

Rothe Erde - E-Crane

1200 ton cranes can't be built single-handedly

On a sunny day in March we had the opportunity to interview the king pins of the E-Crane company. What we heard was a fascinating story about the weal and woes of this crane builder, by the way the only remaining one in Belgium!

The company was founded in 1990 by Lieven Bauwens and his associate Geert Watteuw. They opted for a well-considered, careful and organic growth, avoiding careless investments.

From day one, these gentlemen have cast curious eyes far beyond their country's borders. At present E-Crane is active throughout the world, yielding branches in the US, Poland and Belgium. Essentially Europe is their playground, but they are also active in South and North America, Australia, Asia,... you name it. Currently Indonesia

is especially a genuine booming market. Since the beginning, the company has specialized in the niche-market of transshipment of mass products such as bulk goods and scrap for companies in various industries (cement, agriculture, steel, ...). The smallest crane weighs 100 tons and the largest engine ever built weighed 1200 tons.



From left to right: **Mrs marleen Van Gemst**, Purchase Department, **Gauthier Vermeyen**, Production Manager – parts & Logistics Manager, **Christophe Horion**, Product Manager Rothe Erde with Vansichen Lineairtechniek, **Lieven Bauwens**, Managing Director – Executive Director.

Meanwhile they are world leader in 'scrap catering': the handling of scrap in steelworks.

We requested Lieven Bauwens to describe his company in a couple of words. "Dynamic, international, customer oriented, expansive, doing things differently from other companies", was his answer. "What exactly does that mean?" we asked. The answer was both fascinating and clear: "For us, doing things differently means that we always have spare parts available, enabling us to help out customers quickly in case of a sudden problem. This is unique in the area of crane building. Customer oriented means that we work entirely tailored to the customer's wishes, for instance a computer system in the cabin, additional lighting,... Every project is named after the customer, we never work with only numbers. We are extremely service-minded."

The personnel policy clearly reflects this personal touch, resulting in a minimal staff turnover. They've never lost a customer. Customers always continue to order. That's why E-Crane likes to work with testimonials in their communication. This allows prospective customers to learn what E-Crane can mean directly from existing customers. The life span of the machines is also quite long: between 15 and 20 years. All this time, E-Crane is of course



E-Crane specializes in cranes for the transshipment of goods in bulk in numerous areas and uses products of Rothe Erde, partner of Vansichen Lineairtechniek.

servicing the machines.

"Just like with our customers, we are keen to establish a good relationship with our suppliers, for instance with Vansichen Lineairtechniek", says Mr. Bauwens. "We have been working with ThyssenKrupp Rothe Erde for many years. Mr. Christophe Horion, the technical support with Vansichen Lineairtechniek is an important added value for us. He is very good at imaging himself in his customers' situation. He does the needful and solves possible problems, for instance regarding delivery times. Our confidence in the entire Vansichen Lineairteam is solid.

We also asked Mr. Bauwens which accomplishment in his career he is most proud of. His answer was very frank: "Being the son of a farmer, I was absolutely not interested in agriculture, but all the more in everything in connection with mechanics. When I visited a tractor factory, it was an eye-opener for me. Since that moment I've cherished this childhood dream of starting up a heavy machinery factory. Today I'm delighted to be able to say that I've successfully set up 3 such factories. And that is my major pride."