

Wheel Products Europe

NEWSLETTER

July 2007

Spedition Blum, Alcoa wheels and Dura-Bright® pioneer

Ever since it was established in 1932, the German transport company Blum has been active in the transportation of building materials and it has been developing continuously. Today, the business is run by Frank Blum and his father Heinz.



Already during the 1985 IAA Show, the first trailer with Alcoa wheels was ordered to transport material in powder form in optimal weight conditions. Since then, gradually all trucks and trailers were equipped with Alcoa forged aluminium wheels.



Weight saving is the key driver when specifying Alcoa wheels. However, they are also being used to improve the look of the Blum vehicles. For the maintenance of the wheels the drivers are using the appropriate Alcoa cleaning products. Mr. Blum is especially pleased with the effects of the ALpolish polishing paste, which - in combination with the ALfinish polishing head - offers the best results on the traditional Alcoa Mirror Polished wheels.

In 2003 Frank Blum decided to equip their show truck with the - at that time - completely new Dura-Bright® wheels. He had heard about the new Alcoa low-maintenance surface and was determined to mount these wheels on the new Actros truck and the show trailer. Alcoa provided him with a set of wheels, which were actually only imported in Europe to test the markets acceptance. So Spedition Blum was one of the first European transport companies to test these wheels, and with great success! Indeed, the maintenance efforts needed to keep the wheels on this vehicle shiny, were minimal. **"With an excellent result", confirmed Michel Blum, who drives the vehicle himself every day. "The wheels are only regularly wiped clean with a sponge, sometimes with a little water and soap. In addition, there are some other benefits", he explains. "The minimal maintenance means lower expenses for cleaning products, more motivated drivers and last but not least vehicles that always look their best. This pays off for us!"** Michel proudly shows the shiny Dura-Bright® wheels, which in spite of having been used for three winters now, do not show any signs of oxidation, salt corrosion or damage from road metal. Even the wheel that was scratched in an accident three years ago does not show any signs of corrosion in or around the scratches.

Since then, Spedition Blum equips all new vehicles with Dura-Bright® wheels, so far already four. For them, there is no alternative. And since they are 100% convinced of the advantages of Dura-Bright®, they are operating a silo truck with an Alcoa Dura-Bright® advertisement, equipped with the newest Dura-Bright® wheels with XBR™ Technology. When you see it on the road, say hello...

The PREMAT Group: Success on a Human Scale

With over 50 years of experience in the transport industry, the family-run French company PREMAT has considerably changed, expanding to more than 250 trucks of all makes and models and as many semi-trailers. The company initially focused on the transport of solid goods (dump truck and silos) and hydrocarbons (carriers and semi-trailers) and to a lesser extent on atypical transport. Since then, Premat has expanded into new activities.

Through additional external growth, they recently managed to diversify by incorporating the specialised transport of bottled gas and solid as well as liquid waste.

As a way of optimising the profitability of every trip, the payload remains one of the principal indicators for assessing the performance of the solutions provided; this decision is always made by the CEO Philippe Premat himself, who will carefully examine all of the variables, in even the least of their implications. It is no coincidence that Alcoa has been a partner in this success for over 15 years. With a few exceptions, the entire fleet is equipped with Alcoa's forged aluminium wheels. Even the 2 axle semi-trailers are equipped with aluminium wheels 22.5 x 14.00. The newest 6x4 tractors, used for atypical transport, are also equipped with Alcoa Mirror Polished wheels, combining sturdiness with good looks.



Premat's reputation is recognized all over the Parisian region, its principal area of activity. Also, all employees are strongly committed to making sure that each and every vehicle is carefully serviced and cleaned, as a perfect illustration of their quality commitment and professionalism towards their customers.

To facilitate servicing, the most recent six hydrocarbon tankers were equipped with Dura-Bright® wheels, Alcoa's newest easy-maintenance wheels. This special surface treatment allows the wheels to keep their original shine effortlessly, by using the same products recommended for cleaning the vehicle (just soap and water).



Alcoa Dura-Bright® wheels, now with XBR™ Technology The only patented surface treatment that cleans with soap and water!



Because Alcoa Dura-Bright® is a surface treatment, not a coating, it won't chip, crack, peel or corrode, and never needs polishing. No other manufacturer can offer you that. Even after hundreds of washes and thousands of miles, Dura-Bright® wheels maintain their shine. You can't say that about coated wheels, which scratch, filiform corrode and discolor in commercial applications. Only Dura Bright® wheels use a patented surface treatment that penetrates the aluminium and becomes an integral part of the wheel.

The new Alcoa Dura-Bright wheels with XBR™ Technology are more reflective and offer better image clarity.

Now your wheels can look their best with less effort than with any previous steel or aluminium wheel. So you save money and time - and still hit the road with good-looking wheels on your trucks, trailers and buses.

For detailed information on Alcoa Dura-Bright® wheels with XBR™ Technology, please visit our website www.alcoa.com/alcoawheels/europe/en/durabright.asp. In case you would like to receive our Dura-Bright® brochure, please send an email to info.wheels@alcoa.com.

Limpens in Elsloo, NL - bigger in bulk

Limpens bulk transport is headquartered near Maastricht in the Netherlands. The company has seen steady, continuous growth since its establishment in 1930. A few years ago, Limpens moved to a new location. The new complex includes bulk storage facilities, parking spaces, tank cleaning facilities, a truck wash, service stations and offices and is located close to Sabic, one of Limpens' key customers for which they transport plastic granules across Europe in closed bulk vehicles.



In 1960, Limpens purchased the very first bulk truck in the Netherlands with a payload capacity of 11 m³. This was the first step towards full bulk transport. A couple of years later, the company bought the first bulk trailer with a payload capacity of 24 m³, the largest bulk trailer in the Netherlands at that time. Early 1980s, a bulk trailer for plastic granules with a capacity of 52 m³ was added to the fleet, in those days the biggest payload capacity in this transport segment.

Weight saving became a top priority for this type of transport. Mid 1990's, Alcoa wheels gradually found their way to Elsloo. Since then, all new Limpens vehicles are delivered ex works on Alcoa Mirror Polished wheels.

LHV

In 2005, Limpens entered the LHV (long and heavy vehicles) test in the Netherlands with a custom-made, one-of-a-kind, 100 m³ bulk combination, also on Alcoa wheels. If this configuration will be officially allowed after the testing period, this would mean a 20% saving for Limpens. The Alcoa wheels certainly pull their weight, because this LHV is fitted with no less than 16 wheels, 12 of which sized 22.5 x 11.75, together representing a weight saving of approximately 290 kg. An LHV combination increases capacity by 30% with only a 10% increase in costs.

“Weight saving, reliability, minimal maintenance and a lasting shine are the reasons why I specify Alcoa wheels as a standard on every new vehicle”, says Guus Limpens, CEO of Limpens.



Limpens facts & figures

Employees	: 120
Warehousing	: 15.000 m ³ for dry bulk
Logistics	: 80 GPS, data transfer equipped tractors & 130 silo trailers
Rental	: 25 new silo trailers for short & long term rental
Bulk cleaning	: Elsloo NL & Bottrop D

Did you know that...

Alcoa stood at the cradle of the process for smelting aluminum?

Copper has been in widespread use for over 7,500 years, bronze (copper with tin) for about 4,000, iron and steel for 3,000 years plus. But the age of aluminum is just beginning. It was born when Alcoa was born, in 1886, with the first process for smelting aluminum in quantity.

An Undiscovered Metal

It was a long time coming. More than 7,000 years ago, Persian potters made their strongest pitchers and bowls from a clay containing an aluminum oxide - what we now know as alumina. Thirty centuries later, ancient Egyptians and Babylonians were using other aluminum compounds in fabric dyes, cosmetics and medicines. Still, no one knew about aluminum, no one had ever seen it. Though it's the most abundant metal in the earth's crust, it doesn't occur naturally as a metal.

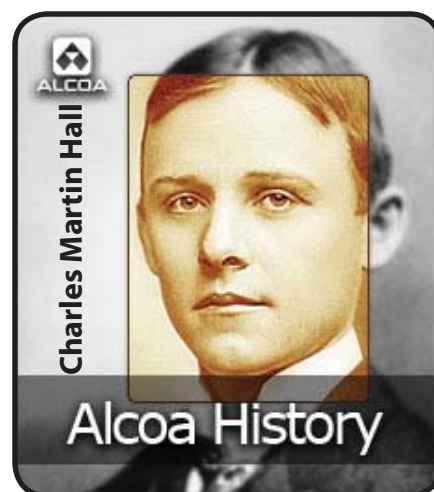
The First Glint

Finally, in 1808, Sir Humphry Davy proved the existence of aluminum and gave it its name. Soon after, Danish physicist Hans Christian Oersted managed to produce a few droplets of the metal. Others improved his process until, in 1869, about two tons of aluminum were produced. That brought the cost down from \$545 to \$17 a pound, about the same as silver - a reasonable price for tableware at the French Court, a crown for the King of Denmark, and a cap on the Washington Monument (it's still there). But it would take a high-volume, low-cost smelting process to open the way for aluminum as a major metal that would outperform its predecessors - and that is the discovery that launched Alcoa.

The Age of Aluminum

In the mid-1880s, aluminum was a semi-precious metal, scarcer than silver. Total U.S. production in 1884 was 125 pounds. At Oberlin College in Ohio, Professor Frank Jewett showed his chemistry students a small piece of aluminum and told them that whoever could discover an economical way to make this metal would become rich.

One of those students, Charles Martin Hall, had been experimenting with minerals since he was 12 years old, turning a small woodshed behind his home into a crude laboratory. After graduation, he continued his woodshed experiments. He learned how to make aluminum oxide - alumina - and he fashioned his own carbon crucible. On a cold February day in 1886, he filled the crucible with a cryolite bath containing alumina and passed an electric current through it.



An Historic First

The result was a congealed mass which he allowed to cool, then shattered with a hammer. And there were several small pellets of pure aluminum. It was a remarkable discovery. But to carry it forward, Hall would need money. He found his financial backers in nearby Pittsburgh - a group of six industrialists led by Alfred E. Hunt. These venturers formed the Pittsburgh Reduction Company and built a small plant in what is now Pittsburgh's Strip District. On Thanksgiving Day, 1888, Hall and his first employee, Arthur Vining Davis, produced the first commercial aluminum using Hall's technology.

... TO BE CONTINUED

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