

New concept of automatic positive material identification within the Raccortubi group

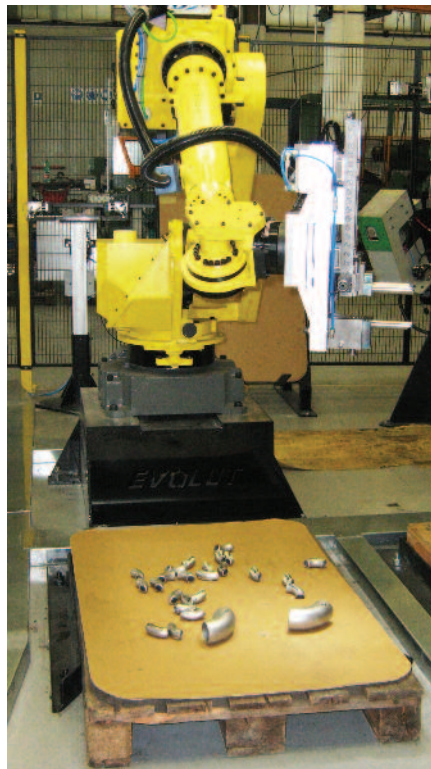
Stainless Steel World recently caught up with Luca Pentericci, Managing Director of "Raccortubi S.p.A., who was keen to pass on to us some recent news about investments, which have been taking place at Technox, a member of the Raccortubi Group



Mr. Pentericci: "as you know Raccortubi is one of Europe's leading companies in the production, stockholding and supply of piping systems for a wide range of industrial applications: from chemical, petrochemical and oil installations to power plants, from shipyards to offshore platforms. The production of our butt weld fittings is entrusted to Technox, which has been a Group company member since 1988, and which enables the Raccortubi Group to improve its productive performance and reduce delivery times. The nature of the sector in which Raccortubi operates," continues Mr. Pentericci "may not allow a great amount of product evolution, but the Group is committed to constantly developing its production processes, through assigning capital to the research and development sector. In 2009 alone this amounted to the noteworthy sum of one million Euros." It appears that one of the most important objectives of the Group is process automation, aimed at cutting costs and production times and increasing industrial capacity while maintaining flexibility and guaranteeing quality. Recent investments have been concentrated in two fundamental areas: production, with new mechanical processing machines, and testing, with the development of an innovative robotic area.

Can you tell our readers about your recent investments at Technox?

When manufacturing hundreds of thousands of pieces every year, one of the



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top priorities is to achieve the maximum productivity and, at the same time, ensuring quality controls of the highest standards. With this in mind, Technox has invested and developed an in-house brand new concept of automatic positive material identification (PMI).

Why did you decide to invest in this new technology?

This new quality enhancement has been installed to avoid any human oversight in reading the PMI instrument to detect a wrong material grade. That has practically

never been the case at Technox but, as we believe in constant improvement, the importance of addressing this point was considered crucial for the future.

How does it work in practical terms?

At the end of the production route, the operator feeds the robotic area with the pieces to be tested and the instructions are sent to the machines by a bar-code reader. Before each piece is picked up by the robot and transferred to the PMI machine, a reconnaissance camera identifies the shape and dimension of the pieces and compares the data with the information supplied by the system via the bar-code. Only if the material grade is consistent with the actual PMI reading does the robot activate the ink-jet marking machine and then moves the fitting into the packing to form layers separated by carton sheets.



The Raccortubi Group manufacturers hundreds of thousands of pieces each year.