

THE FAMILY BEHIND GARAGA ACQUIRES NOVATECH GROUP

By Vicki Jones, Editor



In May, the family behind Garaga announced that they had acquired Novatech Group (Novatech) for an undisclosed amount. The Gendreau family is now the majority shareholders of Novatech. Two investment funds, Fonds de solidarité FTQ and Investissement Quebec (IQ), are additional shareholders.

Transaction details

Garaga and Novatech will remain two separate businesses and will continue to operate autonomously. The Gendreau family owns 100% of Garaga and is the majority shareholder of the Novatech Group. Martin and Maxime Gendreau will remain Garaga’s copresidents and will continue to be focused on the growth of Garaga.

Harold Savard, CEO of Novatech for over 12 years, will keep his position and remain a minority shareholder of Novatech. Mr. Savard and his existing executive team will maintain full autonomy in managing the organization. Martin and Maxime will provide Novatech’s executive team with strategic support to help further develop the company.

Some background

Garaga is a significant player in the garage and overhead door industry of North America. Novatech is Canada’s largest patio door company and is also a major player in the entry door manufacturing industry. While the patio and entry door sectors may be new to the Garaga team, their relationship with Novatech is not. D+AS interviewed Garaga Copresidents Martin and Maxime Gendreau to find out more about the family’s decision to purchase Novatech.

Company comparison

Garaga and Novatech were both founded in the early 1980s. They were both family-owned and Quebec-based door manufacturing companies that were built from the ground up by two inspired entrepreneurs.

Michel Gendreau founded Garaga in 1983 at the age of 26. The company designs and manufactures garage doors and hardware systems for the residential, commercial, agricultural, and industrial markets. Today, Garaga is among the largest garage door manufacturers in Canada and their products are sold throughout Canada and the United States.

Raymond Ouellette founded Novatech in 1982. The company began making decorative door glass and is now Canada’s leading manufacturer of door glass, residential steel front door panels, and patio doors. The company is also a major manufacturer of insulated glass for the residential and commercial markets. Currently, Novatech has more than 1,500 employees, 16 manufacturing plants, and five distribution centers in Canada and the United States.

The Garaga/Novatech connection

Novatech has been Garaga’s garage door window supplier for over 40 years. Michel Gendreau and Raymond Ouellette have maintained a longstanding business relationship and friendship. Over time, their mutual values and shared business philosophies have allowed their relationship to grow into more than simply a manufacturer/supplier connection.

For the past 10 years, Novatech and Garaga have been developing an ecosystem of products that perfectly match. The ongoing collaboration has led to the development of products that allow consumers to conveniently match their front doors with their garage doors. Some examples of their complementary products include the Vog, Prestige, and Shaker-Modern doors.



Garaga garage door
Model Standard+ Shaker-Modern XL; 16’ x 8’; Weathered Grey Faux Wood, Sandblasted Windows

Novatech entry door
Model Soho from the Shaker Collection



Garaga garage door
Model Standard+ Vog; 10’ x 7’; Black; Window layout: Left side Harmony

Novatech entry door
Model Vog from the Design Collection

The first call

When Ouellette, now in his late 70s, decided it was time to ensure his company’s long-term future, his first call was to Michel Gendreau. The Gendreau family was immediately interested in being a part of the acquisition process. “We knew that we shared the same vision of growth and values,” said Garaga Copresident Maxime Gendreau. “Mr. Ouellette also knew that our family would continue to grow the company and keep

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it as a long-term investment.” Quелlette also knew that the Gendreau family would honor his wishes by keeping Novatech a standalone business and keeping the existing management team.

“It was also an opportunity for our family to diversify our portfolio of investments into a sector that we know relatively well and where we felt we could bring added value,” added Maxime.

Canadian community

The two significant players in the Canadian door industry found that they also have something else in common — a sense of responsibility to their community. As reported in the Globe and Mail story, Harold Savard, CEO of Novatech, said, “It was very important for us to keep our head office here, in Quebec, in Canada. We keep our band name, our management team, and our values.”

Maintaining not just the headquarters office in Quebec, but every Novatech location including the U.S. facilities, was also a crucial part of the agreement. Maxime said, “We recognize the importance of continuing to provide quality long-term jobs to the Novatech employees and to offer great value products to their distribution networks.”

Shared values

According to Maxime, both Garaga and Novatech have demonstrated the ability to innovate and reinvent themselves. “We take pride in delivering quality products and harmonized designs, and we both have a culture of measuring and benchmarking everything.”

A growing presence

Garaga’s Mid-America Door acquisition in 2018 and their North Central Door acquisition in 2022 increased Garaga’s footprint in the United States, which offered the company significant expansion into the U.S. market. Maxime said, “The Novatech acquisition will allow [us] to develop even more the ecosystem of complementary products that consumers particularly appreciate, and there will certainly be other synergies yet to explore.”

With this acquisition, the Gendreau family is becoming an important employer in the industry, with two corporate offices, 20 manufacturing facilities, and 10 distribution centers in Canada and the United States.

The long-term plan

Martin and Maxime’s primary focus will be to continue as the growth leaders of Garaga. They will also sit on the Novatech Board. “Our goal is to support the executive team on a strategic level to further develop Novatech and to help the company reach its full potential,” said Maxime.

Despite the larger size of both companies, the Gendreaus intend to keep their “small-town” company cultures. “We also want to remain approachable and humble,” said Maxime. “It’s part of our DNA and what allows us to serve individuals, not customers.”

Garaga also stays committed to helping their business partners and dealers by being “off-the-charts” and responsive as well as customizing products and programs that meet their needs.

“We care about their success, and alongside them we hope to continue to develop the market together, capture market share, and grow the value of their businesses,” said Maxime. Their latest acquisition could help to do just that. ■