

Manufacturing

BEST PRACTICES FOR INDUSTRY LEADERS

today **EUROPE**

Breaking limits

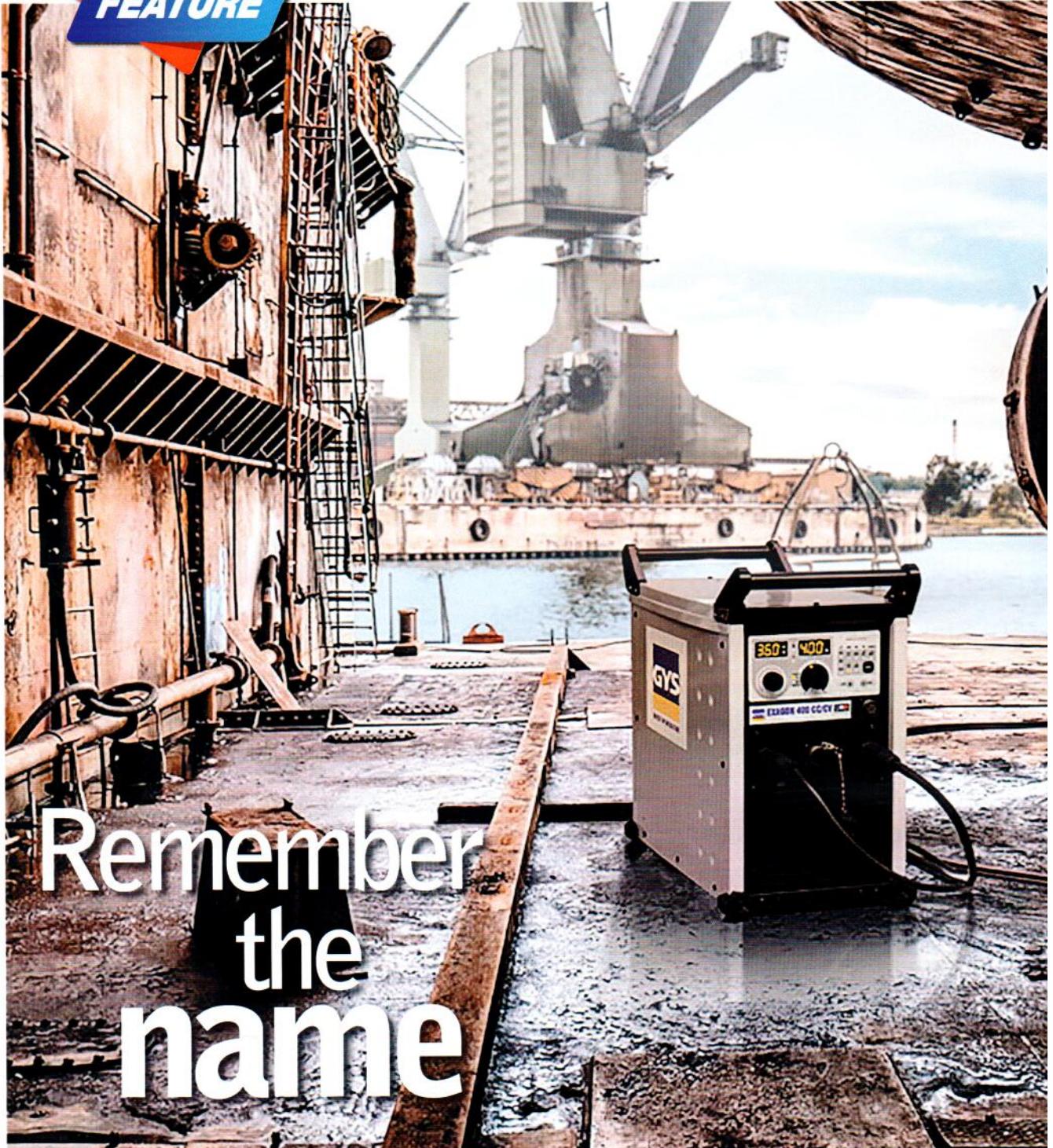


Integral Powertrain continues to expand its motorsport and automotive product ranges, as well as introduce its powertrain and e-drive solutions to new markets

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EXCLUSIVE

FEATURE



Remember the name

GYS' aggressive investment policy has allowed the welding equipment manufacturer to develop extraordinary R&D capabilities and become the largest of its kind in Europe

The understanding that it should rely solely on its own capabilities as it climbs to the highest echelons of the welding industry is a definitive trait of GYS that speaks volumes about the value system established and followed by the company since its renaissance began in 1997. Well-versed in the engineering and manufacture of welding, automotive body repair, and battery service equipment, the

French family-owned group has firmly taken the path of constant investment in R&D and continuous improvement of its manufacturing processes over the last 20 years. By virtue of its prudent financial decisions, it has achieved a remarkable organic growth on a year-on-year basis, proudly claiming the position today of Europe's largest manufacturer of inverter welding machines.

"It can be a characteristic of companies

that grow quickly that the perception can lie behind the reality. It is true for GYS that we have to work hard to ensure we communicate properly to inform customers of the present capability of GYS. It is normal for people to be genuinely surprised at the scale of our operations nowadays," remarks GYS UK's Managing Director, Neil Pulsford.

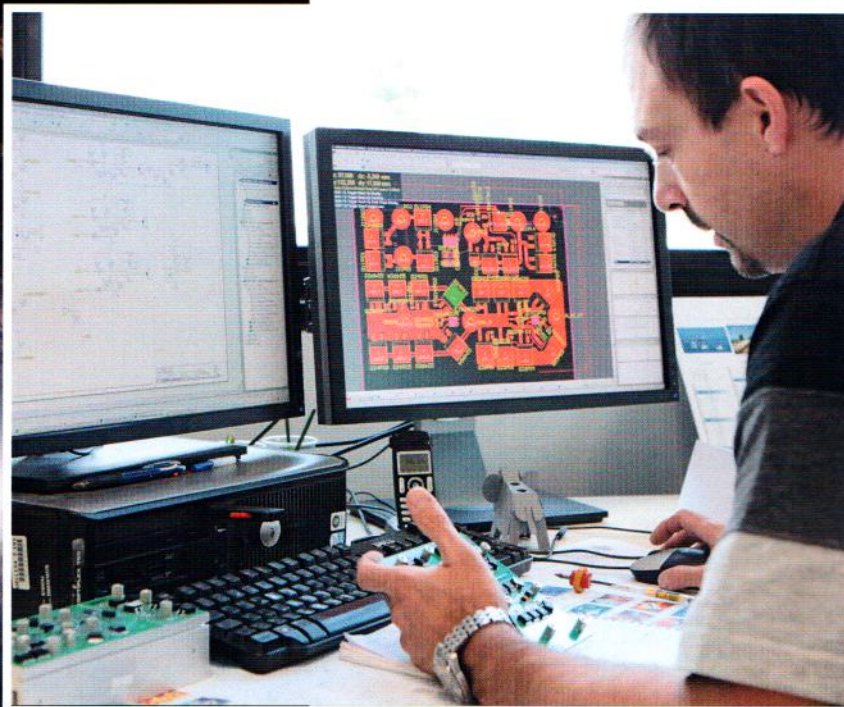
Neil then takes us on a journey through GYS' history, which he intertwines with an



Right: High volume GYS inverter welders in production

Left: GYS Exagon 400 amp Multiprocess CCCV in action

Below: PCB design within R&D



of the revolutionary technological
nents in the welding industry in
wo decades. "Our timeline divides
periods. The first one started with
ion of the company in 1964 when
Stephany founded the business
se to the change of voltage from
230V initiated by the state-owned
y of France company. His idea was
facture transformers on behalf of

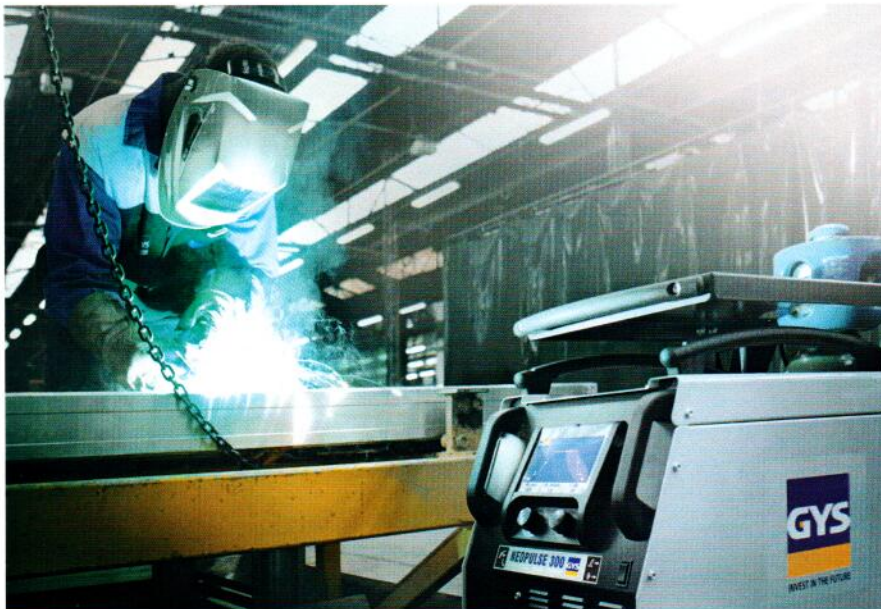
Electricity of France for households in the
western part of the country."

The 1970s saw GYS expand its product
range with car battery chargers and welding
machines and success remained the company's
trusted companion throughout the years that
followed. A period of decline in the latter
part of the 1990s, however, brought GYS
on the verge of bankruptcy. This was the time
when the manufacturer's current owners

– Nicolas and Bruno Bouygues (father and
son) – acquired the business and began the
revolution for GYS that we can now see.

Neil continues: "Being a family-owned
company has enabled us to deliver a true long-
term strategy, without influence from external
investors. The owners' unflinching belief in the
need of investing heavily in R&D has been a
cornerstone for the company fuelling double
digit annual growth for some 20 years now.

Below: GYS Nomadfeed portable wire feeder



Above: GYS Neopulse 300 amp pulse MIG welding machine

GYS is by definition a learning organisation, constantly expanding its knowledge, mastering the ever-changing technology that we now see in the latest most complex welding equipment that we manufacture.”

Winding back the clock to the close of the 20th century, at the heart of a welding machine was a transformer power supply, a very basic technology. Since then, an

astonishing technology shift has taken place, turning the modern welding machine into an extremely complex electronic device.

“The term we use in the industry, is inverter welding machine,” Neil explains. “The move towards an electronic power supply coincided with the time of Nicolas and Bruno purchasing the business and they were really keen to embark on a journey of continuous investment

in electronics. We continue to maintain a large R&D team, whose work over time has helped us to establish a product range of over 70 different machines, a far cry from where the company was in 1997.

“In recent years, in particular, we have started to see the emergence of software-upgradeable equipment, whose growing popularity is another clear marker of the evolution of welding technology,” he discusses the very latest hot trends in the industry. “To give you an example, at one end of the scale, we have the simple hobbyist, who may use a small arc welder or a small MIG welder to do a simple repair, and at the other end, there is the incredibly complex, high-power Neopulse 400 MIG machine that features multiple electronic cards and tens of thousands of lines of software. There is very little in common between the two types and the rate at which technology is progressing means that even the most recently-launched machines can have a lifecycle of just three or four years.”

Staying on top of all the latest developments in welding and effectively disseminating and receiving the information about the capabilities of new models, is arguably one of the principal challenges of the day faced by producers and users alike. A by-product of the industry’s rapid modernisation, the new knowledge that

GYS' main factory and R&D centre in Laval, France



ng generated calls upon manufacturers
t in extra effort in transferring this
gence down the supply chain.
nother feature of markets where
ology is moving quickly is that it can
ery difficult for customers, both end
. and local distribution, to keep abreast
e latest equipment and its capabilities.
erefore follows that the manufacturer
. clear responsibility to inform. This
ires both the right approach and also a
mitment to investment in local markets.
s is why our strategy is to place serious
stment in growing our service capabilities
ffering full support to our key local
kets (mainly the UK, Germany, France,
Italy) where we have strong subsidiaries
employ highly skilled industry experts
rovide the highest level of service in the
ket to support our customers and take
: of the distribution of our products."
Whereas GYS' welding equipment range
resents the majority of the group's
rover, the remaining share is divided
ween the organisation's car body welding
ge (25 per cent) and battery charger
aintenance products (20 per cent).
urprisingly, there is a big overlap between
requirements that the company needs to
et when manufacturing the three product
ilies. For Neil, branching out into other
tery environments for the otherwise
omotive-oriented division will provide a
nber of growth opportunities, due to the
wth in application of battery technology
ten lithium) for off grid storage.

"There is no doubt that we have the knowledge, so we are now working to apply our expertise to new applications," he reasons. "What used to be the humble battery charger is now a powerful electronic device that is much sought-after by the largest global car manufacturers. We have products that can be connected to the Internet and that are upgradeable and customisable, so they can play a vital role in a range of different markets."

For GYS, the last 18 months have marked an important milestone in its welding capabilities as the company has finally arrived as a full range welding supplier. The industrial welding catalogue is largely complete and able to serve every segment of the market. This has further fuelled the growth of the organisation with 40 per cent growth being seen in its UK

activities since the start of 2019, and other impressive progress in GYS's other major markets maintaining double-digit growth across the entire group.

Neil delineates GYS' strategy for the years to come: "Now that we have completed our range of industrial welding machines, the challenge is to raise brand awareness and let the market know about our proposition. To this end, we will be working to improve our communication with the welding industry. We are growing at an excellent rate, but at the same time, there are still quite a few markets where our share is rather modest. The potential to increase it is there and we are expecting our proven successful model to bring us further growth in these areas, too." *

GYS

Products: Welding, automotive body repair, and battery service equipment

<http://www.gys.fr/en>



Below: Manufacturing partners

