

## **Vandersanden Brick Factories continues on its own in the Netherlands**

In 2005, the Bilzen-based brick factory Vandersanden entered a joint venture with the Dutch brick factory HUWA. Together, they managed three modern brick factories in the Netherlands. Now, both parties have agreed to end their collaboration in the Netherlands per 31 December 2009.

Vandersanden takes over two of the three factories completely: **Brick Factory Spijk BV**, mainly focused on the production of baked clay bricks for paving, good for some 15% of the Dutch market of paving bricks, **and the Brick Factory Hedikhuizen BV** (near 's Hertogenbosch), which was fully rebuilt in 2007 and which is specialised in the same type of facing bricks as the Belgian factories. As a result, with five production sites (three in Belgium and two in the Netherlands), Vandersanden is now the largest brick-producing family business in Europe.

On the other hand, from 2010, **Brick Factory Huissenswaard** will continue completely independent under the new name Caprice B.V.

From 2010, **the facing bricks** will only be marketed under the Vandersanden brand name; **the pavers** will continue under the HUWA brand name. Mr. Jean-Pierre Wuytack, current general manager of the Belgian Vandersanden Brick Factories, will take on the general management of the entire group.

With this transaction, Vandersanden makes its next move in its **further growth in the Netherlands**. The fact that the further expansion takes place in the Netherlands is obvious. Just like the Belgians, our northerly neighbours are avid builders: the total market of facing bricks is over double of the Belgian one. In addition, the Netherlands is a great starting base for the German market.

This acquisition comes at the time of an upcoming building crisis, but "you have to invest exactly in times of crisis," says Wuytack, "so after the crisis, you are ready to conquer the recovering market. In addition, Vandersanden is a healthy business and the acquisitions are largely financed with our own means."

### **Investments in clay preparation, green expansion and extra staff**

The merger of the Dutch and Belgian brick factories will not result in any job losses. On the contrary, there are currently various open positions to target new markets, both locally and abroad, and to launch new product lines, such as the ZERO brick and the VIP+ system.

In addition, **Vandersanden is currently investing some 10 million Euros in its Belgian factory in Bilzen-Spouwen** in a new storage space and automated pallet transport, as well as additional factory buildings for covered storage of all raw materials and an even better clay preparation. The latter also allows for processing and mixing various high-quality types of clay in order to assure the full quality.

At the same factory in Spouwen, Vandersanden is investing in a substantial green expansion. Along the store space, a total of about 1 ha extra green zone is being developed as a buffer zone between the factory and the residential zone.

### **Vandersanden does “ecological and sustainable” entrepreneurship**

At the beginning of 2009, two new CHP (Combined Heat and Power) plants were taken into use in Lanklaar and Spouwen, whereby part of the required electricity is generated on site by means of an environmentally friendly gas engine. All waste heat is used for drying the bricks.

In addition, there was a transfer to CO2-free ALPENERGY by Electrabel with regards to the purchased electricity in all Belgian factories.

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### **About Vandersanden**

- Vandersanden NV Belgium has three factories, namely in Spouwen, Lanklaar and Hekelgem, in which it employs some 200 people. In total, it achieves a production capacity of over 250 million facing bricks per year, and with an annual turnover of some 60 million Euros, it is the largest Belgian producer of hand-formed facing bricks.
- From 2010, with its two factories, in Spijk and Hedikhuizen, Vandersanden B.V. in the Netherlands will be amongst the largest brick producers in Netherlands, with a production capacity of 175 million facing bricks and pavers per year, whilst employing some 120 people. The factory in Spijk is unique in that it is not only equipped for the production of hand-formed and mould-baked facing bricks, but also of pavers. The latter are high-quality thanks to their patented “distance keepers”, which improve the (rain) water drainage of the paving. The branch in Hedikhuizen is specialised in the production of hand-formed facing bricks with exceptional possibilities with regards to colour development and various formats intended for all possible export markets.
- Baked facing bricks and pavers are mostly used in the Benelux, which is why “Vandersanden’s home market” represents 75% of its sales, which means that the remaining 25% goes to export countries from Europe to Japan.

More information on [www.vandersanden.be](http://www.vandersanden.be)

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