

PMSA adds colour to the South African concrete industry

West End has revealed its true colours as a market-leader in the manufacture of roof tiles, using groundbreaking technology supplied by PMSA (Pan Mixers South Africa).

Leading roofing specialist, West End Roof Tiles is able to produce roof tiles of the highest-quality colour directly from a concrete mixer, thanks to an innovative powder dosing system available locally through PMSA, the leading manufacturer of concrete block, brick and paving machinery in Africa.

West End has been making use of the innovative Finke universal powder pigment dosing system in the production of its roof tiles for the past three years, and operational director Francois Aveling points out that powder oxide is more consistent and user-friendly than industry-standard granules.

"West End strives to ensure that colours on all products are consistent, and powder moves considerably faster than granules; thereby, ensuring that precise colours can be blended to the highest grade, in the shortest amount of time," he explains. "The Finke system is able to work with up to four quality primary colour pigments, stored in bulk bags, which can be dosed individually or mixed together in different proportions to produce a wide range of intermediate shades."

Aveling points out that customer service from PMSA is unrivalled. "West End has the peace-of-mind in knowing that the company can rely on PMSA in providing dedicated and committed after-sales and technical support, which enables the company to focus its time and resources on manufacturing the highest-quality products on a continuous basis, without unnecessary delays."

What's more, he also notes that the Finke system perfectly-compliments the entire onsite mixing plant, which was fully-installed and commissioned by PMSA. "The process starts when the bulk bag discharge sleeves are connected to the system, using a special sealed docking station for a dust-free connection. The level of pigment within the bags is continuously-monitored and displayed on the control panel of the unit - to enable the production operator to determine when a new bag of pigment will be required, and to avoid any disruption to production."

After selection of the required recipe, Aveling notes that the pigments are automatically weighed in the correct proportions, using a computer-controlled load-cell system. "Following the weighing process, the pigment is discharged into a pressure vessel and pneumatically conveyed to whichever mixer requires the pigment."

PMSA director Walter Ebeling points out that the patented Finke system replaces the need for the more costly granular and free flow methods, as it is designed to feed concrete mixers from a single ground-level weighing station. "The disadvantage of a granular or free flow system is cost, as granules take longer to break up inside the mixer, meaning that more needs to be used in order to get the same kind of intensity that powder oxides produces," he explains. "If you use granules in your oxides, you may end up with streaks of colour because the granules don't break up properly.

The end result is a more cost-effective, better quality product that is more consistent."

Ebeling does; however, note that a number of local manufacturers remain skeptical to the idea of adopting newer and more capital-intensive technology. "The Finke universal powder pigment dosing system pays for itself over a period of time, as the higher price is counteracted by superior reliability, accuracy and consistency, which ultimately saves the user on overall production costs in the long-run," he explains. "A number of manufacturers are beginning to realise this, and I am confident that demand for the powder oxide dosing systems will continue to increase in the years to come."

Looking to the future, Aveling notes that the global economic downturn has had a significant effect on the South African building industry. He does, however, believe that the market is starting to show some signs of recovery. "The recession has definitely had a negative impact on the industry, and slowed a number of businesses down significantly. The demand for roof tiles is gaining ground once more, and we expect to see a considerable improvement in the market within the next 18 months," he concludes.



PMSA director Walter Ebeling



Finke general application



Francois Aveling

