

# Family tradition and innovation at Alpha Beton: Investment in modernisation and automation

The history of Alpha Beton, a leading precast concrete company in Belgium and part of the Linden Group, is characterised by family tradition, innovation and an impressive 100-year success story. To continue prospering, the industry leader modernised its production with large automated systems from Progress Group, a Form Master shuttering robot and an M-System BlueMesh® mesh welding machine.

## The roots of Alpha Beton: Tradition and technical know-how

In the 1980s and 1990s, Udo Linden, visionary and grandson of the founder of H.P. Linden, recognised the shortcomings in the market for concrete products. The result: The purchase of the company premises, the construction of the first halls and the manual production of precast concrete slabs. They even developed their own machines, customised to the needs of production. Over time, Alpha Beton expanded its product

portfolio to include double walls and developed the innovative Pamaflex system, allowing the construction of highly energy-efficient homes. The company has always focussed on development. As a supplier in Belgium, particularly in the French-speaking part and Luxembourg, Alpha Beton successfully serves several markets. Flexible communication in German and French means the company can serve customers in different regions.

## Market situation and forecast: Challenges in the building industry

The construction industry is facing major challenges. "Unfortunately, demand for precast concrete parts also collapsed in Belgium last year. However, we hope for a speedy recovery," said Michael Huppertz and Eric Scheuren, members of the Alpha Beton Directors Committee. Germany and Luxembourg are also taking a wait-and-see approach. But the



*Alpha Beton has been producing precast concrete parts since the 1990s – initially with a lot of manual labour and now highly automated.*



*The M-System BlueMesh mesh welding machine produces the required mesh just-in-time and fully automatically.*





*The Form Master shuttering and demoulding robot places and removes the shuttering fully automatically and precisely according to CAD specifications.*



*The Form Master makes it possible to achieve a high level of precision and work without disposable fillers.*

trend is towards an imminent recovery in the market after the current crisis.

### Staff shortages and the use of machines

To be ready for the future, the traditional company is now investing in modernisation. The Progress Group systems were purchased for personnel and profitability reasons. The shortage of qualified personnel was a decisive factor in the use of automation. Machines such as the shuttering robot and the mesh welding plant help to compensate for the shortage of personnel and increase the precision and quality of production, while avoiding product waste.

### Investment in the future: Progress with Progress

In view of the current challenges, Alpha Beton is focussing on innovation and investing in automation with tried-and-tested machines. In the past, Alpha Beton has also built its own machines, but for such large-scale installations, the Belgians rely on an experienced mechanical engineering company. The technology is well established and many benchmark installations have been fully operational on the market for many years. The co-operation with Progress Group not only guaranteed high-performance machines, but also a competent service, which was a decisive factor for the investment. "The service is very easy to contact and you can always find the right person to talk to," says Eric Scheuren, who is responsible for the technical aspects, machines and product development at Alpha Beton: "There are people there who are very familiar with the machines."

### Fully automatic machine technology

The Form Master shuttering and deshuttering robot carries out all work steps of the shuttering process fully automatically. This process guarantees high precision and an exact

production time without disposable fillers. With the M-System BlueMesh mesh welding machine, the required meshes are produced flexibly and just-in-time from the coil. In addition, the low current connection values thanks to Progress inverter welding and production without waste and time-consuming cutting of the reinforcement mesh ensure efficiency and cost-effectiveness.



*The reinforcement machines work directly from the coil and thus avoid waste.*



*With the double walls produced in the plant, construction is faster and safer.*



### Trust, service and cooperation

Alpha Beton relies on Progress because the manufacturer not only offers innovative machines, but also impresses with its confidence, excellent service and good personal relationships. The Belgian group of companies acquired its first Progress system 20 years ago and this straightening and cutting machine is still in use today. Experience as an overall provider and the German mother tongue play a decisive role. The development of its own circulation plant controller with Progress machine communication and the use of Progress' software expertise also contribute to the efficiency increase at Alpha Beton.

Michael Huppertz, who is responsible for Sales, Pricing and IT, among other things, explains: "Progress Group has the experience in the interaction of the individual machines and offers the complete programme as an overall supplier. They are set up for all machines and do not specialise in just one. Progress also has its own precast concrete plant, which immediately gave us confidence. Experience is also growing because of the large number of machines in service. The learning effect with many different systems is great and it can always be constantly optimised."

### Automation and successful projects

The investments in modernisation help Alpha Beton to remain competitive even in challenging times. Progress' experience and support have proven to be crucial for success. In times of change, Alpha Beton remains true to its tradition and continues to rely on advanced technologies to meet the demands of the market.

Alpha Beton is part of the Linden Group, a construction company that has been in business for over 100 years. To ensure in-house quality in both residential and commercial construction, managing director Udo Linden set up his own steel construction department, Steeltec, in the 1980s and the Alpha Beton precast concrete plant in the 1990s. A few years ago, the fourth generation joined the company and is facing up to the challenges of the present and the future.

### FURTHER INFORMATION



Alpha Beton  
John-Cockerill-Straße 13  
4780 Sankt Vith, Belgium  
T +32 80 281212  
[info@alphabeton.eu](mailto:info@alphabeton.eu)  
[www.alphabeton.eu](http://www.alphabeton.eu)

### PROGRESS GROUP

Progress Maschinen & Automation AG  
Julius-Durst-Straße 100  
39042 Brixen, Italy  
T + 39 0472 979100  
[info@progress-m.com](mailto:info@progress-m.com)  
[www.progress-m.com](http://www.progress-m.com)



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