

# A successful store baker in Poland

THE BAKERY ROBSON PIEKARNIA ROBERT MARCZAK FROM ŁOCHOW BELONGS TO THE NEW GENERATION OF BAKERY BUSINESSES IN POLAND WHO HAVE SUCCESSFULLY FOUNDED BRANCH NETWORKS OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS. HE HAS NOW BUILT A NEW PRODUCTION FACILITY



++ figure 1

Most part of the elongated main hall belongs to the bread and bread roll manufacturing operation; here you see the bread plant

**+** He was only just 23 years old when he set his course for his professional future. It was not entirely voluntary, because his parents' apple orchard, which he should really have taken over, had been destroyed by frost in a severe winter a few years earlier. So Robert Marczak remembered the small confectionery business his father had run from the sixties until the late eighties and in which he had often helped. Although this market had suffered seriously due to cheap imported

confectionery after the end of the single-party state, the premises and part of the equipment were still there.

Using what he had learned as a child, and with help from his father and with three employees, Marczak started baking yeast cakes there in 1993. One month later he opened his first shop and from that point onwards the situation improved for the newly hatched bakery businessman. Three years later he was employing 30 staff, and today 50 employees



++ figure 2

The Miwe proofing plant



++ figure 3

A König bread roll line for small baked goods production



++ figures 4+5

Depositing the proofed dough pieces onto the scrabbler, from which the Athlet oven loader takes them after the wagons have docked on

work in the production unit alone. Almost all of them have learned their trade here, since regulated vocational training scarcely exists— this is his biggest problem. He took the solution into his own hands, and today he employs twelve apprentices, who are at the same time students at a technical college.

The branch network of his bakery, which trades under the name “Robson”, includes 40 locations within a 100 km radius, three of them in Warsaw. The branches contribute 75 % of his sales, and the remainder comes from supplying small food retailers. The product range includes around 100 articles. Marczak makes 40 % of his turnover with rye, blended and wheat breads together with a growing range of special breads, 20 % with bread rolls, and earns the rest with fine pastries and confectionery articles. Gateaux are the only products that have not yet returned to the range. The main article is still a hearth-baked mixed bread loaf made from 70 % wheat and 30 % rye, weighing 500 g.

However, the bread market is on the move. Consumers are leaning increasingly towards pan-baked special breads with various additives such as seeds or even cranberries. Special breads need explanation and this is why Marczak is now making a bigger investment into training the sales staff. In parallel with this he is modernising the shops and equipping them with in-store ovens. Marczak says, “Consumers appreciate the quality of our baked goods and their consistency, but dietary and consumer habits are changing not only in big cities but also in small villages. The public wants new products, as well as the opportunity to drink coffee or have something to eat on the spot. Anyone who doesn’t go along with that trend will disappear from the market.” The strategy is rounded off with an extensive program of advertising and sales promotion campaigns ranging from posters and information leaflets to tasting opportunities in the shops.

The cost is not inconsiderable, particularly considering the fact that the prices of investment goods, energy and diesel

for his own vehicle fleet are entirely the same as those in Western Europe, but the prices of baked goods still remain distinctly lower. This is why Robert Marczak did not find it easy to take the decision to invest in a new production facility. He explains, “I already had the idea of building a new production facility in 2004, but I waited to see how the market and our branches would develop. Our principle is always to deliver promptly. Then, when the quantities had increased to the extent that we had problems in the production department, and the dispatch was also too small, we risked taking the plunge.” Together with the architect, Jacek Sienko and project planners from the oven constructor MIWE Michael Wenz GmbH in Arnstein, Germany, and also Tomasz Guderski, whose company Geth in Kraków represents Miwe in Poland, he has built a new, brightly-lit production hall in Łochów. This not only provides space for both the old and new production plants, but also enables further growth. The new building is rounded off by generously sized amenity rooms and offices as well as sufficient space for goods traffic and parking places. Production has taken place here since November 2011. The new building is divided according to functions. Of course the elongated main hall belongs to the bread and bread roll ▶

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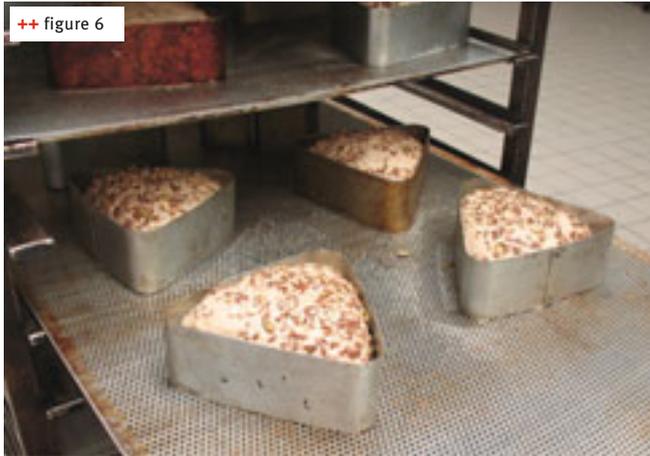
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++ figure 6

## ++ figure 6

There are distinctive pans for special festivals (heart rolls) and for products that are permanently in the range (triangular shaped bread loaves)

manufacturing operation. The ovens are located at one side in a room opening onto the hall. Fine baked goods manufacture, confectionery and dispatch each take place in separate rooms, as does the cleaning of the tools, baking trays and transport crates.

Standing centrally in the middle of the main hall there are three large Miwe pass-through proofing cabinets, each for four wagons with crossway scrabblers, for bread manufacture. The proofing cabinets are supplied from two bread preparation plants positioned at the top end, both operating classically with dough dividers and round and long moulders. Newly arrived in the department are three spiral mixers delivering up to 250 kg of dough per batch, together with a pre-dough plant whose mild acidified pre-dough is used in special bread varieties and to produce Kaiser rolls. The flour is supplied by six new silos each holding 27 t.

After proofing, the crossways scrabblers are pushed by hand to the four Ideal multi-deck ovens positioned behind at the left, each with a baking area of 22 m<sup>2</sup>; their loading and emptying is undertaken by teamwork using a Butler and an Athlet XXL. The Butler, a combination of a vertically moveable depositor belt and an unloading bar, takes the bread dough pieces from the crossways scrapper and transfers them to the fully automatic Athlet oven loader/unloader, which is



++ figure 7

## ++ figure 7

Proprietor, Robert Marczak

dimensioned in such a way so that it can also integrate a fifth oven if necessary.

The new bread roll plant from the König Maschinen Gesellschaft m.b.H. Company, Graz, Austria, is set up at the side in the longitudinal direction of the hall and produces the range of bread rolls. They are baked in four energy-efficient rack ovens from the Miwe roll-in e-plus series. The confectionery department has received a final sheeting plant from the RONDO Burgdorf AG Company, Burgdorf, Switzerland, which produces the growing range of pastry pockets, Danish pastries and other fine baked goods, a Canol fat frying system and a Multidrop dispenser.

Marczak says, "We are well equipped with the new production facility, everything is running smoothly, and the generous size of the rooms makes the work easier. The product range is wide and sales are growing in all sectors." Nonetheless he is plagued by worries: "We can scarcely find any trained personnel and there is practically no opportunity to train staff other than in our own factory. We need well-trained bakers who can, on the one hand, monitor and optimise products and production processes and, on the other, can undertake the training of new recruits. I do hope we can work together with well-trained young people in the future." +++



++ figure 8

## ++ figure 8

If the batch is small, the confectioner applies the fillings for the pastry pockets by hand



++ figure 9

## ++ figure 9

The Robson bakery in Łochów, east of Warsaw

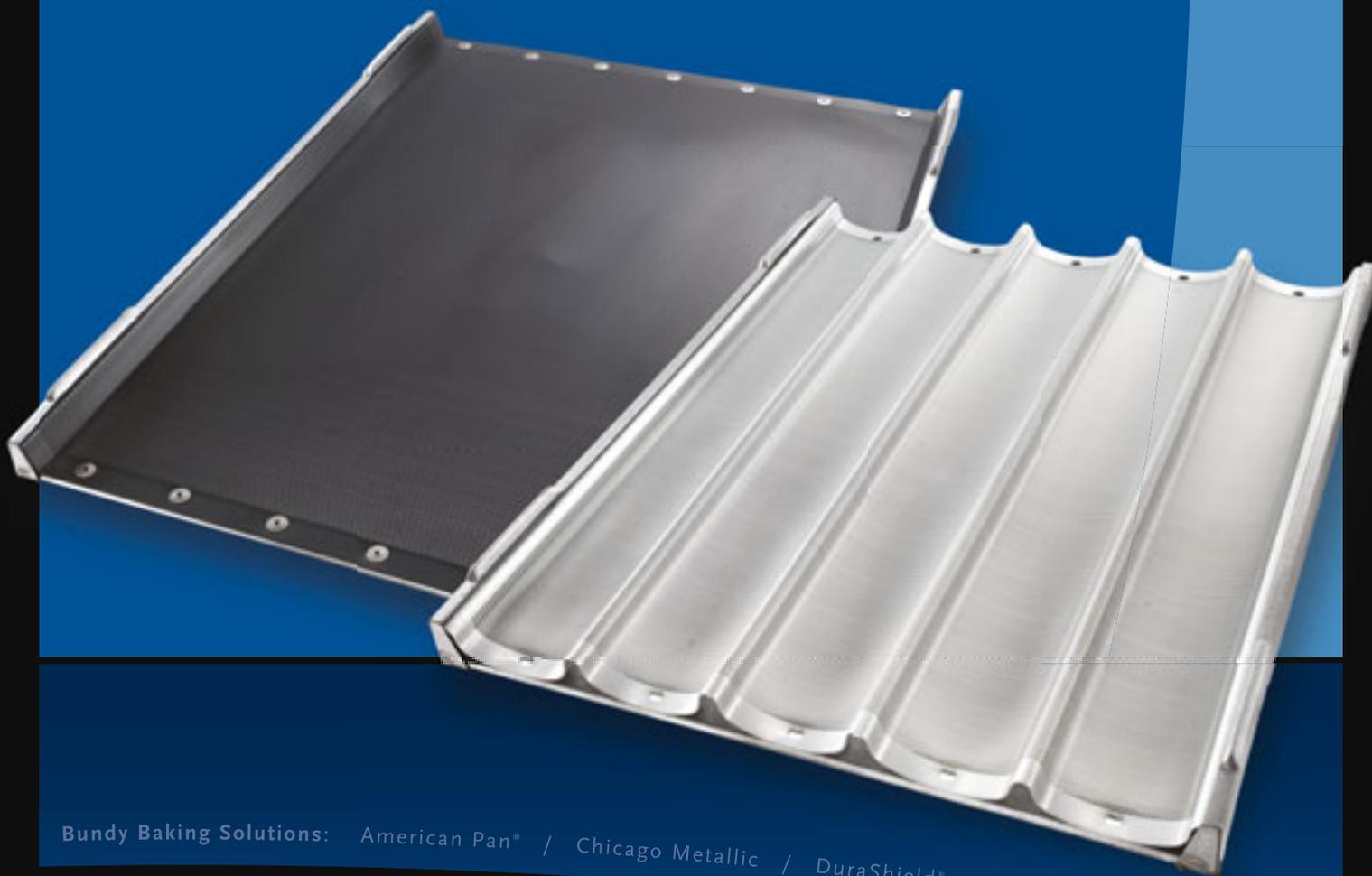
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