

New channel-partners for vaBW

African Fusion talks to Herbert Abbott, Regional Sales Officer for voestalpine Böhler Welding Middle East and Africa, about the company's recently adopted channel partner approach for South Africa and the Sub-Sahara sub-region, and what this means for local customers.

Renewing the company's commitment to service the welding needs of South Africa and sub-Saharan Africa, voestalpine Böhler Welding (vaBW) is expanding its distribution network for its Böhler Welding, UTP and Fontagen product portfolios.

"voestalpine Bohler Welding is a global company under the umbrella of voestalpine AG, a global organisation that employs approximately 52 000 employees worldwide," begins Herbert Abbott.

"vaBW is well known and respected in the South African market for its trusted range of premium quality welding filler metal brands i.e. Bohler Welding, UTP and Fontagen – fully supported by the company' highly regarded welding metallurgy and welding applications know-how. Our products have been approved and confidently used in the most demanding applications across industries such as Power Generation, Oil & Gas, Construction, Chemical, Transportation, Cement,



The Böhler TERRA NX 400 PME is a next-generation welding machine that enhances productivity and is user-friendly and ideal for heavy-duty applications in the metal fabrication industry.

Mining and Sugar to name a few. In recent years vaBW has expanded its offering to include, for example, premium quality ranges of welding equipment, automation, and a high-end PPE and accessories, all with the intention of assisting our customers to achieve the perfect weld seam.

"For decades, selected products from our comprehensive portfolio were available to the South African market via two successive exclusive channel partners. As from 1st January 2024, vaBW has adopted a non-exclusive channel partner approach and is actively seeking and recruiting additional quality strategic distribution partners to take our comprehensive world class product portfolio to the market," Abbott tells *African Fusion*.

"To bolster our sales, service and distribution network and to make it easier for customers to access our full range of products and, furthermore, to benefit from the resultant higher levels of customer service and support, we believe strongly in adding strategic distribution partners in the region, each with their own unique expertise and strengths," says Abbott. "We are excited by this latest evolution of our business and are confident it will enhance the value proposition to existing and future customers," he adds.

"Since the adoption of the new channel approach at the beginning of 2024, we are very pleased to announce that we have signed a distributor agreement with Renttech SA, who has a well-established footprint across South Africa – including branches in Gauteng, Western Cape, Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga, North West, Limpopo, Free State, and the Northern Cape – and will be a national channel partner for our diverse range of Bohler Welding, UTP and Fontagen filler metals on a non-exclusive basis. Renttech has already demonstrated its commitment via a significant investment in a broad range of inventory products. Stock will be arriving from our global manufacturing facilities within the coming weeks and, considering the range they have included in their pilot order, I believe they will hit the ground running to cater for a large



percentage of the day-to-day welding requirements of their clients in the industry segments where they have proven to be very strong over the years. Since many of our filler metal products are already qualified for use by the major South African fabricators, there should be little to no difficulties in reintroducing our products to those valued customers," Abbott informs *African Fusion*.

"In addition, in the Western Cape, we are proud to announce that we have signed a distributor agreement with RSA Welding who is a very well-established welding product distributor focusing on the Western Cape market and who has earned a reputation in the market for service excellence and loyalty. RSA Welding will stock, promote and support vaBW's comprehensive range of products including Bohler Welding, UTP and Fontagen filler metals, our welding equipment range and our range of PPE and accessories.

"The company has already demonstrated its commitment by making an investment in a range of filler metals and welding equipment for inventory," Herbert Abbott assures.

"We are in discussions with a number of additional potential distribution partners who are located in the major industrial hubs around South Africa, all of whom we have identified as being able to enhance our presence and access to our world-class products," says Abbott.

When asked how vaBW would manage potential channel conflict between multiple distributor partners in a common market he says that vaBW has in excess of 4 000 active distribution partners globally and that it is very common for the company to have multiple non-exclusive distributor partners in a single country or region and that those distributor partners are able to coexist and flourish because of the ethical



Approval certificates with the new diamondspark names are available for ABS, BV, LR, RINA, TÜV and DB.



In combination with diamondspark flux cored wires, pipeRunner® can produce excellent girth welds of the highest quality, minimising NDT indications and lowering repair rates.

and fair manner in which vaBW supports all distributor partners.

"We arm our committed distributor partners with the necessary industry, application and product knowledge and then assist them to hone and leverage their unique strengths and experience in order to sell and support our products. When we get this right, the customers – who have the right to choose from whom they wish to purchase our products – will choose the partner they believe adds the most value to their operation," he assures.

Experience the perfect weld seam

The high-quality range of vaBW filler metals, equipment, automation PPE and accessories being made available to selected distribution partners in South Africa will be showcased via a series of road shows which will kick off in June 2024. "We intend to feature, for example, the unique MIG/MAG process technology under the hood of the newly launched state-of-the-art TERRA NX PME series of pulsed MIG/MAG welding machines. These technologies include RapiDeep and QuickPulse2, which have both been developed by voestalpine Bohler Welding to improve productivity and weld seam quality," he continues.

RapiDeep is an innovation designed to deliver a highly concentrated arc for consistency, lower heat input, higher arc



A distributor demonstration of railRunner, which is able to perform in any welding position and, with vaBW consumables, takes productivity to another level.

precision, easier control, deeper penetration as well as reduced undercut risks. "RapiDeep allows the welding speed to be significantly increased, with a direct impact on welding costs through higher deposition rates and productivity and reduced welding time. The end result is better penetration, cleaner and smoother weld seams, and increased welding speeds of up to 60%," Abbott explains.

QuickPulse2 is a pulsed MIG/MAG process that offers the same benefits as RapiDeep with the added advantage of the synergic pulsed mode, which can deliver further heat input reductions, an increase in welding speeds, along with similar high precision and deep penetration advantages.

"Our new Cape Town based distributor – RSA Welding recently took us to a local manufacturer where we had the opportunity to demonstrate these unique processes. We successfully demonstrated QuickPulse2 on the new Böhler TERRA NX 400 PME welding set in combination with our diamondspark seamless metal-cored wire whilst running our tailored Bohler Arc synergic lines for the selected Bohler metal-cored wire on a number of different weld joint configurations and in various weld positions. The weld quality and deposition rate were simply mind blowing! Because of the very stable wire feed rate, the consistency of the arc length and exceptionally accurate arc positioning, the customer's welders were able to comfortably push the wire feed rate far beyond what they were conventionally used to and, as a result, they were welding at speeds they had never experienced before.

We look forward to presenting this tech-

nology to a broader audience during our road show events and also via personalised demo days at customers in South Africa very soon," Abbott relates.

vaBW also intends to unveil a selected range of market relevant mechanised welding solutions during their roadshow events in South Africa. Among these solutions is the family of mechanised welding carriages – wheelRunner, railRunner and pipeRunner.

"One of our mechanised solutions, with which we have had terrific success in our region, is our pipeRunner orbital MIG/MAG welding system for automated welding of pipe girth seams. We are able to weld 8-inch diameter pipe and upward with this solution and we have a wide range of tried and tested seamless and conventional cored wires to weld a broad variety of material grades. For many of these, we already have trial procedures available, which can very swiftly get our customers up and running.

As a key to success, we do not only sell the mechanised welding carriage and power source, but an entire solution consisting of the equipment, the welding filler metals, the procedure development and qualification, welder training and qualification and, at customer request, even onsite technical support for ongoing production," adds Abbott.

"We look forward to engaging our valued customers and distributor partners during our forthcoming road show events and are excited about the additional benefits our new distributors will bring to local customers who choose voestalpine Bohler Welding. Please come to experience the perfect weld seam for yourselves," Herbert Abbott concludes.

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