

Raccortubi Group: The ultimate mix of

Raccortubi Group elegantly combines its roles as a manufacturer, stockist, and supplier in a perfect threefold to serve customers in every corner of the globe. Having ridden out the period of low oil and gas prices by boldly investing in the expansion of its portfolio and geographical presence, the company is now ideally positioned to benefit from the upturn in the sector, particularly in the Americas.

By Joanne McIntyre

Stainless Steel World Americas met Luca Pentericci, the company President, at the Raccortubi Group headquarters near Milan, Italy. "For many years we have been a manufacturer, stockholder, and supplier of pipes, fittings, and flanges. This allows us to offer customers flexible, tailor-made solutions. We can provide fittings combining different elements such as dimension, thickness, and more, in a wide range of alloys in any quantity – including small orders – right up to complete piping and fitting packages for mega-projects," says Pentericci.

The synergy between the company's stockholding and manufacturing activities is the key to its success. It maintains a large stock of stainless steel and special grades pipes, which are available either for immediate shipping or to produce fittings.

"Having full control of the flow of both the base materials and the production program means we do not experience the typical problems that other suppliers do, such as late delivery. We have developed sophisticated algorithms to optimize production in terms of cost and resource allocation. Our stock serves as a buffer to supply our customers immediately 'from the shelf', without needing to wait for a new production batch. At the same time, our pre-planned fitting production program is so flexible that we can enter new customers' orders of any quantity, because the same batch can also be used to replenish our own stock. This is a tremendous advantage over manufacturers who must wait until they receive a minimum quantity before starting production, which will often result in significant delays. Our system is both highly flexible and extremely fast."

Therefore, a key advantage of Raccortubi's strategy is that it optimizes production by bundling customer's orders together into regular production batches destined for replenishing the company's stock. This means that customers never have to wait to get their order, no matter how small, because as a bundle the quantity is always sufficient to be manufactured immediately.



Tecniinox and Petrol Raccord jointly manufacture fittings from 1/2 an inch to 56 inches, with no thickness limitation.

“Ultimately, we are not just a supplier, but a partner.”

Luca Pentericci, President of the Raccortubi Group

Growing the South American market

Raccortubi has established a local presence in São Paulo (Raccortubi do Brasil), in Dubai (Raccortubi Middle East), in Aberdeen, Scotland (Raccortubi Norsk), and Singapore (Raccortubi Singapore). When asked where particular growth might be expected, Pentericci replies, "Right now we are looking at South America in general and Brazil in particular. Hence we established our own production plant in Brazil."

Named Tecniinox do Brasil, or TXDB for short, this new company, within the Group is, producing butt weld fittings with the same proven quality of its Italian counterparts, Tecniinox and Petrol Raccord. "TXDB guarantees our proximity and adaptability to the rapid needs of local customers, in addition to a wide stock availability that offers the highest service."

Pentericci recognizes the importance of local production to cover the Brazilian market as well as the rest of South America. "We understand how important local content is to be flexible and rapidly accommodate customer needs. Through Raccortubi do Brasil, we are also exploring the opportunity to supply seamless tubes, pipes, and fittings to the U.S.A. in the range of half an inch up to eight inches in stainless steel, duplex, super-duplex, and higher alloys."

Raccortubi is focusing on supplying fittings to the oil and gas sector in the Americas, as the specifications used for that application also apply to a much wider range of applications.

"Our strength is consistently supplying material backed by technical expertise with the flexibility to achieve a rapid delivery time. Today, customers are keen on very short delivery times. This is again where our threefold of having our own raw material, our own internal production, and a very large stock of finished products proves to be a massive benefit. This is a unique capability in the market."

Fast-track service at Petrol Raccord

In an industrial market like piping and fittings, suppliers are judged not only on the quality, reliability, and pricing of their materials but also for their ability to understand and anticipate the wide range of customer requirements. In 2018 the company launched its fast-track service for quick deliveries at its Petrol Raccord branch, providing non-standard stock or special pieces. Roberto Torresani, Managing Director of Petrol Raccord, explains, "fast track service relies on a dedicated production line at Petrol Raccord, which is able to fulfil deliveries of special items in four to six weeks. For this, we can rely on the company's extensive availability of raw materials."

The high level of service offered at Petrol Raccord is clearly appreciated by its



Raccortubi Group's main warehouse in Italy, with more than 6,000 items in stock.

customers; turnover since its acquisition in 2014 has grown significantly.

"Our focus is on higher value orders such as special materials, unusual shapes, and non-standard items," continues Torresani. "We work closely with customers to find a solution that works for them. We can produce high-quality items in any material, literally from iron to zirconium. Our customers are extremely satisfied and particularly appreciate our short delivery times."

► Celebrating its 70th anniversary

In May 2019 the Raccortubi Group will celebrate its 70th anniversary with its teams around the globe.

"We are planning something unique and special to mark the occasion in style, but at this stage, it is a surprise!" smiles Pentericci.

► Raccortubi Group at a glance

Raccortubi S.p.A.: The Group's headquarters near Milan, Italy, manages and directs the entire global distribution network. Raccortubi S.p.A stocks more than 6,000 items, and directly supplies piping materials in stainless steel and special alloys.

Tecniinox (Piacenza, Italy) manufactures cold-formed butt weld fittings from 1/2 an inch to 16 inches.

Petrol Raccord (Piacenza, Italy) uses hot-forming to produce seamless and welded fittings up to 56 inches with no thickness limitations.

Tecniinox do Brasil (São Paulo) manufactures butt-weld fittings in the Tecniinox range.

Raccortubi do Brasil (São Paulo) stocks and supplies pipes, fittings, and flanges.

Raccortubi Middle East (Dubai) stocks and supplies pipes, fittings, and flanges.

Raccortubi Norsk (Aberdeen, Scotland) stocks and supplies pipes, fittings, and flanges, particularly for offshore platforms and oil and gas applications.

Raccortubi Singapore stocks and supplies pipes, fittings, and flanges.

All products are available, in stock, in austenitic stainless steel, duplex, super duplex, 6Mo, nickel alloys, UREA, and titanium.

manufacturer, stockist, and project supplier



Pentericci. “Our production activities have been developed through two manufacturing plants, Tecnox and Petrol Raccord. Tecnox manufactures fittings up to 16 inches using the cold forming method, with very high efficiency and pre-planned production systems. Petrol Raccord uses the hot-forming method to produce fittings up to 56 inches. In this way, we are able to provide every pipe, fitting, and flange that a customer needs as a complete package, within a short lead time, and using just-in-time delivery.”

Acquisitions and growth

While other companies took austerity measures during the economic crisis and the subsequent period of low oil and gas prices, Raccortubi chose instead to instigate growth, by opening new branches (Raccortubi do Brasil, Raccortubi Middle East, and Raccortubi Singapore), through the bold acquisition of Petrol Raccord and Norsk Alloys.

Pentericci recalls, “During a visit to Petrol Raccord shortly before the acquisition, I watched the team making 18-inch tees with 40 mm wall thickness in nickel alloy 825 and I knew, ‘this is what we are looking for!’ The staff in the technical department and manufacturing plant are all highly skilled, so it was a fantastic opportunity to enlarge our manufacturing program.”

In 2015 the company acquired Norsk Alloys, an Aberdeen-based facility which is now Raccortubi Norsk. “We started working together in 2016 and from 2017 to 2018 turnover doubled, which proves the value of having local people providing a high level of service and expertise in the market. With the Aberdeen market being 99% oil and gas, end-users appreciate having a local entity with locally available stock, which is backed-up by a manufacturing technical expertise to support them in the different phases of their projects. If there is an issue, they know that we are experts and can handle technically challenging matters.”

These acquisitions are helping to power ahead the Raccortubi Group, which is now geographically positioned in many corners of the world, with highly-sophisticated production methods and extensive stock.

“Geographically we have the globe covered, which is appreciated by local companies and end-users; having local stock ready to support the needs of the market demonstrates our commitment,” continues Pentericci. “Our staff around the world act on behalf of our project department whether they are in Brazil, Dubai, Singapore, or the U.K. An advanced IT system provides them with all the information they need to react to their customers’ needs. Once an order is placed, we bring all the material to-

gether, then ship the whole package to the final destination. We have the advantage of having local expertise, local contacts who can speak the same language or even dialect, and are in the same time zone. This is particularly important for the branches far away as they need to be able to supply the same level of service as we do in Italy. Ultimately, we are not just a supplier, but a partner.”

Fighting counterfeiting

Raccortubi Group joined the Steel Alliance Against Counterfeiting (SAAC) to help tackle this problem around the world. “We see a lot of counterfeit materials being sold as genuine materials, particularly in the Middle East. Through improved vigilance by end-users and EPCs, and organizations such as SAAC we hope to combat this serious problem,” explains Pentericci.

More structured organization and instructions need to be given to engineers, and the use of reputable auditors needs to be reintroduced to as many end-users and EPCs as possible, in order to tackle this problem. Our customers are welcome to run up unaccounted to inspect our facilities. Inspecting and auditing manufacturers and suppliers are crucial to fight counterfeiting. We also see an opportunity to use blockchain technology to ensure traceability of products and are now exploring how this can be utilized.”

Pentericci concludes by saying, “cus-



Group President Luca Pentericci at the Raccortubi warehouse in Italy.

tomers deserve to receive the product they are expecting to receive. Raccortubi clients have the assurance of a good product, with excellent quality, and at the right price.”

Petrol Raccord uses the hot-forming production method to produce seamless and welded fittings up to 56 inches with no thickness limitations. It also manufactures welded elbows in two halves, tees, reducers, and caps to handle all urgent requests, from single-item delivery to complete project supply. Historically, Petrol Raccord has been involved in the production of butt-weld fittings for power plants in alloy steel (P5, P9, P11, P22, P91, and P92), as well as in high-yield steel (WPHY60, WPHY65, and WPHY70). “We are now highly-specialized in the production of special fittings according to customer drawings, such as flow and barred tees, Y pieces, lateral tees, manifolds, and headers,” Torresani concludes.

Complete project supplier

One of the company’s main global activities is the supply of material for packages and complete orders. For this, the company’s very large stock of more than 6,000 materials in significant volumes, provides an edge over the competition. “Our portfolio range starts at 304L and goes all the way up to titanium,” explains



A special piece manufactured at Petrol Raccord.



Raccortubi is a one-stop shop for all piping needs, providing full packages for projects worldwide.

► Facts and figures

Founded	1949
Key activity	Manufacturing, stocking, and supplying piping materials such as pipes, butt weld fittings, and flanges for projects.
Production	Tecnox and Petrol Raccord plants in Italy, Tecnox do Brasil in São Paulo.
Grades	Austenitic stainless steel, duplex, super duplex, 6Mo, nickel alloys, titanium, UREA, low alloy steels, and high yield steels.
Main focus	For critical applications, such as chemical and petrochemical plants, power plants, nuclear plants, shipyards, fertilizer and desalination plants, offshore platforms.
Distribution	Stocking distribution points in Italy, Brazil, Dubai, Singapore, and the U.K.