



## Taste of SUCCESS

**With over 30-years of experience behind it, Chocolaterie Ickx is well versed in the craft of artisan chocolates**

**F**or Chocolaterie Ickx there is a very fine art to chocolate production. This quality has been an integral part of its business ever since its humble beginnings in the late 1970s when the company began making its first exclusive hand-made pralines, and other chocolate products. The success of these delicious products saw Chocolaterie Ickx open a small studio in Kapellen, Belgium in 1982 where it continued to employ traditional chocolate-making methods. Since 1993 the business has operated from a purpose built factory in Essen, which due to its continuing growth has been further extended in both 1997 and 2003.

Since 1988, Chocolaterie Ickx has been closely integrated with Dutch distributor Dragee following its acquisition of all shares within Ickx. As a wholesaler of chocolate products within the Netherlands, Dragee's activities complement those of Chocolaterie Ickx as its contact within the Dutch speciality market. Dragee delivers to patisseries, speciality chocolate shops, delis, wholesalers, and high-end department stores across the



region. Alongside the Netherlands, Chocolaterie Ickx's specially prepared chocolate products are exported across the world to over 30 countries including the UK, Germany, Japan, Australia, and the US. The company also has plans to explore other countries in the regions of Asia, Middle East, South America, and the US.

In 1993, a large proportion of Dragee's activities were moved to Ickx's Essen site, with a dedicated sales team for the Dutch market still operating from Roosendaal. This location is also home to Rosenberg, another Dutch importer and distributor, which was acquired by Dragee in 2008. Rosenberg specialises in exclusive luxury items for the complete confectionary market, and is involved with more than 40 candy manufacturers from around the world. Besides import, Rosenberg offers a wide range of products under its own label.

Over the years Chocolaterie Ickx has innovated and developed a range of unique and exclusive chocolate products that are specially designed for different seasons, major holidays and special occasions. These chocolate products are divided into milk, dark, and white all made with different flavour combinations and fillings such as praline, ganache, caramel, and marzipan. New products are added to this selection regularly, with

# Chocolaterie Ickx

the latest addition being the 'Xclusif' collection, which was launched at the ISM in Cologne in January 2009. The Xclusif concept was created around a desire to go back to Belgian's chocolate heritage with a unique look and taste combination, and took some time for the company to perfect in term of shapes and fillings.

## Seasonal collections

These seasonal collections have both international and national appeal, and are carefully tailored to each theme. Within its local market, Chocolaterie Ickx has worked very hard on a range of chocolates for Sinterklaas – the day on which the Dutch celebrate the Feast of St. Nicholas. The company also offers a wide selection of marzipan products especially created for the feast of

Sinterklaas.

Another key event within the Netherlands is the Queen's birthday, celebrated on the 30<sup>th</sup> April. In recognition of this, Chocolaterie Ickx has created an array of chocolate products designed within the traditional colours of the country – orange, red, white and blue. Major globally celebrated occasions such as Christmas, Easter, and Valentine's Day are also catered for with products that match the colours and symbols associated with such events. However, Chocolaterie Ickx equally observes the seasons themselves with dedicated products lines based around summer and autumn. Again these evoke the attributes of this time in the form of exquisite and tempting chocolate items. Even landmark events like births and marriages have been



expertly translated into Chocolaterie Ickx's trademark luxury offerings.

The task of continually updating Chocolaterie Ickx's selection of hand-made pralines and chocolate assortments falls to its studio of specialists. The business considers quality, creativity and innovation to be the core values for developing original and enticing recipes. With each praline individually hand-finished with extreme care, Chocolaterie Ickx not only guarantees its customers' chocolates with a perfect character, but also of a consistently high quality level.

This quality is one of the highest priorities at Chocolaterie Ickx.

In order to maintain this, the company works strictly in accordance with a quality assurance



ingredients of the highest quality in all of its products. As a finishing touch, Chocolaterie Ickx has also designed a beautiful collection of gift-wrappings and packaging that complements the various seasonal themes of its range.

## Exclusive pralines

It is Chocolaterie Ickx's aim to continually surprise its end consumers with exclusive pralines for all occasions and this what informs its ambition to constantly identify new ideas for the market. Each year, these adjustments and extensive investment keeps Chocolaterie Ickx ahead of the competition when it comes to unique chocolates. Part of this is down to its interest in market specialities from across the globe, which are evaluated for their potential use within Chocolaterie Ickx's own products. This helps ensure the business remains a leader, as opposed to a follower. ✦

system based upon the principles of Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP). As a result, customers can rely on all of Chocolaterie Ickx's products satisfying these guidelines, its own internally specified quality requirements, and necessary legislation concerning foodstuffs. Chocolaterie Ickx also holds British Retail Consortium (BRC) Higher

Level certification.

In terms of the products themselves, Chocolaterie Ickx's balanced production processes make use of cutting-edge techniques without losing sight of the traditional aspects of chocolate making, such as hand-crafting, that remain just as important to the business today. Naturally, the business only uses



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## Finnish meat producer expands order pick capacity with Dutch system

Five years ago the Finnish meat producer Snellman faced a capacity problem, as it found order picking in three shifts was still not enough to cope with a rapid increase of sales. The Dutch system integrator Inther created the solution for this problem: a highly compact storage- and order pick system.

The system consists of 12 commissioners positioned in two rows of six. Each commissioner serves a picking station with a maximum of 27 pick locations, which consist of flow racks with space for three to five totes. Once the stock level declines to a certain level the commissioner automatically receives an instruction to replenish the pick location. The system includes a pick-to-light system and at various places in the system weighing scales are integrated. The order pick system also serves as buffer system for the shipping department, which again saves space.

Everywhere the process is optimised as much as possible, and in addition Snellman has a wealth of information available due to Inther's software. This information makes it possible to adjust various parameters in order to maintain efficiency.

Over two years after the commissioning of the system Snellman is very satisfied. The company only needs two shifts and usually not all pick stations are manned. There has been an increase in capacity, and in productivity, with estimated savings of 250,000 euros in totes transportation and washing costs alone. As Bertil Grankulla,



warehouse manager of Snellman, also notes, there have been savings in manpower. Some order pickers get to 2500 order lines a day. "We have now 45 people in operation, 25 less than before. If you consider the increase in volumes, we were able to save 35 FTE in our workforce," he concludes.