

CHEESE WIZARDS

JUBILEE MAGAZINE 2025

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st. PAUL 
SMART CHEESE SOLUTIONS



EDITORIAL

From hunting to harvesting

Forty years ago, my sister and I embarked on this St. Paul adventure. We were two young entrepreneurs with guts, a good idea, 5,000 guilders, and above all, a mountain of energy. We were hunters, always on the lookout for opportunities and always on the move. This approach took us far, but it also came at a price. My sister eventually chose a different path, and now I work with my sons and son-in-law. It's wonderful to see how our family business has grown to become a major player in the European market. However, growth requires a change of approach; I often say that we need to move from hunting to 'farming'. It's not just about pursuing new opportunities, but also about taking good care of what we have built.

In this jubilee magazine, I will take you on a journey through our history, memorable milestones and special stories. We could never have achieved this without our employees, whose dedication, craftsmanship and commitment are the driving force behind our success.

Balancing family and work is not always easy – we have certainly faced our fair share of challenges. Nevertheless, I hope we can maintain this balance so that one day the next generation can take over, and perhaps even my grandchildren after that.

I look back with pride on what we have achieved. And I look ahead with confidence. Here's to the next forty years, with the same drive, of course with the new factory and with an even greater focus on sustainable growth.

Dieter Kuijl

COLOPHON

Concept, editing & design:
TALK ABOUT PR & communicatie

Photography: Ambacht in beeld fotografie
Printing: Drukkerij Druwa

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FACTORY OF THE FUTURE

St. Paul combines forty years of craftsmanship in a state-of-the-art factory

TEN YEARS AFTER MOVING TO SINT JANSTEEN, THE ST. PAUL FACTORY IS UNDERGOING A SPECTACULAR TRANSFORMATION. IN 2026, A STATE-OF-THE-ART PROCESSED CHEESE FACTORY WILL BE BUILT ON THE SAME SITE, COMBINING TECHNOLOGY, AUTOMATION AND CRAFTSMANSHIP TO CREATE A UNIQUE COMPLEX. THIS VISIONARY PROJECT COMBINES FORTY YEARS OF KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE IN ONE PLACE: THE FACTORY OF THE FUTURE. THIS IS A FACTORY THAT IS READY FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.

The project team consists of Samuel Verheggen (plant manager in Lokeren), Tim Kuijl (project manager), Wim Kuijl (production manager) and Dieter Kuijl (CEO). They are enthusiastic about this development. Dieter: "We want to further improve the consistent quality that is the hallmark of St. Paul, and respond to growing demand. That is why we are investing in a new, ultra-modern factory. We are using our own processed cheese factory in Lokeren as an example; it is still very advanced for its time and has a capacity of 10,000 kilograms of processed cheese per hour. In St. Jansteen, we

are now building a factory with a capacity of 25,000 kilograms per hour, more than double that of our existing facility. This will make it the largest processed cheese factory in the Benelux region and it will be equipped with in-house developed technologies. Efficiency and reducing our ecological footprint are the most important criteria here. We are committed to making a positive impact. This will be achieved not only through production, but also through heat and cooling recovery, reducing our CO2 emissions, combating product waste, and saving energy, among other things."

“DEVELOPING A NEW FACTORY IS A LONG PROCESS. WE HAVE BEEN WORKING ON THIS FOR TEN YEARS.”

Where knowledge and robots converge

Tim: “There are plenty of companies that have built natural cheese or mozzarella factories, but processed cheese factories are rare. The knowledge about this often remains internal. It’s a specialized field.” Samuel continues: “Developing a new factory is a long process. We have been working on this for ten years. Taking into account the technologies available on the market and our knowledge of machines and engineering, we conducted our own research. The aim was to determine whether certain technologies could be applied in the new factory. We then discussed with a large number of colleagues whether it was a good idea. Step by step, the design of the new factory took shape.” Everything in the new factory will soon be fully automated. Wim: “Everything will be controlled from a single control room. The cheese will travel hundreds of meters: robots will unpack it, place it in the correct grinding machine, send it to the melting machine, pump it to the packaging lines, cool it, and prepare it for transport.”

Consistent quality

Dieter explains that, in the new factory, the functions of the machines are even more precisely tailored to the recipes. “Everything happens at the right time and in the right way. The quality control system remains St. Paul’s flagship feature. Smart sensors monitor consistent quality based on parameters such

as speed, time, temperature, and chemical composition. This means we always know that the product meets the highest standards, allowing us to work more efficiently. Since we are measuring continuously, we can reduce checks at other times.”

Broader range

In addition to consistent quality, the new factory also offers more production possibilities. Wim: “We can use other techniques to create a wider range. In addition to pasteurization, we can sterilize and produce shelf-stable products that can be stored outside of refrigeration. This opens doors for the further expansion of our cheese sauces for the B2B market, for example.

Special mixing techniques, such as high and low shear, also expand our range. These techniques will further develop the range of enzymatically produced natural cheese flavors (EMC). In general, we will soon be able to respond even better to trends such as the growing demand for vegan and vegetarian food. However, our number one priority in building this factory remains consistent quality.”

From offices to a cheese experience!

“In addition to a brand new production line for processed cheese, the new factory has much more to offer,” Tim says. “The project also includes a new head office, canteens, a steam boiler house, workshops for technical services, and a building for water treatment and fire extinguishing systems. There will also be a new production office overlooking the production line, with a research and development department underneath. New silos and a steam boiler will also be installed on the site.” The project team is also proud of the new experience corridor: a glass walkway above the production line where visitors can observe the production of processed cheese and cheese solutions without disrupting the process.

From plan to production

Before the Factory of the Future is up and running, there



LTR: Tim, Dieter, Wim, Samuel.

are still quite a few steps to be taken. Samuel: “We have a comprehensive commissioning plan that specifies exactly how we will test, validate and start up the new machines. From preparation to delivery. For example, the machines will first be tested with water before we start testing with cheese, after which the entire delivery can take place.” Tim: “The plan also describes how we will train colleagues in all the new technologies. Manufacturers provide training courses and we develop our own training programs. Everyone is very committed; everyone wants to see the new factory in operation, so the training will certainly be successful.” Dieter: “The great thing is that the factory in Lokeren will continue to operate. This means we are under no pressure to deliver immediately and can start up at our own pace. Few companies that are innovating have that advantage.”

Looking to the future

With just a few steps left in the commissioning plan and the factory under construction, the four are already looking ahead. Wim: “With the arrival of our new factory, we are strengthening our position in Europe and gaining even more clout.” “And now it’s mainly a matter of protecting our silverware,” says Dieter. “By staying close to ourselves, doing what we’re good at and staying focused. You also have to be able to lose, show resilience and make sure you always remain liquid. For me, these are core principles that will remain important for the future.” According to him, a new phase is dawning: “We are becoming less hunters and more farmers. We must cherish what we have, give it time to grow and harvest what we have built up. And those who cherish well allow the most beautiful flavors to mature!”

FACTS & FIGURES

*Every year, St. Paul processes around
35,000 tons of processed cheese.*

With the acquisition of Koninklijke ERU in **2024**, St. Paul is now the **largest** processed cheese producer in the **Benelux**.
*St. Paul is a family-owned business that was founded in Belgium in **1985**.*

*The company entered the Dutch market in **2016**.*

In **2022** cheddar cheese reached its highest price worldwide, around **US \$13,40** per kg.

*With only **5,000 guilders** in his pocket,
Dieter started St. Paul together with his sister Margo.*
Dieter's favorite cheese snack: **chili cheese nuggets**
*In **1911**, processed cheese was invented by Walter Gerber in Switzerland.*

Kraft Foods launched the first industrial processed cheese in **1916**.

Founded by Margo and Dieter, St. Paul has grown in 40 years into a company with **157 employees** in Lokeren and St. Jansteen and **127** at ERU in Woerden.

*In addition to traditional processed cheeses, St. Paul also develops **vegan** cheese alternatives.*

The cheese from the **souflesse** is developed and produced by St. Paul.

*This entrepreneurial family's passion for cheese goes back more than **nine generations**.*

St. Paul produces **5,630 tonnes** of chili cheese nugget cheese annually.

*In **1997**, St. Paul received an award for innovative techniques as the most modern factory in the world in the field of industrial cheese.*

The global market for processed cheese was estimated at approximately **\$18 billion** in 2024 and is growing at an annual rate of around **4 tot 5%** (CAGR).

In **2026**, St Paul wil open
The factory of the future.

MILESTONES



Sharp steering, shifting gears at the right time and daring to accelerate. That mentality is in the Kuijl family's genes. In 2017, father Dieter drove his first car race in a classic car. It left him wanting more. So much more that he soon started his own **St. Paul Historical racing team**. With drivers Dieter, Wim, Tim, Samuel and six mechanics.

FULL SPEED WITH THE KUIJLS



FROM LOKEREN TO SINT JANSTEEN

St. Paul's very first factory opened its doors in **Lokeren**, Belgium. But demand for its products grew so rapidly that by 2016, the building was bursting at the seams. It was time for a new step: St. Paul crossed the border and settled in **Sint Jansteen**, the Netherlands, ready for the next phase of growth and innovation.

FROM WAREHOUSE TO CHEESE BALL

Cheese is in the Kuijl family's blood. Long before St. Paul was founded in 1985, the family was active in the cheese world. **Grandmother Kuijl** ran a cheese warehouse in Nieuwpoort, grandfather traded in cheese, and Dieter's father continued the tradition. Dieter could often be found at the market with his father (photo). Dieter's mother had her own cheese shop in Hulst, aptly named **De Kaasbol** (The Cheese Ball).



ALWAYS AHEAD

Innovation is in St. Paul's DNA. From day one, innovation has been a common thread throughout the company. From the consumer market to the food industry, always one step ahead. In 1997, this was even **rewarded**: St. Paul was named **the most modern cheese factory in the world**.

The EMPEROR of CHEESE SOUFLÉS

The **Souflesse** is not just any cheese soufflé – it is the culinary version. Developed by St. Paul, together with the then Swinkels Snackery & Bakery (now Van Ge-loven), at the request of a client who dreamed of the perfect balance: wafer-thin puff pastry with a rich filling of mature cheese. The result: **pure snack royalty**.



From kitchen table to international family business

GETTING STARTED, PERSISTING, GROWING

NORMALLY, MARGO AND DIETER, THE FOUNDERS OF ST. PAUL, PREFER TO LOOK AHEAD. THEY PREFER TO FOCUS THEIR ENERGY ON NEW OPPORTUNITIES AND IDEAS. BUT FOR THIS JUBILEE MAGAZINE, THEY ARE HAPPY TO MAKE AN EXCEPTION! SOMETIMES IT'S GOOD TO LOOK IN THE REARVIEW MIRROR AND SEE HOW FAR YOU'VE COME. THIS IS THE STORY OF FORTY YEARS OF ST. PAUL: FROM A SMALL IDEA AT THE KITCHEN TABLE TO AN INTERNATIONALLY OPERATING FAMILY BUSINESS.

"It was only natural that we worked in our parents' cheese business on weekends. My sister Wilma and I worked with our mother in the cheese shop in Hulst, while our brother Dieter worked in our father's cheese wholesale business," says Margo Kuijl, reflecting on her family. "We were all real go-getters—roll up those sleeves and get to work." Dieter: "There was a logical path mapped out for our careers: work in our parents' business, and then gradually take it over. However, Margo and I chose a different path in the cheese industry, founding St. Paul in 1985. We didn't know how we were going to do it, but we knew we were going to do it."

After completing her secretarial training, Margo wanted a job at an insurance bank. That turned out not to be an option. Dieter had his sights set on the driving school in Driebergen, but ended up at the business school in Vlissingen. They were both prepared

to continue their parents' business. But things turned out differently. Margo: "Dieter was 21 and I was 25 when we started St. Paul. We saw plenty of opportunities in the cheese industry, the industry in which our family had been active for generations. From the beginning, we were extremely driven to prove to our parents that we could do it ourselves. We had inherited that mentality from our family: tackling challenges and persevering." Growing up in an entrepreneurial family was a valuable learning experience that contributed to our success," Dieter adds.

The beginning

Dieter and Margo started their business in the consumer market. They based this choice on the idea that they had to be able to manage all aspects of the business. Initially, the brother and sister handled every aspect of the business themselves, including purchasing, production, and delivery to customers. They



"WE GOT THINGS DONE; SLEEVES UP AND GO."

“We wanted to show our parents: we can do this ourselves.”

began melting cheese at the Lokeren factory, where St. Paul has been based since day one. The cheese-melting process was highly technical, as was the packaging, which was close to Dieter's heart due to his interest in technology. Margo said, “We never wrote down a division of tasks on paper; it just happened naturally. Dieter was already in sales and was technical, so machines and product development were his domain. I did the figures, paperwork, and everything else that came my way. We did production together. We were eager to learn and took training courses. We learned a lot from the professionals at the factory, who thought it was quite remarkable to have two young entrepreneurs as cheese manufacturers.” Dieter adds: “One of those people was Dr. Berger from Ludwigshafen. Producer of JOHA emulsifying salts; the partner for processed cheese producers worldwide. He was happy to share his knowledge with us and helped us to further expand the processed cheese business.

In addition to business discussions, a true friendship developed. This man traveled the world helping processed cheese producers. Wherever he went, he corresponded with us about what he saw and learned. We received faxes from Japan, Australia, and the United States, among other places. Even after he retired, our friendship continued, and we stayed in touch until his death. Dr. Berger made a significant contribution to the foundation of St. Paul, and we learned the art of cheese melting from him.”

Growth

St. Paul expanded rapidly, not only in terms of employees but especially in terms of product range. Through various channels, exports to other countries got underway and at one point the company was also serving markets such as the Middle East. There was a large market here for processed

cheese products with functional applications and a longer shelf life. In 1995, the first potential buyers of the company expressed interest. Margo said, “We couldn't have received a better compliment. If people were interested in buying our company, then we were doing something right. It would be a shame to sell. Then our fighting spirit came into play. What others can do, we can do better. So we didn't sell.” Dieter saw this moment as a turning point: “If the company was worth so much, Margo and I could start doing fun things,” he says. For him, that meant finally following his passion: buying his first classic car and having Saturdays off for the first time since he was twelve. And so a better work-life balance was established.

A completely new direction

A second turning point for St. Paul came when the company stopped producing processed cheese for consumers. “That happened around the time our company first attracted serious interest,” says Margo. “Export refunds for European agricultural products were set to disappear, which would have made our prices too high for the foreign market. We then identified more long-term opportunities for processed cheese as an ingredient in the food industry, in which we were already partially involved, so we decided to focus entirely on that market. That market was still in its infancy. Frozen pizzas hardly existed at the time. Dieter was already working on developing analogue cheese, an ingredient that

would later be used extensively on frozen pizzas as a substitute for or addition to cheese.” “It was a huge change,” says Dieter. “Our machinery and our organization were geared towards consumer products and export outside of Europe. Everything had to change: new machines, a different market approach, and arranging our own transport within Europe, where the food industry was located at the time.”

Hunters

Then came 1999 and a crisis that almost brought everything to a standstill. The dioxin crisis paralyzed Belgian food production. Work also had to stop at St. Paul because all products from Belgium were boycotted. Margo: “The entire organization did everything it could to find a way forward, but various authorities opposed this.” So, the siblings came up with their own plan. “We informed the Belgian and Dutch authorities of the exact date and time that we would send the first truck back to the Netherlands. We provided proof that there were no Belgian products in the end product. As far as we were concerned, that should have been enough to resume operations. And that's what happened.” Dieter: “We're not farmers; we're hunters. We're always on the lookout for new opportunities. It's in our blood.”

New phase

In 2016, Margo and Dieter explored sales opportunities for St. Paul. Although there was interest, it didn't feel right. Margo:



Dieter and Margo in their younger years.

“For me, this was the moment to stop. St. Paul was my great passion, my joy, and my life. However, I wanted to make room for other things. We had just bought new premises in St. Jansteen. Production in Lokeren was becoming too small, and Dieter wanted to move on, together with the next generation.” Dieter understood her decision. “It had been difficult for her to keep up with me in recent years. But I did miss her very much. Apart from being the CFO of St. Paul, Margo was family and knew everything. She was my buddy, my confidante, and my sparring partner. I look back fondly on our time together, and I still recommend working with family. As long as you respect each other, it can be very rewarding.”

Always an eye for opportunities

After forty years, the entrepreneurs cannot give one specific golden tip, but one thing is certain: St. Paul's success is primarily thanks to Margo and Dieter's immense drive to learn and their entrepreneurial spirit. Margo: “In the early years, we brought in two guys to make the production process transparent. They went into the factory and wrote everything down on rolls of wallpaper. After two days, Dieter and I knew we had to automate. At the time, automation was still in its infancy at many companies, and it has served us well. So, my advice to entrepreneurs is to stay true to yourself, do what you're good at, stay focused, keep developing, and always look ahead... to where the opportunities lie.”

Working together on knowledge, trust and the taste of tomorrow

PARTNERS IN TASTE

WITHOUT CUSTOMERS, THERE WOULD BE NO JUBILEE. FOR FORTY YEARS, ST. PAUL HAS BEEN WORKING WITH ORGANIZATIONS THAT EXPECT MORE THAN JUST A SUPPLIER: THEY ARE LOOKING FOR A PARTNER WHO THINKS ALONG WITH THEM, INNOVATES, AND GUARANTEES QUALITY. IN THIS ARTICLE, EGBERT VAN DE WINCKEL, KEY ACCOUNT MANAGER, EXPLAINS HOW ST. PAUL WORKS WITH CUSTOMERS TO BUILD TRUST, INNOVATION, AND GROWTH. FROM THE INITIAL DESIRE TO DEVELOP A NEW PRODUCT, THROUGH THE TESTING PHASE AND CHEESE ACADEMY, TO THE FINAL PRODUCT.

Every collaboration begins with a market demand. "Customers often come to us with a concrete idea or a desire for a new product. Together, we translate that into a technically feasible recipe that meets all requirements and can be produced in practice," Egbert explains. The process is step-by-step: from the initial briefing to creating initial samples, testing and tasting them, and fine-tuning their taste, texture, and stability. Finally, there is an upscaling in the factory and a check to see whether the product also meets the set conditions in large volumes. "What sets us apart is that we don't just carry out this process on our own; we really shape it together with the customer. It's about maintaining short lines of communication, responding quickly, and collaborating to find the best solution."

Sparring partner

In the food industry, margins can be razor thin. A difference of a few cents in price can determine whether large contracts are won or lost. "That's precisely why customers want a sparring partner who looks beyond the product itself," Egbert says. "For example, we also advise on securing raw materials at the right time so that our partners can remain competitive. That requires insight, timing, and trust."

Quality and reliability first

At St. Paul, quality always comes first – not only in its products, but also in its partnerships. "Our customers serve millions of consumers every day. There is simply no room

for compromise," Egbert says. Safety, sustainability, and reliability are prerequisites. For example, an external safety audit was recently conducted, in which St. Paul identified and implemented areas for improvement together with the customer. "That openness and flexibility are essential. It's the only way to grow together."

The magic of cheese

Egbert is not surprised that customers sometimes refer to the people at St. Paul as cheese wizards. "For those who don't work with cheese on a daily basis, it sometimes seems like magic how we adjust a recipe or process to achieve the desired result. In reality, it's all about precision and craftsmanship: turning one knob and adjusting another slightly. We keep going until the product is perfect."

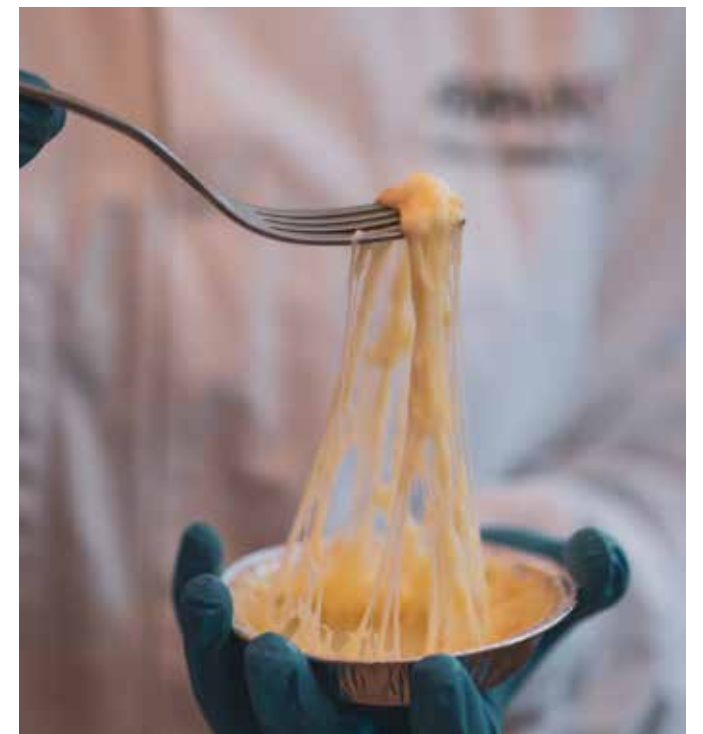
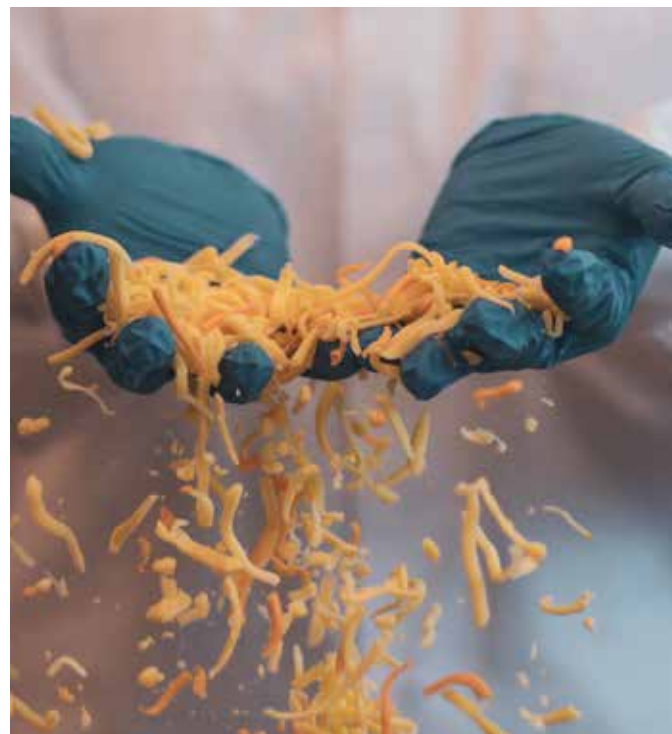
Cheese Academy

This level of precision doesn't stop at factory production. At the St. Paul Cheese Academy, this expertise is shared with customers. "It's an ideal way to learn more about cheese and the processes involved," Egbert says. "This gives our partners a better understanding of the product, allowing us to develop more quickly and effectively together. Ultimately, this results in better products and stronger collaboration."

Future

"This jubilee is a milestone not only for us as an organization, but also for our customers, who have made this joint achievement possible. Their trust and cooperation have

brought us to where we are today. In the coming years, our priorities will remain innovation, efficiency, consistent quality, sustainability, and knowledge transfer. We don't want to be a supplier that simply does what is asked of us," Egbert concludes. "Our ambition is to be a partner that thinks along with you, looks ahead, and helps you grow. That is what has made us successful for forty years, and it is what we will continue to build on in the future."



Seniors bring knowledge, young people bring energy

CHEESE DNA

FAMILY MEMBERS: THERE AREN'T TECHNICALLY 157 OF THEM, BUT SOMETIMES IT FEELS LIKE THERE ARE. AT ST. PAUL, FAMILY MEMBERS AND COLLEAGUES WORK TOGETHER AND FEEL LIKE PART OF THE FAMILY. WHETHER YOU'RE DIETER'S SON OR DAUGHTER-IN-LAW, OR A COLLEAGUE FROM OUTSIDE THE FAMILY, YOU SHARE THE SAME VALUES: FAMILY TRADITION, MASTERY, INVENTIVENESS, RELIABILITY, AND QUALITY.

In this article, family members share their thoughts. Cousin Hidde, sons(-in-law) Samuel, Wim, and Tim; daughter-in-law Kimberley; and Dieter Kuijl talk about what family tradition means to them; what makes St. Paul a family business; and how they plan to ensure continuity for future generations.

From fondue to core values

At St. Paul, family ties are a common thread running through everything: eating together, working together, laughing together. Tim says, "Every winter sports holiday, cheese fondue is on the menu one evening. It's wonderful to sit around the table together as cheese lovers. This typifies the close bond we have with each other, both as a family and as a company. It's no coincidence that 'family tradition' is one of our core values. It's how we've built the future together for forty years." Dieter adds to his son's words: "The founders' DNA makes the difference between a company and a family business. You see it in everything. I am down-to-earth and steadfast, and I never give up. I finish everything. I'm a perfectionist and driven to win. I believe independence is important so St. Paul can chart its own course. But my most important characteristic is my enormous passion. I do everything from the heart. It is precisely this passion that I want to pass on to future

generations so they can carry on the St. Paul legacy in their own way, but with the same foundation and core values.

Open and clear communication

Wim: "Our communication style is also characteristic of a family business: it's open and clear, with short lines of communication. Our colleagues contribute ideas, act quickly, and are extremely dedicated. Recently, we said goodbye to a retiring colleague, and people came back from vacation for that. How wonderful is that?" "Just like in a family," Kimberly adds. "We spend a lot of time together, even on weekends. We have coffee in Koewacht before the racing team prepares for the race. Or enjoying a nice meal together. We don't have to do these things, but they're just so much fun. That's what makes me enjoy working at the company during the week."

One captain

Although St. Paul is a true family business, with many

family members working there, one person still holds ultimate leadership. Dieter: "St. Paul is a family business. That means it is owned by the family but has only one owner. There can only be one captain, and that's me. We don't always agree — we don't have to — but we make decisions democratically. The majority rules."

“THE FOUNDERS’ DNA MAKES THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A COMPANY AND A FAMILY BUSINESS. YOU SEE IT IN EVERYTHING.”



LTR: Wim, Hidde, Kimberly, Tim, Dieter, Samuel.

The hunter and the farmers

For Dieter, the roles at St. Paul are clearly defined. The younger generation ensures that the company runs smoothly day in and day out, which he calls "farming." "They keep the foundations solid and are working hard on constructing our new factory, for example." He sees himself primarily as a hunter in the coming years. "I want to discover new opportunities and continue growing the company. With the new factory and the acquisition of Koninklijke ERU, there are so many possibilities. Once everything is in place, I will be happy to hand over the reins. But when will that be? I have no idea. I'm enjoying myself too much, and there are so many great plans to carry out."

Family council

Harmony is just as important as results in a family business. That's why St. Paul has a family council that brings together all family members who work at the company. The company secretary updates them on strategic decisions, monitors their relationships with each other, and establishes guidelines for how they interact with the company.

Dieter: "We are the ambassadors of St. Paul and serve as role models. What we agree on internally, we also communicate unanimously to the outside world. Of course, things can sometimes go wrong with relationships, even among family members, and it can be more difficult to resolve the situation properly in those cases." "If something personal is going on, we sometimes bring the 'cheese bosses' together. We discuss how to continue acting professionally. We always ensure that the ship stays afloat," says Samuel. Hidde: "In addition, we are drawing up a family charter that sets out the values and guidelines so future generations will know what St. Paul stands for."

Next generation

Although Dieter would like to see his grandchildren take over the reins one day, but that is still uncertain. "Of course, it's possible that our children won't want to run the company," Kimberly says realistically. "Margo and Dieter started small and built St. Paul from the ground up. Coming into the company now is very different. But we want them to gain experience at other companies first. That's an agreement that will also

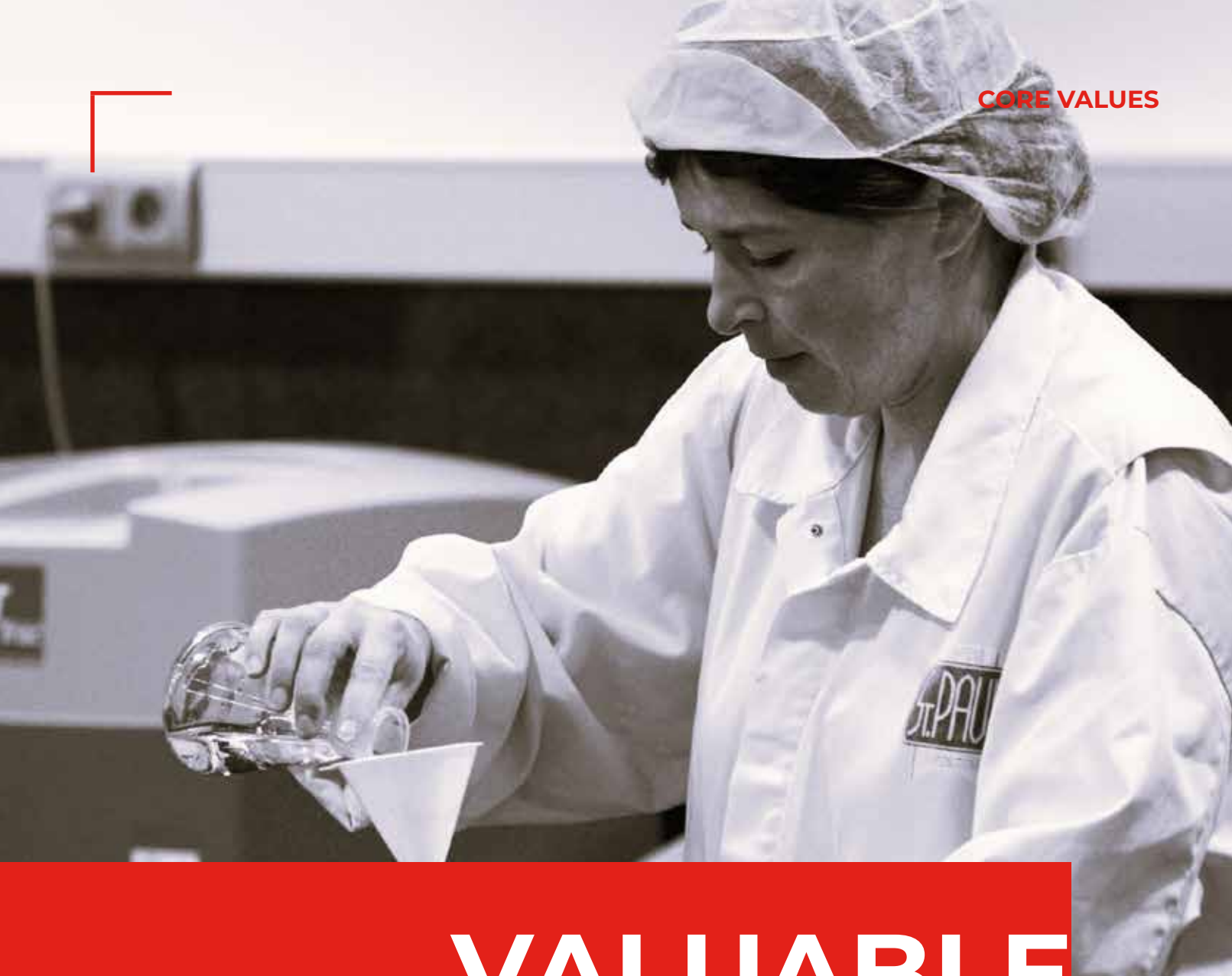
be included in the family charter."

Learned young

"I started working somewhere else and have been here for 36 years. They call me the 'library of St. Paul' because I've been here so long, I remember everything, and I know a lot about many aspects of the production process," says Hidde. Dieter: "We built the company with colleagues who have been working here for a long time. They know better than anyone how processes run here. We don't work top-down, but rather from the shop floor to the boardroom."

"We learn a lot from our senior colleagues," says Samuel. "You listen to them first because they have a wealth of knowledge and experience." Wim: "We are also inspired by the energy and fresh perspective of our younger colleagues. They bring different knowledge and ideas, creating a refreshing dynamic."

In this way, St. Paul remains a family business in the broadest sense—rooted in experience, nourished by new generations, and always moving forward together toward the future.



VALUABLE

At St. Paul, everyone works passionately every day to create the best cheese solutions. The family beautifully describes this shared DNA in the article about the family business. Family tradition, mastery, inventiveness, reliability, and quality are central values that guide us. These values form the basis of the work and show what St. Paul stands for as a company. What does this look like in practice? Colleagues share their daily experience of these values.



René van der Linden
(sales manager)

"A deal is a deal," meaning reliability is an important value that our customers can depend on.

Stand by what you do and what you promise. We go to great lengths every day to fulfill our goals and the agreements we have made. That is why, to me, reliability is the value that customers should immediately recognize when working with us. St. Paul is always there for its customers, large or small, and will do everything possible to serve them well and correctly in all areas."

Hessel Hamelink
(purchasing manager)

"Family tradition is the value that suits me best because most family businesses have a long-term focus and think in terms of generations. I think that's essential. Additionally, the owner is heavily involved. When new colleagues join us, I tell them that we are a typical family business with sound principles, short lines of communication, and the ability to respond quickly. Mastery comes first. We are always looking for quality products that align with the image of St. Paul and Koninklijke ERU. That is why we only work with suppliers who share our dynamism and passion."



Ale de Vries (strategic support)

"Ideally, customers would immediately feel good about working with St. Paul. The foundation of our partnership is reliability. To me, that means being knowledgeable, honest, and loyal to colleagues, suppliers, and customers. The other core values will further strengthen our relationships. Mastery is the value that appeals to me most because I know that we are really good at what we do in this company. To me, mastery means understanding what you're doing and acting consciously based on that understanding. I want everything I deliver to be correct, logical, and future-proof."



Nadine Laureyns
(logistics administration)

"I believe the most important values in a relationship are reliability and quality. It's great when customers immediately experience these values when working with St. Paul. The customer always comes first for us! My solution-oriented nature makes me best suited to inventiveness and reliability. Incidentally, this character trait is also reflected in the value mastery. However, reliability remains the most important thing for me!"



Chantall Stoppels
(junior marketer)

"The value that suits me best is reliability, knowing that you can rely on each other and truly experience a sense of togetherness. We work together and depend on each other. In my work, I always seek to strike a balance between different parties and tasks. It's important to me that people feel heard and valued. If we can't reach an agreement right away, I try to think creatively and solve problems. When people feel comfortable at work, that also radiates to the outside world. I always tell new colleagues that at St. Paul, you really feel the warmth of a family business. The atmosphere is extremely positive."

Stefan Herwegh
(product developer)

"I've noticed that all values always come back in every project. As a product developer, you often have to be creative to find solutions for customers. In doing so, you adhere to the company's philosophy and family tradition. This should ultimately lead to a reliable, high-quality product. I see mastery reflected in our complete control of the process. It's not just about the end result; it's also about the journey: working carefully, paying attention to detail, and only being satisfied when the product is truly excellent. This is evident year after year when products of the same high quality roll off the production line."



Franklin van Gorp (production manager)

"I would tell new colleagues that everything will be fine as long as they work according to our values. I hope customers immediately experience our commitment to mastery, reliability, and quality when they work with us. Almost anything is possible for them. Once the R&D department has developed and tested a recipe, the production department only needs to execute it."



BOTH COMPANIES AIM TO FURTHER DEVELOP AND EXPAND THEIR DIVERSE SELECTION OF HIGH-QUALITY PROCESSED CHEESE PRODUCTS.

A MELTING MATCH



IN 2024, ST. PAUL ACQUIRED THE CHEESE SPREAD PRODUCER KONINKLIJKE ERU. THIS ACQUISITION WAS AN IMPORTANT MILESTONE FOR BOTH COMPANIES, STRENGTHENING THEIR MARKET POSITIONS. TOGETHER, THEY WILL CONTINUE STRIVING FOR EFFICIENCY, QUALITY, AND GROWTH IN THE PROCESSED CHEESE INDUSTRY. READ THIS ARTICLE TO LEARN HOW THE ACQUISITION CAME ABOUT AND WHAT THIS SPECIAL MERGER OF TWO FAMILY BUSINESSES MEANS FOR THE FUTURE.

Koninklijke ERU is one of the best-known cheese brands in the Netherlands. For more than 200 years, the company has won a place in the hearts of many Dutch people with products like the longstanding favorite ERU Goudkuipje. About five years ago, Dieter Kuijl, the CEO of St. Paul, came into contact with Maurits Sandberg, the director of Koninklijke ERU at the time, through the trade association for processed cheese. It soon became clear that ERU was interested in selling because remaining independent in a small market like the Netherlands was becoming increasingly difficult. When the cheese spread company was actually put up for sale, Dieter saw it as a unique opportunity.

Knowledge of the business

Koninklijke ERU was, of course, a different kind of company. Unlike St. Paul, it focused on retail. Although there was no real desire to buy a retail company, Dieter was enthusiastic about the fact that ERU was a processed cheese company because St. Paul knew about that. A thorough investigation of the company was

carried out before the final purchase, of course. Nothing unusual came to light. At ERU, they knew exactly what they were doing. It's no coincidence that the company has been around for so long. They have the right recipe for the perfect processed cheese. Apart from their history, ERU and St. Paul also turned out to be very similar. Both are family businesses. They also share values such as mastery, reliability, and quality. Like St. Paul, ERU works with the best cheese suppliers. Furthermore, they carefully match the best ingredients.

Joining forces

Starting January 1, 2025, Audrey van Ham became the new co-CEO of Koninklijke ERU alongside Dieter Kuijl. In this shared role, they each have their own complementary responsibilities. Audrey: "Koninklijke ERU will, of course, remain as a brand and organization, but it will become part of a larger whole, which offers opportunities. We are joining forces and exploring ways in which companies can strengthen each other. Koninklijke ERU's focus in the

coming period will be on product innovation, new products, and new flavors. Production of processed cheese will remain in Woerden. However, we are examining areas where efficiency and optimization are needed. For example, we are going to further automate the ERU factory in Woerden. St. Paul has extensive technical knowledge of the production process that we will put to good use for Koninklijke ERU. With the launch of our new brand campaign in early 2025, the Netherlands' leading cheese spread brand will be impossible to ignore," Audrey concludes.

Ambition

Through this historic step, Koninklijke ERU and St. Paul now have joint control over the entire processed cheese chain, from production to the end customer. Both companies aim to further develop and expand their diverse selection of high-quality processed cheese products to meet the needs of consumers, the out-of-home sector, and the food industry throughout Europe.

ON TO THE NEXT 40 YEARS



1



5



3



6



4



2

Een zakenvrouw tussen duizender kazen

1. Grandfather delivered cheese with his goat cart. 2. Interview in Eva Magazine with the resolute Mrs Kuijl-Verboom, Dieter's grandmother and a true cheese expert. 3. The St. Paul logo from 1990. 4/5. Dieter and Margo melted the cheese and packaged it in 2 kg blocks. 6. Cream cheese with pineapple: one of the first St. Paul products.

