

With main focus fixed on gear used for catching groundfish off the Faroes as well as off Norway and Russia—and orange roughly off the Azores—fishing gear manufacturer Bergið invests in a new workshop building, adding new trawl models to its product range.

BERGIÐ, THE BOTTOM trawl specialist located on the southernmost Faroe island of Suðuroy, is expanding its business, teaming up with rival gear manufacturer Vónin while extending its product range and constructing a new building for its operations. The company is likewise launching a new international sales and marketing effort to meet growing global competition, according to Bergið partner and director Rógvi Thomsen.

Mr Thomsen said that Bergið's business has been growing steadily over the past few years. In a surprise move by the turn of the year 2005/2006, however, the company joined forces with old rival Vónin, the largest fishing gear manufacturer in the Faroes. Generating new advantages for both companies in a global marketplace, Vónin purchased



a minority stake in Bergið in a deal of undisclosed value.

"To accommodate our growing business we need extra space, not least for the net loft," Mr Thomsen said. "For instance, under the present working conditions we have to go outside from time to time in order to spread a trawl; with a larger hall we will be able to work more independently of weather conditions and quayside eventualities. The new two-story building will give us 1024 square meters of new working space."

Mr Thomsen added: "Our product range has traditionally been solely bottom trawls and related items. However, we are now going to add new trawl models to the product range in order to counter competition from international suppliers, something we see as a fresh

new challenge and an opportunity for further growth."

Dan Thomsen and his sons took over the business in the mid 1990s, keeping the old name Bergið (meaning the Seacliff), and a strong focus on bottom trawls designed for groundfish in the North Atlantic off the Faroe Islands as well as in the Barents Sea off Norway and Russia, and for orange roughly in the mid-Atlantic off the Azores. In addition to designing, developing, manufacturing, supplying and servicing trawls, Bergið offers a complete range of accessories and spare parts, including wires, nets, ropes and twines.

Faroe Islands' fleet of deep sea trawlers, that is excluding a number of larger freezer trawlers operating mostly in foreign waters, consists of about a



TRAWL SPECIALIST EXTENDS PRODUCT RANGE

with Mr Thomsen senior as production manager. With 30 years of experience as a sailor working on board a trawler, he's well acquainted with everything from bridling and wires to knotting and nets.

Good craftsmanship is key to quality management at Bergið, Mr Thomsen senior explained, showing up a piece of a top rope. "You recognize a Bergið trawl when you look here and find no loose ends or rough edges. We are very keen on meeting the highest standards in craftsmanship in order to create a product that just works and keeps working; this is a combination we believe will provide for optimal results for trawlers."

Among the most successful products Bergið has developed is the Orange Roughy Trawl, designed for catching orange roughly off the Azores. Not long ago, one of the trawlers known for its huge catches there brought in the equivalent of USD 4 million in the summer half of the year.

"They use our specially made trawl for that particular kind of fishing in conjunction with Injector trawl doors; this combination enables them to trawl by those coral reef cliffs without touching the seabed with the gear." The Orange Roughy Trawl allows for an extreme gape

BERGIÐ

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Design, development, manufacturing, servicing, import/export, marketing of fishing gear and accessories – including:
Bottom trawls
Shrimp trawls
Turbot trawls
Pelagic codends
Fish farm nets,
Ropes, twines, nets, Dyneema
Steel wire, shackles, chains, trawl doors

and with the right trawl door it becomes technically possible to trawl at extremely slow speed, extending the gape slightly above the cliff side then hauling it in immediately after reaching full gape.

With both Faroese and foreign trawlers as customers, Bergið is poised for continued growth—no wonder more space is needed as the company's net sales have doubled over the past couple of years.

But Mr Thomsen is bent on pushing for more international business. "We'll be making a new sales and marketing drive in Europe," he said.

dozen vessels, most of which are based in Suðuroy. "We work very closely with these trawlers," Mr Thomsen senior explained.

"Every design, every change and adjustments made to the trawls we deliver, are done in accordance with the requirements and preferences of the skippers. They are the ones who depend on the gear to work properly and bring in the catch. They have a profound knowledge and understanding of the issues involved."

Depending on how many trawlermen are available at any given time, Bergið's staff varies between seven and ten,

Bergið partner and director Rógvi Thomsen (center); main shareholder and managing director Dan Thomsen (bottom left); deep-sea trawler Rasmus Effersøe TG 2, a client vessel (right).

