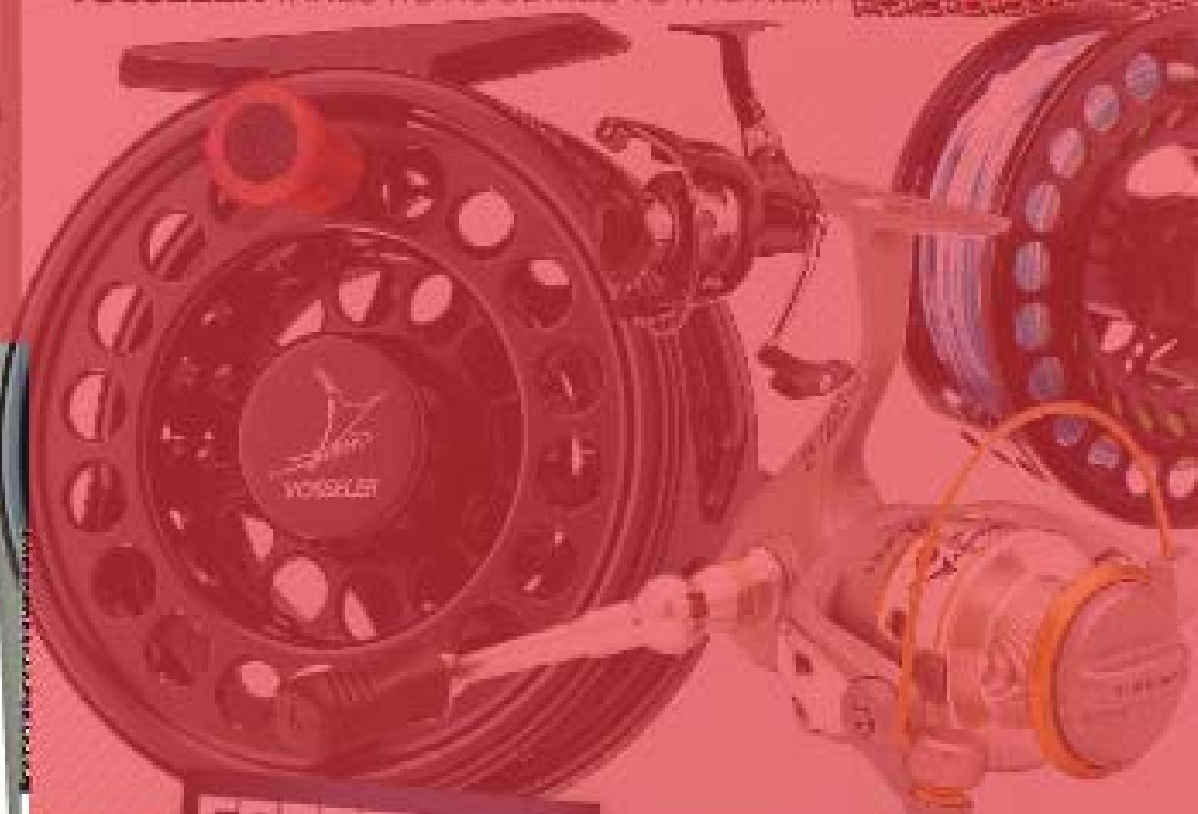


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**EFTTEX
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NEW! EFTTEX NEWS

**The official news section for
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This month: Delalande targets North African market, Arnaud sets sights on Germany and Vega reveals launch of its new magazine for Portuguese retailers

Arnaud unveils
how he is targeting
Germany

A

An open letter from the CEO
to all non-EFTTA members



COMPANIES YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT...

Patrick Sébile: 'Distribution is the key to success now'

Investment in stock and a new warehouse – plus some smart direct selling – has put Sébile in the perfect position to meet increased demand for its lures in 2010.

Angling International: You became CEO of Sébile in January last year and then MD of Anglers Diffusion Ltd (ADL) three months later. How are you managing to juggle the demands of these roles with the creative skills on which your company is founded?

Patrick Sébile: I have to say these three roles take pretty much all of my time, with no holidays or relaxing weekends since last year. So it's good that at least my job needs me to go fishing. I am very well assisted by the team in the USA and around the world, especially my COO Russell Gray. On the creative side, I have already developed a wide range of soft, wired and hard baits, so it doesn't take as much time as in the past and means I can give a substantial portion of my time to my management positions. Promotion takes a lot of my time. With the recent addition of the Middle East, we are now in 40 countries, so I have to provide the knowledge and help needed by each national distributor.

AI: Are you still able to involve yourself in the creative process?

PS: One hundred per cent! I developed this company because of all the creations I've worked on for the last twenty years, so I really have no plans to have other people designing and developing lures for Sébile. Many people come to me claiming they have a great idea, but I prefer not to see it in case I am working on the same kind of stuff myself. If you believe strongly in what you are doing, I suggest you do as I did and create your own company.

AI: At the end of last year you realigned US market territories and senior management responsibilities to improve service. Are you seeing the benefits?

PS: It is a bit early to be able to see significant results, but what I can clearly see is every time a retailer or wholesaler comes to me on that subject, they appreciate the approachability of the sales managers and reps that we employ. Our sales force is knowledgeable about the fish species in their

regions and this has helped us bring more lures to the retailers' shelves. For example, with having Barry Stockhaus in the northern part of the US as well as Canada, what we are seeing is more and more shops and wholesalers promoting Sébile lures due to his discussions about how well they work for pike, walleye or striped bass. Remember, a good sales person does not just sell lures for us, they sell fishing and the excitement that everyone has when the fish hits the lure.

AI: Do you see further organisational changes in 2010?

PS: As you know, Keeton Eoff left Sébile in February of this year to pursue different adventures. We wish him all the best, but his leaving has actually given us an opportunity to reassess the southern USA and Mexico regions. We have actually brought on Sportco Marketing Inc. to help increase our sales in the TALO region as well as some of the Midwestern states that we did not have representation in. Additionally, we now have a Latin America sales manager, Philippe Garcia, and we want to take great care of these territories. But a big evolution for 2010 is that we are now able to sell lures to retailers and wholesalers in countries where we don't yet have a national distributor. We cherish the national distributor approach, and we only work with exclusivity in each country. Our contract also stipulates that we don't allow national distributors to sell in markets other than their own. But we don't want to miss sales opportunities in countries where we don't have national distribution. So by selling directly to retailers and wholesalers in these countries, I believe we will be able to meet the existing demand, then make it stronger, with the goal at a certain point in time of finding the right exclusive



DOUG BLUNGER, SPORTS/SHOOTING MAGAZINE, USA

national distributor to handle the country. This is the benefit of the investment I made last year to move to a big warehouse and build stock.

AI: What is the biggest thing you have learned from your experience of establishing Sébile in the US?

PS: Nothing is impossible if you believe deeply in what you are doing. As an entrepreneur, the USA was the toughest challenge for a foreigner, a very strong market that was very difficult to penetrate. Several European companies, not just in the fishing industry, have tried to become established there, have spent millions in investment and have abandoned the attempt after a few years. My partners and myself did not get into the same situation. We came with a limited amount of money, but great faith in what we were doing and respect for the established brands and the American people. So the welcome and the position we have achieved today is so rewarding! * These people are very open-minded, and if you bring something that has a benefit for them they will give you your chance. It is then up to you to prove the value of what you are doing.

AI: What are the key differences between marketing to US and European markets?

PS: Actually there are a lot of similarities, but I have seen a difference in attitudes. In Europe, and I would say mainly in France, few people were paying at-

"By selling directly to retailers and wholesalers we will be able to create demand before finding the right distributor"

attention to my background with my 300 record fish catches, travelling and guiding all around the world, and different creations such as unique rods for SERT, in-line spinners for Mepps and new hook shapes for Gamakatsu. It's a cultural thing. When I came out with my lures, many people just criticised them because they were different to other brands, without paying attention to the products themselves. In America journalists, anglers and retailers don't judge the product on whether it fits the trends, they try it and judge it on how well it works.

AI: Where will your main focus be in the next two years, the US or Europe?

PS: Soft plastic lures will be at the centre of Sébile's development. In addition, a big part of our strategy will be to support our national distributors. This is why my sales managers are also avid and experienced anglers, so they are able to be out in the field with journalists on fishing trips, sharing with them their knowledge and the different uses of each lure. This is where Laurent Picq in Europe and Russia is a very strong asset. He is a top level zander and pike angler, and when he is fishing with a distributor, local journalists or representing us at a show in Clermont Ferrand, Moscow or Dubai, no one is better at creating the greatest possible impact on sales and brand promotion. This helps the brand credibility.

AI: You have been on record as saying the quality of delivery has been a key issue for you in the past. Is this something you are still working on?

PS: This is correct. I said that in the context of a

brand that created such an explosion in demand that no company in the world would have been able to fulfill the orders. That is why part of the plan I have put in place is to take a 6,300 sq ft warehouse. We now have several monthly deliveries there from the factory and each customer is now able to see that, since last summer, our ratio of filling orders is pretty good. No one is waiting to receive their baits. In addition, we now provide our customers with stock detail every week, so they are sure to get what they order. It makes our business easier too, with very few back orders to track. This was and is a big investment but I can see it paying off very well already. Links with many national distributors have been improved a lot as a result, so not only is the US retailer seeing the benefit from this, but also everyone from the angler all the way through the different levels of the selling chain. And of course Sébile as a company is reaping the rewards. In 2009 we did 2.2 times the sales we achieved in the previous year.

AI: In 2008 you won the EFFTEX hard bait award and in 2009 both hard and soft bait awards at ICAST. Can we expect something special from you again in 2010?

PS: I won't say that I have now got all that I wanted, but this has certainly fulfilled long-held dreams both as a lure designer and a CEO. To appear in *Field and Stream*, the reference point for the outdoor world for more than 110 years, was also fantastic, along with several 'best bait of the year' awards from other magazines that I deeply respect. But whatever happens, I just plan on staying who I am, always easy to reach and able to share my passion, whether it is



with Joe's shop or with the biggest fishing catalogue buyer. If Sébile wins more awards and accolades in the future it will make my heart beat just as fast as it did the first time. I don't think you can get used to that – and I wish not!

AI: What can you tell us about new products for 2010 that will excite the market place?

PS: We will focus on truly innovative ways to bring soft plastic worms, spinnerbaits, deep diving crankbaits and weighted hooks to the market. I just consider myself an angler who faces the same problems as every other angler, so as a designer I work to bring solutions that work for myself and my customers. I probably wouldn't do stuff that gets so much recognition if it was just for money. My involvement is linked to the benefits I will get while fishing myself!

AI: Finally, what do you see as the next big step for Sébile as a company?

PS: Reaching new levels of distribution. I don't want any half measures in making this company a major player in the fishing business.



**Want to talk to Sébile?
Here's how to find them...**

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