

EDITORIAL

3 entities, 1 group, 1 promise!

"Your positive partner" is our new signature, a promise that Sermas Group is making to its clients wherever they are located in the world. The group's activities are gaining speed in new regions of the world: the Middle East, India, China and other countries in Asia will be at the front line of tomorrow's world, and it is our mission, there as elsewhere, to join the main actors in this movement. To do so, our experience and skills as well as our requirement of true added value should make all the difference.

Respond to clients' needs with the latest technical solutions, take exploitation constraints into account as closely as possible, custom design, manufacture, install, and push ever further to satisfy the client: this is what has guided our development over the years and this is what will continue to make us evolve in the years to come around three major entities:

- **Sermas Industrie:** manufacture and maintenance of installations in the aluminium sector, notably high-speed and large-dimension T-bar and slab sawing (including non-ferrous metal and carbonaceous product sawing), but also cathode sealing, the specialized equipment for handling anodes, ladle skimming systems, not to mention on-site servicing (expertise, updating, modification, renovation) and the supply of spare parts;

- **Alu-Cut International:** sawing expertise with a dominant specialization in gantry-mounted circular sawing for aluminium sheet metal packets in addition to an extended role in the USA, Latin America, Australia, New Zealand and Great Britain;

- **3S:** consumables (saw blades, lubricants, shot, strapping, marking ink and paint, labels, etc.) specifically developed to provide Sermas equipment its maximum efficiency and yield.

Technical performance and proximity are our two most important trademarks.

The world record presented in the "News" article (opposite) is proof of our performance, as is our geographical expansion, since our acquisition of the American company Alu-Cut International.

Today we are indeed a group that is: "your positive partner".

To be continued...

Jean-Christophe Garcin
Deputy director



NEWS (Bernard Schmitt)

Farther, higher, stronger!



Slab slitting installation with a 3200-mm capacity.



Demonstrating Sermas Industrie's ambition to satisfy its clients, here is new proof of the company's ability to respect its development objectives: a 3200-mm cutting width, a world record in aluminium sawing.

A major innovation stemming from Sermas Industrie's long experience and the key to a wide range of improvements for all future installations.

"Pioneers for nearly 25 years with more than 70 installations throughout the world, until now we have developed sawing equipment able to cut slabs up to 2560mm in width with flatness of two-tenths on slab lengths up to 4.5m.

This new installation goes beyond everything we have accomplished in the past, already the best to be found on the market: a cutting capacity extended to 3200mm in width and 6m in length, with a maximum thickness of 1400mm while preserving the same performance in terms of flatness, a world record," explained Bernard Schmitt.

Without a doubt, the many developments already tested on the more traditional Sermas machines have made this major advance possible. In addition to this new cutting capacity, a wide range of innovations have been added:

- chip suction on the top of the slab in addition to the traditional suction, with a suction sensor that adapts to slab thickness;
- an automatic thickness measuring system on the sides of sawed sheet metal packets;
- engraving (pneumatic stylus);
- a 6-tonne manipulator;
- a blade especially developed to improve cutting speed, surface finish, and blade lifetime;
- automation: once the data have been transmitted, the products come out measured, marked and sorted. A true identity card, this provides total, simple and reliable traceability; no production stoppages for real-time verification and no human error possible;
- supervision: each step can be followed with an indication of the condition of sensors and activators and any defects located, alerted and archived.

All this comes on equipment covering a ground surface reduced to only 16 x 25m!

Result: greater productivity, greater sawing quality and precision, greater reliability, and simplified maintenance procedures for our clients. Beyond the technological performance that has been demonstrated, our objective is to allow Sermas Industrie's partners to make use of production tools that make a difference.

INTERVIEW (Gérard Laforêt)

Bringing together process automation and supervision skills, the key to success.

Process automation and supervision are two of the essential stations in any sawing installation. Sermas Industrie has long sought to improve its performance in these areas. This has now been accomplished by integrating new skills within the company. Gérard Laforêt explains.

In process automation and supervision, what is at stake?

These two key components take root in two totally immaterial elements (data bytes) and are therefore not physically palpable, although they are fundamentally important to the proper operation of our installations. Breakdown factors (who has never heard of computer or software bugs?) if these two components are not or are insufficiently under control, these two components can generate substantial gains in productivity throughout the lifetime of the equipment (installation, use and maintenance) if they are perfectly parametered.

What have you attempted to do to promote this?

Until now, we have relied on the skills of our network of subcontractors. However, aware of the major influence of these

developments on the performance of our equipment, several months ago we decided to acquire this expertise in-house. The key: time savings objectives (-30%) notably in installing the equipment and a clear improvement in reliability and maintainability for our clients. Our responses will be both more relevant and more efficient in terms of the quality/performance/price ratio.

How has this been accomplished?

At the beginning of the year, we welcomed three new automation collaborators and a supervision specialist to reinforce our team of project managers. Since then, armed with an exhaustive analysis of all the client comments accumulated over the past few years, we have worked to design standard programming modules for all of the functions of our different installations: "standard" translates into rapidity, reliability and stability. This guiding principle of performance should of course bear fruit for us, but particularly for our clients who can now count on the technical support of a team of specialists within our electrical and automation engineering. We'll be back in a few months to evaluate these results. The first returns are showing that our bets were indeed well placed.

Sermas Group, multiculturalism is an essential trait.

Beyond the technical-, industrial- and commercial-scale achievements, multiculturalism is another of the group's major contributions. For this reason, one of Sermas Industrie's members, Joseph Verrat, has just joined the ALU-Cut International team in Texas along with a number of international executives from Iceland, the United States, Great Britain, China and Burma/Myanmar. The first shared experiences were not long in coming: his extensive knowledge of Russia has enormously simplified the group's work in handling the latest affairs taken on by ALU-Cut, in Russia, as a matter of fact.

3S, cutting under control.



The vocation of our subsidiary 3S is to develop and supply consumables that allow clients to maximize Sermas equipment: a perfectly adjusted machine equipped with an imperfect blade and the result is mediocre (limited cutting speed, geometry problems, poor surface finish, etc.). This should be avoided at all costs. To assist our clients in this search for efficiency, we propose a complete range of innovating products such as SERMAS ALU carbide blades, high-performance Sermas oils as well as the standard product range (diamond blades, shot for surface treatment, lubricant for chip pressing, consumables for marking, strapping and labelling aluminium blocks). 3S means irreproachable service quality, ensuring infallible reactivity, the guarantee of the lowest possible square-meter price, and therefore a pledge to productivity and profitability for your installations.

The Middle East at the forefront.

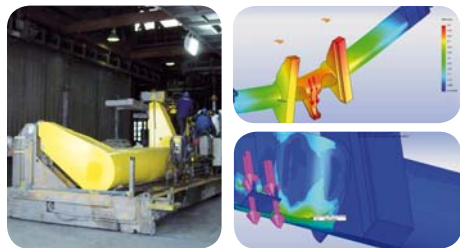
A large number of aluminium production factories are being constructed throughout the world, particularly in the Middle East where Sermas Industrie is participating as the supplier of cathode sealing units in very specific environmental conditions (temperatures up to 54°C and nearly 100% humidity). In the United Arab Emirates, we are working on a very-high-capacity plant (the 1st phase of 700,000 tonnes underway + the 2nd phase of equal capacity in the planning phase). It should be noted that Sermas Industrie is also in charge of the factory's cast iron circuit and will provide the complete workshop. In Qatar, we are working on another large-scale project.

Turkey and Bosnia, 2 newcomers in 2008.

In 2008, we added two new countries to our list of references. In Turkey, at Seydisehir (Konya), we are producing a slab and T-bar sawing line with high-level of equipment. In Mostar, Bosnia-Herzegovina, we are providing an installation incorporating all the latest automation technologies.

ZOOM (Jean-Luc Dugelet)

After-Sales Service: valuable support to make your equipment more reliable over the long term.



Replacement of the beam at the Saint-Jean RTA site and 3D modeling with finite element analysis.

A valuable partner of many of the actors in the aluminium sector, Sermas Industrie has installed more than 20 machines on the Rio Tinto Alcan (RTA) site in Saint-Jean-de-Maurienne, France, in the past 25 years. However, a true partnership is judged over time. This was demonstrated when an anode handling station delivered in 1986 had its main beam crack in several places: RTA contacted Sermas Industrie's After-Sales Service.

After listening to the client, we suggested replacing the beam while improving its performance

based on recent technological advances made by Sermas Industrie R&D, combined with client comments since the first installation was set up.

Result: end of 2007, the study and mechanical resistance calculations were completed, then mid-2008, the new beam (12 m long, 6 tonnes) was installed, finished within the 4 days allotted for the intervention.

The equipment is operating today with improved performance, with all of the suggestions for improvements adopted, notably those designed to optimize maintainability.

This was done in total collaboration with the RTA teams, in response to this partner's needs and limitations, whether they be in production, budget or security. Here is new proof of the efficiency of an after-sales service, which, well beyond supplying spare parts, contributes to the company's expertise in bringing the existing machines up to date and making them more reliable.