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CHEESE



EDITORIAL

We are proud to present this new St. Paul magazine. We would like to tell you what we do and who we are, the people behind the company. How we look at the future, at technological developments and what we do with those. Telling something about our organisation, cannot be done without also looking at our family. St. Paul is a family business pur sang.

Our company dates back to 1985, but the Kuijl family was in the cheese business long before that. Not surprising: cheese and entrepreneurship are in our DNA. Let's add another two outstanding traits of our family: the drive for innovation and the tremendous passion. Be it for cheese, for a new project or for racing. Everything we do, we do not do with 100, but with 300% commitment and enthusiasm. Our family has a real winner mentality, which ensures that we are often ahead of the game. We like to take the lead and that's what makes us fully committed to innovation at St. Paul. You can read about this in this magazine. A magazine through which we hope to inform, but above all inspire.

Enjoy!

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From idea to snack

AS DIRECTOR OF SWINKELS SNACKERY BAKERY, BUT ESPECIALLY AS A CHEESE LOVER, TON VAN DER AA HAD THE IDEA TO MAKE A SUPERIOR CHEESE SOUFLÉ, A DUTCH FRIED SNACK, IN 2009. SO, TIME TO SIT DOWN WITH A TRUE CHEESE ARTIST. AFTER A NICE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS, ST. PAUL BECAME THE PURVEYOR OF CHEESE FOR THE 'SOUFFLESSE', THE EMPEROR AMONG DUTCH CHEESE SOUFLÉS.

Ton van der Aa is taking a number of St. Paul's colleagues back to the beginning of Soufflesse. Van der Aa: "My business partner Mart Beniers and I noticed that the quality of cheese in cheese soufflés was declining and that the ratio of puff pastry to cheese could be better. We were really missing the cheese experience in the product and aged cheese could largely solve this problem as far as I was concerned. By itself, this cheese has a delicious spicy and full flavour. We knew it would be a challenge to make aged cheese pumpable. In fact, due to its texture, it crumbles much earlier than the cheese previously used in cheese soufflés. St. Paul, one of our suppliers was one of the few who could turn aged cheese into processed cheese. Moreover, we knew St. Paul as

a real sparring partner in a development process. So after one call, we got started."

The idea

In the weekly sales meeting at St. Paul, the story got a follow-up. During this meeting, which still takes place every Monday morning, the request was discussed. Egbert van de Winkel, sales manager at St. Paul says: "After the initial contact, we try to get the question as clear as possible. It has to be clear what the desired output should be, what standards the product should meet. Our product developers should then be able to work with this. Swinkels Snackery Bakery wanted to develop a distinctive cheese soufflé with more cheese and more flavour.



“THE QUALITY IS VERY GOOD AND CONSISTENT AT ST. PAUL”



There was also a desire for a tastier crust and a distinctive shape, which would distribute the cheese better and make the snack easier to eat. Once the brief and requirements were clear, we still had to figure it out financially, of course.”

Ton van der Aa: “We knew the quality and taste of the cheese from St. Paul and had full confidence in the company. The latter is very important because that is the basis of a good cooperation. For example, one of our conditions was that the recipe had to remain exclusive. We knew Dieter Kuijl and his team and were convinced of their qualities.” Kuijl complements him: “We were confident as well. But we did want Ton to make a deliberate choice for us.

If we partnered, we wanted to become the sole cheese supplier. In return, we offered good value for money. Thus, success would not depend on price, but purely on the product.” “We gladly agreed to this and a strategic partnership was born. With a good cheese price, we could really accelerate and conquer the market,” says Ton van der Aa.

Team spirit

Cees van Oostrom, food technologist at St. Paul, continues: “It is no coincidence that we have a weekly meeting on Monday afternoon at the product development department, following the sales meeting. We immediately discuss the new requests. For each new assignment, we discuss the operation and the desired final product. We put together a tailor-made team that includes all disciplines from the organisation. This allows us to provide truly tailor-made solutions, so feedback is provided from different perspectives at each stage of the process. For example, on taste or practicality in the factory. It is a very efficient way to develop new products.”

Making good soup!

“During the development of a new product, the research phase is essential. The challenge in developing the cheese for Soufflesse was, on one hand, the baking stability and meltability of the final product and, on the other, the processability, the pumpability, of the cheese filling. Our knowledge and experience is of vital value as, for example, what we discovered when redeveloping the ‘Kaaskrakertjes’ (Cheese Crackers). These snacks initially fell apart, and when Dieter and I investigated this in the early 1990s, we found that the protein particles in the cheese

had not been dissolved properly. Since then, our production process has been adapted and we give each ingredient a separate treatment.” “After all, having all the right ingredients does not make a good soup, it is the way you put the ingredients together,” adds Dieter Kuijl. “In fact, partly as a result of these developments, the Kaaskrakertjes are one of the top cheese snacks in the market again and Ton van der Aa now sells them on behalf of Van ‘t Hof Foodgroup, the current producer of the Kaaskrakertjes.”

Quality above all else

Once all the information is complete and the research phase completed, the actual recipe for the cheese is started. A phase that focuses on finding the perfect ratio and processing method for all ingredients. Dieter Kuijl explains: “When developing a new product, quality is very important to us. But it is hard to describe what this is. For example, cheese is a natural product. The taste of milk, the basis for cheese, differs in summer or winter due to the cows’ diet. We anticipate to this changing raw material by constantly measuring the structure with smart parameters in the production process. In this way, we ensure quality year round and that’s our distinctive strength.”

Ton van der Aa agrees: “The quality is really very good and constant at St. Paul. They know how processed cheese is constructed and what they can and cannot do with it. They are real professionals.”

Not the end but the beginning

And then the success story begins for the No. 1 premium Dutch cheese soufflé: the Soufflesse from Swinkels Snackery Bakery. Thanks to the pumpable aged melting cheese from St. Paul, less dough and great taste, this snack is a big hit. Thus, the product has been rolled out internationally and the Soufflesse Mini Assorti is the basis of the Cheese Pillow. That the success of the Soufflesse has not failed to benefit Swinkels Snack Bakery is clear, among other things, by the fact that the company was acquired by snack manufacturer Van Geloven in 2016.



TON VAN DER AA

Snacks are the DNA of Ton van der Aa. He worked as a commercial manager Foodservice Benelux at Ad van Geloven, as managing director of Swinkels Snackery Bakery and is currently director/owner of Cynthor Food Service.



CEES VAN OOSTROM

Cees is a food technologist and crossed paths with St. Paul several times, when there was a survey or test to be done. In 2017, he joined the St. Paul team.



EGBERT VAN DE WINCKEL

As of 2017, Egbert is a permanent member of the sales team at St. Paul. As international sales manager, he has already experienced many development processes.

THAT MAKES YOU WANT MORE

THE ENTREPRENEURIAL BLOOD IS THICKER THAN WATER. WITH A FATHER WHO TRADED CHEESE AND A MOTHER THAT HAD HER OWN CHEESE SHOP, IT IS NOT SURPRISING THAT MARGO AND DIETER KUIJL FOUNDED ST. PAUL IN 1985. THE PRODUCER OF HIGH-QUALITY AND FUNCTIONAL CHEESE SOLUTIONS HAS NOW GROWN INTO A TRUE FAMILY BUSINESS. DIETER, SONS WIM AND TIM, DAUGHTER SABRINA AND HER HUSBAND SAMUEL EXPLAIN WHAT MAKES THIS COMPANY SO SPECIAL.



Wim Kuijl



Tim Kuijl



Dieter Kuijl



Sabrina Kuijl



Samuel Verheggen

“OUR PARENTS ALWAYS ENCOURAGED US TO CHOOSE OUR OWN PATH”

Dieter: “As a child, I used to go to the factories with my father to buy cheese. I thought it was a boring world with men in grey suits. At the time, I was much more interested in automotive engineering. My parents wanted my sister Margo and I to take over the trading company as the 8th generation, but we took a different approach. I was 21 years old when, with only 5,000 guilders in our pockets, we decided to set up our own company; St. Paul. Not in the cheese trade, but in the cheese industry. In a small factory in Lokeren, East Flanders, we started making cheese products for consumers, but soon shifted our focus to the B2B market. This is where the need arose for processed cheese products with functional applications and longer shelf life. We started exporting abroad pretty soon. This growth necessitated purchase of machinery, where

my interest in engineering came in handy and was united with my passion for cheese. After many successful years, Margo decided to leave the company in 2018. For me, it was too early to stop, entrepreneurship had given me a taste for more.”

It runs in the family

“We are a real family business. Besides Margo and me, our cousin Hidde de Boer joined our team early on. He has worked here for 34 years now and has been a steady beacon for St. Paul. My daughter Sabrina’s husband Samuel started working here in 2009. For my sons Wim and Tim, getting into their father’s business was not a done deal. Both studied at the IVA, the automotive business school in Driebergen, because of their passion for technology and cars.” Wim: “Our parents

“We have created a **unique concept** in which we have never compromised on **quality**”

always encouraged us to choose our own path. This course was therefore a logical choice for me. After that, I still decided to make my love for cars my hobby and started working at St. Paul.” Tim continues: “After my studies, I first worked at a car company. Due to some changes at this company, I wanted to do something different. After a few exploratory talks with my father about working at St. Paul, I started working as a product manager. Even as a child, I had worked at St Paul with my sister and brother during holidays, so I already knew a thing or two. I still lacked the industry-specific knowledge, which I learnt from Hidde, Samuel and my father. Currently, as logistics manager, I am back to my first interest, cars and transport. A fun fact: my wife Kimberley now works for the family business as well!” Sister Sabrina worked at other organisations as well,

before joining St. Paul as HR manager. Sarina, Dieter’s wife and mother of Wim, Tim and Sabrina also has an important role to play. “She is the heart of our family and provides the work-life balance. In addition, at St. Paul she provides the finishing touches in the office by organising the joint lunch, for example, and she is always busy getting the last details right,” Dieter says.

Family work(s)

“All in all, the family spends quite a lot of time together. It is very nice to work with your family, because you know what you have in common. But separating business from personal life can be tricky sometimes. We made clear agreements to not take our work situations home,” Sabrina says. Dieter: “I also understand that it can be difficult to be the son or daughter of the owner. As a family member, you are a role model and so you will



have to work even harder than the rest.” Wim adds: “And no exceptions will be made. When I started working here, I had to start at the bottom like my brother and sister. For me, this was in technical services.” Dieter: “The advantage of being family is that you have complete commitment. We are all so close and can really count on each other. If we are short of a driver, then Tim just gets into the truck.”

Proud

Dieter: “Because of the family bond and working closely together with all colleagues, we have achieved a lot. That is the greatest wealth you can wish for as a father and CEO and makes me one of the happiest

people on earth.” Samuel adds: “It’s great to see what we achieve every week in terms of different products. That is really the achievement of the whole team, everyone works well together.”

Future

“My sister Margo and I have created a unique concept where we have never compromised on quality. This condition, along with other important core values, are fixed in the handbook of St. Paul. For example, we also always want to be able to pull our own weight and be in charge! And in doing so, we focus on what we are good at and dare to outsource things we are less good at,” says Dieter.

Tim: “For the future, we have big plans. I can’t tell much about it yet, but innovation is obviously a common thread here. And we will enter a new phase when my father steps out of the business, but that’s for the future. We are learning a lot from each other.” Dieter responds: “I have gained a lot of practical experience over the years. Nice to pass this on to my children now so they can continue with St. Paul and can pass it on to their children.”

Sabrina: “Our sons are already eager to do holiday work with grandpa. Ideally, we want them to gain experience somewhere else, just as our parents encouraged us. But we also know how that ended for us...”

TRADITIONS

“We are a close-knit family” Sabrina says. “For example, we go on ski holidays together every year. This truly is a family tradition. Escape work for a moment, with my parents, brothers, all partners and children and not dealing with work, but spending time with the family. Priceless!” Samuel adds: “Having a coffee in Koewacht every Saturday morning with the family has now also become tradition. We have a spot there where the race cars of our race team are located and where we can work in the workshop.” Sabrina: “We really have a special family bond and that is reflected in the togetherness in the company.”



PASSION FOR HISTORIC RACING

It is no coincidence that St. Paul competed in the Belcar Historic Cup for the first time with its own race team in 2018. The family business has a passion for racing! Of course, the family's love of cars and technology plays an important role here. Besides, sport shares many similarities with entrepreneurship.

The similarity is in several aspects. In addition to good equipment - which is a must in both the production of our cheese solutions and in racing - dedication, passion and a winner's mentality of the team are at least as important. Racing forces a team to step out of its comfort zone and be sharp. Precision and resilience are essential. After all, you have to deal with unexpected situations. All to achieve the common goal: winning. It is easy to draw a parallel between this and delivering top performance at work.

On the floor

St. Paul aims to be a global leader as a producer of high-quality and functional cheese solutions. For this, the team delivers top performance every day. After all, the company wants to excel in all areas of its operations. This requires the same characteristics as in racing. Due to the innovative, solution- and goal-oriented nature, St. Paul delivers high-quality standards all year round.



**“TO THE WORLD
WE ARE A TEAM,
TO EACH OTHER
WE ARE FAMILY!”**

THE COMMON THREAD

ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT AND AN INNOVATIVE NATURE ARE SEEN THROUGHOUT THE YEARS AT ST. PAUL. NOT SURPRISING AS THE FOUNDERS' MOTHER RAN A CHEESE SHOP AND THEIR FATHER - LIKE HIS ANCESTORS - TRADED IN CHEESE.

On the track

A love of cars has long lived in the Kuijl family. For father Dieter, this started with restoring classic cars and trucks and building a collection of vintage cars. Sons Wim and Tim were introduced to car racing through Trackdays - organised events by circuits. In 2017, Dieter competed in his first car race. This positive experience was the deciding factor for the formation of St Paul's own racing team: drivers Dieter (Ford Capri), Wim (Ford Capri) and Tim Kuijl (BMW) and Samuel Verheggen (Mercedes in DTM version) and six mechanics. With great attention to detail, the cars are kept in original condition to ensure their authenticity. As a result, St. Paul's race team will preserve the experience of these old legends - the 2 Ford Capri's have even been labelled 'rolling heritage' by UNESCO - for future generations. 2018 was the first full season in the Belcar Historic Cup: a championship suitable for old- and young-timers built up to the year 2000 that, for the time being, takes place on circuits in Belgium. The team

competes in four different categories.

Enthusiastic

Every race weekend - six in one season - the drivers' entire family goes to the track with them. Business relations of St. Paul receive an invitation for these races to introduce them to the passion for racing. In addition to a pit walk and explanations about the team and racing, the races are the highlight of the weekend. Meanwhile, the enthusiasm for racing has led to St. Paul being title sponsor of the Belcar Historic Cup as of 2022. With this, the company aims to encourage racing with historic cars and make it more professional. You can think of organising more races abroad with the organisers and participants in due course, for example.



Scan the QR code and read more on our St. Paul racing website.



The passion for cheese goes back no less than eight generations!

<1985

1985

Brother and sister Kuijl establish St. Paul in Lokeren, Belgium.



1990

Introduction of new logo and fully automated production line.



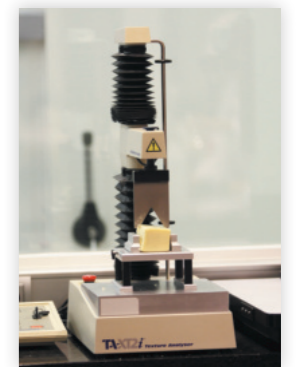
1995



Market leader in production of processed cheese on B2B market.

2000

New philosophy: single treatment of each ingredient.



2016

New business premises Sint Jansteen.



2020

35th anniversary. Acquisition of processed cheese operations Vika from multinational Givaudan.



2022

Two new production lines for plant-based products and mozzarella.



Scan the QR code for St. Paul's full timeline.

FUTURE

For the future, there are big plans in which innovation plays a leading role.

PORTFOLIO

St. Paul is a high-tech company. Our 'cheese wizards' are very knowledgeable about cheese and its processing techniques. Again and again, we invent applications for our functionalities and introduce new end products. We specialise in developing customer-specific solutions based on their needs.

Cheese sauce

Cheese sauce is a new development in our product range. This is made with real cheddar cheese and is creamy and full of flavour. There are different varieties and culinary applications. For example, the cheese sauce is used on fries (loaded fries), on nachos and in wraps.



Cheese functionalities

All our products are available in all melting cheese functionalities.

Of the variant high-melt soft, which completely flows out when heated, to non-melt hard, which retains its shape when heated.



Thermised cheese

This product is made from 100% natural cheese and is used when high microbiological values may pose a problem. In fact, this cheese gets a thermal treatment between 57 and 68 °C, significantly reducing the number of micro-organisms. By putting thermised cheese in ready meals, the shelf life is greatly extended.

Cheese snacks

We incorporate processed cheeses that need to be cut or shaped before being breaded. Some of our cheese snacks are: cheese curds, chilli cheese nuggets, souffle cheese and mozzarella sticks.



Applications

When developing new customer-specific products together, the process really is about finding:

- the right product types
- the requested processing for ingredients
- the desired texture and flavour
- the correct functionality
- the most suitable packaging

APPLICATIONS

Pizza & pasta products

Cheese sauce

Cheese appetizers

Meat products with cheese

FUNCTIONALITIES

High-melt-hard

Semi-melt-hard

High-melt-soft

Semi-melt-soft

Non-melt-hard

THE TYPES

Thermised cheese

Processed cheese

Plant-based cheese

Preparations with cheese

Pizza rope

Pizza rope is a superior quality (mozzarella) cheese that is used for pizzas with stuffed crust. This product has excellent melting and stretch properties.



Plant-based cheese

This contains 100% natural ingredients and has less cholesterol than traditional cheese. This unique product is made entirely with vegetable ingredients. Vegetable oils, proteins, carbohydrates or other plant-based alternatives can be added if necessary.

Plant-based cheese alternatives have less impact on the environment and have a much smaller carbon footprint.



Scan the QR code for more information.



INNOVATION

From the beginning of its establishment in 1985, innovation has been a common thread running through the organisation. St. Paul focused on the Belgian consumer market when it started, but soon saw a need in the food industry in Europe. Ready meals were on the rise and many of them contained cheese. Innovation was fully harnessed and a state-of-the-art pilot plant was built with a German partner. Everything was focused on progress.

And it still is. Since its early days, the company has grown tremendously. At the time, there were 24 employees, six of whom worked in production. Now St. Paul has 2 sites, it produces 35,000 tonnes of cheese a year, employs over 100 people and innovation is embedded in its Research & Development team. Today, St. Paul makes cheeses with all kinds of different appearances and characteristics. Worldwide,

these end up in cheese snacks, pizzas, meat dishes and cheese sauces, for example. The continuous drive for innovation does not go unnoticed. In 1997, St. Paul won the award for innovative techniques as the world's most modern factory in the field of industrial cheese. But the company is always moving to stay ahead. For example, it recently invested in two new production lines. A plant-based line to develop products based on vegetable ingredients and a fully automated mozzarella line to produce mozzarella in different applications, flavours and shapes, based on an Italian recipe. Furthermore, the product range was expanded to include cheese sauce in 2022.

Curious about the latest developments?
Scan the QR code.

