OBUT
PREMIER EN PÉTANQUE

La Boule Obut and STHENO/PRO®
Setting the Competitive Standard

PARTNERS IN SUCCESS

CAD Schroer

www.cad-schroer.com

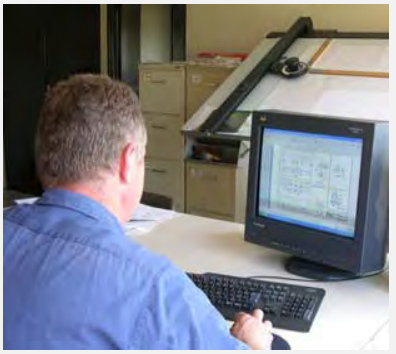
Obut is a modern French classic. At its state-of-the-art manufacturing facility in beautiful Saint-Bonnet-le-Château in the Monts du Forez mountain range of the Auverne region, over 50 years of manufacturing know-how and innovation combine with a love of tradition and a passion for pétanque. The company develops, designs, manufactures and distributes high quality pétanque boules for leisure and competitive use. Since its beginnings in 1955, Obut has also designed and developed its own manufacturing machinery. Since May 2007, STHENO/PRO has joined the family as a trusted partner for high tech jig and tool design and layout drawings for production process and plant maintenance optimisation.

A boule is made by forging a steel disk then shell, assembling and welding two shells, then turning on a lathe. Then it is striated, marked, hardened, polished and plated.

You only have to look at Obut's 12,000 m^2 manufacturing plant with its ultra-modern effluent treatment station to know that pétanque is a serious business. La Boule Obut is the undisputed market leader in France: around 72% of the 24 million French who play pétanque use the brand. Home country sales amount to 88%, with a 12% export share, and about a 60/40 split between competion and leisure products. All of Obut's boules are still produced locally – around 3.2 million a year, using 3,000 tons of steel, all completely recyclable.

Pétanque Perfection

"Obut's manufacturing process involves six main areas of expertise -metal forging, welding, machine-tooling, polishing, heat treatment and surface treatment," explains Pierre Souvignet, CEO of the 140-strong company, *"Competition boules require a high level of craftsmanship and highly sophisticated machines. Leisure boules are manufactured by entirely automated systems."*



Mr Ferraton working on jig and tool design with STHENO/PRO.

Obut was founded by Antoine Dupuy and the Souvignet family. Today, Obut's Technical Director André Dupuy continues in his father's footsteps, modifying and devising new manufacturing machinery and processes for an ever greater range of boules. Now with a stock of 45,000 competition sets, and a staggering 1,200 listed products (of different quality, weight and diameter), Obut offers unbeatable choice. Its boules range from family leisure boules in colourful cases to the ATX ("the Rolls-Royce of Boules"), made from hand-finished special nickel chrome stainless steel, also used in the aeronautics and nuclear industries.

Technical Innovation

"Our design department works on the properties and chemical compositions of steel (a strictly guarded secret) to produce better and better boules," explains Mr Dupuy. *"Obut is the only manufacturer capable of guaranteeing its customers identical properties for the three boules of one set, in terms of hardness, balance,*

La Boule Obut and STHENO/PRO®:

CAD Schroer

diameter and weight – a result of diligent dedication to product quality, leading-edge technology, strict continual controls, functional adaptation, and the involvement of all staff members."

STHENO/PRO®: The Perfect Fit

Adaptation and innovation also raised their head in the mechanical design arena: Obut's engineers wanted to be able to quickly access and modify existing drawings of the machinery and tools designed for its unique processes. "*Our main problem was that I designed all our custom machinery with the traditional 2D system: by hand and on tracing paper! And tracing paper doesn't last forever*," explains Mr Dupuy. "*We did not want to redraw all our existing designs with a CAD system just to preserve them, so initially we just scanned them in and stored them on CD. But then we had to scan each drawing again after each modification – this took too much time, discipline, and money – and it was easy to let it slip.*"

The 40mm steel bars used for the boules. The machine in the background (1 of 6) is used to create the outer casings.

It was time for a tool that allowed Obut to preserve its old drawings and to modify them without starting from scratch. "*Most CAD vendors wanted to sell us a 3D system, but that was not the solution. We needed a user-friendly CAD system that could deal with legacy drawings, layouts, and quick and easy jig and tool designs and modifications.*" ADVICE Technologies, a CAD Schroer and PTC® reseller, finally offered the right tool for the job: STHENO/PRO with the STHENO/IMAGE module for incorporating and editing raster designs.

Jig and Tool Design

Obut uses STHENO/IMAGE to store and modify scanned hand-drawings of existing machinery, and Design Engineer Laurent Ferraton uses STHENO/PRO for new designs. "*Now I can quickly create drawings for machinery and spare parts*," he says, "*and exchange this data easily with our suppliers in DXF or DWG format.*"

Promotional Boules

Mr Dupuy adds, "*By popular demand, we now also offer promotional boules, engraved with company logos – great for creating customer loyalty and promoting a brand. This is another area where we deploy STHENO/IMAGE – we use it to import client graphics, which are then passed on to our engraving machines*."

Installation Layout and Maintenance Designs

"*Another benefit of using STHENO/PRO*," says Mr Ferraton, who is also responsible for factory maintenance, "*is that a 2D tool is excellent for quick factory layouts – STHENO/PRO helps me optimise the production and maintenance process. It's much more flexible than other CAD systems we considered.*" "*STHENO/PRO is the right tool because it is simple to use but powerful, fast and effective – even for occasional users,*" Mr Dupuy summarises. And so, like Obut, STHENO/PRO continues to set the competitive standard.

: Setting the Competitive Standard