

# Air Liquide and Oerlikon strike new partnership

*African Fusion* talks to Air Liquide's Hard Goods Manager, Willie Burger, about an exciting partnership that has been struck between Air Liquide in South Africa and Oerlikon for the local distribution, supply and support of the premium Oerlikon consumables and welding equipment.

**“W**hilst we already offer a full range of consumables and hard goods, from our in-house Ultra Arc wire brands to our Gemini electrodes, and have existing partnerships with welding equipment OEMs for the supply of premium equipment and consumables, our latest partnership with Oerlikon offers us an alternative premium option,” begins Burger.

“We can offer Oerlikon products at highly competitive prices, particularly to fabricators who are already using our gases and other products,” he continues.

“We see Oerlikon as an interallied complement to our gas offering, particularly with respect to flux cored welding wires. The brand fits perfectly into our total welding service offering, positioning Air Liquide to meet all the welding needs of our clients on all levels. We are therefore offering a full range of Oerlikon welding consumables and equipment.”

“In spite of the many global ownership and local distributorship changes that have taken place over the years, the Oerlikon name still carries weight in the South African market,” Burger tells *African Fusion*. “The Oerlikon welding consumables that we offer, however, are the latest formulations coming out of Europe rather than the limited range that

used to be manufactured here in South Africa,” he adds.

Burger acknowledges that the niche premium brand appeals to discerning customers with historical preferences towards Oerlikon. “There are still a lot of people in South Africa who continue to want to couple the Oerlikon brand with Air Liquide's ArcalTM new generation gas offer. Certain consumables such as Oerlikon's Fluxofil 14 HD and the Fluxofil 19 HD seamless flux cored wires offer exceptional performance, while the OP 121 flux and the OES 2 submerged arc wires are loved and well regarded by many,” he says.

Many of Oerlikon's stainless steels and other special alloy products also have an excellent reputation in South Africa, while every-day electrodes such as Fincord M E6013 and Oerlikon Supercito LH electrodes are still in high demand. “There are still fabricators that will accept nothing less than Oerlikon. We have tried to convince customers to use alternatives, often without success, so it makes total sense to bring the Oerlikon option back into our range,” he adds.



On the machine side, Burger cites the exceptionally rugged welding power sources and the pioneering MIG machines that predate the modern all-digital and networked machines. These have evolved into the modern Oerlikon welding machine range, which retains all of the fundamental reliability while incorporating the latest advanced digital capabilities.

The CITOARC range of MMA and TIG-LIFT units for example, offer exceptional arc control handled by a microcontroller, very low network distortion and they consume very little power. “We are also bringing in the new CITOSTEP range of GMAW machines, which set the standard for MIG and flux-cored welding for light industrial

fabrication, maintenance or repair work,” he says, adding that units range from the CITOMIG 210 A machine to CITOSTEP 355C, 425S and 505S synergic units. At the high-end, we are awaiting the CITOPULS III 420 synergic pulse units that offer reliability in harsh conditions with easy portability for on and offsite work and superior arc welding behaviour,” he notes.

Burger says that Oerlikon is a high quality brand for those who don't mind paying a little more for a well-engineered and very robust machine. “We are not simply importing stock and selling it, though. This is a market driven exercise. We are exploring the interest that is out there and building the range depending on customer preferences and requirements. When clients want particular consumables or machines, we are more than happy to bring these in specifically for them, and thus expanding the range. That way, we hope to arrive at ideal

stocking levels that match local needs. We are willing to supply anything that Oerlikon makes, however,” Burger assures.

He emphasises that existing customers who are already using Air Liquide's shielding gas range have the added advantages of being able to match it to a machine and a consumable. “For Oerlikon 14 HD flux cored wires, for example, an M21 gas mix is recommended, which is an argon/CO<sub>2</sub> gas mixture with a CO<sub>2</sub> content of between 15% and 25%. We have two such mixes, ARCALTM Force and INARC 25, and we are actively encouraging people to partner our New Generation gas range with the Oerlikon brand.

“This further rationalises the attractiveness, cost effectiveness and quality of the premium basket of welding products and solutions Air Liquide is able to offer clients in South Africa,” Burger concludes.

[www.airliquide.com/south-africa](http://www.airliquide.com/south-africa)



Oerlikon OP 121 flux and the OES 2 submerged arc wires are also loved and well regarded by many fabricators.

## Smart orbital welding station ultra-high purity welding

To cope with the rising modern needs of semi-conductor manufacturing facilities across the globe, along with new pharmaceutical developments being developed to produce the huge number of vaccines for the fight against COVID 19, Polysoude has launched Smart Welding Station P3 UHP (ultra-high purity).

In the field of semiconductor production, extended tube networks are needed to supply clean room installations with ultra-pure gases and liquids, to keep the atmosphere inert, for etching and rinsing.

The preparation of pharmaceuticals depends on steam and germ-free water for sterilisation, diluting and injection purposes. The high-quality tubes for the network assembly are usually connected by welded joints, which must meet extremely stringent surface finishing standards.

Cleanroom equipment manufacturers and suppliers of related components such as tubes, valves and fittings produce these welds in their workshops, whereas cleanroom builders must perform the welds on site. The required joint quality, however, can only be met if all of the welding is done under clean room conditions.

The ultimate goal of Polysoude's P3 UHP concept is exclusively for these cleanrooms. The Smart Welding Station P3 UHP is designed with welding heads of the type UHP 500 or UHP 625. These orbital TIG welding heads produce joints of unrivalled quality without cracks, pores and roughness.

Closed chambers provide perfect gas protection to avoid heat tint of the tubes and they reduce particle emission to maintain the cleanroom's pure atmosphere. The gas cooled UHP type welding heads allow autogenous welding of thin-walled tubes with diameters of between 1.6 and 6.35 mm. As precision welds require precision adjustment, the welding current can be programmed in steps of 0.10 A.

With a weight of only 17 kg the P3 UHP power source is the lightest automatic welding station on the market and can be carried without hoisting equipment, which is comfortable in the workshop but especially advantageous if used on site.



Polysoude's Smart Welding Station P3 UHP systems with closed-chamber welding heads are designed for ultra-high purity orbital welding of tubes and fittings.

The Smart Welding Station P3 UHP is ready for Smart Factory application; it interfaces perfectly with the Industry 4.0 process and the related OPC-UA protocol. Together with the wide range of available accessories, the Smart Welding Station P3 UHP can deliver unrivalled tube connection quality, which meets or exceeds even the most stringent specifications, easing the demands on cleanroom operators.

[www.polysoude.com](http://www.polysoude.com)



Many of Oerlikon's stainless steels – such as the Supranox RS 316L – and other special alloy products still have an excellent reputation in South Africa.