

SetraNews

May 2013



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Being new in the job is fun and inspiring!

I HAVE DEVOTED my first months at Setra to meeting people, listening and getting to know the business. I have found a company with proud, dedicated and highly skilled employees. I have encountered a flexible and efficient production organisation and a dedicated and involved sales team that puts the customer in focus. This is an excellent foundation on which I want to continue to build. My aim looking ahead is that we should be even more visible in the market and that Setra will always be our customers' natural choice when it comes to wood.

THE MARKET FOR WOOD PRODUCTS continued to develop in the right direction during the spring. The situation remains fragile, particularly in Europe, but there is a better balance between supply and demand compared with last year. Japan, Setra's fifth largest export market, is an example of a market that keeps going really well and we take a closer look at this in the article on page 6.

Spring and summer are the high season for the building materials trade. The summer cottage needs renovating and the new patio must be built. In this issue of SetraNews we make a customer visit to the Swedish west coast and the local builders merchant in Grundsund which is well stocked and ready to welcome the summer guests. You will also find a feature from Setra's planing mill in Valbo where we are making major efforts in solid wood flooring, claddings and other processed wood.

BETTER TIMES LIE AHEAD and I look forward to good cooperation!

Olle Berg,
Market Director



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Cover photo: Yoshiyuki Takahashi and Tomohiko Takahashi run Setra's Japanese sales office. Photo: Said Karlsson.

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Setra was previously a partner to the Wood 2010 exhibition held at Virserum Art Museum.

Setra gold partner to art museum with a wood focus

COOPERATION Setra is delighted to continue its cooperation with Virserum Art Museum in the Swedish province of Småland which has had a major focus on wood from the outset. This year Setra is a gold partner to the exhibition Wood 2013 which opened on 5 May.

"Few can communicate the possibilities of wood in a sustainable community in the same way as Virserum Art Museum. The art gallery links sustainability with architecture and the technical challenges of building," comments Setra's Market Director Olle Berg.

Wood 2013 is an exhibition which focuses on the future use of wood in architecture and building. The exhibition is open to the public between 5 May and 8 December 2013.

TONGUE-AND-GROOVE PANELS SIMPLIFY ROOFING WORK

NEW PRODUCTS One new product in Setra's range for this summer is 540 mm wide tongue-and-groove panels. These are tongue-and-groove boards which have been pre-joined as panels which simplify roofing work. Over time the panels will be produced in several different dimensions.

"We will also be able to supply a primed panel, an eave blocking panel," says Urban André who is Product Manager at Setra's Wood Products business area. "We believe this will be extremely popular since anyone who has painted under the

eaves knows how tricky this can be."

The tongue-and-groove panels comply with VilmaBas standards which have been developed by the building and hardware industries. The panel has two grooved sides. This is partly to provide an anti-slip surface but also to reduce the risk of mildew.

"We are known for the high quality of our tongue-and-groove boards in general. And this is also reflected in our panels which are seamless and made of high quality material," Urban concludes.



Photo: Johnér

TASTIER CHEESE WITH SPRUCE

GOOD TASTE The number of small, local farm dairies in Sweden is growing more and more. Cheese is made here by hand using traditional methods that hold to this day. One such tradition is to mature the cheese on ageing racks made of slow-grown spruce. It is said that harmful bacteria cannot thrive inside the spruce wood which, on the other hand, can preserve certain cultures of lactic acid bacteria that make the cheese tastier and give it more flavour.

According to tradition, the spruce should have grown on the north side of a mountain so that its growth rings are as tight as possible. It should be felled and debarked when the sap is rising

so that the bark loosens easily and the wood is as durable as possible.

Inger Wallin runs the Sanda farm dairy in Haninge south of Stockholm. She says that the process, from milk to finished cheese is true craftsmanship that requires feeling, finesse and care.

"My cheeses are matured on specially chosen planks of slow-growing spruce with tight growth rings. And they must be made of spruce. Nothing else will do," Inger insists.

Read more at www.gardsmejerietsanda.se



MORE FLEXIBLE PRODUCTION RATE IN HEBY THIS SUMMER

SETRA In order to meet market demand and adapt production to the raw material flow, Setra Heby will increase production during the summer. A planned production shutdown for maintenance will be postponed until the autumn.



Charlotta Andersson,
Manager at Heby.

"The second and third quarters are real high-pressure periods for sawn timber. This is why, except during the annual holiday, we will increase from two shifts to two and a half shifts during the summer," explains Charlotta Andersson, Manager at Heby.

New sales support for dealers

MARKET During early summer Setra's dealers will get the chance to test new sales support facilities in the stores. The aim of this initiative is to raise awareness of Setra's solid wood floors and will consist of specially developed store displays as well as samples in easy-to-use packaging.

"Setra has been manufacturing solid wood floors for decades, but now we have a new initiative with a new type of surface-treated pine flooring. We are also introducing an extended range with solid wood floors in oak and ash," says Annica Olsson, Market Coordinator for the Wood Products business area.

This initiative is well timed, in terms of both market and business. Setra today has a wide network of dealers and many

good partners which increases availability in the market. At the same time, consumer demand for wood products is rising. The idea is that the store display will provide a clearer picture of the expanded flooring range.

"The advantage of a store display is that you can show all the alternatives we offer within floors, both in stock and available to order, in a small space.

"The store display is a simple and 'self-selling' support for retailers and it makes our floor range clearer to buyers and end users," says Annica.

Dealers who are interested in a store display or neatly packaged flooring samples, are welcome to contact customer service or their salesperson for more information.



Jan Grönberg



Charlotte Thedén



Fredrik Skärström



Roger Johansson

New faces

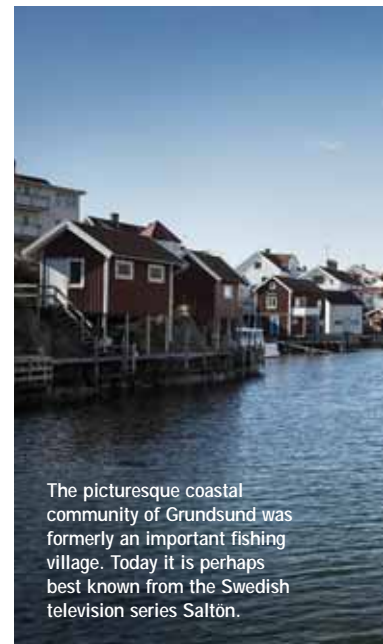
SETRA Setra Långshyttan has a new Sales Manager in Jan Grönberg who joins Setra from Stora Kopparbergs Bergslags. Setra's Environmental Manager Kjell Eriksson will retire in 2013 and hand over to Charlotte Thedén who was most recently with Stockholm Gas. Fredrik Skärström is back at Setra following sales jobs for among others Skaraborgs Träförädlings. His new role is Sales and Account Manager in Skutskär. In Valbo, customer service has been strengthened with Roger Johansson who previously worked at Korsnäs for many years.

DID YOU KNOW...

... that Setra has a page on Facebook. Here we share pictures and post job vacancies. Please visit and "like" Setra Group!



Christer Svensson has taken over the role of CEO from Gunnar Svensson who is pleased to hand over to his son.



The picturesque coastal community of Grundsund was formerly an important fishing village. Today it is perhaps best known from the Swedish television series Saltön.

Timber trade flourishes among

In Grundsund, in the Swedish county of Bohuslän, old craft traditions and the renovation enthusiasm of summer visitors are good business for the local building materials trade. Setra's customer GRG Bygg is now stocking up with wood from Norrland and hoping for a reasonably cloudy summer. TEXT: KAROLINA GRUNDIN PHOTO: CHRISTIAN LJUNG

GRUNDSUND, on the Swedish west coast, was formerly an important fishing village but is today perhaps best known from the Swedish television series Saltön. When SetraNews visits this picturesque coastal community, spring is in the air and the sun is shining over Bohuslän county.

Gunnar Svensson, one of the founders and the outgoing CEO of GRG Bygg, welcomes us to the local builders' merchants. He squints in the spring sunshine and laughs a little when he says that the latest delivery from Setra contained a lot of traces of winter.

"We order virtually all our wood from Setra in Rolfs and they are in a completely

different climate zone. Here on the coast the snow seldom lies for long, so the snow we see usually arrives with transports from the north," smiles Gunnar Svensson.

Prefers Norrland quality

Cooperation between GRG Bygg and Setra's most northerly sawmill has a long history. There are several reasons for this long-term relationship – reliable deliveries, sensitivity to product development needs and, not least, the high quality raw material.

"Timber from Norrland is superior and they know a lot about wood up there in the north. For us it is about offering our customers the best quality timber. We never accept second best," says Gunnar firmly.

Over the years Gunnar has really got to know the people at Setra Rolfs. He remembers one of the first orders he placed.

"Here on the west coast we call, thin, narrow planks fox skins. So when I called my contact and said I wanted to place an order for fox skins he was rather confused at first. But today he has caught on entirely," laughs Gunnar.

Architecture with special requirements

Grundsund's charming wooden houses with their gingerbread trim are typical for the west coast. Many of the houses that cling to the bare rocks have stood for generations. Situated on the rugged coastline there is little to protect them from salt spray, weather and wind.

"The houses here are very vulnerable and this makes the right timber even more important. Pre-painted claddings, for example, work very well since they are not that sensitive and can be put up all year round," says Gunnar.

Gabriella Persson, recently appointed deputy CEO, has worked at GRG for just over two years. Right now her focus is on marketing GRG to customers.

"Our target group includes both professionals and consumers but we approach them differently. Our work with professional builders is more long term and designed to build relationships. For them it is very important that we have the right knowledge and provide a prompt service. We really must know the products and understand craftsmanship," Gabriella explains.



Gunnar Svensson is one of the founders of GRG Bygg.



Christer Svensson, Märta Schewenius, Gabriella Persson, Gunnar Svensson and Birgitha Frisk are some members of the GRG Bygg team.

islets and skerries

Successful joinery

The ordinary consumer is a little more difficult to reach since they often live elsewhere for most of the year. In Grundsund the population can grow from 1,500 permanent residents in the winter to up to 20,000 during the summer months.

Despite this shifting population GRG succeeds in maintaining a relatively even volume of orders throughout the year. One explanation is that in addition to selling building materials they also operate their own joinery which employs two craftsmen. One of them is Urban Hansson. After many years in the academic world with roles as both a crafts teacher and school principal, he chose to change his profession.

"I have always worked with wood in addition to my job so when I got the chance to start working in the joinery, I took it," explains Urban, while putting the finishing touches to a glulam bench.

"This job is highly varied and it is so wonderful to work with wood! Plus I don't have to take my work home," Urban smiles.

"Seagull" pattern popular

The joinery's orders are varied and customised and right now include making glulam furniture on a trial basis. Layers of long, narrow pieces of paperboard in various shapes hang on the walls. These are the bargeboard patterns, templates for decorations for the eaves of the houses

in the archipelago. These patterns have been handed down for six generations and many are typical of the area around Grundsund.

Urban shows us what is perhaps the most popular bargeboard pattern, known locally as a "måvemönster" (seagull pattern).

"Here we call seagulls "måvar" and this pattern looks like seagull wings," explains Urban.

Generation shift

Gunnar's son, and also the newly appointed CEO, Christer meets us in the workshop. Both sons have followed in their father's footsteps to the delight of Gunnar who now starts to feel ready to pass the baton.

And it is a successful business that Christer Svensson is taking over. With its 21 employees GRG is currently one of the biggest employers in the area.

"There has been a trend reversal in recent years and the building business is not as seasonal as before. For example we sell a lot of pressure-treated wood all year round," says Christer.

Gunnar adds that they have benefited from local building regulations. Renovations and rebuilding in coastal communities are regulated by the Building Committee and must be in line with existing buildings. Furthermore, many summer visitors are also choosing to renovate interiors using wood.



Urban Hansson shows the traditional "seagull pattern" which adorns many rooftops in Grundsund.

Patios – a growing trend

"The main thing that people are building today is patios and they are not content with 30–40 sq.m. Many patios being built are 250 sq.m. Maybe this is because most of the plots here consist of rugged rocks and few people have lawns," Gunnar believes.

During the recent rainy summers, however, sunny days on the patio have been rare. So Gunnar, Christer, Gabriella and the others are hoping for a summer with "moderately good" weather.

"For us it is perfect when it's a little cloudy and windy. Then the boat stays moored and they drive over to us and go shopping instead," says Gunnar with a twinkle in his eye.

Photo: Corbis



Swedish wood big in Japan

Pending a rise in VAT, the big wood country Japan is increasing its housing starts. The increase, combined with post-tsunami reconstruction, is laying the foundation for a good couple of years for the wood products industry. At the same time, the aging population looms large like a threatening cloud in the sky. TEXT: KAROLINA GRUNDIN

JAPAN IS A densely populated country and almost half the population is crowded together in the three metropolitan regions Tokyo, Osaka and Nagoya. At the same time, over two-thirds of the archipelago's land mass is covered by forests. With such a large domestic timber

volume, it may seem rather surprising that Japan is now Setra's fifth largest export market.

The explanation is relatively simple, however. Despite the fact that a large part of the Japan's forest lands are cultivated, the country's topography with many

steep mountains is not ideal for forestry. Traditionally, a lot of wood is used for interiors and construction and in order to meet demand, Japan imports a large amount of timber.

Swedish redwood and whitewood popular

"Swedish and Finnish wood is highly valued both in comparison with our domestic production and with goods from the rest of Europe. We like the Swedish approach to forestry and the long-term thinking about issues such as reforestation," explains Yoshiyuki Takahashi, a member of Setra's sales team in Japan.

Yoshiyuki Takahashi has worked for Setra for many years and together with his son, Tomohiko Takahashi, he runs Setra's Japanese sales office. The office is located in central Tokyo and opened under the AssiDomän flag in 1996. Japan has been a stable market for Setra ever



Traditionally a lot of wood is used in interiors and construction in Japan. Today, Setra exports sawn redwood and whitewood here.

“We can see that wood has become more and more popular in single-family homes.”

since and today exports to Japan include sawn redwood and whitewood, together with glulam beams, flooring and claddings. Customers are Japanese glulam manufacturers and the Japanese building materials trade.

Future VAT increase affects market

Now, however, the country is on the threshold of change. From April 2014, the current Japanese VAT of five per cent will be raised to eight per cent, to reach ten per cent by year-end 2015.

This is the first VAT hike since 1997 and it has been promoted by the Prime Minister, Yoshihiko Noda. The background is Japan's major need of tax revenues as the country, in the wake of the disaster in 2010 and with its aging population, must get the economy back on its feet and reduce the national debt.

“People are speculating that these increases will not be sufficient and that there will be more. Many people are therefore taking the opportunity to buy a house or flat now, before the tax increase. This is also having a positive effect on housing starts,” explains Andreas Nyström, Product Manager for the Redwood business area who has recently returned from a customer visit in Japan.

Tomohiko and Yoshiyuki Takahashi believe that the VAT hike will lead to increased sales until implementation and then the situation will stabilise.

“In the long term, Japan is a stable market but in the short term the increase will lead to reduced consumption and

less capital for the construction sector. Despite this, public buildings will remain in focus and we may see increased demand for day nurseries, schools and even private homes,” says Tomohiko Takahashi.

Housing shortages and new building regulations

As in most other places buying a home is one of the biggest private investments a Japanese makes in his or her life. The VAT hike will therefore to some extent contribute to falling demand for housing and a decrease in new construction.

At the same time, the 2010 disaster, when northeast Japan was devastated by an earthquake and tsunami, has led to a housing shortage. This considerable housing crisis will be impossible to remedy in a short time and problems with housing are expected to remain for a few more years.

In the already densely populated Japan, the lack of housing has caused additional problems since large areas of the country are unsuitable for habitation.

“After the tsunami the government decided that new construction must not take place too close to the shoreline. The houses being built must also be multi-storey in order to provide homes for more people,” explains Yoshiyuki Takahashi.

Wooden buildings increasing

For the most part, materials such as concrete and steel are being used for the areas being renovated or in new construction today. But wood is starting to become increasingly common as a building material and has raised its relative market share significantly in recent years.

“We can see that wood has become more and more popular in single-family homes. Furthermore, public buildings are also increasingly being built of wood,” says Tomohiko.

And increased use of wood is essential if Japan is to continue to be a major market for the Swedish wood products industry. The country's demographic development with a median age among the highest in the world means that in the longer term there will be reduced demand for new housing. But in the foreseeable future Japan will continue to be a significant market for Setra.



Photo: Corbis

Despite the fact that a large part of Japan's forest lands are cultivated, the country's topography with many steep mountains is not ideal for forestry.



Photo: Sald Karlsson

“We like the Swedish approach to forestry and the long-term thinking about issues such as reforestation,” explains Yoshiyuki Takahashi who together with his son Tomohiko Takahashi runs Setra's Japanese sales office.

Japan facts

POPULATION 127,650,000

MEDIAN AGE 45 (Sweden 42)

SAWN TIMBER IMPORTS

From Europe (excl. Russia):
2,438,000 m³. Of which imports
from Sweden: 789,000 m³

GLULAM IMPORTS

From Europe (excl. Russia):
593,000 m³. Of which imports
from Sweden: 25,300 m³

SHARE OF SETRA'S EXPORTS 7%

DESIGNER DUO FINDS INSPIRATION IN NATURE

Inspired by driftwood along the shoreline and raw material from the Hälsingland forests, designers Linda Hagberg and Thomas Impiglia have created a furniture collection with eye-catching whitewood.

TEXT: KAROLINA GRUNDIN PHOTO: STEFAN BLADH

THE NATURALLY SHAPED structure of driftwood was the starting point for the Driftwood furniture collection designed by Linda Hagberg and Thomas Impiglia. The result is an attractive collection which blurs the boundaries between furniture and a work of art and calls to mind both attractive forests and windswept seas.

“The idea was born from an interest in wood as a living material. I like the fact that wood is so compliant and can be formed into so many different structures and shapes,” says Linda Hagberg.

“Furthermore the new digital design possibilities using parametric design are extremely interesting. This, combined with a desire to design in wood, laid the foundation for Driftwood.

Spruce from the Hälsingland forests

The raw material for the furniture comes from the stately spruce forests in the Swedish region of Hälsingland. Due to favourable growing conditions the Helsing spruce is generally of higher quality than spruce from more southerly latitudes. The attractive raw material, which is sawn by Setra Färila and planed by Setra Valbo, was therefore particularly suitable for Linda and Thomas’s furniture since it is made almost entirely of visible wood.

“Spruce was ideal for this project since it both has an attractive structure and is a typical Swedish type of wood. It is native to the Swedish forests and is fast-growing

which makes it an environmentally sustainable material,” says Linda.

Want to combine design and architecture

Linda and Thomas work as architects in London. Their shared interest in design made them take a step away from the world of architecture to create something on a slightly smaller scale. Since then Driftwood has been exhibited at the Stockholm Furniture & Light Fair where it was selected from a number of contributions.

Now they hope that this side project within furniture design will develop into something more. The long-term dream is to be able to work across the boundary with both architecture and furniture design.

“Of course we hope we can find someone willing to produce Driftwood on a larger scale. It would be fantastic to be able to combine furniture design and architecture in the future and I would love to work more with wood,” says Linda.

For Linda Hagberg and Thomas Impiglia spruce was an ideal material. The attractive raw material comes from the Hälsingland forests and was sawn by Setra Färila and planed by Setra Valbo.



NEW TIMBER REGULATION NOW APPLIES

Countering illegal timber harvesting will allow competition and trading on equal terms.

TEXT: KATARINA BRANDT

THE EU'S NEW TIMBER REGULATION came into force on 3 March 2013 and is intended to counter illegal logging. This means that all companies which trade in wood products must be able to produce traceability documentation for the timber.

The new Timber Regulation prohibits traders from selling illegally harvested timber or wood products derived from such timber. This applies to both imports and domestic timber harvesting. Monitoring of timber and wood products will take place when it is sold in the EU market for the first time. This means that importers, forest owners and first buyers of harvested timber will become operators and subject to the Timber Regulation.

Kjell Eriksson, Environmental Manager at Setra, has received a number of questions about the regulation since its introduction at the beginning of March.

"Since there are penalties for non-compliance, with fines or imprisonment for up to two years, people naturally want to be on the safe side. But as far as we are concerned the regulation does not mean any major changes. We have a system for purchasing and can easily find customer transactions in our business system."

Greatest impact on importers

Sweden already has a system of state supervision with the Forestry Act and the Environmental Code as well as require-

ments for felling applications. This means that the regulation will have the greatest impact on importers since it affects imports of round timber as well as furniture, paper, boards and other wood products.

"Furniture quite often contains tropical wood and the traceability requirement means you must be able to show where the raw material was obtained and if there is a national permit. This assumes that there is a credible system for recording and monitoring, which is not now always the case," says Charlotte Thedéen who is succeeding Kjell Eriksson as Setra's Environmental Manager.

Stefan Karlsson is project manager for the Timber Regulation at the Swedish Forest Agency and he feels he has already noticed that the global market has reacted to the new regulation.

"We can see, for example, that imports from China have fallen quite sharply in recent months which may mean that the Timber Regulation is being taken seriously. We hope that this will mean that

competition and trading can take place on equal terms. This will benefit Sweden which is an export-dependent country."

The Swedish Forest Agency is designated as the competent authority in Sweden and will coordinate enforcement of the Regulation.

THE NEW LEGISLATION

In order to comply with this legislation, companies that handle timber and wood products must apply a due diligence system. This system must include procedures for:

- ✓ Information about origins, suppliers and products
- ✓ Risk assessment based on information collected
- ✓ Risk mitigation based on completed risk assessment

More information about the EU's new Timber Regulation is available on the Swedish Forest Agency's website www.skogsstyrelsen.se



Photo: Scampix

A major global problem

Illegal logging is a major global problem. It contributes to deforestation, climate change and loss of biodiversity. Furthermore, it counteracts equal competition in both export and import countries and leads to a loss of state revenues.



"Hopefully the new Timber Regulation will mean that competition and trading can take place on equal terms," says Stefan Karlsson, Project Manager for the Timber Regulation at the Swedish Forest Agency.

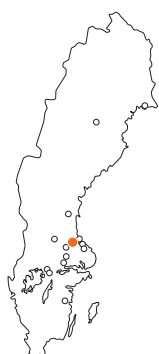
Fredrik Kojonen and Lars Eriksson work to ensure that the planing mill in Valbo is at the forefront when the trend moves towards increased added value in the final product.



Add more value!

Setra's planing mill in Valbo just west of Gävle plays a key role in the company's major focus on its interiors product range. Here they have set the bar high when it comes to developing flooring, claddings and other processed wood products of the highest quality.

TEXT: KATARINA BRANDT PHOTO: CHRISTIAN LJUNG



The planing mill in Valbo is one of Setra's units in the Wood Products business area.

DESPITE THE FACT that we are a few weeks into April, spring is conspicuous by its absence when SetraNews visits Valbo. However, this cannot be seen in the yard in front of the planing mill where the grooved decking waits expectantly for its onward journey to the summer's patio building projects.

Fredrik Kojonen, Manager of Setra Valbo, tells us that the business has been in operation since 1954. First under the name Norlida Trä which then became Mindab, which it was called until the formation of Setra Group in August 2003. Together with the units in Skutskär, Långshyttan and Kalix, the planing mill is part of the Wood Products business area.

Launch of a new interiors range

Lars Eriksson is a salesman and he started at Setra almost exactly one year ago. His task is to develop the interiors range and promote it in the building materials

trade. During the autumn an entirely new range of solid wood flooring and claddings with new surface treatments and profiles has emerged. Lars unfolds a fan of samples on the floors. These include both planed with a smooth surface and



Wood products are packed and ready for their onward journey to customers throughout Sweden.

a structured version where the wood grain is clearly visible and reminiscent of driftwood.

"Pine flooring with a structured surface is almost 50 per cent more durable than a smooth, planed floor and the surface is almost as hard as oak," explains Lars.

Today, hardwax oil has almost entirely replaced traditional treatment methods. The oil can penetrate deep into the pores of the wood which allows the floor to breathe and move naturally. Hardwax oil contains no solvents and is made from natural raw materials such as oil and wax.

Now the new range of flooring and claddings will be launched in the building materials trade. Lars pulls out his mobile phone and shows a picture of the new display stands that will be in place in the stores when the summer season starts. New brochure material is also being produced. So all in all they are ready to raise

“We have extremely high demands on the quality we deliver which makes this job a challenge every day.”

the curtain and show the Setra brand from a new angle.

“At present we are far more active in the market. Success depends on having the nerve to stick your neck out and help yourself,” Lars and Fredrik agree.

Good start for new floor range

It can already be seen that the investment in the new interiors range is paying dividends. Today Setra has agreements with all the major building supply chains and has sold more floors during the first two months of the year than during the whole of 2012.

“Our aim is to be even stronger in Sweden and neighbouring markets such as Norway and Denmark. When almost everything is exported it is easy to find yourself in a vulnerable situation, particularly due to currency fluctuations. We want to be flexible and be able to redirect the business in response to the business climate,” says Fredrik.

And most of the products from Valbo are exported. Primarily to Germany and Japan but also to Poland, Spain, Italy and exotic markets such as Jordan.



Sorting in Valbo is done manually. Here Hans Engberg's sharp eyes are examining the floorboards.

“The Japanese buy an enormous amount of flooring, as much as 300,000 square metres per year,” says Lars and adds that Setra's own sales office in Japan contributes to this success.

For some time now the planing mill in Valbo has been cutting, packing and processing products for modular building manufacturer Plusshus, which is part of the Setra Group. They also supply other modular home manufacturers in Sweden.

In addition to its three planing lines, Valbo also has a slightly unusual business. Two years ago they invested in a shavings and baling plant.. This operation is almost entirely automated and according to Fredrik the only one in the Setra Group that boasts a robot.

“We do not want anything to go to waste and we currently produce 550,000 bales per year that are sold to riding stables and trotting tracks throughout Sweden.”

Focus on customer service

Roger Johansson is the latest addition to the workforce of 23 people. Roger is responsible for customer service in Valbo and acts as a channel into the business for both internal and external customers.

“For those of us who are out travelling a lot it makes things easier to have a contact who is always available and who can also relieve us from some administrative tasks,” says Lars.

Fredrik describes the atmosphere and fellowship as very good in the comparatively small group that drives the planing mill forward.

“Our employees are skilled professionals who cannot be replaced by just anyone. They really do their best and always give a top performance. We have extremely high demands on the quality we deliver which makes this job a challenge every day. As I see it, the fact that employee turnover and customer complaints are close to zero proves that we have succeeded,” concludes Fredrik.

Pinewood floors are available with both smooth and structured surfaces. A structured surface provides almost 50 per cent higher resistance to wear than a smooth one.



Wood shavings from the planing mill are packed in bales and delivered to riding stables and trotting tracks.



Roger Johansson is responsible for customer service in Valbo.

Setra Valbo facts

RAW MATERIAL Redwood c. 45% whitewood c. 55%

PRODUCTS Claddings, flooring and construction timber

PRODUCTION VOLUME 2012 54,000 m³

MAIN MARKETS Germany, Japan, Poland and Sweden

Number of employees 23

Founded 1954



Olle Berg
Title: Market and Business Development Director
Lives: Stockholm
Age: 47
Family: Wife, two sons, one daughter and a dog.
Interests: Training, golf, spending time with his family and the dog.

Market Director raises his sights

TEXT: KAROLINA GRUNDIN PHOTO: OLA HÖGBERG

THERE ARE A LOT OF new things in Olle Berg's life right now. Firstly, he recently took over the helm as Setra's Market Director, and secondly he has a new family member in the house on Lidingö, outside Stockholm.

"I love dogs but the decision to get a small puppy was not the most rational. But if you only make rational decisions, you don't have much fun," says Olle Berg with a smile as he sits in his new office at Setra's headquarters in Solna.

A real wood veteran

There is, however, no doubt that Olle makes rational decisions when required. With his previous employer, Stora Enso, he successfully pushed market issues for many years. There are few roles in the market organisation that he has not tried, or markets he has not visited. All these trips have taught him to be humble about cultural differences and to recognise that each market has its own special relationship with wood.

"Every country has its traditions

and if you do global business, you must understand that the use of wood and the approach to wood in design are highly regional," says Olle.

Wants to position Setra

The Swedish wood products industry has had a couple of difficult years and Olle's assessment is that the export markets are still problematic to some extent.

"The entire industry has had a tough time and now Setra must raise its sights. We must find the areas where we are best and position ourselves there. We will be the natural choice for our customers and they must be sure that we are their wood experts," he says firmly.

Olle predicts that North Africa and the Middle East will continue to be important markets for Setra. Likewise, we will see a peak in Japan in the years ahead. Olle is also excited about the Chinese market but at the same time he points out that competition in export markets generally is intense.

"In China, the biggest competitor is not other Nordic exporters but other types of wood. But this is a growing market and our Swedish wood varieties have several advantages compared with domestic ones."

Firm belief in the future

Wood's unique position as the only renewable building material is highlighted by Olle as a strong competitive advantage compared with other materials. He believes that the sustainability aspects will be even more important in the future which in the long run will benefit the wood industry. At the same time, he does not want the use of wood to become an end in itself and is happy to see combinations of different materials.

"Wood should be used where it works best, sometimes together with other material. This is why it is time to start thinking more of performance and focusing on highlighting the strengths of wood. In the right context, wood is a fantastic material!"

SETRA is one of Sweden's largest wood products companies and a leading player in Europe. We offer eco-certified wood products for interiors and construction to customers in the building materials trade and industry.

Sawn and planed wood products in redwood and whitewood account for most of sales. The assortment for the building materials trade includes products such as floors, glulams, exterior claddings, interior claddings and decking.

Setra has 1,000 employees and annual sales of approximately SEK 4 billion. Exports to Europe, North Africa, the Middle East and Japan account for almost 60% of sales.

Setra Group includes nine sawmills, three independent wood processing units and two modular building factories.

Setra's principal owners are Sveaskog (50.0%) and Mellanskog (49.5%). The other approximately 1,500 shareholders together own 0.5% of the shares in the company.