



# The future of freight

**Exclusively focused on** the development, construction, financing and delivery of 45-foot containers to meet the specific needs of its clients, UNIT45 was first established in 2002: "The company was set up with a budget in place to construct approximately 400 units in its first year of business and 600 the following year," explains Jan Koolen, managing director of UNIT45. "What the company in fact managed to achieve was a total of 1895 units in that first year and over 5000 in the second, which is a massive achievement for a new company starting up within the industry.

"In those early days of the company's existence it predominantly developed and constructed dry box units. In the years that followed, UNIT45 brought to market 45-foot versions of reefer units, curtain-sided units, diesel electric units and most recently a wing unit, that opens hydraulically from both sides. Today these units are sold throughout Europe, into Russia and also in some countries in Africa and the Middle East."

The 45-foot container concept represents the most efficient solution for the logistical modality problems of the future and is fully compatible with European legislation. The emphasis of the company's design is on innovation at the highest level and is in part achieved through the use of high-quality materials, aimed at boosting the applicability of the 45-foot concept in practice. As an intermodal innovator, UNIT45 is the undisputed market leader within this segment with a customer portfolio that boasts the likes of ECS, Samskip, P&O Ferrymasters, DFDS, Eucon, Finnlines, BG Freight and GE-EX to name just a few.

In 2001, the European Union released a position paper on freight transport in which it strongly emphasised the need to achieve the harmonisation and standardisation of loading units. At the time, the lack of such a process was deemed to be one of the main obstacles to achieving an optimum intermodal transport concept. It was suggested by the European Union that traditional 20 and 40-foot containers were no longer satisfactory

**FROM ITS BASE IN ROTTERDAM, UNIT45 IS PROUD TO BE RECOGNISED AS THE MARKET LEADER IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND CONSTRUCTION OF 45-FOOT CONTAINERS**



as they did not provide optimum cargo capacity for ISO pallets and fail to take advantage of the maximum dimensions permitted for transport by land.

The optimal intermodal transport unit is defined as that which combines the advantages of a container and a swap body, while also remaining suitable for handling conventional transport units until a more complete intermodal infrastructure has been established across the continent. With the industry calling for a general-purpose dry cargo box unit that can also be loaded from the side, UNIT45 considers its product range to be the perfect solution to match the European Union's intermodal aspirations.

The growth of UNIT45 can be directly linked to such market evolution, as well as the changing demands of its customers: "At around the time the business began operations there was a distinct lack of interest from companies to the proposal of changing from standard road transportation methods to forms of intermodal transport," Jan states. "This work was predominantly carried out using 40-foot container equipment, with dimensions that allowed the loading of no more than 26 euro pallets. With the introduction of UNIT45's 45-foot container design these same customers were given access to a series of containers that could hold 33 euro pallets. With such capabilities now available many of these customers were able to make the

transition to intermodal transport without having to adapt their operations, which in itself is of huge logistical significance."

The transition to intermodal transportation is hugely significant to UNIT45, which believes that the future needs of businesses will not simply be solved by the addition of more roads, bridges and railways. The view of the company is that the sensible option is to better utilise existing infrastructure, by transporting greater volumes with less movements and by devising ways of effortlessly switching between rail, road and water routes.

Such an approach appeals not just to carriers and transhippers, but also political and social groups, predominantly because of its socio-economic advantages and environmental benefits. It is a known fact that those within the transport industry have been searching for an intermodal transport unit for several decades. Such a modern transport system would guarantee sustainable benefits for all parties involved, supporting a network while provide greater efficiency in regards to cost, environmental protection and infrastructure demands. The 45-foot concept ushered in by UNIT45 is widely considered to be the answer to the demands of the market and environmental action groups.

The most recent innovative development to be

designed by UNIT45 is its wing unit. Much like its curtain-sided unit, this container possesses full side access, but with greater security and ease of operation. Also able to carry 33 euro pallets, the wing unit's firm side walls offer it greater security than its curtain-sided opposite number. "This wing unit provides a safer, more secure container option while also retaining an important quality, which is ease of opening," Jan says. "The sides are opened and closed through a push button that activates a hydraulic system that opens the container within no more than 15 seconds. The prototype of the wing unit is expected to be completed by March 2012, and there is already considerable demand for it from customers that are very keen to see how it will benefit their operations.

"The wing unit is just the latest example of UNIT45's commitment to constantly innovating its product range. The company carries with it a great deal of knowledge when it comes to this market sector and this know-how shines through in the quality of its container units. No expense has been spared when it comes to investing in research and development, and this attitude has been rewarded with UNIT45 becoming the leader in its field."

Making the decision to pour money into anything

at a time of economic decline and uncertainty is no doubt a risky undertaking. Be that as it may, when done correctly and in such a way that it furthers one's business and sets it out to face the years ahead, as UNIT45 did, it can prove to be a highly effective and profitable gamble to take. This has helped place the company in a position where it can pursue its strategy to remain at the peak of the marketplace for many years to come.

"In the short-to-medium term, UNIT45 will be more than satisfied if it is able to sustain the level of activity that it presently has. Of course the company wants to grow, but it will not rush into anything in such a way that it is a detriment to its future prosperity. UNIT45 is a constantly evolving business, developing in line with the market in order to provide its customers with the state-of-the-art container solutions they require," Jan concludes. □

UNIT45

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Products 45-foot containers

## DESTINATION FUTURE

UNIT45 / INTERMODAL INNOVATORS



The 45ft concept is the intermodal transport system of the future / 45ft means transporting more with fewer movements, all handled with the same infrastructure as used for 40ft containers. That represents efficiency in terms of costs, environment and infrastructure. UNIT45 is the only company in the world that concentrates exclusively on the development, construction, financing and delivery of containers within the 45ft concept. UNIT45 offers European shortsea/intermodal transport operators a range of 45ft containers, such as the standard dry unit, but also various types of reefers: the diesel, electric and all electric with different options such as double-stack, track & trace and the latest design with hi-lift. Also offered are the curtain-sided, open top, garment, bulk (also 20, 30ft) and wing unit (pictured). So let the future begin today and visit us at [www.unit45.com](http://www.unit45.com)

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