

Precision, efficiency and hygiene

THE KÖNIG MASCHINEN GESELLSCHAFT M.B.H. IN GRAZ, STYRIA, SOUTHEAST AUSTRIA, HAS USED 2013 TO EXPAND ITS PRODUCT RANGE OF DIVIDER-ROUNDERS AND DOUGH SHEETERS, AND TO INTEGRATE EVEN MORE BAKING AREA INTO ITS FULLY RE-ENGINEERED PLATE CIRCULATING OVEN. BBI TALKED TO EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR **RICHARD HÄUSLER**



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Richard Häusler, Executive Director of König Maschinen Gesellschaft m.b.H.

+ bbi: Mr. Häusler, there was no iba in 2013, which must have left enough time to push forward new developments in a relaxed atmosphere. What was the outcome?

+ Häusler: Development is a permanent task nowadays, and is determined by the expectations of customers and the market rather than by trade fair dates. 2013 was a fruitful year in this respect. We made further developments to our Industry Rex AW divider-rounder (AW = accurate weight) with which we had already set standards for hygiene and weight accuracy at the iba, focusing even more on weight accuracy and technical perfection. We succeeded in designing the pressure to make it absolutely uniform and continuously adjustable over the whole width of the ten or twelve rows on the very big industrial machines. This involved modifying the entire drive system. Stop&go operation has now replaced the previous continuous running. In the industrial version, the divider-rounder now divides and shapes 30,000 dough pieces per hour in ten rows, and does this in a weight range from 30 to 110 g. We have also already transferred these design features to our smaller industrial machines, the 4, 5 or even 6-row models, whose capacity

range is between 12,000 and 18,000 pieces per hour. However, in 2014 König will offer yet another new Rex divider-rounder, namely a basic model that will then take its place between the more artisan Classic Rex dough dividing and rounding machines and the Industry Rex machines.

+ bbi: You presented a new dough sheeter, the Certo Pan M, at the südback trade fair. How was it received?

+ Häusler: The advantage of the Certo Pan M is the formation of a dough sheet that is produced continuously and thus does without any overlapping joints between the individual strands of dough. The dough sheet is cut to the required first dough sheet thickness by an oscillating knife or even an ultrasonic knife situated at the end of a rotating drum from which the dough emerges continuously. This yields improved weight accuracy, even for doughs with a high water content and long pre-proofing, compared to all the previously known systems that operate with composite dough strands. Incidentally, the response to this innovation was excellent. The machine is currently undergoing a second practical test. The first gave excellent results, and if the second is equally good we will begin series production in the spring of 2014 and will also deliver the first customer orders.

+ bbi: Where is the Certo Pan's performance range, and what will it cost?

+ Häusler: The performance range is 600–800 kg dough/h, and as far as the price is concerned, it is in the same region as the cost of other dough sheeters in a similar configuration. The dough sheeter machine, cross cutting and longitudinal cutting, stamping, rounding, seeding and scrabbling are estimated to yield a price to the customer of around EUR 220,000.

+ bbi: König is not only a bread and roll plant manufacturer, it also builds ovens. Is there anything new in that area?

+ Häusler: Certainly, we have just delivered a PU Integral plate circulating oven with a baking area of 110.5 m² to a manufacturer of frozen baked goods in Germany. It is not only the biggest Integral we have ever built, it is also significantly different. Very good separation between the four baking zones is achievable by novel sealing systems, and that also functions extremely well in continuous operation. Consequently the temperature and humidity are controllable separately in each of the four zones, thus creating a wide variety of baking curves for every imaginable kind of product. This makes the oven attractive for the production of both fresh and frozen goods, and does so on a smaller footprint and with less energy consumption compared to other ovens with the same baking area.

+ **bbi:** How is the oven heated?

+ **Häusler:** The individual heating coils are supplied with thermo-oil, which heats the counter-flowing air. So this automatic baking oven is also a convection oven with the additional effect of radiant heat acting between the individual baking plates. The advantage of the heat exchanges heated by thermo-oil is that the heat regulation can be adapted very quickly to the various required baking programs.

+ **bbi:** This brings us to another topic. The financial crisis is accelerating structural changes in the baking industry. That makes the world unpredictable for bakery equipment manufacturers. What is the situation for König, and how did you fare in 2013?

+ **Häusler:** We are entirely satisfied with the year. It started rather quietly, but in the last three or four months we experienced a strong and unusually high level of incoming orders. However, much of it is individually customized and configured plant technology rather than standard machine construction. For us that is design-intensive, and consequently the implementation and commissioning are also more time-consuming and complex.

+ **bbi:** Where do the orders mainly originate from, and how large is the proportion exported?

+ **Häusler:** Our export proportion in 2013 will be approx. 90%. 60% of our sales go to traditional markets like those in

Germany, the USA, Russia, Poland, Switzerland, Great Britain, Scandinavia, France and of course also to Austria. We are currently working on big orders from Austria, Switzerland, the USA, Russia and Poland. The markets in the Near East and Latin America are also developing positively for us, mainly Chile, Brazil, Peru and Colombia. We have just commissioned a large central production unit for "European" baked goods in Lima, Peru. Due to the modest start, the 2013 earnings position can be described as rather average, and margins in general will not be bigger.

+ **bbi:** Latin America is one of the growth markets for the bakery machine constructors, and many are also putting their hopes on Africa. What does the situation there look like for König?

+ **Häusler:** South Africa is traditionally one of our good markets, and more recently there are also König plants in Angola and Nigeria. The markets in Africa are very attractive, but their development is also very complicated.

+ **bbi:** How long will the existing backlog of orders last?

+ **Häusler:** The amount entered in the order books up to the end of the year will certainly employ us fully for six to nine months and that is a good base which will still not cause excessively long delivery times for the expected orders.

+ **bbi:** Mr. Häusler, thank you for the interview. +++

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