

# FENCING TIMES

*UK & Ireland*

*2025, Issue 26*



## NEW frame for all **ALIGATES** gates

Plastivan updates  
Duofuse  
slatted board

Alpha Rail Celebrates  
Its Fortieth  
Anniversary

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# From Pin-Up to Passé

rembrandt@fencingtimes.com



Hooters is an American restaurant chain founded in 1983 as an April Fool's joke. Six friends from Clearwater, Florida, were always the last ones left in the bars and clubs they frequented. Tired of being kicked out – in their opinion – far too early in the night, they decided to buy their own nightclub. There happened to be one nearby that had gone bankrupt for the umpteenth time, which they could snap up for a bargain. At least then they'd have a place where they wouldn't get thrown out.



The six figured they'd go bankrupt themselves in no time – none of them had any hospitality experience. So they relied on very basic principles. They didn't call it a nightclub but a restaurant. They put dishes on the menu that everyone loves: burgers, steaks, and chicken wings. For promotion, they tapped into the age-old formula 'sex sells': they named the joint Hooters and dressed the waitresses in tight, revealing outfits.

Their formula was brilliant. Customers lined up from day one. Men, of course, loved it right off the bat, women found it a fun spot and put up with the sexy waitresses, and back then, other genders didn't yet exist. In 1984, within a year, the six friends got an offer they couldn't refuse and sold their concept to an investor. That was Robert Brooks. He saw the huge potential in the simple idea and turned it into an icon in the United States and beyond, with over 430 restaurants at its peak.

There came Hooters merchandise, Hooters calendars featuring the year's most beautiful waitresses, a Hooters magazine and a Hooters casino hotel in Las Vegas, right across from the MGM Grand. There was even an airline with seven planes, Hooters Air, where Hooters waitresses helped the flight attendants entertain passengers. Money was pouring in.

There was criticism too. Men were consistently turned away when they applied for waiter jobs, leading to a few discrimination lawsuits. And naturally, Hooters got plenty of flak for portraying women as sex objects. Until about eight years ago, nobody cared much. Customers – men and women – kept coming. But then came woke. Beer and boobs were suddenly 'out', and inclusivity was 'in'. People suddenly all wanted to show how virtuous they were. Especially Millennials and Gen Z, the generations now roughly between 16 and 40 years old, started staying away more and more.

Hooters spiraled downward, ultimately forcing the company to file for bankruptcy in March of this year. The business, a money-printing machine a decade ago, now has 100 million dollars in debt on its books.

There'll probably be a relaunch. Woke has passed its peak and the call for common sense and tradition in America has been growing louder, so there'll surely be a market niche left for Hooters. Though likely in a slimmed-down form. Still, it's remarkable how fast a cultural shift can happen, leaving even an icon like Hooters unable to keep up.

In the fencing market, thankfully, we don't have to worry about cultural shocks like this. In our industry, the wheels turn so slowly that any cultural changes – if they even exist



– are easy to keep pace with. So there's no profound lesson in this example, we just wanted a good excuse to print a picture of Hooters waitresses.

Well... that first part isn't entirely true. Because while trends in our industry shift slowly, the industry itself sometimes moves even slower. Many fencers like doing things the way they've done them for thirty years.

And that can cost money. About fifteen years ago, there was a big shift in the German market from hot-dip galvanized mesh panels to panels welded from pre-galvanized wire. This shift was pushed from the production side. Customers liked the better price and went along, while fencers put up a lot of resistance. They feared less zinc would mean a shorter lifespan and saw it as a drop in quality.

They tried to keep competing with hot-dip galvanized panels against colleagues who'd already switched to the cheaper pre-galvanized mesh panels, accepting lower margins. In some ways, looking back, you could call that a waste of money and effort.

Right now, we're seeing a similar trend emerge, again in Germany: fencing is increasingly being rammed into the ground. This ramming technique comes from the Netherlands and the agricultural side of the industry. The connection to the ground is less rigid than with posts set in concrete foundations, but whether that's worse for the final quality of the fence – and if so, by how much – is something you could debate endlessly. It's been debated for decades already. But because it's also much cheaper, and because price is always a huge factor in the fencing market in general, and in Germany in particular, we're willing to bet rammed fencing will become the new standard there in a few years.



Trends are everywhere, always. In every country, every market. In England, closed board fencing has been the residential standard for decades. Drive through any random neighborhood: you'll see nothing but wooden fences. Or hedges, or stone walls, but certainly no mesh panels, ornamental railings, chain-link, or other fence types that people on the European mainland put around their gardens.

Until now. Suddenly, seemingly out of nowhere, demand is picking up for composite and aluminum fences. While in France, it's the opposite: people there have been putting up chain-link and mesh panel fences around their homes for decades, but lately, we're seeing more variants combining real natural wood with steel and aluminum.

Trends pop up in all sorts of areas. Products, quality, and installation are just a few. You don't have to jump on every trend – plenty of them blow over pretty quickly. Especially if you need to learn a bunch of new techniques or make heavy investments to join in, it's smart to wait and see. Anyone who buys an 80,000 Pound post driver at the first request for rammed fencing will kick themselves in a few years if the trend doesn't stick.

But you definitely shouldn't wait too long to innovate either – those gorgeous Hooters girls that no one wants (or is allowed) to look at anymore are the ultimate proof of that. ■



Photos: © Hooters, Inc.



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# content

# 2025

If you're a fencing installer with a little passion for the job, you can't live without Fencing Times.

# FENCING TIMES



31

21

Cheers to 40 Years!



ALPHA

RAIL

## From the publisher

From Pin-Up to Passé

04

## Industry News

Plastivan updates Duofuse slatted board

21

Alpha Rail Celebrates Its Fortieth Anniversary

25

New frame for all Aligates gates

31

## And also

Fence Post

11

Fences in the News

37

25



# FENCE POST



[FENCEPOST@FENCINGTIMES.COM](mailto:FENCEPOST@FENCINGTIMES.COM)



Have you got a tip for us? Or taken part in something great that you want to share with the market? Spotted a beautiful fence or a beautiful gate? Or perhaps a really ugly fence, which you turned into a great photo? Let us know and share it with your colleagues in the sector.



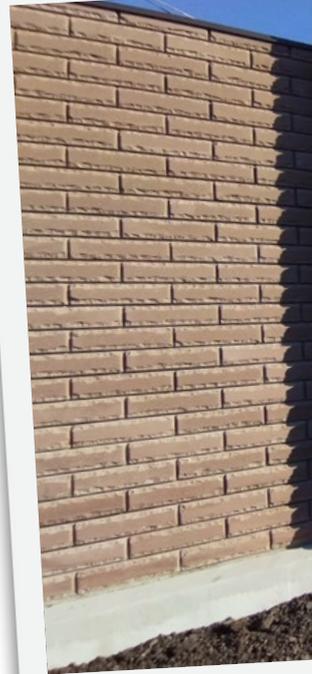
## Composite Fence

Lennerd Sonnevill from the fencing company The Fence in Ophasselt sent us this photo of a composite fence he installed. Nice fence, Lennerd! It looks very neat too. Thanks for the photo! ■



### Barcode Gate

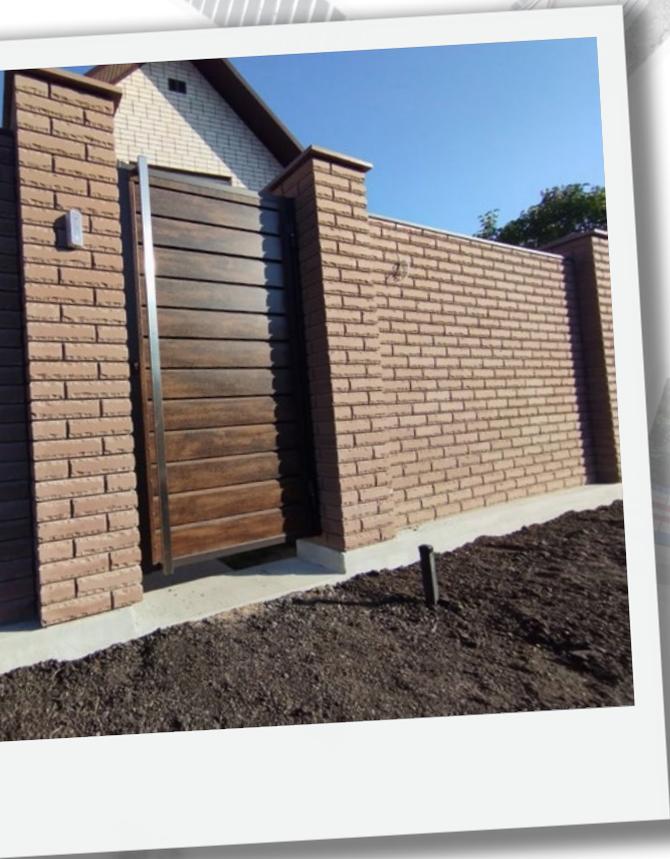
Gerwin Govers from Govers Sierhekwerk in Budel sent us this remarkable gate. It looks like a barcode with all those varying thicknesses on the bars. Very unique, Gerwin! Thanks for submitting! ■



### Slytherin Gate

Slytherin was one of the four houses at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. The house was founded by Salazar Slytherin. For those who have no idea what this is about: Hogwarts School is the main setting of the Harry Potter series. If you watch the movies, you'll see a gate with snakes on it for the Slytherin house. The snakes are the symbol of Slytherin, representing cunning and flexibility, or something like that. And you might think: that gate is probably made of cardboard, or digitally added later, or who knows what else they come up with in Hollywood to make things look real. But as it happens, we were recently at the Warner Brothers Studios in Watford, just outside London, and to our great surprise, it turned out that a large part of the props used in the film not only look real but actually are real. Like this gate. It's genuinely a steel gate with a steel shield and steel snakes. Has any of our readers ever made something like this for a client? ■





### Front Door Gate

Alexander Zavertnev from the Belarusian company Intehtrade sent us this photo of a gate that looks more like a front door than a gate. Nicely crafted, Alexander, especially that continuous handle looks modern. Thanks for the photo! ■



### Hamster Fence

Nils Behr from Heras cordoned off part of his living room with toy fences so that his hamsters (or perhaps his daughter's hamsters) have a place to scamper back and forth. As befits a good fencing expert, he made a nameplate for one of the fences. Well done, Nils! Thanks for the photo! ■



## Photo of the Month

### Gabion Gate

This month's photo comes from loyal reader Florian Effertz of Effertz Tor- und Zaunanlagen in Krefeld, who has sent us at least a hundred photos over the past 15 years but, to our great surprise (we scoured the entire archive), has never won a radio. He came across this beast of a gate in Kempen, a town near Krefeld

in the Niederrhein. He didn't know much about who made the gate for this client. What he did know is that the owner of this gate works for a company that builds aircraft hangars, or perhaps owns such a company himself. Apparently, the man attached the motor of such a hangar door to his sliding gate. We can't quite



tell from the photo how thick the gate is, so it's hard to estimate the weight of these gabions, but it's probably pretty hefty. Thanks for the photo, Flo. The construction radio is on its way to Krefeld. ■

Would you also like to win a Locinox radio? Send us your most beautiful project! Do not be too modest, do not think your picture will never win anyway. Every project can be beautiful for its own reason, or a source of inspiration for fellow fencers. Send your photo to [fencepost@fencingtimes.com](mailto:fencepost@fencingtimes.com).



UK Fencing Industry

Awards



Book the date 13th November 2025 is awards night for Fencing.

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Fencing Times  
The NEWS

UK & Ireland

## Postsaver Partners with WOOD-MIZER

**STAUNTON, UK** – Postsaver, an English manufacturer of, among other things, protectors for wooden posts based in Staunton near Gloucester, has collaborated with machine manufacturer Wood-Mizer to develop a machine that semi-automatically applies protectors to posts. The machine, called the Post-Mizer, is designed for sawmills and other suppliers of wooden posts, enabling them to expand their product range.

*“For sawmills and timber merchants, the PostMizer offers a*

*cost-effective solution to produce guaranteed long-life timber posts,”* says Postsaver CEO Richard George. *“That reduces the need for expensive alternative treatments. Timber and lumber yards can now efficiently scale up production, saving both time and money while delivering a premium product to their customers.”*

With the Post-Mizer, sawmills can seal up to 360 post protectors per hour onto wooden posts. The machine is compatible with Postsaver’s Pro-Sleeve and Pro

Plus Sleeve, post protectors that safeguard wooden posts against rot for 20 and 40 years, respectively. *“This partnership tackles a key challenge in the timber industry,”* George continues. *“It’s strengthening wood’s market position and driving growth amid increasing competition from alternative materials. By enabling timber producers to offer guaranteed long-life posts, Postsaver and Wood-Mizer are empowering the industry to reclaim its competitive edge.”* ■



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# GARDA'S Acquisition of HERAS Approved

**OIRSCHOT, Netherlands** – The Garda Group, the group behind the Norwegian fencing company Garda Sikring and one of Europe's largest providers of perimeter security, has successfully completed the acquisition of Heras. The acquisition was announced in July last year but still required approval from competition authorities in various countries.

With Garda Group's strong presence in Scandinavia and Germany and Heras' established presence in Western Europe, both companies aim to grow further by joining forces, according to a press release.

"We are delighted to welcome Heras and its skilled team to the Garda Group," says Jon Ola Stokke, CEO of the Garda Group. "Heras is a well-managed, innovative company, and our customers will greatly benefit from recent investments in the capacity, quality, and efficiency of its facilities. This acquisition provides us with new expertise, a broader product range, and modern technical solutions, and expands our footprint to the United Kingdom, the Benelux, and France. Furthermore, it offers our customers in Germany perimeter security solutions alongside our existing technical security solutions."

Emmanuel Rigaux, CEO of Heras, adds: "I am thrilled that Heras is joining the Garda Group, following our successful transformation. We share the same strategy, vision, and values as the Garda Group. The Garda Group is a leader in technology and has developed cutting-edge concepts in mechanical security and service that we are eager to roll out ourselves. In the future,

*we will leverage each other's expertise, product portfolios, and geographical reach, which will*

people, largely due to a series of acquisitions.

Heras was founded in 1952,

Sweden, it acquired Heda Security and Great Security last year, and in Denmark, it acquired Kibo Sikring.



Emmanuel Rigaux & Jon Ola Stokke

*greatly benefit our employees and customers."*

Garda Sikring is a fencing company with its own production facilities in Hagan, Norway, a village outside Oslo. The company was formed in 2016 through the merger of Garda Anleggssikring, Systemsikring, Håland og Karlson, Solheim Gjerdenett, Lauritsen Gjerdefabrikk, and Røa Gjerdefabrikk, with venture capital from the investment firm Longship. It is now owned by EMK Capital and employs around 2100

employs over 1000 people, and is headquartered in Oirschot, near Eindhoven in the Netherlands. It has production facilities in the Netherlands, Belgium, France, and the Czech Republic. In Denmark, Heras owns SER-Hegn, which it acquired in 2021 from owner Henrik Rasmussen. In previous years, Heras also acquired the Swedish company Tuvan Stängsel and a Norwegian branch of Gunnebo. Garda Sikring was already Norway's largest fencing company at its inception. In

This means that with the acquisition of Heras, Garda now owns the two largest fencing companies in Sweden and Denmark. In Sweden, a merger has already been announced: Heda Security will be integrated into Heras Sweden.

In the Netherlands, Garda, through Heras, also controls the country's largest fencing company. In Germany, the focus is more on perimeter security, where Heras acquired Ba-Kro last year, and Garda acquired Freihoff: both are perimeter security providers. ■

# ASD expands program with composite

**CORK, Ireland** – The Irish fencing wholesaler ASD from Cork has expanded its program this winter with wood-plastic composite boards. “For complete gates, we are a dealer of the French company La Toulousaine and the British TFS Gates,” says sales manager Micheál Cronin. “But we also have many customers who fabricate their own gates from steel or aluminium. For them, we now offer composite boards in our product range, suitable for in-fill. For builders, carpenters, and joiners we also offer decking boards in four colours.”

The expansion is part of ASD’s mission to become the largest provider in all of Ireland in the fields of gates, access control, and security. “We want to provide our customers with as complete a program as



possible,” says Cronin. “So that they can come to us for everything they need, from drives to intercoms to video surveillance and detection.”

The composite Fence Boards are 146 millimeters high, 19 millimeters thick, and 2 meters long. There are four colors: black, grey, brown, and

oak. Each colour is available with either a wood grain, embossed woodgrain, or a sanded pattern. ■

## AVANTGATES launches its own hydraulic oil

**RIMINI, Italy** – Smoes, the Italian manufacturer of Avantgates brand vertical gates, has launched its own oil for the hydraulic systems of its gates. “Oil is not just oil,” says Avantgates CEO and co-founder Loris Gentili. “It’s very important which oil is used. In the past, there were sometimes problems. Customers used the wrong oil – out of ignorance – which led to damage. That’s why we’re now launching our own oil, so nothing can go wrong. It’s also easier for the customers; they no longer have to search for oil them-

selves but can simply order it along with everything else.”

The new oil from Avantgates is a synthetic wear protection oil according to ISO VG 15 with antioxidant and corrosion protection additives. Gentili: “This oil is resistant to high and low temperatures, even under extreme conditions. The associated technical properties guarantee flawless operation and a long lifespan of the gate, thereby minimizing maintenance costs.” Avantgates’ own oil has been on the market since March. ■



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# PLASTIVAN

updates DUOFUSE  
slatted board

Plastivan, a Belgian manufacturer of privacy fencing from Oostrozebeke, a small town between Ghent and Kortrijk, is launching a new board for its Duofuse composite fencing. It's called the DF7 Rhombus and features five narrow slats.



*"We see a shift in market trends," says export manager Bert Lanssens. "Customers are increasingly asking for upright, vertical slats, which look more modern. Our current slat profile, the DF4, is actually a bit too coarse for that. Therefore, we have created a new version that can be installed both horizontally and vertically, with five slats instead of three."*

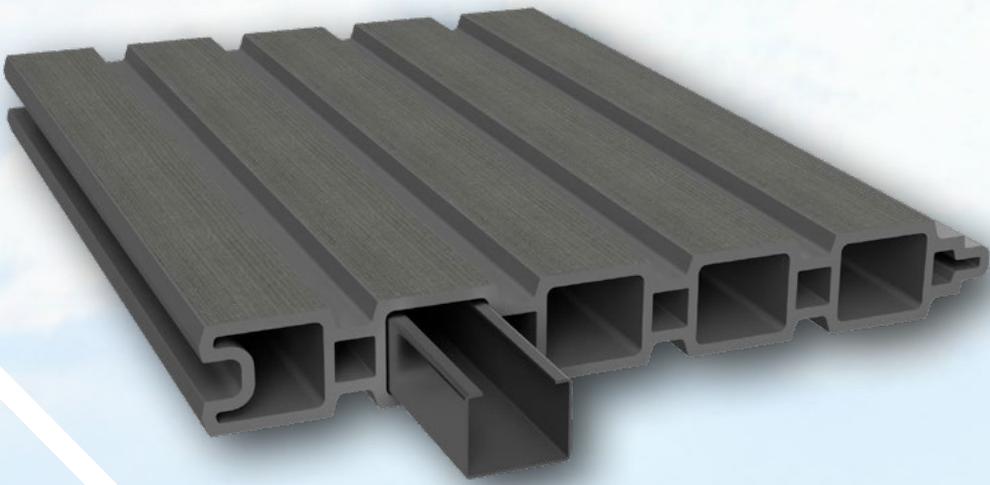


## COMPOUNDING

Plastivan produces the new DF7 Rhombus boards, like all other composite boards in the range, in-house. "There are large quality differences in WPC," says Lanssens. "There are many boards on the market that consist of 70 percent or more wood flour. Boards with a high wood flour content are less resistant to moisture. And if the plastic part is made of PE or PP, the boards can easily expand or deform. That's why we use a mix of 50 percent wood flour and 50 percent PVC, which guarantees better mechanical properties."



**Bert Lanssens**  
Export manager



## PRODUCTION

With its own compounding and subsequent production on its own extrusion machines, Plastivan controls the entire production chain. *"This gives us control over the temperature, speed, and all other factors of the process,"* says Lanssens. *"This helps us maintain consistent and high quality. We even make the molds ourselves. The result is boards that never rot, deform, or fade, yet are indistinguishable from real wood."* The DF7 Rhombus is available in three colors: Graphite Black, Stone Grey, and Wenge Brown. It is 27 millimeters thick, 200 millimeters high, and 2 meters long. The new DF7 has been on sale since the beginning of this year. *"The initial market feedback has been very positive, and we look forward to selling many of these boards."*



# ALPHA RAIL

CELEBRATES

## Its Fortieth ANNIVERSARY

Fence manufacturer Alpha Rail from Huthwaite, a small town between Nottingham and Sheffield, celebrated its fortieth anniversary on April 1st. The company was founded in 1985 by David Moores and Michael Page.

*"Their previous company was going through a difficult time," says Dean Briggs, who now leads Alpha Rail alongside Mark Sipson. "They had failed with a large expansion and with a move to a new location many miles away. So David and Mick then left and started their own business."*





### EARLY BEGINNINGS

As well as Moores and Page, two other managers from the same original company also started their own venture. They were Steven Pendred and John Morris. "Their company was called Berneray," says Briggs. "I actually joined Berneray in 1988 as a draughtsman and estimator. Steven and John's business did not do as well as Alpha Rail, but it was located on a large factory site. Alpha Rail, on the other hand, had a workshop that quickly became too small, and the neighbours started complaining about noise. So, Alpha Rail took over Berneray and bought out its owners. That's how I ended up at Alpha Rail."

### MORE THAN STANDARD

Alpha Rail makes much more than just standard railings. From the start, David Moores and Michael Page aimed for a more bespoke product range, but also to provide standard railing types. "We supply to main contractors, landscape companies and fencing contractors, but also to the end customer," says Briggs. "Our commitment to versatility and quality is what sets Alpha Rail apart in the industry. Our ability to adapt to diverse customer needs, whether for custom designs or standard products, showcases our dedication to craftsmanship and innovation. By maintaining strong relationships with all our customers alike, Alpha Rail ensures that each project is executed with precision and care. Our comprehensive approach – from initial sketches to final installations – demonstrates our expertise and reliability, making us a trusted name in the railing manufacturing sector."





**“OUR COMPREHENSIVE  
APPROACH DEMONSTRATES  
OUR EXPERTISE AND  
RELIABILITY”**



David Moores (original owner), Steven Shirley, Michael Page (original owner), Dean Briggs, Phil Ball, Mark Sipson





# ALPHA RAIL

## BUYOUT

In 2001, Moores and Page wanted to retire. Their management team then took over the company: Mark Sipson handled accounts, Phil Ball was the sales administrator, Steven Shirley was production manager, and Dean Briggs was the technical manager. *"With the four of us, we had all parts of the company covered,"* says Briggs. *"We then bought the business from David and Mick. That was a big step, but Steve retired in 2017 and Phil last year, now Mark and I are left running the show between us. Along with the team, of course. We have a fantastic team of specialists here; without them, we wouldn't have lasted this long."*

## CAKE

In 2016, Alpha Rail moved to a new site. Briggs: *"The old site was rented; we couldn't change anything there, and everything was very spread out. Here, we have the production, storage, and office all together, and we can sustain it for many years to come."* On April 1st, exactly 40 years after its founding, Alpha Rail celebrated its anniversary. *"We had a nice time together, and there was cake for everyone. Here's to the next forty years!"* ■



Dean Briggs & Mark Sipson

#### **WHAT ARE YOUR BEST EXPERIENCES FROM THE PAST FORTY YEARS?**

*"Well, there are quite a few things to look back on. For myself, one of the most remarkable things is that I saw how the Docklands were re-built. We originally did do a lot of work in London, particularly in the Docklands. In the early days, there was just nothing. It was all flat. I witnessed Canary Wharf being built, and the DLR, and over the years, the change from that very first site visit in 1988 to going down now is just absolutely gobsmacking. I tend to go to the observatory in Greenwich every year and take a photo of Canary Wharf. From the last few years, I have a library of pictures; I wish I'd started that earlier. I was actually there last week, on the DLR near East India, and could pinpoint some railings that we originally supplied and are still there, on a retaining wall near the station. That's just amazing."*

# HOLLER

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# New frame for all **ALIGATES** gates

Aluminium gate manufacturer Aligates from Warrington, England is updating the frame of all its gates. The swing and sliding gates in the range will thereby become stronger, gain more possibilities, and the installation will be quicker.



*"We have always claimed that we make the strongest aluminium gates in the UK," says sales director Kevin Brooker. "Now they are becoming even stronger." The extra strength provides more stiffness to the leaves and allows for slightly larger openings.*





## **INTERNAL CORNER**

The basis of the new frames is a newly developed internal corner. *“All other suppliers in the UK, most of whom have gates from France and Portugal, sell gates where the profiles of the frame are simply cold screwed together. That is cheaper, but also less strong and less attractive for the eye. The corners of our frames are mitred and slide over an internal corner. We mill that from a block of aluminium with our CNC machines. This internal corner has a clamp, and we can secure it firmly by tightening a bolt. That technique also ensures that the angle between the profiles is exactly 90 degrees.”*

## **BONDING**

*“But we don’t just rely on that clamp,” Brooker continues. “We also bond the profiles onto the internal corner with an adhesive. We use a technique from the automotive industry for this. In the production of modern cars, welding is being used less and less, with more bonding instead. And that is not always because it is cheaper, but mostly because it is stronger. This is also true for us. I dare to bet that our connections are stronger than many welded gates. Especially because many manufacturers grind away the majority of the weld seam after welding to make the gate nice and smooth.”*

## CNC

All profiles and components in Aligates' gates are custom milled, turned, and lasered with CNC-controlled machines. "For example, when we make a cantilever sliding gate, the bottom beam and the base profile of the frame are entirely CNC machined, with all holes and screw threads already perfectly aligned," says Brooker. "This makes assembly fast and easy. The same goes for the brace triangles at the back. They are prepared in the same way and then screwed and bonded. All these CNC machines are expensive, but we earn that back in assembly. The final assembly of all profiles is only 10 percent of the work for us."



## FINISH

"It also provides a particularly nice finish," Brooker adds. "When it comes to a sliding gate on a rail, the frame not only has cut-outs for the wheels, but even the threads to secure those wheels are already tapped. In the past, we used rivets for this, nowadays the CNC machine heats the aluminium and pushes it inwards. A profile with a wall thickness of 2.5 millimetres becomes 6 millimetres thick at the screw point. Then a hole is automatically punched and a thread is tapped. It is a stronger connection than the blind rivet and the assembly goes quicker."



## VERSATILE

With the new frames, Aligates' gates not only become stronger but also more versatile. "We have taken the opportunity to incorporate various handy features," Brooker explains. "The toothed rack on the bottom beam can now be secured in a rail. The profile has a groove where nuts can slide back and forth. This means you can first loosely attach the rack, then slide it precisely into place and then secure it. We do many such things that make installation easier and ensure that you spend very little time on the project. For the swing gates, which pivot on the axis of the hinge stile, we have now designed the hinges so that they can be easily replaced if something happens."

## LARGER

The new frames are about thirty percent stronger than the previous versions. Aligates uses them on all swing and sliding gates in the range, including on pedestrian gates. "The latter may not necessarily need the extra strength," says Brooker. "Although pedestrian gates can sometimes be slammed shut harder than you might think. But mainly we ensure that all gates look identical, which is particularly attractive when multiple gates are installed next to each other. Moreover, it makes production easier if all gates are produced in the same way." With the new frames, Aligates can now offer cantilever sliding gates with an opening of up to 5.2 metres, sliding gates on a rail with an opening of up to 8 metres, and double swing gates with an opening of up to 6 metres, at a height of up to 2.5 metres. The gates will be officially presented during a festive open day in June of this year. ■



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# FENCES NEWS



28 MAY 2025

FENCES IN THE NEWS

PAGE 1

## FAIRY TALE HOUSE WITH FAIRY TALE FENCE

Obolonya,  
Ukraine

In Obolonya, a small village in northern Ukraine, lives Oksana Khloptsova. Oksana's husband has been fighting at the front since the start of the war, and she was looking for something to distract her from her worries about him. She began sculpting with concrete,

creating all sorts of fairy tale figures, which she then placed on her house, in the garden, and on the fence around her garden. By now, her house has become a true fairy tale paradise.

The figures come from fairy tales unfamiliar to us in the West, but that makes the house no less special. Oksana has no set plan or system for her creations; the fairy tale figures are not grouped by story. She simply makes whatever comes to mind. She works straight from her imagination, without making drawings first. Oksana crafts the figures from concrete, adding chemical additives to

prevent them from crumbling. Larger figures also have reinforcement for stability. Where possible, the figures are hollow inside to save weight and material. This realization came after she made a gnome for the roof that four men together couldn't carry up.

Oksana's husband, who hasn't been home in two years and has seen most of the figures only in photos, supports his wife's endeavor. If he survives the war – we hope he does – he will return from the hell of the battlefield to a literal fairy tale house. Ain't that nice? ■



# LITHUANIAN KNOCKS DOWN BORDER FENCE

Lithuania



In Lithuania, the recently built border fence on the border with Belarus proved to be slightly less sturdy than expected in May. A drunk Lithuanian drove his Toyota Yaris Cross into the fence and ended up officially on Belarusian territory. The Lithuanian police pulled him out of his car and threw the man in jail. The border fence is, of course, primarily intended to stop people trying to cross the other way, from Belarus to Lithuania, but if you can apparently break through it from the Lithuanian side with a Yaris, it seems to us that the fence could use an upgrade. ■



Bangkok, Thailand

# GOOD FENCES, BAD NEIGHBOURS

That a fence is not always the solution to every neighborly dispute has been mentioned in this column before. Often, neighbors end up arguing about the new fence itself. Two neighbors in Soi Boonthanom, a suburb of Bangkok, took things to an extreme. They, too, got into a dispute because one of them had a fence installed. To be precise: a former village chief (we're guessing something akin to a mayor) was

likely already at odds with his cousin, who lived next door, but the conflict escalated when the cousin hired a fence builder to put up a fence. The fence builder, unaware of the feud between the two, innocently drilled a hole into the wall of the uncle's house to attach the new fence. This infuriated the uncle so much that—after a heated exchange of insults—he pulled out a gun and shot his cousin dead, followed by his

cousin's wife. He also fired at the couple's child, but the child managed to escape in time. The wife of the former village chief was able to wrestle the gun from him, after which he got into his car and drove off angrily. At the time of writing, the Thai police were still searching for the man. The fence builder survived the ordeal. Who will now pay him for the fence he installed remains unclear. ■

Rome,  
Italy

Until U.S. President Biden had the fence around the White House raised in 2021, this column almost monthly featured stories about Americans trying to climb over it. They did so dressed as Santa Claus, in a Pokémon costume, or completely naked. Usually, they were drunk or just plain crazy. Since the fence at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue is now too high, we haven't written about fence-climbing Americans for a while, but that's about to change. In Rome, at the beginning of May, an American was injured when he tried to climb over the fence surrounding the Colosseum. He slipped and impaled himself on one of the protruding bars of the fence, in front

of dozens of tourists. Firefighters and paramedics who rushed to the scene needed 20 minutes to free the man, after which they took him to the hospital. He underwent surgery there. At the time of writing, he was still in the hospital with about 80 stitches in his back. What possessed the man remains unknown. According to the newspaper *Il Messaggero*, he climbed the fence for a better view. The entrance fee to the Colosseum is 18 euros, so it's unlikely he thought that was too expensive. The third option, of course, is that, like his fellow fence-climbers who tried to breach the White House, he wasn't entirely right in the head. ■



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