



Rob interviewing Stefan Gallard

Rob:

And I'm here in Morlaix with Stefan Gallard who is the marketing director of Grain de Sail. Could you explain a little bit why the name Grain de Sail rather than Grain de Sel?

Stefan:

Exactly, yes it's a sort of a bi-lingual play on word. So the French expression of Grain de sel - S-E-L not S-A-I-L which would be a grain of salt. In English you take something with a grain of salt means to discount something, in French to bring your grain of salt means to make a contribution, sometimes in a negative way, by the way, sort of an unexpected, unwarranted contribution but we sort of take that into a positive meaning we are making a contribution and why its S A I L is obviously a reference to the fact that we have the first modern cargo sail boat in the world, so we bring a contribution to making maritime shipping greener through the use of sail and wind.

Rob:

Now your product is chocolate but it's not the only part of the journey is it? How does the circuit work?

Stefan:

Absolutely. So Chocolate is actually, chocolate and coffee, even though over 90 per cent of our revenue is the chocolate business but we did actually start with coffee, so coffee and chocolate and the reason for those is actually the means to finance the maritime project. So the green shipping. And so we always knew what we were gonna bring from Latin America which is the raw ingredients, so the coffee beans and the cocoa mass, but we had to first cross the Atlantic and so the question was what are we going to transport? Travelling empty makes no sense, but creating a viable business between Europe and for example the Dominican Republic which is where we go also didn't make a whole lot of sense economically because of the disparity between purchasing power. So we said well that's not a problem, we'll go further north and sort of create a virtuous triangular trade and so we export wines from France - Burgundy, Cote du Rhone, all the great ones that we all know and love. We export those to New York City and then between New York City and the Dominican Republic we actually transport humanitarian aid so last time we transported over 20 tons of medical equipment that was donated from New York hospitals and clinics and we bring that to our partners in the Dominican Republic and that's also where we will load up on our long greenest which is what we really need to bring back to France on our chocolate factory and coffee roasting facility.

Rob:

We're in the chocolate-making factory here in Morlaix. You've just shown me around and it's also an exhibition space. And we get to understand how and where chocolate comes from.

Stefan:

Through the experiential visit here that we're proposing we want people to understand the historical and geographical origins of cacao the different types of cacao, how you produce the product itself so that cacao and then how you make it into a finished product. And so we give the whole journey through that which leads them to actually see our production and see our people working and then they end up in our store where they buy the chocolate bars that they actually



saw being produced. So it's kind of cool making the whole circle and obviously when you're tasting that chocolate bar back home afterwards you will have a whole different level of appreciation for what it is that you're tasting and all of the people behind it all of the journey that that product has gone through and especially with us because it was transported by sail boat, etc, etc.

Rob:

And I noticed when we arrived there was a small group of people actually making their own chocolate.

Stefan:

Yeah, so that was fun also. We said OK well we got to give people an opportunity to get their hands dirty and have fun with the product and it can't be just looking at things, it's good to be actually able to try things and so we have we call it the lab and people can come and work with one of our folks and they can actually live produce their own chocolate bars, and decide what they're gonna put in it and create craziest the recipe and then go back home and hopefully taste good, right? but at least they're actually learning what is the job of a chocolate maker through their own experience.

Rob:

Tell us a little bit about the ship.

Stefan:

So currently we the first modern cargo sail boat in the world which is a very small cargo ship, it's a large sailing vessel but it's a small cargo ship. It's a 24 meter ship with a payload capacity of up to 50 tons.

Rob:

That's not very big considering the Atlantic trade, but still ...

Stefan:

But it a great place to start and it's the first marine merchant certified cargo sail boat, so that's also quite a feat in itself. But we need to go further and currently this first ship is insufficient to supply all of our production needs.

Rob:

How many times does it do the circuit that you've described?

Stefan:

Currently twice per year, so we're able to bring back to France about say about 75 to 80 tons realistically which is great, better than anyone else. It's a step in the right direction, but it's only about 50, 55 per cent of our needs, current. So that's why we have to accelerate on a second ship. So we just announced a few weeks ago the signing of the contract with the shipyard.

Rob:

And where's it going to be constructed?

Stefan:



It will be made by a French shipyard, but in their shipyard in Vietnam. It's an all aluminium build which is unique a 52 meter ship built in aluminium so not a lot of shipyards know how to do that. This shipyard has the capabilities in their shipyard in Vietnam. In order to build that in France it would have been probably 30-50 per cent more with no gain in quality.

Rob:

And you're hoping to have that ship in service?

Stefan:

That will be, err it's supposed to be delivered at the end of 2023 so at the end of next year.

Rob:

OK, and then there will be 2 ships, sail ships bringing chocolate?

Stefan:

Yes, yes and no. The first ship our smaller ship will actually be sort of re-purposed, err, so we'll use it more for European shipping and reserve the large ship which will be 52 meters with 350 tons of payload capacity so that's much more, you know, substantial for us and we'll keep that for hauling the stuff across the Atlantic.

Rob:

I should point out that just around us here are new manufacturers of all different sizes that are going to make chocolate of all different tastes.

Stefan:

It's a family-friendly place that kids love learning about chocolate, so yes there are families with kids here and mums and dads and we like that a lot, absolutely.

Rob:

Let's be right down to earth now - this magnificent shop and chocolate-making facility is open to the public - every day of the week apart from Sunday?

Stefan:

Except for Sundays and Mondays except during the high season for like Christmas and certain holidays

Rob:

So people can come and not only taste the chocolate but they can also make chocolate and also understand the whole process that's brought Grain de Sail to Morlaix. I can't help but ask you - If I didn't know I was in Morlaix, I'd think I was in the States. Could you tell us about how come you're with Grain de Sail?

Stefan:

Sure, my mum is American my dad is French and I've worked and lived in both places as well as in Germany and Brazil.



Rob:

Stefan Gallard, marketing director of Grain de Sail, thank you very much indeed for your time.

Thank you.