

Raccortubi Group: Petrol Raccord acquisition boosts complete project supplies



Raccortubi Group headquarters in Marcallo con Casone (Milan, Italy).

The past few years have been busy for Raccortubi Group, the Italian-based producer and stockist of high quality fittings and piping packages. Extensive investments at its Tecninox plant have increased production, while the recent acquisition of Petrol Raccord has further boosted the company's product range and capacity. Yet one thing remains the same: a consistently high level of customer service and a commitment to quality. *Stainless Steel World* spoke recently to Mr. Luca Pentericci, Group Vice President, to learn more about how this unique supplier and manufacturer continues to thrive without compromising on its values.

By Joanne McIntyre

"What makes Raccortubi Group unique is our capacity to combine stockholding and manufacturing to provide customers with the best possible solution," begins Mr. Pentericci. "We are able to supply material immediately from stock, while also being in the position to draw on our manufacturing capabilities. This gives us a much broader range of order control because we do not have to buy

in the most complicated part of the piping system: the butt weld fittings. We can take raw material from stock and insert it directly into production, or we can utilize our existing production planning to fulfil customer requirements. It means we can offer a complete package for projects with a very short lead time and a high level of personalization."

Organizational growth, expansion and acquisition

In 1988, aiming for greater autonomy with regard to suppliers and market fluctuations, Raccortubi established the Tecninox production plant in Sarmato (Piacenza, Italy). This fully integrated manufacturing plant was tasked with producing butt weld fittings in stainless steel, duplex, super duplex, super



Luca Pentericci,
Raccortubi Group
Vice President.

expertise, and is the perfect addition with a production range that meshed seamlessly with our existing activities. The dimensional range of fittings manufactured by Petrol Raccord starts where that of Tecniinox leaves off, and carries on up to 56" almost without wall thickness limitations."

Petrol Raccord: the perfect fit

Another key driver behind the acquisition of Petrol Raccord was Raccortubi Group's desire to supply complete project packages to customers, Mr. Pentericci explains. "With the diameters and wall thicknesses that Petrol Raccord has the capability to manufacture, we have no constraints on the types of offers we can put together for our customers. This applies both to fittings which are produced to standard specifications and those produced to 'custom' requirements for individual clients depending on the final application. Petrol Raccord is able to manufacture a wide range of customised fittings such as flow or barred tees, "Y" pieces, laterals, manifolds and headers in special materials from pipes or forgings. The highly-skilled and technical R&D department at Petrol Raccord is dedicated to finding the perfect solution to customers' problems."

"Since the acquisition we have been supplying even more complete packages of pipes, flanges and fittings thanks to the expansion of our manufacturing programme. Having such wide control over our performance gives us a real competitive edge."



Manufacturing of a large diameter and thickness elbow at Petrol Raccord.

Flexibility and adaptive planning reduces delivery time

Raccortubi Group's fully integrated manufacturing plants allow it to offer customers tailor-made solutions, within the specific delivery time the customer is looking for.

Mr. Pentericci explains: "We have implemented adaptive planning at the Tecniinox plant, whilst at Petrol Raccord flexibility allows for custom-made items to be delivered quickly and to schedule. The adaptive planning at Tecniinox has been created to both fulfil Raccortubi stock requirements and reserve capacity for specific jobs,

austenitics, nickel alloys and titanium. Over the years Tecniinox has enlarged and improved its range to produce fittings from ½" up to 16".

Buoyed by the input from Tecniinox, the global footprint of Raccortubi Group has continued to grow with offices and warehouses opening in Brazil, Dubai and Singapore. In recent years it became clear that the Group would benefit from offering an even broader range of products and the search began for another company to add to the mix.

"We had also considered the option of establishing a hot forming production plant from scratch, but we wanted to avoid bringing more over-capacity into an already saturated market. We therefore knew that we were looking for a company with extensive experience and a solid technical background," explains Mr. Pentericci. "We found the ideal solution in Petrol Raccord. It was established in 1969, has a high level of



Petrol Raccord plant in Calendasco (Piacenza, Italy), home to the Group's latest addition.



The huge stock of pipes and tubes at Raccortubi headquarters: for direct distribution, for project packages, and for base material for the integrated production plants.

in particular project packages. For example, imagine we receive an order for 300 items of fittings: 150 items are in stock, 100 will come from running production, and 50 must be inserted into planning. For many, making just 50 items would result in a lengthy and unreliable delivery time because the raw materials would first have to be sourced. However, at Raccortubi we already have the raw material in stock and our planning is flexible enough to quickly accommodate a fresh order into existing production. This dramatically reduces the lead time for delivering the full package requested.”

“Raccortubi really is providing the best combination of supplier and manufacturer characteristics. As a manufacturer, it doesn’t have to source raw material as it is already available from Raccortubi stocks, and as a supplier it can call on top-quality butt weld fittings thanks to consistent stock replenishment directly from its own production.”

This synergy between the company’s manufacturing and stockholding capabilities has set the Tecniinox plant apart for many years already, Mr. Pentericci explains. “Tecniinox manufactures fittings to internal technical specifications, which it then supplies to Raccortubi stocks. Chemical compositions, mechanical values and additional tests of duplex, super duplex and 6 Moly are covered by these internal specifications which adhere to the most stringent market

requirements. This means that we can supply customers with even just a single item of already upgraded material directly off the shelf: it’s the perfect combination of industrial optimization. With our huge stock of European base material, we can have full control over our internal process which leads to an ideal time to market for the finished product.”

Additional qualifications and certifications

As the company has grown, the same quality and HSE standards have been implemented throughout the Group. “At Raccortubi we don’t only value the quality of the products we make, but are dedicated to providing a safe environment for our employees. As well as ISO 9001:2008 quality certification, we also have the OHSAS 18001:07 health and safety certificate.”

Furthermore, the acquisition has enabled the Group to expand on the variety of customer and end-user approvals it holds. “Both Tecniinox and Petrol Raccord were able to complement each other’s portfolios. Over the years, both companies have attained a wide range of customer and end-user approvals, particularly for the oil and gas industry which has always been our reference market,” explains Mr. Pentericci. “Historically Tecniinox has concentrated on oil and gas applications, while Petrol Raccord has also been very active in the power generation industry, including nuclear

power generation. The companies have served these industries with high quality products all over the world. In addition, we are making further strides forward in the fertilizer industry thanks to our worldwide agreement with Salzgitter Mannesmann Stainless Tubes. As preferred global partner for the distribution of its urea pipes, we are able to offer customers complete packages of urea grade pipes and fittings to short timescales, as we take Salzgitter pipes from stock and insert them into production for the complementary fittings. The acquisition of Petrol Raccord has further strengthened our contribution to this industry thanks to the fact that we can produce larger diameter fittings. Now, when faced with specific requirements for large items with heavy wall thicknesses and a short lead time, we have full control over that process.”



As a result of its integrated production, Raccortubi can guarantee top-quality fittings which surpass market specifications.



An example of the increased production range available at Raccortubi Group thanks to the acquisition of Petrol Raccord.

New furnace and Norsok approval

Raccortubi has a steady investment plan in place to maintain and update its modern production facilities.

“Investments are carried out on a regular basis to enhance production capabilities and stocking levels worldwide, and to add new grades to our portfolio. This has particularly been the case at Tecniinox which has benefitted from some very substantial investments over the past few years. The most recent of these was

a new furnace; the auditors who came to renew our Norsok qualification considered the furnace state-of-the-art. The level of precision the furnace is able to achieve is absolutely amazing.”

Asked what influenced the choice of furnace, Mr. Pentericci explains: “We carried out a thorough search to find the best solution to give us a good competitive edge. The new furnace increases our production capacity for heat treatment four times over.” Further investments have been made at Petrol Raccord to provide the plant with complementary tooling, machinery and base materials, specifically targeted at ever-more demanding applications. In fact, even though Petrol Raccord will continue to provide carbon, low- and high-alloy steels for the power industry, greater capacity has already been taken up by more sophisticated grades of material, such as duplex, super duplex, nickel alloys and titanium. “As the team there has strong technical skills in producing these high-end alloys, we are merely completing an evolution which had already begun in the past.”

Customized products & solutions

The acquisition of Petrol Raccord has given Raccortubi Group an even greater ability not only to supply a much wider range of fittings and packages, but also unique customer solutions.

“At the end of the day, we are a solution provider. We can distribute a whole

range of pipes, tubes, fittings, flanges and complementary items based on the individual request,” continues Mr. Pentericci. “We carry out an in-depth analysis and evaluation of each customer’s needs, and come up with the best solution. We even have a part of stock dedicated to extra-European piping materials for clients who specifically require such origin. The important thing is to provide the customer with the ideal solution to fit their needs.”

“We are able to put together complex orders of a wide range of material thanks to our stock availability and on-demand production. Within Raccortubi Group, we have people with key experience, expertise and skills who know how to advise customers to ensure the desired outcome.” This is highly valued both within the company and by customers, points out Mr. Pentericci. “It’s essential to be open and transparent with customers from the start.”

In addition, Raccortubi’s clients can benefit from a full range of in-house services including colour coding, cutting, extra testing, customized packaging and special marking.

“We really can supply everything the client is looking for. Raccortubi can offer customers a combination of a wide range of ex-stock material, short lead times, flexible production and a personalized service,” concludes Mr. Pentericci. “We treat each request as a unique case; we evaluate it carefully, construct the best solution, and present it to the client.”



The new Norsok-approved furnace: one of many recent investments at the Tecniinox production facility.

Synergy between stock and production

What makes Raccortubi Group stand out is its capacity to effectively combine stockholding and manufacturing activities to provide its customers with the sought-after solution. The huge Raccortubi stock of pipes, tubes, fittings and flanges works two-fold: it offers the client ex-stock materials which already adhere to the most stringent market requirements, whilst supplying the Tecniinox and Petrol Raccord plants with readily-available raw material pipes. With the ex-stock availability and the fast production of cost-efficient, high-quality butt weld fittings to specific customer requirements, Raccortubi can react quickly to clients’ requests for complete project packages. Since the production is completely integrated within the Group, customers may have a single point of contact in Raccortubi for both the ex-stock and manufacturing requirements.