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Longer service life for boards: Mobile grinding operation at Industrias Bisonó

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Wasa AG, Darmstadt, Germany

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There are components in a concrete block plant that are subjected to above-average stress every day and yet rarely take center stage. They carry freshly formed concrete products, transmit vibrations, pass through curing chambers, are stacked, cleaned and repeatedly returned to the production cycle. When they function reliably, hardly anyone talks about them. However, when their surface begins to wear after years of intensive use, it quickly becomes clear how crucial they are for product quality, process reliability and cost-effectiveness: the production boards.

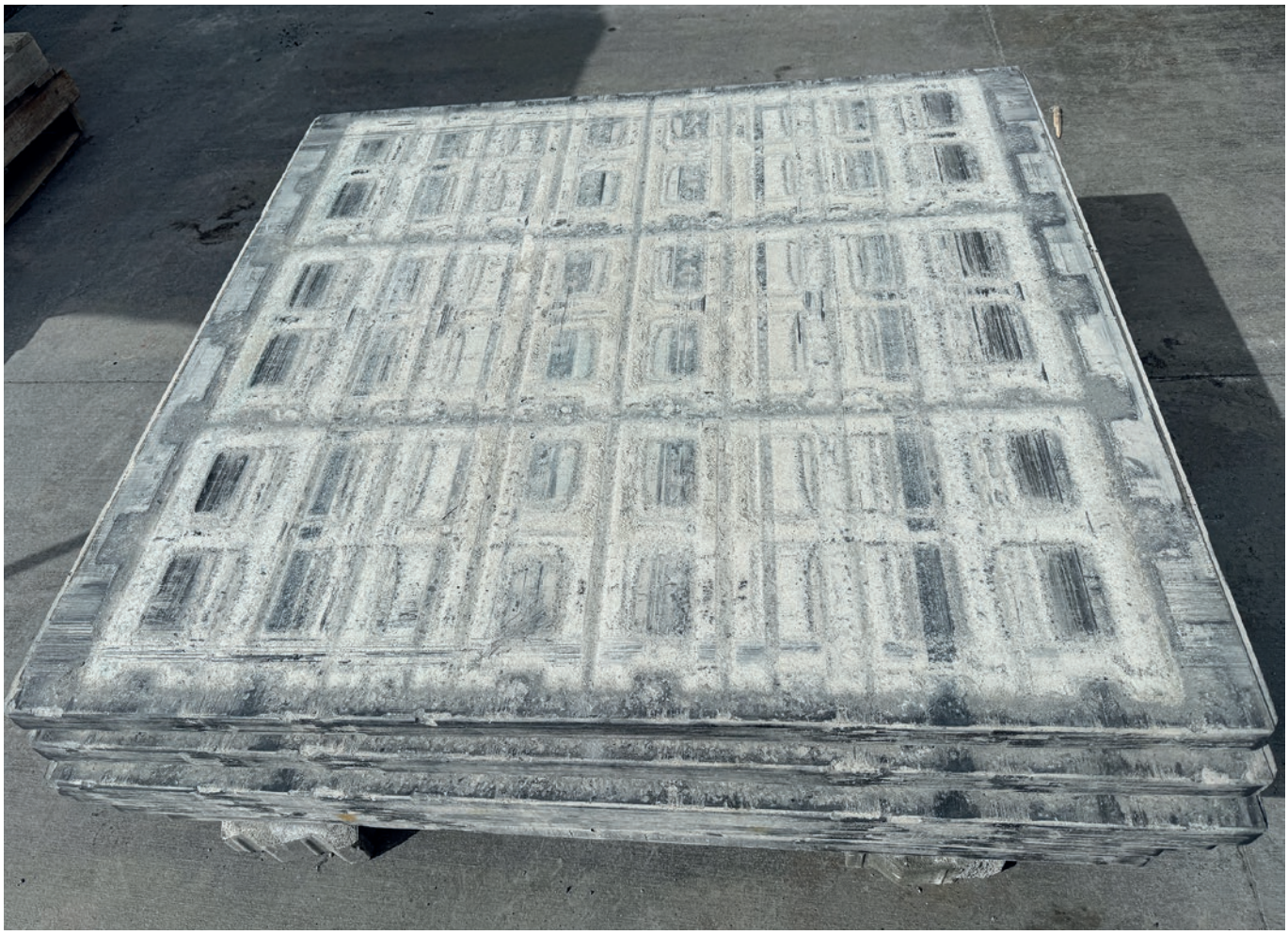
At Industrias Bisonó in the Dominican Republic, this became the focus of a special service operation: Around 4,000 Wasa Uniplast Ultra boards measuring 1,400 × 1,300 × 50 mm were ground on both sides using Wasa's mobile grinding container. The glass-fiber-reinforced solid plastic boards had been in intensive continuous use for more than ten years. Instead of simply replacing them, Bisonó opted for professional surface refurbishment, combining cost-effectiveness, resource conservation and production reliability.

Industrias Bisonó: A strong partner in the Caribbean region

Bisonó is one of the leading companies for the production and marketing of building materials in the Dominican Republic. From its beginnings in the 1980s, when Rafael Vitelio Bisonó Cambiaso laid the foundation for today's corporate group with manually operated block machines, the company developed into a modern industrial operation with high product availability, continuous technical development and a strong market position in the Dominican construction materials sector.

The company's goal is to supply the construction industry with high-quality and environmentally friendly products. Long-term customer relationships, integrity, service quality and a dedicated team are at the heart of this approach. This ambition is also clearly reflected in production. Bisonó operates several plants, including five older production machines and two modern high-performance machinery from the man-

Industrias Bisonó plant in Santo Domingo



Uniplast Ultra after 10 years of intense use

ufacturer Quadra. Around 9,000 Wasa boards are in circulation on the two modern lines. For the first line, around 4,000 Wasa Uniplast Ultra boards were supplied in 2016. Due to the positive experience, a further 5,000 boards of the same type followed for the second line in 2021.

High performance, high stress

Production conditions at Bisonó are challenging. The first modern line operates in two shifts, seven days a week; the second even runs in three shifts, also seven days a week. As a result, the boards are permanently exposed to high mechanical loads. Another factor is the high level of product standardization. The company mainly manufactures concrete blocks in recurring formats, supplemented by grass pavers and paving stones. What makes production efficient also places stress on the boards in the same areas again and again. When mold walls repeatedly come into contact with identical areas over many years, impressions and depressions occur. This wear pattern is typical for plants with high production volumes and consistent product formats. Every board, regardless of material, is subjected to greater stress at these recurring load points than would be the case with frequently changing formats.

This was also the main reason for choosing Wasa's grinding service. Although there were not yet any specific quality problems during production, Bisonó wanted to refurbish its existing board stock in good time and professionally in order to continue using it economically and reliably.

Wasa grinding service: Renewing surfaces instead of replacing value

In concrete block production, the board is far more than just a transportation board. It is an active part of the compaction process: the vibration is transmitted from the vibrating table through the board into the concrete product, while its flatness and surface condition also influence the quality of the finished blocks. For management, it is therefore an investment asset with a direct impact on operating costs, spare parts strategy and sustainability. For production management, what matters is that the boards run stably and reliably in daily operation and deliver reproducible results.

Before the actual grinding operation, Wasa assessed the condition of the boards based on the following criteria:

- surface appearance
- required material removal

- board thickness
- condition of edges and chamfers

In addition, several sample boards were ground in advance so that Bisonó could assess the result before the actual grinding operation began. This preparation was rated very positively; the customer particularly appreciated the quick response and the informative technical report.

Thanks to the sophisticated grinding equipment, which was adapted to fit into a 40-foot seaworthy container, service operations can be carried out directly on site at customers worldwide.

The major advantage: Grinding without production downtime

For many concrete block plants, the decisive question is not only whether a technical solution works, but also whether it can be integrated into ongoing operations. This is exactly where Wasa's grinding container demonstrated its strength. At Bisonó, the boards did not have to be collected, packed, shipped or replaced with a complete new set. They remained at the plant, were processed on site and were immediately available again afterwards. For a plant with high-capacity utilization, this is an enormous advantage. Every unplanned downtime costs production volume, ties up personnel, delays delivery schedules and increases organizational pressure. The mobile grinding service turned what could have been a complex maintenance measure into a plannable service process.

After the grinding equipment was quickly set up on site, the boards were gradually removed from circulation, fed into the grinding container and then returned to production. This allowed the service to be precisely timed and adapted to the processes in the plant. As a result, the line was able to continue operating.

During the actual grinding process, a thin layer of material averaging 1.5 mm per side was removed from both sides. The objective was not visual enhancement, but the technical restoration of a flat, load-bearing surface that comes very close to the original condition and provides many further years of service life. The operation covered around 4,000 boards and took only about 160 hours in total.

Miguel Nuñez, plant manager, commented: "The greatest advantage of the grinding container for us was the on-site recovery of our boards, allowing us to restore their surfaces professionally without removing them from the plant. Being able to continue production during grinding meant that we could meet our customers demand and fulfill existing orders while restoring the boards on site with Wasa's support."

Wasa Uniplast Ultra: Developed for a long service life

The Wasa Uniplast Ultra is a glass-fiber-reinforced solid plastic board developed for high stresses in the concrete block industry. It offers stable properties over a long service life and is designed for reliable vibration transmission. This is particularly important on high-performance production lines, because the board must continuously support the machines performance requirements.

Its solid construction is also the foundation that professional surface treatment can be carried out cost-effectively. A board that is engineered from the beginning for durability and extended service life, it provides additional maintenance op-

Wasas Grinding Container in Operation

Wasa Uniplast Ultra surface before grinding

Wasa Uniplast Ultra surface after grinding

tions at a later stage. It is not simply purchased and eventually replaced, but maintained throughout its life cycle and refurbished when required.

This life-cycle concept can already be taken into account at the time of the initial order. Depending on production requirements and the individual board concept, it is possible to design the boards approximately 3 to 5 mm thicker from the beginning. This creates an additional material reserve for future grinding operations. For concrete block producers, this can be a strategically beneficial decision in order to further extend service life and, if necessary, enable several refurbishments over the life cycle.

A durable board only delivers its full economic benefit when its service life is not left to chance. Wasa therefore supports customers throughout the entire life cycle, from selecting the right board to professional refurbishment during ongoing operation. As a result, Wasa customers can demonstrably look back on service lives of 25 to 30 years using the same board.

Experience, service and proximity to the customer

On-site support is an important part of the cooperation. In Latin America, Eloy Gonzalez plays a special role in this regard. He comes from the Dominican Republic, lives there and knows the requirements of the regional concrete block industry from many years of practical experience. As Wasa's Spanish-speaking representative, he is a trusted contact for many customers between plant, production, management and technology. For Bisonó, this connection is particularly strong: Eloy Gonzalez has supported the company as a consultant for almost 30 years. Tetelo Bisonó's own assessment is correspondingly personal: "Working with a specialist of Eloy Gonzalez's caliber is a major investment; his experience, work ethic, honesty and professionalism guarantee optimal results. A good friend, noble and pleasant to work with; a thoroughly professional person with a great ability to solve situations. These are just some of the qualities that undoubtedly safeguard every investment."

This statement underlines the importance of trust and personal proximity in technical investment decisions. Especially during a service operation in ongoing production, it is not only about technology, but also about security, communication and reliability.

Eloy Gonzalez summarized: "For nearly 30 years, it has been both a privilege and an honor to work alongside Industrias Bisonó and many other outstanding companies throughout Latin America. The success of every project is never the result of one individual, but rather the product of trust, commitment and teamwork among people who share the same vision of excellence. Throughout my career, I have also had the privilege of representing some of the world's leading brands in

the concrete products industry, and I am proud that Wasa is one of these top brands. Working together with industry leaders such as Wasa allows us to provide our customers with proven technologies, long-term value and solutions that contribute to the sustainable growth and success of their operations. A perfect example of this commitment is the recent maintenance of Bisonó's Wasa Uniplast Ultra boards. After nearly 45,000 hours of operation, the boards required their first service. Wasa immediately arranged the grinding work with outstanding responsiveness. The containerized grinding unit and specialized technicians arrived on site promptly, and after only two days of setup, the grinding operation began. This level of after-sales support and dedication to customer success further demonstrates why Wasa continues to be recognized as a global leader in production board technology."

Conclusion: A service that makes the difference during ongoing operation

The grinding operation at Bisonó shows the potential of professional refurbishment of Wasa Uniplast Ultra boards. Without production downtime and directly on site with Wasa's mobile grinding container. From an economic perspective refurbishing the boards significantly reduces the investment budget. A complete replacement would not only have required new boards, but also additional logistics and customs clearance, resulting in considerably more organizational effort. According to Miguel Nuñez, this is exactly what makes the experience relevant for other concrete block plants: "With a low cost of around 20% compared to new boards, we were able to save the boards and satisfy our customers."
From a sustainability perspective, every high-quality board that can be used for longer is of enormous value: it saves material, reduces waste and avoids unnecessary replacement procurement. This approach fits very well with Bisonó's corporate philosophy. Extending the service life of the boards is practical proof of this and combines economic reason with responsible use of resources, thereby directly contributing to the reduction of the carbon footprint.

Modern production does not only mean using new technology, but also intelligently preserving proven components. Wasa's grinding service and Wasa Uniplast Ultra show how this can be achieved: with durable boards, mobile refurbishment, international experience and a service that takes effect exactly where it is needed: directly at the plant. ■

Satisfied customers, from left to right: Miguel Nuñez (plant manager Bisonó), Domingo Ruiz (project manager Bisonó), Benjamin Burschey (Sales Director Wasa) Elian Gonzalez and Eloy Gonzalez (sales agent Wasa)

FURTHER INFORMATION

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