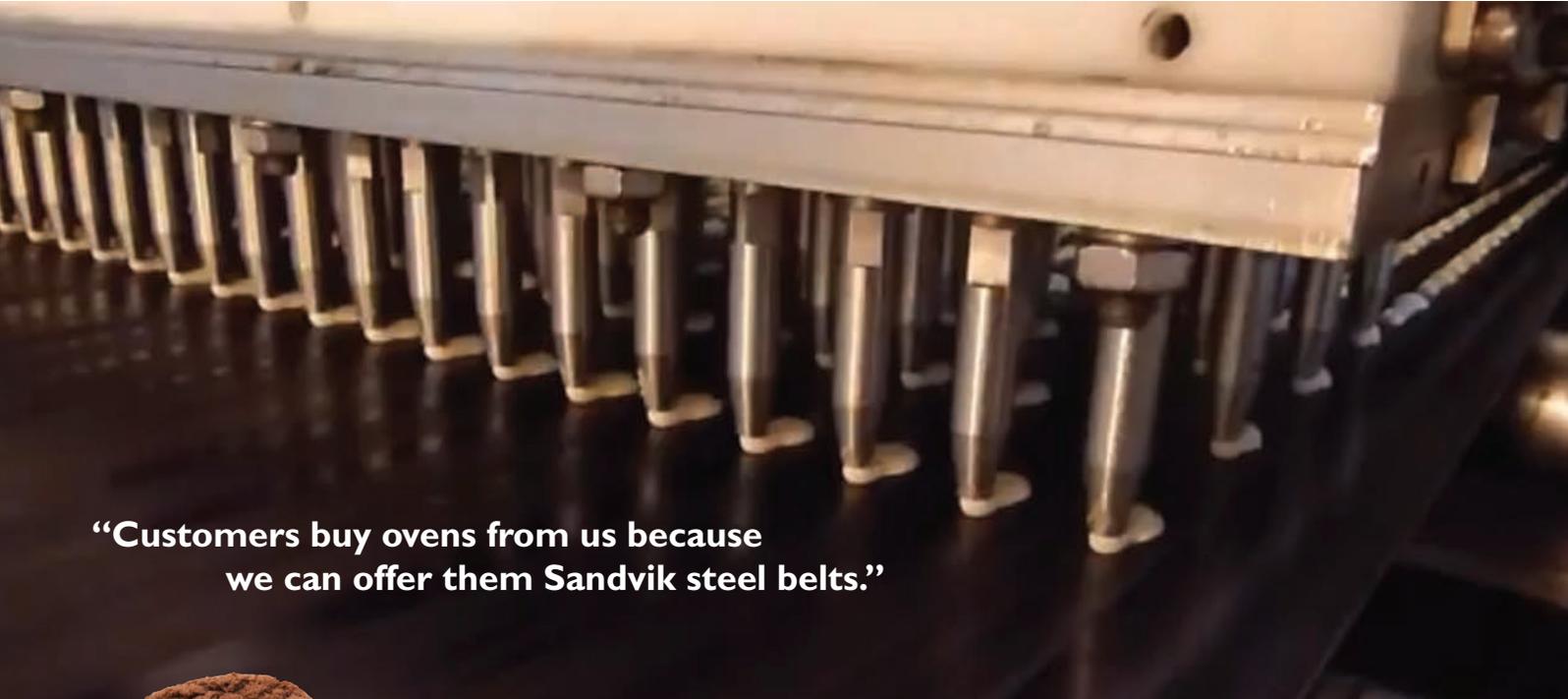




Sandvik bake oven belts
Opening new doors
for AM Fornos





“Customers buy ovens from us because we can offer them Sandvik steel belts.”



Engineering partnership pays dividends

An interview with oven builder AM Fornos

AM Fornos is one of the most sought-after bake oven OEMs in Brazil, a company whose reputation for engineering excellence has resulted in a waiting list for its services. And what makes this all the more remarkable is that less than ten years ago, founder André Vilas Boas Marin had yet to build his first oven line.

In fact, oven building was just the means to an end when he completed his first line in 2000; his goal was to start up his own biscuit baking business.

However, continuing work as a technical consultant – alongside the bakery – led others to recognise his expertise and, in 2006, André Marin accepted a commission to build an oven for a new biscuit plant being developed by a major producer.

With this new line providing a showcase for the newly formed AM Fornos company’s engineering skills, other bakeries began placing orders and oven building soon overtook the biscuit baking side of things.

The next major milestone in the growth of this Sao Paulo-based company came about as a direct result of one company’s visit to the first line. So impressed were they that they contacted AM Fornos to order a line of their own, with one key difference: it should be based on a Sandvik bake oven belt.

We visited AM Fornos and asked André Marin to tell us more about this development.

André, this was your first steel belt oven wasn’t it?

That’s correct. Until this one we’d only ever built wire mesh conveyors into our ovens.

What were their reasons for specifying a Sandvik steel belt?

The main reason for this customer needing a steel belt was capacity. They wanted to be able to increase production of their natural snack products without expanding their facility. Why a Sandvik steel belt? Many years ago the owner had seen bakeries in Europe using Sandvik steel belts and decided that this is what he wanted for his own business.

Tell us more about the productivity. How does a steel belt help?

At the time, all the ovens in the facility used tray conveyors. These are fine in terms of product quality but limited in speed. By building an oven based on a steel belt, we could almost double the conveyor speed from 4 m/min to 7 m/min, enabling us to design a more efficient oven based on a combination of direct flame and circulated air. Plus, a continuous belt eliminates the gaps in production that can’t be avoided using trays.

That first oven increased productivity by 75 per cent compared with the one it replaced. We’ve completed a second line since then and are now installing a third.



André Marin of AM Fornos discusses the project with Jorge Solidario, Belts Sales Supervisor at Sandvik Process Systems do Brasil

What were the challenges you faced in designing your first steel belt-based oven?

All ovens are different and the biggest challenge in any project is the engineering that needs to take place before production can start. Sandvik know bake oven belts inside out so their help was vital in terms of calculating loads, dimensions and such like.

So you worked closely together?

Very closely, yes. Sandvik’s engineers provided specifications for everything from drums, belt supports, belt tracking and the belt cleaning system to the chemical property the cast iron skid bars. Physically they may only have supplied the belt but their input was key to the design of the whole bake oven conveyor system.

What about the installation process?

Again, their technical support was great, not only in terms of the direct support provided by their people – and these personal relations are really important – but also in the on-line support and documentation available to us. I was surprised and impressed with the amount of practical information that can be downloaded and printed out.

Overall, how would you describe the experience of working with Sandvik?

Sandvik operates to international quality levels, up there with the best. They’ve worked to build a partnership

with us and that’s been central to our success in what was a new area to us, steel belt-based bake ovens.

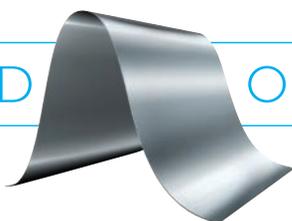
There’s been another benefit too, one we maybe hadn’t appreciated. The Sandvik brand is very important. People don’t say “I want a bake oven with a belt”; they say “I want a bake oven with a Sandvik belt”. Customers buy ovens from us because we can offer them Sandvik steel belts. It’s a real sales tool.

So this partnership is beneficial to your business?

Definitely. The fact that we can build ovens with steel belts opens new doors. We’ve had interest from bakeries looking to use our ovens for cookies and granola breakfast cereal, products that both require a solid, flat steel belt. And of course there are the customers who’ll upgrade to a steel belt to boost productivity.



QUALITY BAKED



ON A SANDVIK STEEL BELT



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