

The finished mill from across the River Plate in 1903



## Molino Rio de la Plata Roller Mill (Simon System) A striking instance of rapid mill building in 1902

by Mildred Cookson, The Mills Archive, UK



### Milling journals of the past at The Mills Archive

**O**n August 23 of the year 1902 **MILLING**, the ancestor of **Milling & Grain**, published two illustrations of the Molino Rio de la Plata roller mill. These illustrations showed the start of the building of the mill which, when completed, would be the largest flour mill in Argentina (then known as the Argentine in Britain). Situated on the River Plate, it had excellent access to the river.

The illustrations in subsequent issues of **MILLING** recorded the extraordinary rapidity of the work. The first photograph taken on April 10 showed the site prepared with the foundations laid, and the photograph taken on July 5, illustrated the progress being made by the enormous number of builders, masons, carpenters and other workmen employed. The sequence of illustrations was published at almost monthly intervals until the middle of 1903.

#### As perfect as it was possible to make

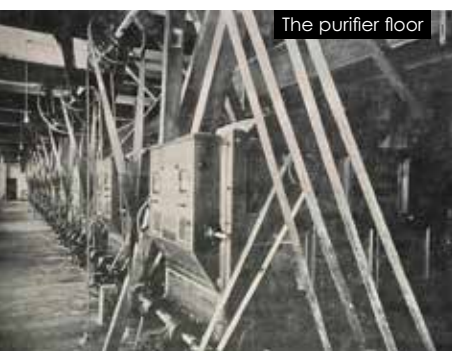
Although the first completed installation comprised a 45 sack plant on the Simon system, it was intended at an early stage to

extend this to 90 sacks. Even as a 45 sack plant it would still be the largest in the country. The planned machinery included 12 Simon heavy pattern double roller mills, 60" x 10" for the breaks, and 27 roller mills, 40" x 10" for the reductions: twenty double purifiers and 76 bolters of various descriptions.

The cleaning machinery would be as "perfect as it was possible to make" and would include washing and drying plants. All loading and unloading would be automatic, from the arrival of the raw material, either by water or by rail, until the finished products were sent on board the ocean-going steamers, which would be moored to the wharf in front of the grain bins.

The products destined for consumption throughout the country would go to those provinces connected solely by railway and loaded directly into wagons, the railway lines having access to the building.

A report in January 1903 described the concentration of the flour milling industry of Argentina into large concerns at the ports; as prominent a phase in the trade as it was in Britain. The large and perfectly equipped port mill was fast supplanting many of the primitive concerns in the country districts, although good mills of moderate size in special inland locations, were still prosperous.



The purifier floor



30 May 1902



The roller floor

## The Molino Rio de la Plata was typical

The concentration of the trade into fewer and larger businesses had necessitated the erection of many new mills. The Molino Rio de la Plata was typical, with Henry Simon installing the machinery. Many Argentinian mills were being fitted out by English roller mill firms during this period.

Since completion the mill had worked day and night. The exterior views of the mills show the building was plain without ornament, positioned by a deep-water quay on the river in the city of Buenos Aires. It was well lighted. The photographs of the interior show the neat order of the placement of the machinery on the purifier and roller floor, reminding the reporter of a similar situation in the Chancelot Mills of Leith.

It was a time of economic power and great wealth for Buenos Aires, the gateway for Argentine foreign trade, providing access to the fertile pampas, aided by railway development in the second half of the 19th century.

A leading destination for immigrants from Europe, particularly Italy and Spain, it became a multicultural city that ranked itself alongside the major European capitals.



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