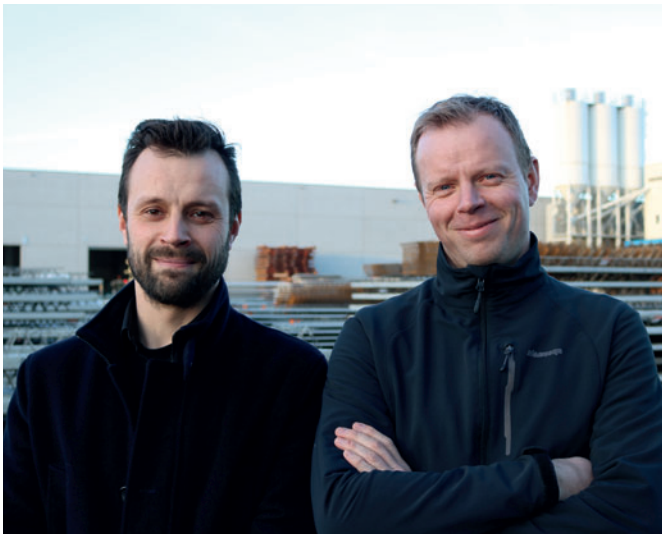
Ebawe Anlagentechnik GmbH, 04838 Eilenburg, Germany

The Success Story of a Newcomer to the Belgium Precast Industry

Predalco, in the Belgian city of Lokeren north-west of Brussels, has been active as small producer of half slabs, called predalles since 2011. With the start of the first major carrousel plant for the production of half slabs, Predalco started an impressive development path turning it into one of the country's leading half slab producers with 45 employees in total, and a daily production capacity of up to 3,000 sqm. Only a few months ago, Predalco started its second carrousel plant by the German precast machinery manufacturer Ebawe, one of the companies of Progress Group, a leading supplier for precast concrete and reinforcement machinery, making a considerable impact on the Belgian market.

A unique start-up story

10 years ago, Predalco's CEO & Managing Partner Peter van der Stock, still worked as a passionate engineer in a Belgian building company, when he was approached by a financial investor asking him if he could imagine to start a precast factory together. After some consideration, Van der Stock could, and decided to take on the challenge. He recalls: "I had no



Production Head Koen de Lange (l.) and CEO & Managing Partner Peter van der Stock (r.) can proudly look back on an impressive 7-year success story, from a start-up company to an established player on the Belgium precast market.

From 60,000 sqm of half slabs in its foundation year 2011, Predalco quickly developed its capacity to nowadays 500,000 sqm of half slabs in two independent precast carrousel plants by Progress Group.

The number of workers, both in Predalco's old and new carrousel system, with only 8 individuals per plant is very efficient.

idea of the market, what the others were doing and also the ideal required machinery, when we set out for this adventure. We started touring Europe and visited numerous precast factories to educate ourselves. I was concerned to make basic mistakes due to my lack of knowledge and information at that time, which might lead to a disastrous end of our plans, in particular since we had invested our own money. Initially we had envisaged a daily production capacity of 600 sqm of half slabs for the first 4-5 years. However, soon after the investment into our first carrousel plant, we had to find out that the market was very challenging, especially since customers are very tied to their suppliers and the established producers did all to put a lot of pressure on us."

The first year ended with a disappointing total production output of 60,000 sqm of precast slabs. In a very short time, Predalco had to learn that in order to enter the market, they had to be able to challenge the big players and that this could only be reached through a strong differentiating factor, which finally brought the breakthrough and allowed the company to grow to 180,000 sqm after two years, and approx. 500,000 sqm of slabs in 2018.

The Formula of Success: Customer Focus & Software

"We decided to go into the market with the attitude of the small market, meaning that service and customer proximity would become the pillars of Predalco's philosophy to make our company really different from the big mass producers." The company's strong focus on service led to the development of its own software, which is designed to support Predalco's customers in all phases of their work and projects. For example, the customer's floor plans are high-lighted in

Already in the planning phase of the new carrousel plant, Predalco focused on a combined carrousel and reinforcement machinery approach to ensure a smooth overall production process.

The Progress MSR 16 straightening and bending machine works off coil and optimizes the flow of production. Low storage costs and easier material handling ensure a cost-effective production.

The Progress lattice girder welding and handling machines of the VGA Versa series represent the best in flexible, just-in-time lattice girder production.

With the help of a plotter, the precast slabs' contures as well as electricity boxes or other elements, are plotted on the pallet in order to make the manual shuttering process precise and time saving.

colours so that it becomes easier for the customer to place his slabs in the right sequence. Furthermore already in the factory all slab staples are arranged according to the construction process. Also a special database for logistics helps to proactively communicate with the customer through SMS etc. Predalco even went as far as to develop their own ERP system over a time span of more than 5 years, to place the customer in the center of all company thinking and acting. "With regards to this," stresses Van der Stock, "I feel we have been able to create something unique, which is really appreciated by our customers."

Ebawe & Progress: Reliable Machinery Partners from the first hour

"One of the most fundamental decisions we had to take," explains Van der Stock, "was the choice of our machinery partner whom to entrust our company's production output and power, and whom to consult already in the planning phase. After a very thorough analysis of the market we finally selected Progress Group with its highly specialized companies, Ebawe as the carrousel plant expert, and *progress* Maschinen & Automation for our steel reinforcement production needs from coil." Following a positive experience with the first carrousel plant in 2011, Predalco in 2018 chose its second carrousel plant just as a copy of the first plant.

The automatic concrete spreader ensures an even and optimised distribution of the concrete into the moulds.

The ideal Balance between Manpower & Automation

"We were very satisfied with the experiences made with our first production system." continues Van der Stock. "However, this time it was very important to us to bring in more automation in the steel reinforcement processing." The *progress* MSR 16 straightening and bending machine, which has been integrated into the carrousel plant, works off coil and optimizes the flow of production and leads to lower storage costs and easier material handling, thus ensuring a cost-effective production. The progress lattice girder welding and handling machines of the VGA Versa series represent the best in flexible, just-in-time lattice girder production. Whereas lattice girders in the past were purchased on stock leading to high storage and handling costs, thanks to the lattice girder welding machine, a flexible just in time production has been introduced with the start of the new carrousel plant.

Also in the new carrousel plant, Predalco aims at finding the right mix between manual labor and automation. To guarantee the highest possible degree of precision of its precast elements, the company uses a plotter in its carrousel systems to avoid any possible mistakes caused by human error. To save concrete and distribute the concrete in the most efficient and time-saving way, an automated concrete spreader fed by a concreted delivery system, ensures an optimized distribution of the concrete. Because of a very good balance between human labor and automation, each carrousel plant is run by only 8 workers, and the company's total production is operated by a total of 16 production workers.

Further Growth Ahead

Also for 2019, Predalco targets a further production growth hoping to reach a min. of 600,000 sqm of half slab production. Van der Stock concludes: "We are very optimistic that thanks to our proven philosophy of customer and service focus and a positive development of the construction industry, we can further expand our production out. For this we also feel that with Progress Group we have chosen the right partner who has the right overall approach to planning and running a precast factory." ■

FURTHER INFORMATION

PREDALCO

PREDALCO Bvba
Maesbossen 2
Industriezone E17/3313
9160 Lokeren, Belgium
T +32 9 326 92 60
info@predalco.be
www.predalco.be

EBAWE
WE FORM YOUR CONCRETE
PROGRESS GROUP

EBAWE Anlagentechnik GmbH
Dübener Landstraße 58
04838 Eilenburg, Germany
T +49 3423 6650
info@ebawe.de
www.ebawe.de

bauma Stand B1.313

progress
Maschinen & Automation
PROGRESS GROUP

Progress Maschinen & Automation AG
Julius-Durst-Straße 100
39042 Brixen, Italy
T + 39 0472 979100
info@progress-m.com
www.progress-m.com

bauma Stand C3.303

PROGRESS GROUP

Progress Group GmbH
The Squaire 15, Am Flughafen,
60549 Frankfurt am Main, Germany
T +49 69 77 044044
info@progress-group.info
www.progress-group.info

bauma Stand B1.313

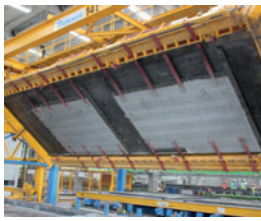
PreConPro
Consulting | Management | Technology | Training

Not happy with your factory results ?

We can help you!

Improvement of
- ✓ Productivity
- ✓ Profitability
- ✓ RoI
- ✓ Quality

Independent and holistic assessment and evaluation of your situation.



- Business planning
- Financial Modelling
- Operational concept
- Concrete technology
- Training on all levels

Let's make your Precast Concrete better!

PreConPro
Consulting | Management | Technology | Training

Off. 505, No 442, Ha Mi Road
Ming Hui Business Centre
Changning District – Shanghai – China
info@preconpro.com – www.preconpro.com