

Collaboration re-imagined: Renttech SA partners with voestalpine Böhler Welding

After much anticipation, Renttech South Africa has become a national distribution partner for the voestalpine Böhler Welding range of welding consumables. *African Fusion* talks to Renttech MD, Duncan Whitehead.

Over the past six years Renttech South Africa, a subsidiary of Bidvest Group of Companies, has been building its business into a leading provider of quality welding solutions for the Southern Africa welding market. “Part of that process was to raise the bar with respect to the welding power sources we sell, which is why we have taken on the Kemppi equipment range. But we also needed to marry our welding equipment with world-renowned quality consumable products – and the voestalpine Böhler Welding (vaBW) range is a perfect fit,” begins Duncan Whitehead, managing director at Renttech.

“We have long been on the lookout for a consumable range that meets the high-end needs of the petrochemical, power generation, OEM equipment fabrication and marine sectors, demanding the best in terms of quality, certification and approvals. We are therefore very excited and proud to announce that we have been appointed as a national distributor for the vaBW range

of products,” Whitehead tells *African Fusion*. Renttech has decided to carry a comprehensive range suited to the South African market, from stick/MMAW and TIG/GTAW welding consumables to solid, metal-cored and flux-cored wires for GMAW/MCAW/FCAW, and fluxes and wires for submerged arc welding. “As the market grows, we intend to start offering some of the more specialised consumables, as required by the various sectors,” he says.

The vaBW brand has been in South Africa for decades and throughout that time it has been the welding consumable of choice for demanding welding environments. In certain markets, the products are considered superior to any competing brands when it comes to quality, value and performance. In addition, from a weldability point of view, many welders prefer these consumables, Whitehead explains.

“We have now found a reputable consumable range to make our own and we are rolling it out into the South African market, along with our equipment and safety



offerings, to better support the different segments including petrochemical, power and fabrication industries,” he says, adding that, as with all Renttech products, technical support and country-wide stock availability will be key features of the offering.

Packaged welding solutions

Most customers already have a fleet of welding equipment, so we are exploring the advantages of using selected Böhler Welding consumables to raise performance levels and productivity. At some sites, though, we are coupling these consumables with our own UNIARC and Kemppi high-end equipment brands to develop packaged welding solutions. For example, we have seen some excellent results from combining Kemppi power sources with the high-end Böhler Welding ‘diamondspark’ and ‘ECOSpark’ welding wires, resulting in reduced fettling and in the number of welding passes to complete certain weld joints” says Whitehead.

While there will always be a place for stick welding, advanced process equipment and better consumables have significantly improved the wire-based processes, which are now easier and faster to use while being far less susceptible to welding defects. This is particularly evident when a good, packaged solution is put together that includes a combination of an appropriate consumable with well-matched welding equipment, and accurate prepping equipment to reduce fit-up problems.

“Customarily, for example, pulse machines were achieving slightly slower welding speeds than traditional CV welding, resulting in customers preferring the CV



An application trial being done at Renttech’s Alrode premises. The root weld is being done using the Böhler Ecospark 420 (ER70S-6) solid wire and the Wiseroot function on a Kemppi welding machine. The fill and cap was then done using the Böhler Diamondspark 46RC (E71T-1M) flux-cored wire using a Promotech Rail Titan welding and cutting tractor.

MIG process despite the benefits of pulse welding. Now, with the advanced pulse technology available in the Kemppi range, we can get 30 to 40% higher deposition rates – or travel speeds, depending on which you are after – using standard GMAW wire (ER70S-6). If we go one step further using the Böhler Welding metal cored wire, a further 20% improvement becomes available,” he says, adding, “this becomes very interesting for customers chasing productivity improvements.

“The welding market is a complex one, with each sector having its own unique requirements in terms of quality consumables and welding equipment. voestalpine Böhler Welding offers a complete consumable portfolio to service these different markets from ‘run of the mill’ mild steel consumables to specialised alloys and hard facing consumables across the various welding processes. They are also able to cater for a full range of metallurgical testing requirements as required by some of the more niche sectors. As Renttech has customers across these sectors it made sense to partner with one of the best consumable brands globally to be able to offer the full welding solution,” he explains.

On the submerged arc side, Renttech is able to deliver a packaged solution using its UNIARC ASAW1250II – a 1 250 A machine with a 100% duty-cycle at 40 °C – with flux and wire combinations ranging from mild steel to the low- and high-alloys, hard facing as well as nickel alloys, all with the idea of chasing higher productivity, enhanced



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deposition rates, fewer weld passes, less heat input for less distortion and reduced post weld operations.

The Böhler Welding range also offers a full array of stick electrodes favoured by welders and quality personnel alike for its numerous applications across the major industry segments found in Southern Africa.

“The fact is, vaBW has been manufacturing quality welding consumables since 1926. With almost 100 years of experience, the company has an extensive R&D skill set, metallurgical and applications know-how, technical and managerial expertise, and experience across all its businesses, as well as state-of-the-art manufacturing facilities across the globe. The company is passionate about welding making it a perfect fit for us. Customers also know this based on the quality and performance that welders get from using Böhler Welding consumables,” Whitehead says.

To meet the unique needs of the South African market, he says Renttech needed to address several key issues, in combination: quality, affordability, productivity and the skills of labour in South Africa. “We have had to find the right products that are easy to use, yet still deliver successful results to business owners, product users, and quality personnel. Böhler Welding was a key component in making this happen. We have always trusted and had a high regard for the quality of Böhler Welding consumables, even as a competitor, as our South African petrochemical, power and fabrication customers have for over 40 years. There is excellent brand recognition and we have now made sure that the supply chain is in place to get the brand back onto shop floors.

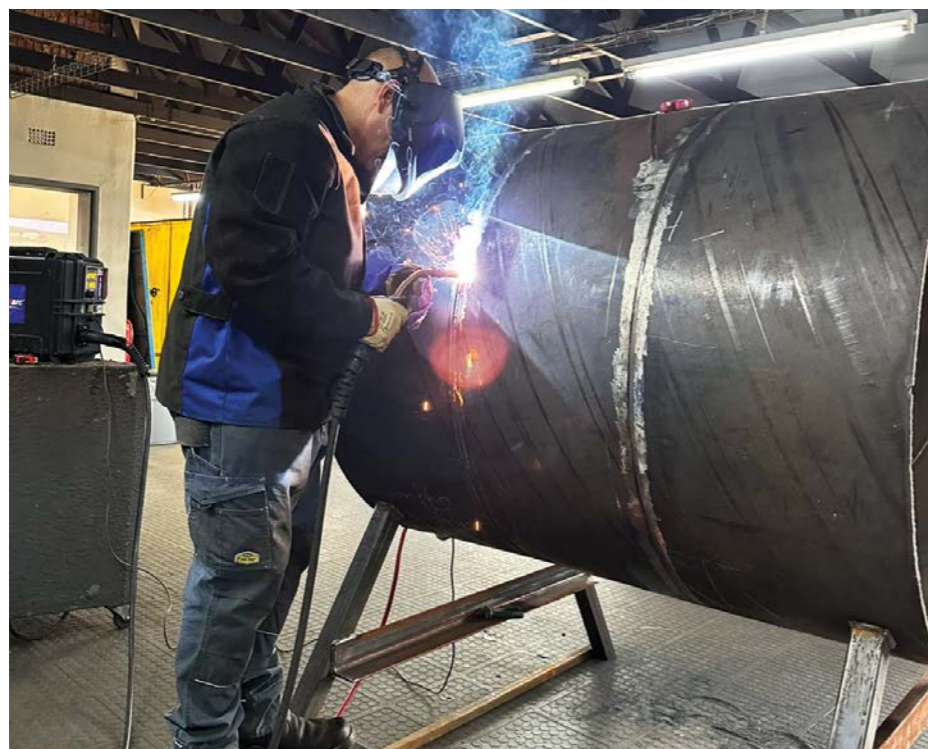
“Also, we are on a drive to help South

African industry to be competitive in the international space because, whether we like it or not, we are competing with the rest of the world for the work that needs to be done here in South Africa. We want to put local fabricators in the best possible position to be able to compete and to keep the work in country, whether through automation, better equipment, higher quality consumables, or carefully structured solutions that combine all of these. This meant that we had to tailor our offering to include the best product ranges, at the best possible prices, whilst striving for the best service levels to ensure our customers have confidence in our ability to move forward with them. Böhler Welding consumables will play a key part in this journey as we continue to build Renttech into a leading welding supplier in Southern Africa.

“It is important also to acknowledge the support of our shareholder, Bidvest, without whom this whole journey would have been a lot more difficult. We have enjoyed a wide spectrum of support along the way. For instance, we have been using Bidvest International Logistics as our external freight forwarders to manage our logistics and imports from different countries around the globe for a number of years now. This partnership between two sister Bidvest companies works very well for us and our customers, making more stock available more frequently and on time,” says Duncan Whitehead.

“We now believe that, with the addition of the Böhler Welding consumable range to our portfolio of products and services, we are well positioned for sustainable growth and continued support to the Southern African welding community,” he concludes.

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