

Wasa AG, 64293 Darmstadt, Germany

# Sustainability and efficiency: Double the profit by switching to plastic boards

■ Benjamin Burschey, Wasa AG, Germany

For over four years now, Wasa has been forging a strong partnership with MT-Beton in order to serve the French-speaking world with innovative solutions. This collaboration has not only led to numerous exciting projects, but also marks a significant step towards greater sustainability and efficiency in the concrete block plants. A prime example of the success of these efforts is the recent conversion to the globally proven Wasa Uniplast Ultra solid plastic board at S.A.S Guérin in Gennes, France.

## Recycled plastic boards

Since 1991, Wasa has been manufacturing the Uniplast plastic board for the concrete block industry in Neubrunn, Thuringia - a product that is not only made of recycled plastic, but also reinforced with glass fibres. This board is the result of decades of innovation and careful optimization of the production process. The Wasa Uniplast Ultra is characterised by a remarkably constant density and a smooth surface. The precise dosing of glass fibres makes the board extraordinarily robust, resistant to shocks and significantly more resistant to bending.

These properties are highly valued in concrete block production, regardless of the manufacturing system used, and offer numerous advantages. The Wasa Uniplast Ultra thus stands not only for maximum technical performance, but also for a sustainable production method by transforming recycled material into high-quality, durable products for the concrete industry.



*Wasa Uniplast Ultra - the glass-fibre reinforced board made of recycled plastic*

## Double the profit by switching to plastic boards

In the picturesque landscape of Maine et Loire, between Saumur and Angers, S.A.S Guérin stands in the geographical heart of France. Since its founding in 1961 on a modest 700 m<sup>2</sup>, the family-run company, which is today managed by Yohann Prezlin, has made an impressive development. Today, S.A.S Guérin covers an area of over 45,000 m<sup>2</sup>, almost 1/6 of the area of which is covered, and represents a modern production plant for concrete blocks.



*The hardening chamber of the new Quadra Q12 with Wasa Uniplast Ultra boards*



Robot handling in the modern circulation system of the Quadra Q12 machine



Thorough maintenance of the Wasa Uniplast Ultra through board cleaning in the Quadra Q12

With the commissioning of the second Quadra concrete block making machine, a Quadra Q12, last summer and the Quadra Q6, which was already commissioned in 2020, the company has achieved significant technological progress. These two machines have modernised the product range and

enable S.A.S Guérin to produce several thousand concrete blocks and hollow blocks of the highest quality every day. Such efficiency is the result of continuous investment in modernisation and the relentless pursuit of excellence.



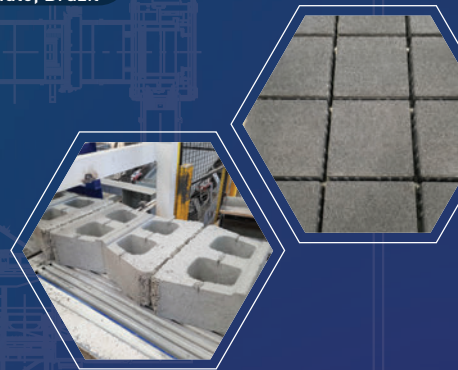
French Manufacturer of Automated Equipment for the Concrete Industry

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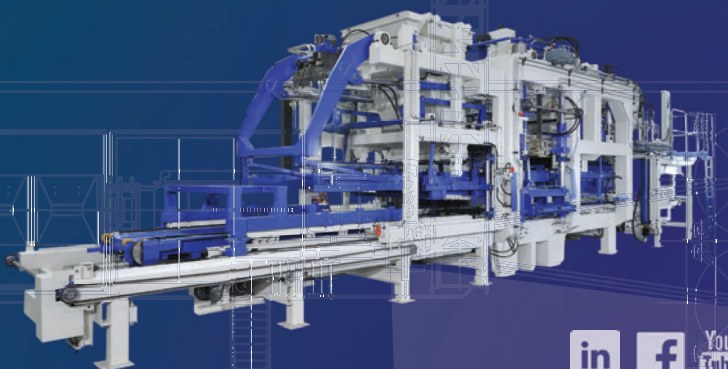
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EFFICIENCY, VERSATILITY & INNOVATION





*Quadra Q6 circulation system with wooden boards before*



*Quadra Q6 circulation system with Wasa Uniplast Ultra today*



*Quadra Q6 circulation system with Uniplast Ultra*



*Very high compression and uniform height of the products due to the new solid plastic boards on the Quadra Q6*

A significant part of this excellence is reflected in the decision to switch from traditional wooden boards to Wasa's innovative plastic boards. With the commissioning of the Quadra Q12, approx. 3,500 Wasa Uniplast Ultra boards with a board size of 1,350 x 1,300 mm were delivered. The commissioning and production with the new boards went so well that S.A.S Guérin quickly decided to replace the existing approx. 5,000 wooden boards of the Quadra Q6 with a board size of 1,400 x 600 mm with new Wasa Uniplast Ultra boards. Thus, S.A.S Guérin has made a decision for the future. The switch to plastic boards aimed at extending the service life of the boards themselves while ensuring higher quality concrete products in terms of better compaction and calibration. These measures not only reflect the commitment to sustainability, but also contribute to an improved return on investment.

The advantages of switching to solid plastic boards are manifested in numerous aspects at S.A.S Guérin. An improved appearance of the finished products, especially on the underside of the blocks, as well as more uniform laboratory test results in terms of strength are just a few of the notable improvements. The reduction of the vibration time of the old and new machines by a total of 2-3 seconds, of which 1-1.5 seconds are directly attributed to the plastic boards, and a 2/3 reduction in tamper head pressure are further technical advances that not only increase the ROI, but also protect the moulds used and the machine parts themselves.

The modernisation of the production line with grinding system has also led to a remarkable increase in efficiency. Thanks to the conversion to the new boards, the concrete blocks now have a uniform height, which significantly reduces the extensive grinding process previously required on the upper and lower sides of the blocks. Now only a slight finishing of the surface is required. This optimization leads not only to an extension of the service life of the wearing parts, but also to a noticeable reduction in the workload in post-processing - a clear plus for productivity and cost efficiency.

The conversion to Wasa plastic boards was not an insoluble challenge for S.A.S Guérin, the settings on the Quadra Q6 had to be adjusted for the change from the lighter wooden boards to the heavier plastic boards. Precise handling of the new plastic boards was ensured through the use of a bridge crane and electric suction cups. Of course, the vibration settings and other machine parameters also had to be adjusted, recalls Emmanuel Ribault, Technical Manager at S.A.S Guérin. However, the S.A.S Guérin team mastered this with flying colours and were able to produce better products very quickly.

### The puzzle of the concrete industry

These innovations are not only proof of the technological pioneering spirit of S.A.S Guérin, but also of the fruitful cooperation with MT-Beton, represented by Muriel Testud. Since its foundation in 2020, MT-Beton has set itself the task of supplying the French-speaking world with high-quality products. Muriel Testud, with over 30 years of experience in the concrete industry, founded MT-Beton - "The puzzle of the concrete industry!" - with the aim of offering a tailor-made solution for every challenge of their customers.

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MT-Beton stands for a philosophy based on customer proximity, listening and offering proven, innovative solutions. This strategy and values are 100 percent consistent with those of Wasas. In mid-2023, MT-Beton invested in a 40 m<sup>2</sup> business office next to the train station of Annemasse, a border town with Geneva, which can be reached in a few minutes from the airport or the city centre with the Léman Express.

The current economic situation, characterised by challenges such as a recession and the aftermath of global events, requires caution and prudence. These times require a strong and courageous attitude, characteristics that Muriel Testud undoubtedly embodies. It shows that, despite uncertainties, progress is possible as long as you are willing to rely on the right partners and make the right decisions.

MT-Beton and S.A.S Guérin are more than just companies; they are symbols of an ever-evolving industry. They show that it is possible to combine quality, sustainability and efficiency and that the path to a successful future leads through adaptability, technological innovations and strong partnerships.

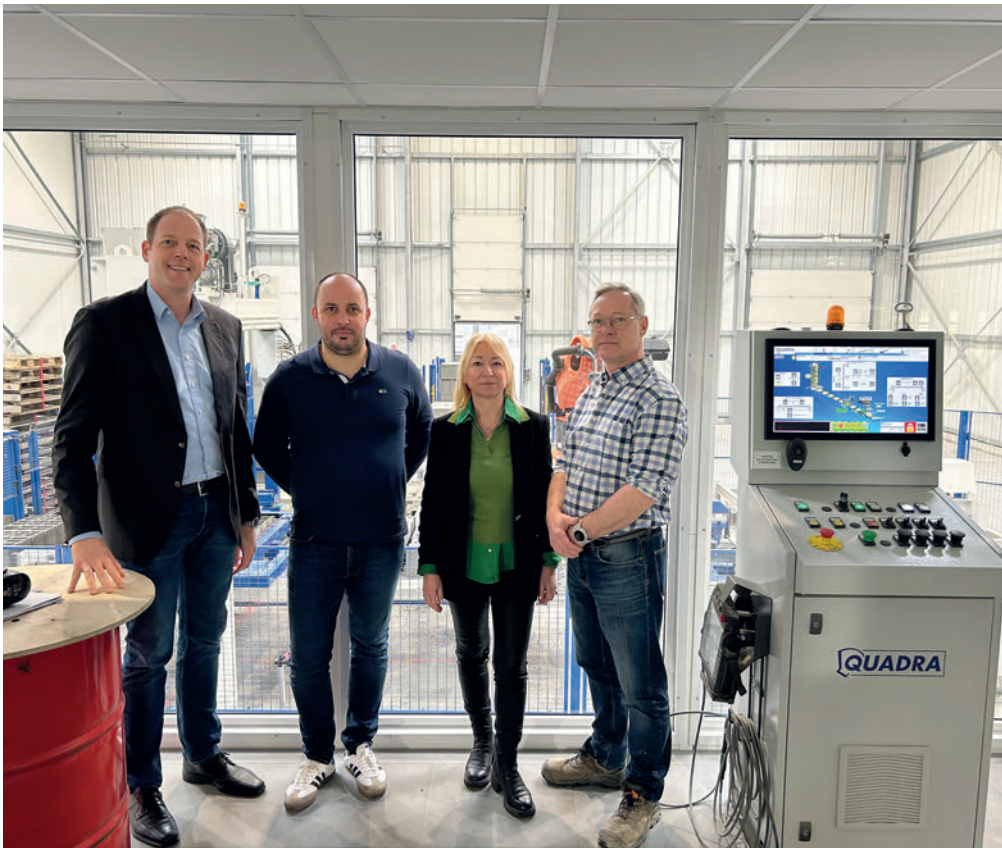
The connection between S.A.S Guérin, MT-Beton and Wasa is an example of the synergy that can arise between delivery partners and customers. The Wasa Uniplast Ultra solid plastic board, which is used at S.A.S Guérin, is a prime example of durability and high-quality products from Wasa.

Looking to the future of the concrete block industry shows that the requirements will remain high. Products must be resistant, precise and aesthetically pleasing in order to prevail in a highly competitive market. Production speed must also be



*The new MT-Beton office in Annemasse*

high to ensure profitability in line with end customer prices. This is where the Uniplast Ultra board from Wasa comes in, which, thanks to its glass-fibre reinforced solid plastic, allows excellent vibration transmission and thus better compaction of the concrete blocks, which in turn, as with S.A.S Guérin in practice, led to a reduced vibration time.



*From left: Benjamin Burschey (Sales Director Wasa AG), Yohann Prezelin (CEO S.A.S Guérin), Muriel Testud (MT-Beton), Emmanuel Ribault (Technical Manager S.A.S Guérin)*

## CONCRETE PRODUCTS & CAST STONE

This means fewer production stops, less wear and tear, and a more sustainable use of resources. The fact that Wasa Uniplast Ultra boards last on average three to four times longer than wooden boards allows S.A.S Guérin to reduce the change of boards on the production lines, maximize the quality of the products and improve the return on investment.

S.A.S Guérin, MT-Beton and Wasa thus represent not only the current state of technology, but also its future-oriented dynamics. They stand for companies that are willing to face the challenges of the time and turn them into opportunities. With foresight, innovative strength and the unwavering will to constantly redefine the limits of the possible, they are shaping the concrete block industry of tomorrow. ■

### FURTHER INFORMATION



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