



A fireplace makes any room so cosy. A lot of people seem to feel that way, as sales and output at this fireplace manufacturer in Liège are up by 30%.

Bodart & Gonay will be celebrating 50 years in business in 2007. The company makes gas and wood fireplace inserts, and has a second product range of letter boxes. These are made at its factory at Harzé near Liège which was completely renovated recently. Since the move from its previous premises, turnover has doubled and so has the workforce, which now stands at 130 people excluding temporary employees. To increase production, B & G has added some production at its ACTIF INDUSTRIES subsidiary based in Herstal. This subsidiary also carries out metal pressing and cutting on a subcontract basis for other customers.

Eight per cent of Bodart & Gonay's 20 million euro turnover is spent on the R&D department. Its laboratories are fully equipped for testing products and verification of conformity with standards. A team of 7 people are employed on developing new products.

High energy prices have helped sales

In 2006, turnover was up 30% on the previous financial year. Sales Director Etienne Fraikin says: "The cost of energy has been one of the main factors behind this rise in sales. The cost of wood for heating has not been subject to the same price rises as other energy sources. In addition, we have stream-

lined our operations and developed extremely efficient products".

Mr Fraikin continues: "We have 40 years' experience on the home heating market. All our products respond to what the marketplace wants. High performance wood fires, pull-out design inserts, and gas inserts. We don't specialise in a niche market, but we cover the whole range of fires. The solutions developed by the R&D department have increased the efficiency of the company's products and cut consumers' daily heating costs".

Focus on exports

Exports account for almost 40% of turnover and as the Belgian market seems to reach his maximum level, the company will be increasingly focused on exports. It currently covers all the EU countries plus the United States, Turkey and Japan. B&G intends to expand sales to countries where it is already present, and add new markets. It has an exclusive importer in the UK and one in Ireland for all its products, and is developing other solutions to grow sales in these markets.

Strong roots in Wallonia

The company is financed entirely by Belgian capital and all its production is located in Wallonia. A strategic decision was taken



not to relocate production to Eastern Europe or further afield. This has implications for production costs but has enormous advantages in terms of image. All the company's know-how remains in Wallonia and product quality is guaranteed. This is a persuasive argument when marketing as far afield as Eastern Europe, and now this loyalty is finding favour with customers in Belgium too. The company has received grants from the AWEX for producing its Internet site, as well as brochures and catalogues, and Bodart & Gonay is a regular participant in AWEX trade missions.

Bodart & Gonay

Fireplace manufacturer turns up the heat



Contact:

Bodart & Gonay

Parc Artisanal de Harzé

Rue de Lambinon, 3

B-4920 Harzé

Tel.: +32 4 239 9393

Fax: +32 4 239 9398

e-mail: info@b-g.be

web: www.b-g.be