Gucci is strengthening its footwear manufacturing capacity. Pigini, a specialist in high-end footwear that is part of the industrial platform tapped by the leading label of luxury group Kering, has begun to build a plant extending over more than 10,000 m2 for the production of uppers (the upper part of a shoe, from the tip to the instep).

"With this new factory, we are keen to guarantee the continuity of this region’s manufacturing tradition, preserve the local know-how in shoe manufacturing techniques, and continue to express our passion for these products within a highly innovative environment," said in a press release the company's founder and boss, Fausto Pigini.

Pigini was founded in 1979 in Recanati, a town in the Marche region, a long-standing centre for Italian footwear production. The company employs 330 people, and is set to build the new factory in a plot adjacent to its other facilities. Pigini said it is building a state-of-the-art plant “in terms of environmental and climate sustainability,” one that is “equipped with the most advanced production machinery.” Construction is expected to start in early 2023, and will be completed in early 2024.

The new factory is expected to employ nearly 400 people within three years. A first recruitment drive will begin later this year. Before joining the new plant, Pigini's artisans will work in a 1,000-m2 workshop that is used for manufacturing and also for training purposes.

Pigini has organised a training programme aimed at young people who have “just left school, and unemployed people aged 18 to 26, for the training of specialist artisans” at the Scuola di Fabbrica Pigini, a vocational school inaugurated at the start of 2022.

This new programme is part of the ‘Gucci Ecole de l'Amour’ initiative, a multi-stage internship scheme at the group’s various factories, aimed at training artisans specialised in leather goods and footwear manufacturing.

Since 2018, 200 specialists have been trained through the initiative. “In line with our commitment to the supply chain, we want to contribute to enhancing the prestige of craft trades in the eyes of young people, offering them a unique training opportunity and stimulating career paths within a forward-looking environment,” said Massimo Rigucci, managing director of ArtLab & industrial operations for Gucci’s leather goods, footwear and jewellery.

In 2021, footwear sales accounted for about one-fifth of Gucci's €9.7 billion revenue.