

20 YEARS OF FRAXINUS

N°12 // 2024

FRAXINUS

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CO-CREATION: THE KEY TO SUCCESS FOR 20 YEARS

Dear reader,

This year we're celebrating a very special milestone: 20 years of Fraxinus! From a rented studio in Izegem in 2004, we've expanded into a thriving business we're proud of today. Many of our earliest employees are still in the picture, as are many customers and suppliers who have trusted us since the start. This shows that our approach, rooted in open communication, is deeply ingrained in our DNA and remains vital in every project.

Collaboration and co-engineering with other parties remains crucial. Good relationships lay the foundation for successful projects. A good example is our new lift application for goods transport, which we recently installed at Gedimat Desmet (see p. 10), and our collaboration with Qimarox for the integration of palletisers in logistics projects (see p. 12).

Our case studies for Farm Frites (see p. 4), Mermet Europe (see p. 6) and Pool Cover Systems (see p. 8) also highlight our varied projects for a range of companies. Fraxinus' strength lies in its balance: a healthy mix of projects, both local and international, from large to small, for multinationals and SMEs. This strengthens both us and our customers.

In addition, we continue to invest heavily in our own machinery. We will soon be installing a large portal milling machine, with a length of 14 metres and a width of 3.5 metres, a tube laser for tubes with a length of 12 metres and an automated pallet dispenser for the storage of parts and semi-finished products. These will enable us to work even more efficiently.

Finally, we would like to express our gratitude to all our employees, customers and partners for their many years of trust. Thanks to you, we can continue to grow, innovate and build our shared future.

Hans Van Essche
Fraxinus CEO

INDEX

Farm Frites	p. 04
Mermet Europe	p. 06
PCS - Pool Cover Systems	p. 08
Gedimat Desmet	p. 10
Qimarox	p. 12

THE FIRST
FRAXINEERS

20 YEARS OF FRAXINUS!



RYAN DEBACKER
Engineer

"At Fraxinus, we keep it simple, so I can easily summarise my motivation: with a great team of colleagues, we see our projects for various sectors come to life from start to finish in our own production workshop. It's a process that I have been happily contributing to for 20 years!"



MARCIN FRANCUS
Technician

"My biggest motivation is my sons. They give me courage to get up and keep going, even though our family isn't complete. Working at Fraxinus has made my life easier. I have learned a lot working with a group of passionate technicians, and can proudly look back on my contribution to many projects. I'm looking forward to the coming years at the company and the challenges ahead."



HANS VAN ESSCHE
CEO

"The privilege of working, consulting, and debating with a steadfast, enthusiastic team gives me so much energy that work feels like one of my hobbies! And I enjoy driving there every day too!"

Our milestones

2004

START-UP IN IZEGEM
Hans starts Fraxinus in a 1,000 m² rental property in Izegem, armed with a milling machine and several welding stations.

2006

MOVE TO BEVEREN
The move results in an expansion to 3,500 m². All business processes are streamlined and automated as much as possible during that period, including everything from accounting to engineering.

2008

NEW MACHINERY
The first large milling machine is purchased. From then on, further systematic investments are made in lathes and milling machines for piecework and large batches, overhead cranes, etc.

2011

EXPANSION OF THE SITE
In order to be able to develop more installations simultaneously, Fraxinus builds two additional halls of 3,000 m² with overhead cranes.

2018

THREE NEW HALLS
Seven years later, Fraxinus once again finds itself running out of space. That's why the company adds three new halls, expanding by an additional 3,500 m². The offices are also renovated.

2022

PURCHASE OF ADJACENT SITE
Fraxinus acquired an adjacent site of over 5,000 m² with a view toward future growth.

2023

HIGH-RISE WAREHOUSE
New high-rise warehouse for storage of pipes up to 12 m, with a storage capacity of 220 tons.

2024

NEW TUBE LASER
Fraxinus invests in a tube laser for pipes from 30x30 to 250x250 with a length of 12 m, including flow drilling and tapping.

2025

ADDITIONAL INVESTMENTS
We are investing in a portal milling machine (14 m x 3.5 m) and an automated pallet dispenser for internal pallet storage of components and semi-finished products.

20 YEARS
FRAXINUS

INTERVIEW WITH HANS VAN ESSCHE

In 2004, Hans Van Essche founded Fraxinus. Looking back, twenty years later, much has changed technologically and in terms of projects, but the initial vision remains: striving for strong partnerships that help every party involved move forward through open and action-oriented communication with customers, suppliers and employees.

Fraxinus particularly values long-term collaborations. Why is this so important to you?
"Good cooperation is the key to success. Not only is it important to listen carefully to our customer's know-how and link it to our expertise for the best result, but we also want to work together in the long term. The more we can do for our customers, the stronger the partnership becomes. As we create more machinery and systems for a customer, we gain a deeper understanding of their product and can offer even better support."

This not only applies to the relationship with customers, but also to the companies you invest in.

"That's right. We are currently taking further steps in our collaboration with the Sticomax group (the umbrella organisation that includes Stumaco, Intocon, Romonta, Viwateq and DTS). We share our experience and know-how to further strengthen our projects, exchange leads, and collaborate on stainless steel projects. We also remain open to partnerships for co-engineering and bringing new solutions to market. For example, we developed a

machine to assemble and nail pallets, and we are now taking steps to integrate mobile AGV and AMR robots into logistics projects."

Fraxinus' strategy has paid off in spades, with large growth spurts over the past twenty years.
"Between 2014 and 2019, we doubled our turnover and number of employees, and we did so again in the period from 2019 to 2024. This is of course satisfying, but we must stay on our toes: with the strong growth of the company, the needs of our organisation are also changing.

We pride ourselves on efficient work and open communication. In the coming period we are planning further investment in the professionalisation of our internal processes and we want to attract new employees."

What do you think the future holds for Fraxinus?
"This has been going on for years, but projects are still getting bigger and more complex. New technologies are constantly emerging that we must master. The combination of construction and automation, with the most recent addition of robots, is now evolving increasingly rapidly into installations with a multitude of technologies. There is currently a lot of buzz around vision systems with artificial intelligence and AMR technology, which we are already fully integrating where possible. It is precisely this speed at which technology evolves that requires us to streamline our internal organisation as efficiently as possible. This is the only way that we can stay ahead on a technological level and offer our customers the best solution."

Welcoming our
new Fraxineers

We are also celebrating 20 years of Fraxinus with the arrival of several new colleagues.



TEODORESCU COSMIN
Started on September 16 as a welder
—
Fraxinus is: *transparent, motivational, progressive, challenging*



TIBO MESTDAGH
Started on November 20 2023 as a draftsman
—
Fraxinus is: *practical, simple, team-oriented, organised*

10 years as a Fraxineer,
congratulations!

Jean Denis and Maxim explain why, after ten years, they still enjoy setting off to work at Fraxinus every morning.



JEAN DENIS BILLET
CNC miller/turner

"First and foremost for the warm atmosphere and the friendly colleagues. Fraxinus is a company that is constantly evolving, and thanks to the enormous variety of our installations, the work remains varied. This is what has motivated me for the last ten years!"



MAXIM BERGEZ
Welder

"The challenging projects and the freedom you get to make your own contribution. We are provided with good quality working materials, which helps us to achieve a quality result. Finally, my great colleagues are of course a bonus!"

Fraxinus in colour

In September, we transformed our atelier into an art studio for one day: under the guidance of graffiti artist 'Pampludex & friends' we enjoyed a creative graffiti workshop. The result? A colourful work of art in honour of our twentieth anniversary, for and by Fraxinus!



FARM FRITES IS PREPARING FOR SPECTACULAR GROWTH AMBITIONS

EXPANSION PACKAGING INSTALLATION AND EXTRA PALLET DISPENSER

The potato industry is booming, a reality not lost on Farm Frites. As a Netherlands-headquartered producer of more than 80 types of fries, potato products and appetisers, Farm Frites processes 45 to 50 tons of fries per hour in Lommel, which represents approximately 60 pallets per hour. To realise their ambitious growth plans, they needed to increase their packaging capacity. Farm Frites came to Fraxinus for an integrated complete solution via Qimarox (see p. 12), the manufacturer of the palletiser. We talked to Luc Aerts, chief industrial engineer.



View this case study on our website. Scan the QR code!

A Fraxtion of the project

BY MATHIAS DESNOUCK
PROJECT ENGINEER



In a nutshell

"This project had four limiting factors: the need for a speedy installation, the limited footprint, the tight timing and the importance of maintaining a continuous production environment. We achieved fantastic results thanks to the dedication of all parties involved and the excellent cooperation with Farm Frites. After the overhaul and integration of the new installation, we devoted considerable attention to aftercare in order to fine-tune the machine to the operators' specifications. As a result, operators now have a machine that is 100% tailored to their way of working."

The highlights

"The speed of installation was key. To ensure that the supply of pallets is as fast as possible, pallets already checked for quality are buffered as close to the machine as possible. This saves important seconds. Multiple pallets can also be placed in the buffer zone. This means that two pallets can be supplied at the same time if it turns out that two palletisers need a pallet simultaneously. We also work with a so-called sandwich conveyor as a buffer - these are two roller conveyors on top of each other just before the stacking positions - so that through transport can continue. If an extra pallet is required, the sandwich conveyor moves up and the pallet is immediately supplied. Another challenge encountered in the installation of the automated pallet dispenser was to install everything in the smallest possible footprint, so that the third and fourth machines remained accessible and there was space to move the stacked pallet from the new machine to the wrapper. Quite the puzzle!"



from left to right: Luc Aerts, Farm Frites Chief Industrial Engineer and Hannes Dekeyzer, Fraxinus Sales Engineer

We continued the work on an existing installation. Can you briefly outline the project?

"We already had six palletisers with a pallet dispenser that can offer three different types of pallets. In order to produce more pallets per hour, we needed to install a seventh packaging machine in the same space. To keep the production stoppage as short as possible, it was necessary to work in phases. That's why, in the first phase, the existing pallet dispenser was moved and a lift was installed. This had to be done in a time span of just two days so that production for those six machines could restart. Then, in phase two, the seventh palletiser was built. Finally, in phase three, two additional pallet dispensers with pallet control were installed between the third and fourth palletisers to cope with the additional packaging capacity."

And how does the palletising process work?

"Cardboard boxes containing bags of potato products are transported at a height in the factory to the palletiser department. While the boxes are being arranged into the first layer in the Qimarox palletiser, an empty pallet is lifted into position. Once a layer is ready, the machine essentially opens up, and the layer of boxes is placed on the pallet. This process continues until a complete tower has been built on the pallet. For the stability of the load, we provide a slip sheet every two to three layers. The stacked pallet is then wrapped and sent to the storage company, also on conveyors supplied by Fraxinus."

"The entire project revolved around time savings: both in the packaging process itself and in the construction of the installation."

— Luc Aerts

Ok! Now we can delve a little deeper into the project. A critical point in phase one was when production had to be stopped for the relocation of the pallet dispenser.

"Our production runs 24/7, so the palletisers are never idle. However, for this phase we had to stop production, which was a big challenge. We aimed to wrap up the relocation in the shortest possible timeframe, as in our industry, where demand outstrips the supply, a production halt is simply not an option. Good preparation was therefore crucial to keep downtime to a minimum. If necessary, we were willing to take drastic action: and so when it emerged that we would save +/- 6 hours if we brought the lift in via the roof with a second crane, we didn't hesitate for a minute."

Given the continuous production, remote control of the installation is all the more important.

"It's very convenient that switching can be done remotely. We can access the installation software via a network connection and intervene remotely. The cameras that are fitted on the equipment itself are particularly useful, so that we can see if anything is going wrong. That really adds value, because it allows us to find a solution much faster."

We are talking about a lead time of ten months, which is particularly tight for such an ambitious project.

"We had the first discussions in January and by the end of May we had already started the first phase of the relocation of the pallet dispenser and the construction of the lift. Phase two then took about two weeks, from the construction of the packaging machine to the finishing and testing of the software, the stacking patterns and the stability of the pallets. In October, the additional double pallet dispenser was integrated. There was no alternative: at the same time as this project, the production capacity of one of our production lines was substantially increased, resulting in a higher influx of boxes for palletising. We wouldn't have been able to handle this with the three existing pallet dispensers, so we really needed those two extra ones."

FACTS & FIGURES

Farm Frites is a Dutch potato processing company. This family business produces more than 80 types of fries, potato products and appetisers and supplies catering entrepreneurs in more than 100 countries around the world.

- › Founded in 1971
- › 5 production facilities in the Netherlands, Belgium, Poland and Egypt
- › 40 sales offices worldwide
- › Production: more than 1.5 million tons potatoes per year
- › 1,500 employees

→ More info at www.farmfrites.com

Fraxinus was just one of many parties involved in this multidisciplinary project. How did you ensure a smooth process between all partners?

"From adjusting sprinkler pipes and lighting to installing ladders and relocating stairs: many companies had to be in sync. To achieve this we provided a master plan with fixed reference points, to keep it as clear as possible for everyone. The timing was very strict for all parties, but it worked out thanks to a good dose of pragmatism and a can-do attitude from all partners."

We won't settle for less. Which aspects of our partnership made a lasting impression on you?

"The invoices, those stay with me! (laughs) All joking aside, I can still vividly picture Ruben from Engico (Fraxinus' regular partner) sitting for hours in the cold warehouse, a blanket on his lap, tirelessly programming the software. That image sums up good cooperation, based on a no-nonsense and flexible approach, with a lot of mutual respect."

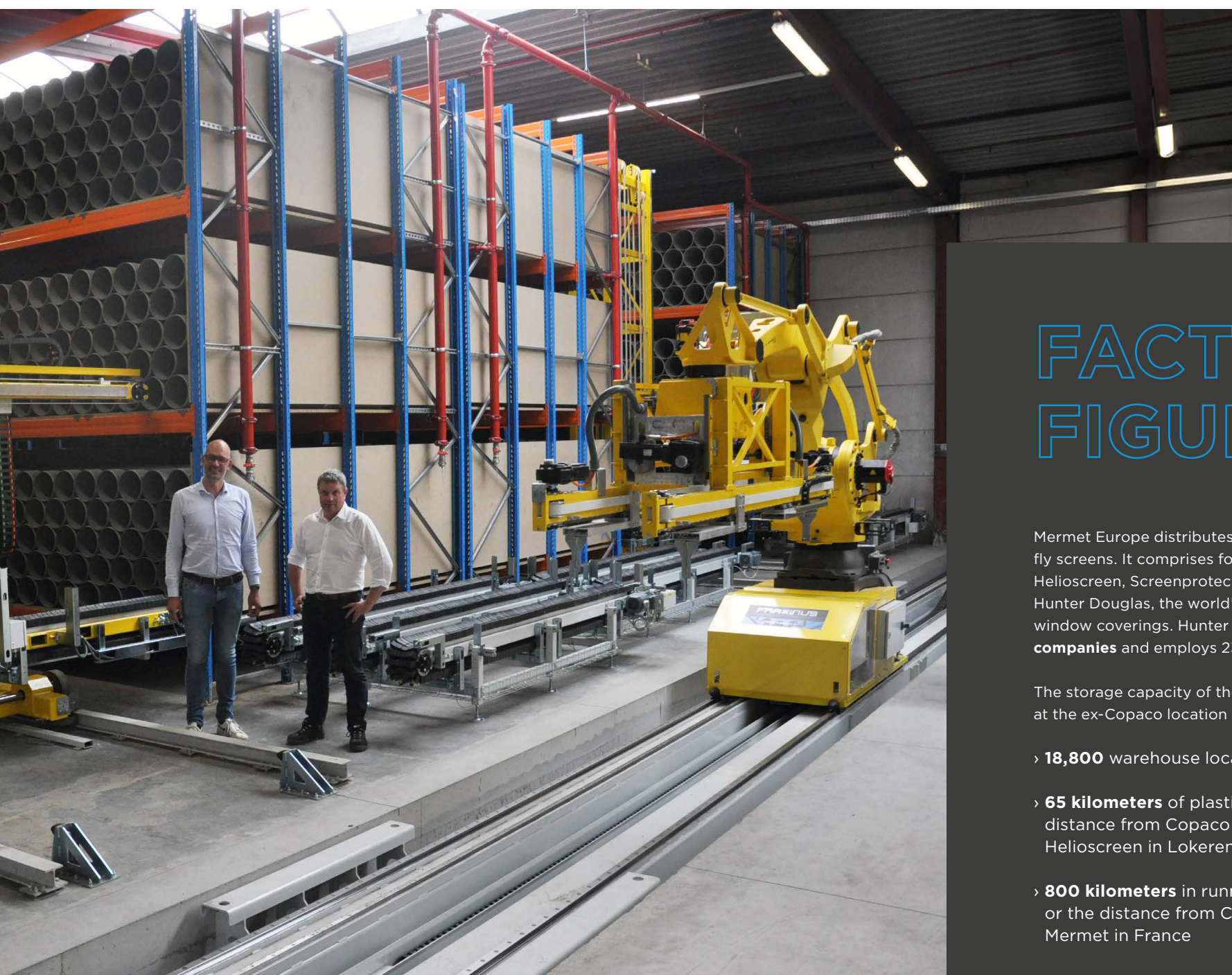
That's nice to hear!

STOCK CENTRALISATION LEADS TO WAREHOUSE EXPANSION AND AUTOMATION FOR MERMET EUROPE

LIFT AND ROBOT INSTALLATION FOR IN- AND OUTBOUND SCREEN ROLLS

Mermet Europe processes jumbo rolls of screen fabrics into marketable, custom-made rolls for end customers, such as manufacturers of sun blinds and fly screens. The company is looking forward to centralising stock from its three production sites in the warehouse in Harelbeke, which will result in a number of organisational changes. Fraxinus has redesigned the logistics process from production to warehouse, with an impressive lift and robot installation. We went to meet operations manager Pascal Scheldeman to see what was going on.

from left to right: Hannes Dekeyzer, Fraxinus Sales Engineer and Pascal Scheldeman, Mermet Europe Operations Manager



FACTS & FIGURES

Mermet Europe distributes fabrics for sun blinds and fly screens. It comprises four companies (Mermet, Helioscreen, Screenprotectors and Copaco) within Hunter Douglas, the world's largest manufacturer of window coverings. Hunter Douglas consists of **130 companies** and employs 23,000 people worldwide.

The storage capacity of the facility installed by Fraxinus at the ex-Copaco location in Harelbeke amounts to:

- › **18,800** warehouse locations
- › **65 kilometers** of plastic cylinders, or the distance from Copaco Harelbeke to Helioscreen in Lokeren
- › **800 kilometers** in running meters of screens, or the distance from Copaco Harelbeke to Mermet in France

→ More info at www.mermet.eu.com



“If everything goes according to plan, the concept will be rolled out within several branches of the group.”

— Pascal Scheldeman

“With our three production sites in France, Bavikhove and Lokeren, we want to bring a uniform collection of screen fabrics onto the market. In order for the customer to maintain an overview, we decided to centralise customer service and the warehouse in Bavikhove. We quickly settled on this location, as 45% of production takes place here and our largest customers are based in the region,” Pascal begins.

The process involves not only centralisation but also automation.

“By consolidating the volumes, the investment in automation became justifiable. We were going to have to make this choice anyway at some point for ergonomic reasons. After all, the rollers are heavy and difficult to manipulate, which was also a challenge for the automation process.”

Can you take us through the new process?

“We purchased a new machine to cut the jumbo rolls into smaller rolls. Once the marketable roll is ready, it is transported from the cutting machine via a conveyor belt to the first Fraxinus lift. The roll is raised and travels to the warehouse area at a higher elevation, reaching a platform where a shifter feeds the rolls into the warehouse. Just before they are taken down in the second lift to be placed in one of the six warehouse racks by the robot, the scanner reads the RFID tag. The robot then picks up the roll and places it in the correct position. The rolls are pushed into the cylinders (plastic cylinders that hold the rolls in place) in the warehouse rack using a gripper. Whenever the crane inserts a finished roll into the rack, it also removes one that is ready for shipment. “In this way we save a lot of crane travel time.”

It sounds simple, but we had quite a few challenges to overcome.

“First of all, we had limited space in terms of surface area and height, so we had to make the most of the available space. The biggest challenge, however, was to insert a supplied roll into the correct cylinder and then to remove the correct roll from the cylinder. The roll and the cylinder have fixed coordinates, but due to the variable diameter of the roll, it is never positioned in exactly the same place. With the help of cameras, the gripper can correctly remove the roll. This happens very quickly, because we have to be able to perform 55 movements per hour to achieve our input and output targets. To achieve all this, a link has been established between the installation and Business Central.”

In short, it's been an educational process and a pioneering approach for everyone.

“The project is being monitored with the greatest

care by the Hunter Douglas Group, the holding company of which Mermet Europe is a part. Recently, the general manager of the EMEA zone came to visit and he was impressed by the newly designed warehouse. Once the installation is operational, he will definitely come and take another look at it. If all goes according to plan, he plans to copy this concept in other branches of the group.”

Great, nice to know that we are participating in a pioneering project for Hunter Douglas. What were your parameters for choosing a partner?

“We first looked at existing systems for handling rolls, but it turned out that they required much more space and were not really suited to the size of our company. That is why it was important to find a partner who could design and implement a custom installation for us. In addition, we wanted a local partner so that we could receive quick help in the event of a malfunction.”

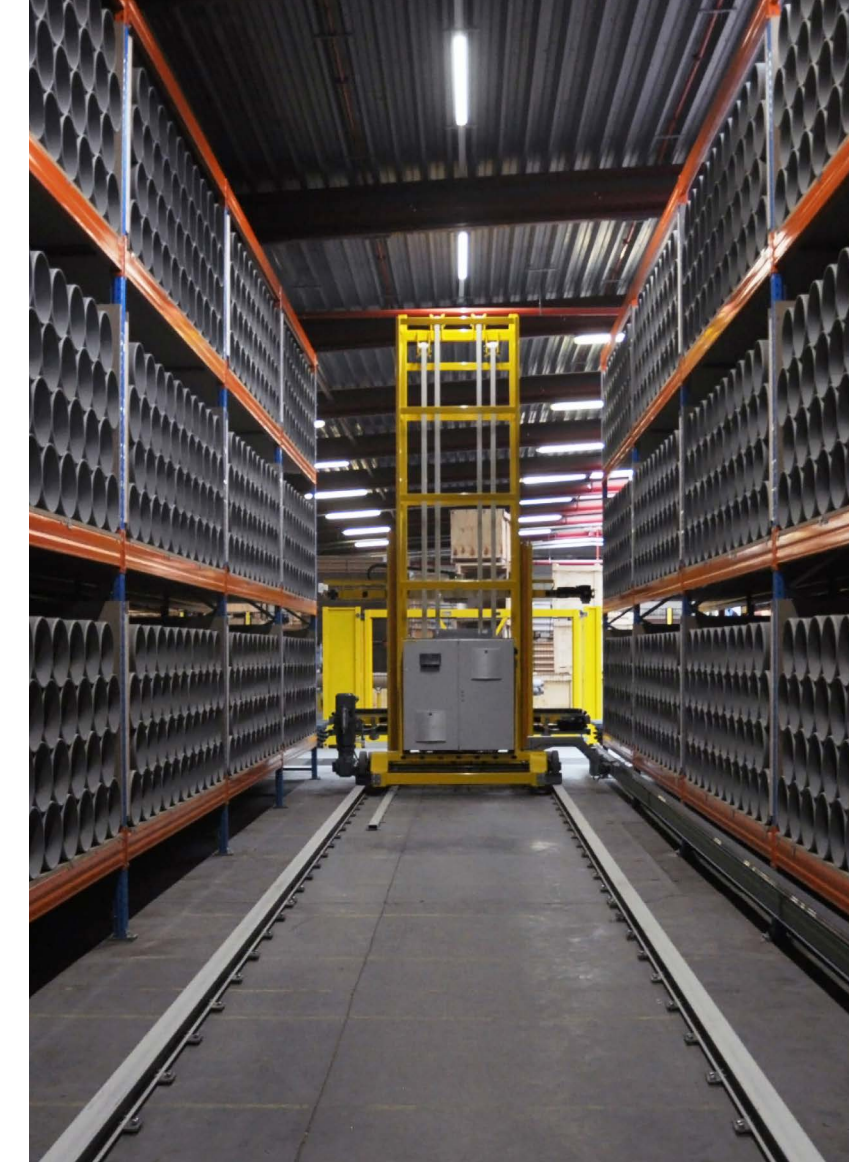
How did you finally decide?

“Fraxinus' thorough preparation helped us in the decision-making process. In our organisation, it's of utmost importance that project proposals are thoroughly substantiated. Fraxinus had already fully developed the concept in 3D during the sales phase, so that we could present a tangible and well-documented proposal to our management. It became a neck-and-neck race with another partner, who proposed a similar concept. The company visit to Fraxinus and several reference projects ultimately tipped the scales. We look back with satisfaction on a dynamic collaboration, characterised by straightforward communication and a solution-oriented approach. The schedule was also perfectly adhered to. Hats off to the technicians and the project manager: the construction went smoothly with highly approachable teams.”

We can't wait for the launch!



View this case study on our website. Scan the QR code!



A Fraxtion of the project

BY JELLE PARMENTIER
PROJECT ENGINEER



“In essence, we've already applied all the technologies incorporated in this installation previously. However, we have never combined them in this way before, which makes this concept a unique project once again. There were some challenges that took this project to the next level:

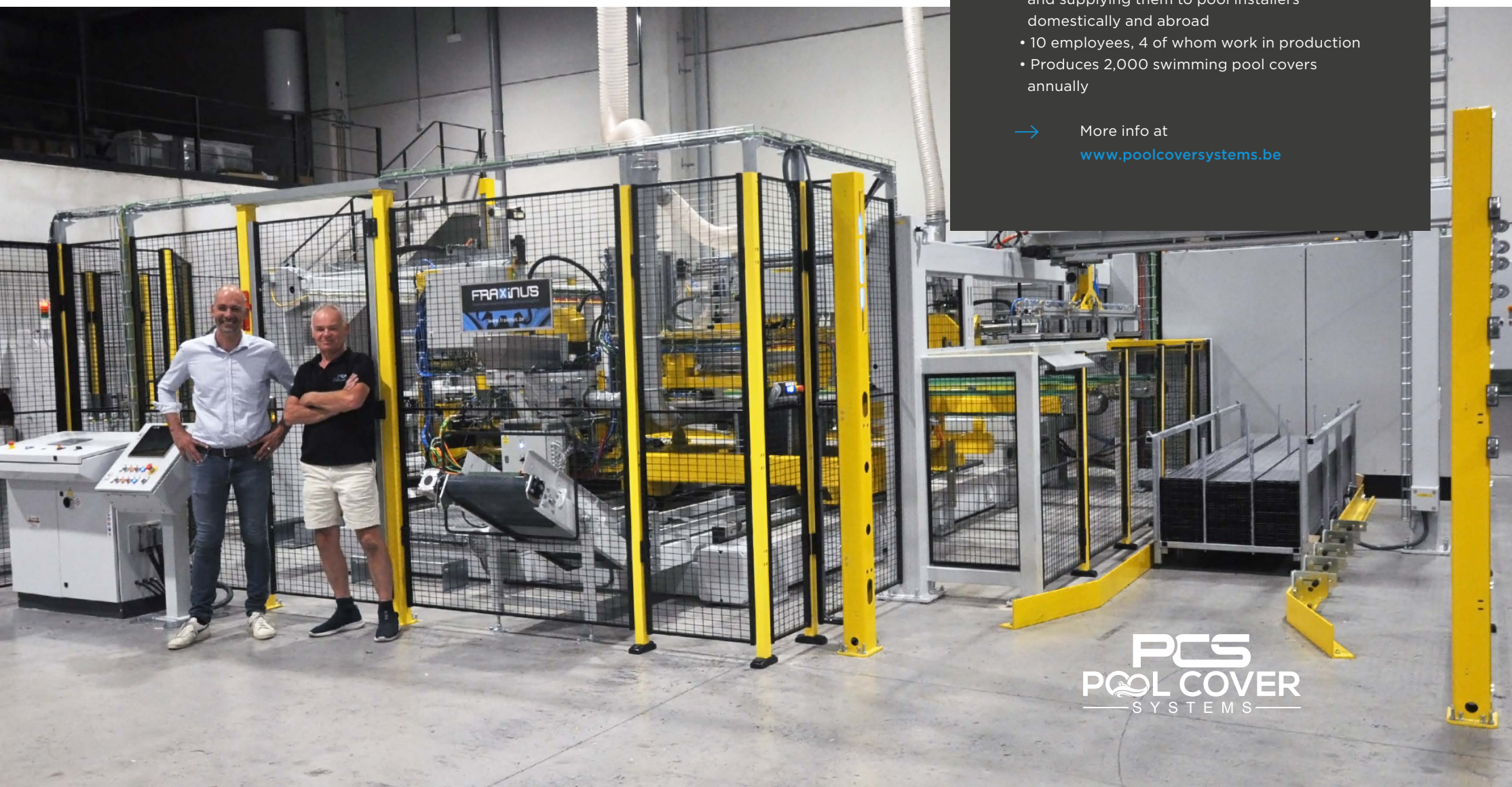
- › The most complex aspect of this project was transporting the foil-wrapped rolls with their RFID tags to the correct warehouse location and retrieving the products from there. An impressive piece of software, developed in collaboration with our colleagues from Engico.
- › The speed of the supply and removal of the rolls is high: the installation must be able to insert 25 rolls per hour into the rack and retrieve 55 rolls per hour. The crane was provided with five positions in the initial concept, but we have modified this. The crane now only carries a single roll, but the speed of the crane has been significantly increased to achieve the required capacity.
- › We also paid special attention to avoiding damage to the packaged rolls within the requested takt time.
- › We kept the size of the installation as compact as possible, allowing us to replicate it in the future and double the storage capacity.
- › The robot can arrange the rolls in the correct sequence on the packing table, which features six positions. This way, the rolls can be efficiently prepared for shipment in the correct order right away.

POOL COVER SYSTEMS IS PIONEERING WITH AN AUTOMATED PRODUCTION PROCESS

UNIQUE SLAT MACHINE FOR FULLY AUTOMATED PRODUCTION OF POOL COVERS

How can you, as a growing company in the swimming pool sector, make a difference? Pool Cover Systems' (PCS for short) recipe for success is ingeniously simple. Standing out is only possible by guaranteeing easy accessibility and impeccable service, which, for a rapidly growing company, can only be achieved by automating processes to free up time for customer interactions. For the fully automatic finishing of the slats, the company partnered with Fraxinus. On the eve of the go-live of the slat machine, we visited manager André Beyens to see how things were going.

from left to right: Hannes Dekeyzer, Fraxinus Sales Engineer and André Beyens, Pool Cover Systems Manager



ABOUT POOL COVER SYSTEMS

- Located in Ravels
- Has been producing high quality swimming pool covers in various designs for 15 years and supplying them to pool installers domestically and abroad
- 10 employees, 4 of whom work in production
- Produces 2,000 swimming pool covers annually

→ More info at www.poolcoversystems.be



"Problems with a swimming pool need to be solved immediately: after all, these are luxury products that can only be used briefly in the summer," explains André Beyens. "Through years of hard work and maintaining our high level of service, we have continued to see our customer base grow. However, to achieve our goals, advanced automation is essential."

We developed a slat machine that automatically finishes the slats of the swimming pool cover with end caps. It sounds simple, but the installation presents numerous technical challenges.

"Certainly. Since it soon became clear that Fraxinus was the expert in the logistics department, the initial discussions mainly focused on the welding process used to attach the end caps to the slats.

This is not an everyday occurrence for Fraxinus. Consequently, we teamed up as partners and agreed

"We evolved from two partners into one team that jointly built a unique machine."

— André Beyens

to opt for servo-driven control of the heating plate. This allows us to perfectly adjust its settings."

The setup works with a reference and a variable side, with actions carried out in a mirrored fashion, as it were: an additional challenge that we tackled together.

"The common thread throughout the story is that we persevered together as partners in our plan, and remained committed to developing an installation whose end result was still unknown at the start of the project.

We are pioneering this in our sector: nowhere else in the world is work done this way. In addition, we only need 10% of the space that our competitors use for ultrasonic welding, and we save on raw materials such as glue."

It must be said: as a client you really stuck your neck out for this project!

"To distinguish yourself as a company, you must be prepared to make decisions that are 80% calculated and 20% uncalculated. If you don't dare to take risks, you become mainstream. What is the added value of your company then?"

How did Fraxinus make a difference for you in choosing a partner?

"The detailed preliminary discussions and the precision of the initial preparation were decisive for

me. During a visit to the Fraxinus studio I was also able to view various installations under construction and I was immediately reassured. "I take my hat off to Wesley, who started from scratch, based on information he received second-hand and designed the installation down to the smallest detail."

Looking back with Fraxinus, we reflect on a highly educational journey that presented us with significant technical challenges. Those are the most fun projects.

"It was a pleasant collaboration with open communication where suggestions from both sides were appreciated, and throughout the process, we evolved into a single team."

Thank you, that's a great conclusion and a perfect foundation to build on together in the future!



View this case study on our website. Scan the QR code!

A Fraxtion of the project

BY PROJECT ENGINEER
WESLEY POISSONNIER

From semi-finished product to finished slat set

"The purpose of the installation is to automatically finish slats, which are supplied in sets of four, with end caps. In order to mount these caps as efficiently as possible on both sides, the machine is equipped with a reference and variable side where all actions are mirrored.

The slat sets are presented to the installation in metal frames. A manipulator transfers the slats from the frame to the transport chain. Following alignment with the reference edge, the slats are cut to the correct length, the burred edge is milled smooth and is air-cleaned to eliminate all leftover PVC particles.

The end caps are then mounted. The slat set is briefly held against a heating plate while the end caps are fed one by one from a vibrating hopper into the correct position and welded onto the slat.

This process is performed alternately on the variable and reference sides, since welding both at once would create excessive stress on the slat. After finishing, a second manipulator picks up and stacks the slat sets. Finally, the slats are packaged and sorted on the buffer conveyor."

A model of co-creation

"This project was a challenging thought exercise in which we started the design from the end product that ultimately had to roll out of the machine. Step by step we have incorporated all the required functionalities into one machine. A complex project, but that's how I like them! To accomplish such a feat, you need optimal interaction with a collaborative customer. I was impressed by André's mechanical expertise and experience. Some parts of the installation are very specific and were made at PCS itself. So this project was a prime example of co-creation. In addition, there was a good

dynamic between André and I, which allowed us to communicate fluently with few words, get ahead and make the right choices quickly."

"To accomplish such a feat, you need optimal interaction with a collaborative customer."

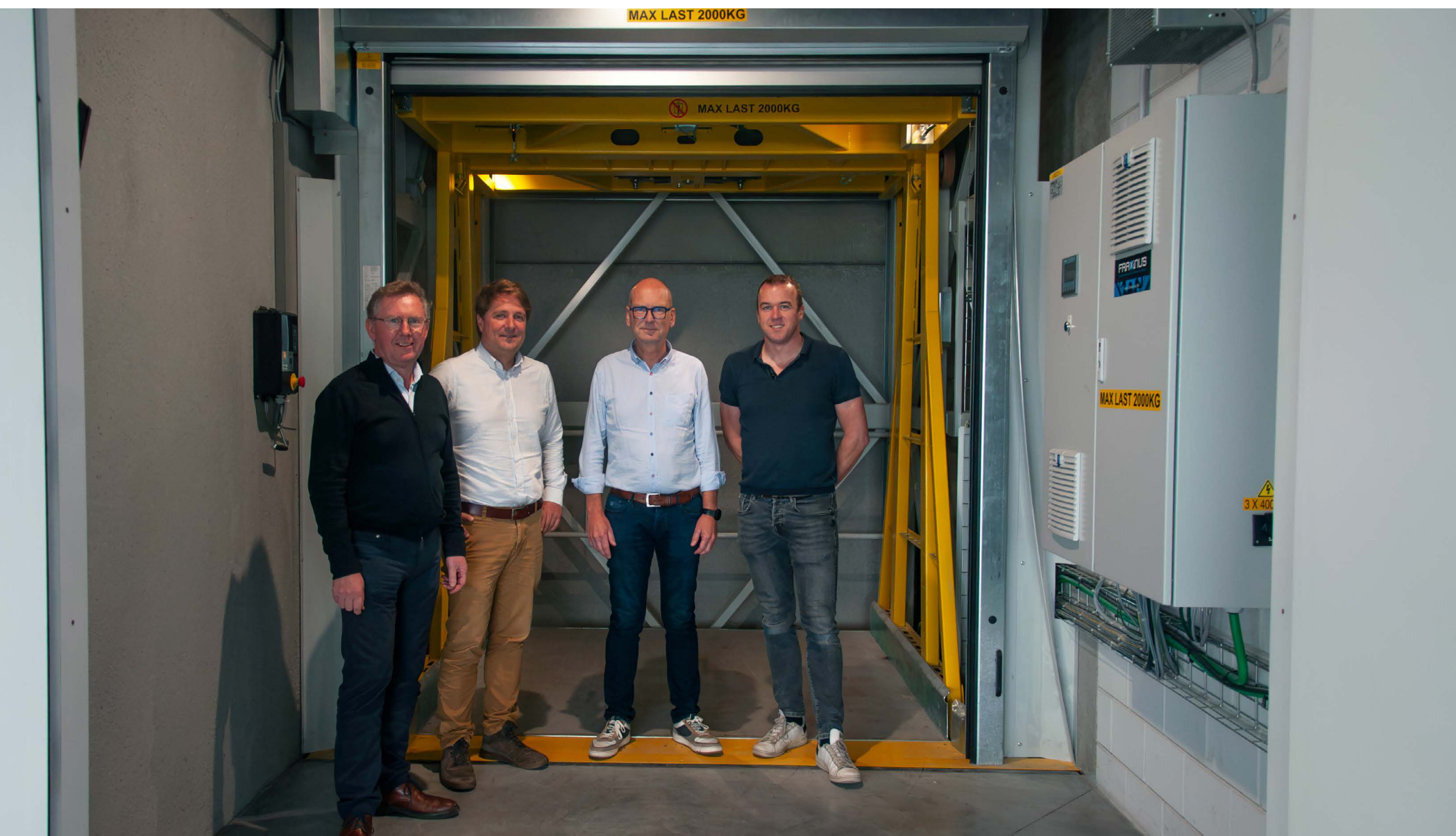
— Wesley Poissonnier



SHORTAGE OF SPACE LEADS TO NEW LIFT APPLICATION

INDUSTRIAL GOODS LIFT FOR SAFE AND EFFICIENT TRANSPORT IN COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS

Land is becoming more limited and industrial lots are becoming smaller. As a result, companies are looking to expand upwards, and we are noticing an increasing demand for industrial goods lifts to transport work materials safely and efficiently from one floor to another. This was certainly the case at Gedimat Desmet in Ingelmunster, which recently moved to an impressive new building. Together with Managing Director Bjorn Deweerdt and architects Bert Ghesquière and Dominique Degezelle from GC Architecten, Fraxinus' Hans Van Essche discusses the advantages of building upward and the associated use of freight lifts.



from left to right: Hans Van Essche, Bert Ghesquière, Dominique Degezelle, Bjorn Deweerdt



ABOUT GC ARCHITECTS

Architectural firm GC Architects from Meulebeke is led by Bert Ghesquière and Frederik Callens. The forty-person team focuses on residential, commercial and industrial construction and is mainly active in West and East Flanders.

→ More info at www.gcarchitecten.be

Bjorn, at the beginning of this year you moved into a new office building and opened your renovated building supplies store. Give us a tour!

Bjorn: "Well, on the ground floor you will find our offices and the building supplies store, where our contractor customers can find the materials they need in an inviting shopping environment. On the first floor we have our meeting rooms and a multipurpose room where we can run demos and training sessions with our customers. The second floor is currently used for storage, but is earmarked for future growth. When we started on this site, we noticed that we were quickly outgrowing our investment. Hence the decision to build large and high enough to be able to remain here in the long term."

Bert: "The building is a prime example of modern technology with an eye for ergonomics and healthy working conditions. The offices are equipped with cooling ceilings, acoustic solutions and tunable lighting, which allows the lighting to adjust according to the time of day and the seasons."

Efficient use of space and ergonomics also led to the decision to install a lift.

Dominique: "The initial idea was to use a forklift and a chute, but for ease and safety, we suggested using a lift. Bjorn was immediately in favour of this."

Bjorn: "We wanted to use the second floor as much as possible for storage, so it had to be easily accessible and we had to be able to move heavy and bulky goods easily."

Hans: "An industrial goods lift was exactly the right solution. Fraxinus has been making transport systems with open lifts for years, but in this instance we closed the cage and ensured that material could be driven in and out of the lift with a forklift. Please note that no other people are allowed in the lift."

How is safety guaranteed?

Hans: "The lift is built with industrial components for industrial applications, so with a safety PLC and detection and lock systems on the gates and on the lift cage. There is a touchscreen for fault diagnosis. An operator control is provided on each floor. Finally, the lift is inspected every three months."

How useful has the lift proven to be, Bjorn?

Bjorn: "It was definitely worth the investment. We use the lift almost daily to move demonstration material and furniture, but also for small materials and cafeteria products. This ensures that we can work even more safely and ergonomically than before. Moreover, we can easily drive into it with our pallet truck. The lift is also secured with a code and our badge system, so it cannot be used by just anyone. All this ensures a worry-free experience."

"Building vertically is the future."

— Bert Ghesquière

Dominique: "We also strongly recommend installing a lift to our customers with multi-storey buildings. It's a key optimisation in the logistical flow and easy to integrate. The lift can be brought in with a crane during the construction phase and its assembly and cabling only takes a few days."

Bert: "Building vertically is the future. Additionally, expanding vertically doesn't lead to a proportional rise in base construction costs, provided the added height is used effectively."

ABOUT GEDIMAT DESMET

Gedimat Desmet from Ingelmunster is a family-run building materials retailer, affiliated with the Belgian Gedimat group. The company focuses primarily on the trade market, offering a wide range of building and finishing materials and associated services. In addition, Gedimat is known for its expert advice, with which it supports customers in both small and large construction projects.

→ More info at www.gedimatdesmet.be



Gedimat Desmet, Ingelmunster



View this case study on our website. Scan the QR code!

PARTNERSHIPS ARE KEY

INTEGRATION OF STANDARD SOLUTIONS MAKES CUSTOMISATION STRONGER

Qimarox is a manufacturer of components for material handling systems such as palletisers and vertical conveyors, and relies on a network of certified partners, including Fraxinus, for the integration of its solutions. We have been working together for fifteen years now and have successfully completed numerous projects, with Farm Frites in Lommel (see p. 4) as our most recent joint achievement. Business Development Manager Jaco Hooijer and Technical Product Manager Jelle Deelman explain the benefits of integrating standard solutions into custom installations.

Qimarox evolved from custom project work to standardised products. Why is that?

Jaco: "We always respond to customer demand. For example, we had a customer who asked for a solution for vertical transport. That's what prompted us to develop our MK5, a unique solution that we have patented. To market this product, we had to ramp up volume and pitch our products to fellow machine builders. This was difficult in the beginning, because we were seen as competitors."

Jelle: "In the years that followed, we made the same move for palletisers. "Over time, we made a strategic choice to no longer supply to the end user, but to build a dealer network of other machine builders and integrators who integrate our products into their own custom installations."

By doing this, you opt for maximum specialisation, which benefits the end customer.

Jelle: "Absolutely. We focus entirely on a limited product portfolio, which gives us room to continue developing and optimising our products. "We refer end customers who contact us directly to a local integrator or machine builder with experience in their sector."

Jaco: "That partner can in turn add their own value, while we focus exclusively on our contribution. However, we remain responsible for our part of the installation, are present during commissioning and provide after-sales service together with the integrator. In this way, we combine specialist palletising and vertical transport with customisation, which offers advantages for the partner, Qimarox and the end customer: a win-win-win!"

Partners can independently integrate your machines into their customer-specific designs. How did you achieve this?

Jelle: "We create fixed configurations for various sectors, allowing partners to determine whether the proposed setup aligns with the customer's requirements, based on the specifications. "Small adjustments are possible, but major changes would take us too far from our specialisation."

Jaco: "Our partners have been carefully selected and certified. They are trained to smoothly integrate our products into their installations. It is important that they can sell our products as if they were part of their own range, but as an integrator they must know how to best serve the end customer. If that turns out to be with a different solution, then that's fine too."

As a custom specialist, Fraxinus will never develop a layer palletiser ourselves, when we can rely on a machine that is the result of decades of expertise.

Are you planning to expand your product portfolio?

Jaco: "We continuously keep our finger on the pulse. We've noticed that a market is emerging for automatic palletising when unloading sea containers. We're currently exploring the possibilities here, and with partners like Fraxinus, we're looking at projects where we can integrate this machine and turn it into a standard solution."

That sounds promising!

Qimarox[®]

ABOUT QIMAROX

Qimarox – a branch of Nedpack, founded in 1995 – was founded in 2012 by CEO Pieter Hanessen. This family business is based in Harderwijk, the Netherlands, and supplies standard components for material handling systems for logistics projects and production lines in various sectors worldwide through a partner network of machine builders and system integrators.

→ More info at www.qimarox.nl



from left to right: Jaco Hooijer, Pim Kreikamp, Hans Van Essche, Hannes Dekeyzer, Jelle Deelman