

INVEST FOR SUCCESS



Welding World visited the GYS factory in Laval to see its latest welding innovations

IN 1997, Nicolas Bouygues acquired GYS, then employing just 40 people. In less than 10 years, through continuous investment in R&D and manufacturing, it grew by a factor of ten. Today, GYS is one of the world's largest manufacturers of welding machines, battery chargers and car body repair equipment.

The award-winning company, already a recognised brand in Europe with the largest single-phase inverter welding factory in Western Europe and a turnover of 58 million euros in 2012, employs 500 people (40 of them in R&D) and distributes products to more than 90 countries from factories in France and China. It is an impressive achievement over ten years from what was, essentially, a small inverter manufacturer.

Quality and innovation

GYS implements an alternative strategy – investing in innovative technologies for a solid foundation of growth. The latest production facilities keep costs per unit as low

as possible. It manufactures the majority of its products, including semiconductor technology, at its factory in Laval, just outside Paris. This gives GYS total control over quality and manufacturing flexibility, new product development and production innovations.

Welding World saw evidence of this during its visit to the GYS factory in Laval – in-house operations range from sheet metal cutting and painting (the paint line controlled by iPhone/iPad), electronics, wiring and mechanics to transformers etc. New Mazak machining centres, TRUMPF punch press/press brakes, robotic systems and Kasto sheet storage systems were on view.

As a family concern with a long term strategic outlook, GYS then re-invests profits back into the business – enabling it to continue investing in the latest production technologies. It recently invested 6.5 million euros on a new factory building in Laval and has purchased a new factory building next door for electronics production.



Left to right: Noel Holbert, UK Commercial Director, GYS UK Ltd and Simon Bouygues, General Manager, GYS

Welding in focus

GYS has welding products across MMA, MIG/MAG and welding processes, including plasma cutters. Particular strengths include a very wide inverter MMA/TIG range – much of the range incorporates GYS advanced PFC and FV technology for superior welding performance from sub-optimal power sources or generators. It also supplies consumables and accessories.

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"Two thirds of our turnover is from arc welding," Bruno Bouygues, General Manager, GYS told Welding World. "Over the last eighteen months, we have introduced products that are suitable for industrial welding. We have also completely renewed our MIG welding range. Our new TIG AC/DC HF inverter is fan-less – the first application of fan-less technology in welding, I believe."

Its new GYS TIG 250 AC/DC welder has received a lot of attention since its launch in January 2013 thanks to its innovative fan-less design using liquid-cooled electronics. It was awarded the Industrie Lyon Award for Technology 2013. Industrie Lyon is the largest industrial exhibition in France.

GYS recently launched a new range of 3 Phase MIG welding machines, the TRIMIG family. Featuring six models ranging from 200A to 350A, all benefit from 4-roll wire feeders and 'GYS synergic control' for rapid and simple operation. The range covers a multitude of configurations, from simple 'compact' versions, air-cooled separates as well as the TRIMIG 350-4S DUO DV with the option of 'Twin Torch' configuration that is suitable for applications involving two wire types.

Today, many GYS products are equipped with its proprietary electronic protection PROTEC 400 to highlight fluctuating input voltage. Its Laval factory also supplies a car body repair product portfolio including water- and air-cooled inverter spot welders, dent pulling stations for steel and aluminium, and integrated or external wire feeders for MIG/MAG welders.

International expansion

In 2003, GYS established its first overseas subsidiary in Shanghai for a foothold in the world's largest market for electronic components. The factory in China also started to

produce battery chargers for the consumer marketplace. A new GYS plant was purchased in China in 2010 to enable further expansion. Today, however, over 90% of GYS products and 100% of the professional welding range are still manufactured in the French factory.

GYS believes that to be a successful exporter, success in Europe's largest markets like Germany would be vital. It consequently set up a sales and service subsidiary in Aachen in 2005 followed, two years later, by GYS Ltd in Warwick, UK. Specific UK electrical characteristics, such as the 13A supply and 110V requirements for work sites, drove the R&D team to develop new products to satisfy market requirements. New products featuring advanced PFC technology bring genuine 4mm electrode welding to where only 13A is available. It also recently opened a sales subsidiary Joint Ventures in India to help carmakers identify the right materials for their requirements.

"We currently process around 150 orders per day - up to 2000 products leave the line every day for next day

delivery in Europe," Bruno Bouygues concluded. "We are working towards flame welding, capacity discharge welding and spot welding products for industrial applications as well as Plug and Play welding software and generator development. We will continue our strategy of continuous investment in production and work with our customers to develop the products they need now and in the future."

For further details, see www.gys-welding.com



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