

Entering the Brick and Block Business

The brick and block making sector provides an ideal opportunity for small to medium sized contractors to contribute to their own communities, as well as helping to combat the housing shortage in South Africa.

Such contractors are not only faced with a skills shortage, but also lack the capital to buy expensive automated equipment. It is for this reason that PMSA, the largest manufacturer and distributor of brick and block making machines on the African continent, offers a range of machines to meet the specific needs of this sector.

This is a critical sector of the South African construction industry, as it promotes the empowerment of local entrepreneurs. "Our machines allow contractors to establish viable small businesses that require little capital injection," Quintin Booysen, sales and marketing manager at PMSA, comments.

To date, Quintin estimates that PMSA equipment has been used to manufacture the bricks for about two million houses in southern Africa alone.

Small capacity

PMSA's small-capacity machines include the PK300 (Cornet) and the UNI (PK100). The standard brick



Quintin Booysen, sales and marketing manager at PMSA

capacity of this range is from 10 000 to 16 000 per nine-hour production shift, depending on the machine option.

These machines are supplied with the appropriate mixing plant. Materials and pallet handling and



Mobile VB1 machinery from PMSA for rural projects where mobility is required

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machine operations are all manual. This range is therefore ideal for smaller contractors without significant experience in manufacturing operations to set up their own plants.

Easy to operate

Looking more closely at the UNI plant, Quintin explains that a simple switch panel is used to operate the loader skip and pan mixer. In addition, the discharge gate is operated by means of a simple hand lever. "The main idea behind this range is to manufacture machines that are easy to operate. They must also be able to withstand rugged operating conditions and be easily maintained". In this regard, the pan mixer wall and floor are lined with easily replaceable wear segments.

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The three-bladed sprung mixing star has an inner-wall scraper for maximum efficiency with block machines all having interchangeable moulds for producing a range of products from a single machine.

Medium capacity

PMSA's medium-capacity machines include the VB1X, VB1 and RE-600. Here the standard brick capacity is between 22 000 and 60 000 per nine-hour shift. A choice of materials-handling systems are available, with the option of either fully automatic or totally manual operation.

The largest-capacity machines from PMSA are the RE-1400, VB4X and VB4. Standard brick capacity is from 96 000 to 165 000 per nine-hour shift. A selection of materials and pallet handling systems are available. These high-end machines can be fully automated or semi-automated, with a selection of options according to the end products being manufactured.

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A VB4X machine from PMSA with a capacity of up to 110 000 bricks per nine-hour production shift