

SA's first validation facility and digital welding technology

Renttech South Africa, a Bidvest Group company with a solid background in the rental and sales of welding and construction-related equipment, has become the first local validation facility to provide a service to industry validating welding equipment according to ISO 17662 standards.

In close collaboration with the Southern African Institute of Welding (SAIW), Renttech has improved its processes to incorporate international testing standards for the validation of welding equipment as required by companies accredited according to ISO 3834.

"In order to comply with the requirement of most big projects, construction companies need accreditation according to ISO 3834 welding quality standards. With respect to welding equipment, ISO 3834 requires that all welding machines used must be validated to ensure that the actual welding current and/or voltage output delivered during welding accurately matches the parameter settings," says Renttech's welding product manager, Johan Bester.

"An external authorised inspection authority (AIA) certified our process for the delivery of performance certificates according to ISO 17662, the equipment calibration, verification and validation standard. This is now incorporated into our ISO 9001 quality management systems via a formal scope change. All new equipment sold, as well as our rental fleet, gets validated according to this standard before reaching customers.

This is also an additional service on offer to clients for their existing equipment, irrespective of brand, and we are the first local company to provide this validation facility," Bester advises.

Renttech recently launched its new UNIarc range of welding equipment, with a host of associated cost benefits and technical advantages for customers aimed at reducing the time and cost per weld.

"For the past three years, we have been engaging with some of the best welding machine manufacturers from all over the world so as to improve and complete our range to suit the demands of our rental and sales markets.

"UNIarc is a brand that has earned itself a reputation for reliability and performance in some of the harshest South African con-

ditions over the past 20 years, in all sectors of the industrial market. With the rapid advancement of software technologies available today, we embarked on improving our existing offering to realise the benefits of these technologies for our customers; thereby further enabling them to drive welding and fabrication efficiencies," Bester explains.

He continues: "Our challenge was to ensure that we made it easy and intuitive for the welder, while unlocking benefits for the business owner. Some of the benefits include reduced fettling costs, reduced distortion, reduced materials handling costs, more effective use of labour, and increased deposition rates in the various welding positions".

Another key requirement was to further improve reliability, speaking to the need to reduce costs-of-ownership. Various technologies have therefore been added to protect the equipment from unstable input power, voltage drops associated with fixed line input power; as well as mobile generator power. Long extension leads and improperly-sized extensions were also factors Renttech had to cater for, since these are realities in the construction and fabrication industry.

"On the back of these improvements, we have been able to increase our standard warranty from one year to a three year parts-and-labour warranty on our three-phase machines; and an 18-month warranty on our single phase units. All of this is backed up with parts and qualified technicians available across the country to ensure minimal downtime," Bester adds.

The final task for Renttech was to ensure that its advanced welding solutions and technology were still affordable to the majority of the market.

"The harsh reality is that South African fabricators are competing for local projects with international firms that employ the



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latest technology to reduce their fabrication cost. We wanted to make a contribution to enable South African industry as a whole to be more competitive, by harnessing the latest technologies whether they are multi-national construction companies or one-man businesses.

"We believe we have achieved this without compromising quality. In fact, most of our units offer more features than those of our international competitors at a very favourable price point," he says.

He adds that, as with all Renttech offerings, welding machines are sold 'ready to weld', with all of the necessary torch consumables and accessories, with integrated water-cooling as an option – but they can also be offered as tailored solutions based on customer requirements.

"In addition, we see training as a critical element for successfully rolling out new welding technology into the workplace. We have, therefore, included the high-end machines into our trailer-based training centre, which is available to customers wishing to ensure their welders are up-skilled and competent in the new welding technologies.

"In conclusion, Renttech SA is able to offer affordable and robust state-of-the-art welding equipment, technical assistance and process solutions to construction projects and fabricators in line with the latest methodologies and welding standards in both the sales and rental options," Bester concludes. ■