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► Dreams can come true



Michael Aengenvoort's love affair with Cape Town started in 1992 when, with his wife, Inge, and three young sons, Marco, Pascal and Patrick, he visited the city for the first time. During that memorable holiday he became entranced – not only by the beauty of the mountains, the vineyards and the proximity of the peninsula's two oceans, but also by the lifestyle and what he perceived as burgeoning business opportunities.

'I remember telling my family that one day we would live in Cape Town,' he now relates with a smile, 'but at the time I had no idea if or how this dream could become reality!'

Well, the way it eventually happened is now recorded in this anniversary profile, published to celebrate the decade that has passed since Michael took a giant leap of faith in 2008 and established his own business ... today's Rotocon, and a success story of note.





► Michael, the man . . .

From a standing start in 2008 to a turnover of R100-million in the 2017/2018 financial year – that's a remarkable achievement in any race! It's clear that something exceptional occurred over the last decade as Team Rotocon accelerated to overtake competitors and take a decisive lead in the supply of printing and converting equipment for South Africa's narrow-web sector.

It has been said many times but it's nevertheless true: a company's ethos invariably percolates down from the person at the top. In the case of Rotocon it's undoubtedly Michael Aengenvoort's personal charm and strict integrity that has shaped the company's fortunes over the last decade.

That's not to imply that he's autocratic but it does mean he lives by defined values and that the rest of the company – his sons and the staff (now numbering 45 employees) – follow similar customer-winning behaviour patterns.

They know that simply sporting Rotocon T-shirts isn't enough. They continually reinforce company values set initially by Michael but now universally applied. It's from this management style that the overall company culture flows.

So where does the story start?

Michael was born in Germany in 1957, a fifth child with four older sisters ('But I survived!' he now quips). In 1976, he completed his studies to become a machine engineer, and



not long after was married to Inge. Marco, their eldest son, made his appearance in March 1980, followed by twins, Patrick and Pascal, in December 1981.

But today's business traces its roots back to 1977, before the birth of the three boys, when Michael bravely borrowed money and teamed up with two cousins to establish a European arm of Canada's Rotoflex business. The business was based in Roetgen, a village 15km south east of Aachen (Germany's most westerly city situated on the borders of Belgium and The Netherlands).

'As well as representing Rotoflex for sales and service of the Canadian company's inspection-rewinding machines, we also manufactured rotary dies, print cylinders, gears and other accessories for the label industry,' Michael explains. 'At that time, the only other European manufacturers of similar products were Kocher+Beck in Germany and Gerhardt in Denmark,' he continues. 'In those days, delivery of a rotary die took four to five weeks. Today, by contrast, we deliver dies produced in our Johannesburg factory in 48 to 72 hours, or flexible dies manufactured in Germany, in 48 hours.'

He undoubtedly learnt the business at the sharp end – knowledge that has stood him in good stead throughout his business life. 'When we started the tooling business in Germany, I became the company's first hand-sharpener,' Michael says. 'I cut blanks on the lathe, I ground blanks on the grinding machine, and prepared them for engraving on the pantograph. A colleague then did the engraving and I finished the process by sharpening the rotary dies by hand.'

After two years of hard manual graft, Michael turned his sights to sales, visiting customers to sell tools and machinery.

'Sales and marketing became my passion,' he remarks, 'and the business grew rapidly. Rotoflex in Germany very soon became the undisputed market leader in sales of rewinding and converting equipment. And then in 1992 I opened a Rotoflex France office in Bourg-en-Bresse, close to Lyon.'

However, it was discussions with Peter Frey of Paul Frey & Son in Cape Town, who was among visitors to the Rotoflex stand at drupa 1995, that caused the kernel of a new idea to be sown. The seed germinated during Michael's subsequent visit to PrintExpo in Johannesburg where Rotoflex equipment was

exhibited and led, in 1995, to the birth of Rotoflex South Africa, with Michael appointed as MD.

Before long he was running a multimillion rand business from his office in Midrand, Gauteng, but was still commuting regularly between Germany and South Africa. However, by 2005, a combination of his love for South Africa and his recognition of local potential for Rotoflex products and systems prompted Michael's permanent move to the southern hemisphere.

The next big change occurred in 2008 with the news that Mark Andy's parent company had acquired the assets of the bankrupt Rotoflex business in Canada, an event that caused a ripple effect for South Africa's narrow-web industry.

As part one of that unfolding saga, with the demise of Rotoflex South Africa, Michael Aengenvoort relocated from Johannesburg to Cape Town to establish a new tooling business – in the process fulfilling his 1992 prophecy.

Meanwhile, back in Germany, Michael and his eldest son, Marco, established RotoControl, which was soon producing high-speed inspection-rewinders, booklet label machines and digital finishing machines.

It wasn't long before RotoControl was acknowledged as a leading global company in its field, and, of course, it was quickly announced that Michael's new Cape Town-based enterprise had been appointed South African agent for these machines.

The rest, as they say, is history. Rotocon has been a stellar success story!

In the last financial year, the company stacked up sales of equipment, parts and tools worth more than R100-million – by anybody's standards, that's no mean feat!

But, as Michael emphasises, none of this could have been achieved single-handedly: it all comes down to the support of family, colleagues, staff and customers. 'We view our employees as our greatest asset and we're very grateful to our South African customers for their loyal support,' says Michael. 'I'm thankful, too, not only for my three sons and their enormous contributions to our business, but also to our business partners, particularly our overseas principals. And, most importantly, I humbly acknowledge that without the support of my dear wife, Inge, over the last 42 years, we would never have been so successful.'

► A portrait of Rotocon today

Against the broad bushstrokes of Rotocon's birth in 2008, a picture can be painted of Rotocon today. What is the extent of the business? How is it structured? Where are its locations and who's responsible for what?

Nothing and nobody stands still for long at Rotocon! This vibrant enterprise is a rich source of newsworthy events for South Africa's narrow-web fraternity!

As depicted on Rotocon's dynamic new website, Michael Aengenvoort and his twin sons, Pascal and Patrick (the former based in Cape Town and the latter in Johannesburg), provide trustworthy capital investment advice and a myriad consumables and after-sales services to South Africa's printers and converters in the labelling and narrow-web sectors. They're considerably helped in this endeavour by local representation of blue-chip equipment suppliers whose products literally describe a full circle – from prepress to printing and finishing, and every

conceivable step along the way (see page 8).

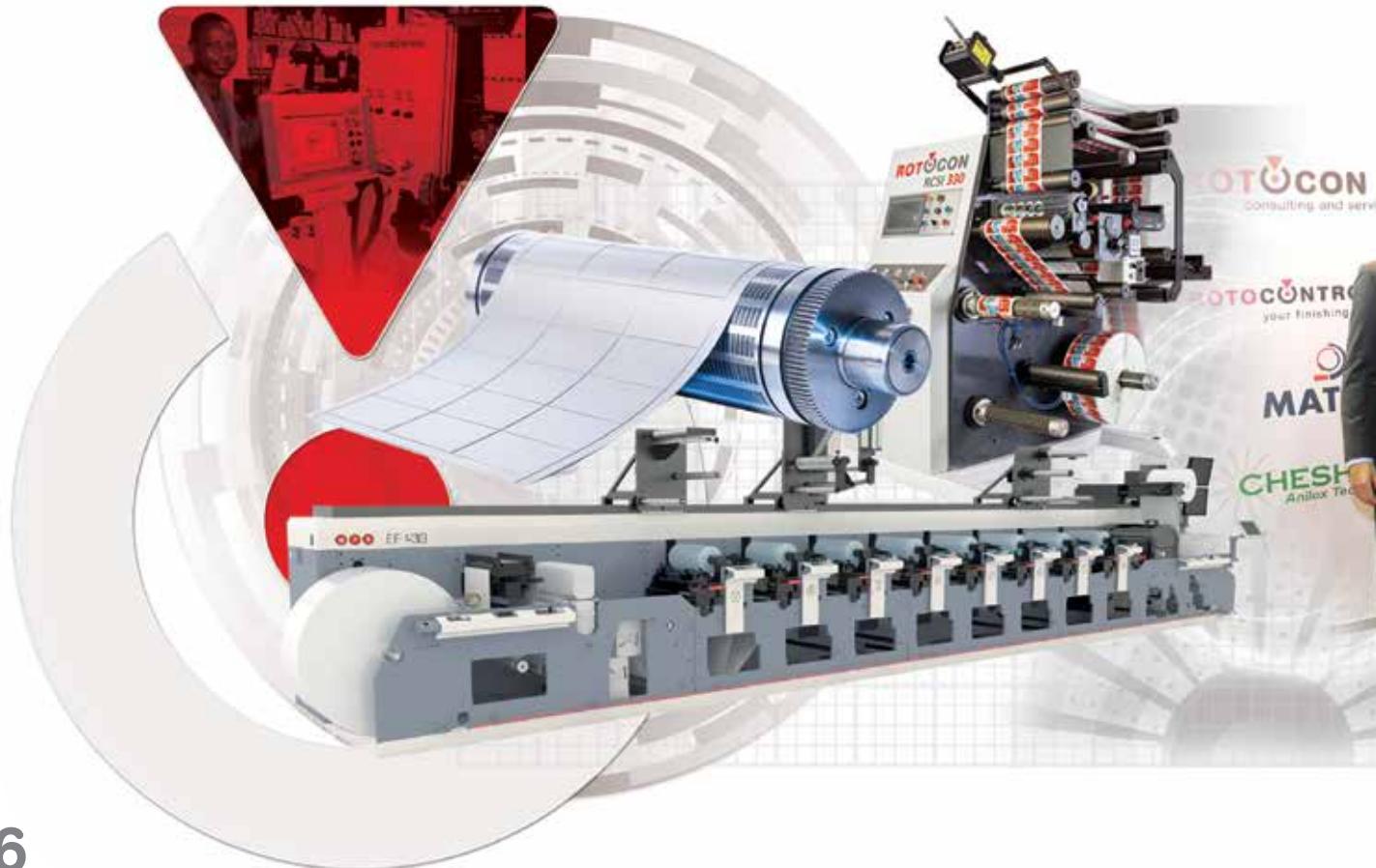
With head office nominally in Cape Town (in fact, located at the family's beautifully-appointed guesthouse, set in Durbanville's lush greenness), Rotocon also has branch offices in Johannesburg and Durban. In addition to Pascal and Patrick as sales directors, Durban branch manager Akhmuth Sayed also handles sales in KwaZulu-Natal.

Over the years, Rotocon's progress has been impressive and steady, with any number of highlights – many recorded in PPM's pages – in terms of new overseas principals secured and stellar sales successes on the local scene. However, 2015 was a particularly auspicious year, as the company climbed inexorably into the 'big time'.

This was, for instance, the year when Rotocon first attained an annual turnover of R100-million. That year's impressive catalogue of spectacular equipment sales included three MPS flexographic presses; three Screen digital presses; five RotoControl inspection systems; six GapControl systems from Wink; and three AVT Helios Vision systems.

It was also the year when Matho was added to Rotocon's growing list of overseas principals.

Also doing exceptionally well by then was Rotocon's division specialising in refurbished equipment, with seven second-hand machines sold during the year, some completely refurbished by Rotocon technicians before





reinstallation; and in some cases even financed by Rotocon.

And then 2016 was another great year for Team Rotocon.

Things got off to a good start at Propak Africa 2016, where visitors arrived in droves to view Rotocon's 'total package' on a stand that occupied space on either side of one of Hall B's walkways. This proved to be a good strategic move, as hundreds of customers, both current and potential, gathered to watch a Screen Truepress Jet L350UV digital press put through its paces and to learn about the latest options from the MPS stable.

It was also in 2016 that the Johannesburg branch was relocated to a new facility and the company diversified into local manufacture of solid rotary dies, print cylinders and accessories, with Tim Shaw joining the team as technical manager.

As Michael now reflects, that was a logical step. 'For years, we had supplied imported dies and cylinders through our three branch offices, ensuring on-time delivery and high levels of service and quality for our customers. But with the capability of local manufacture at our new facility in Johannesburg, and the extensive experience Tim Shaw brought to our team, we were able to expand our services even further.'

2016 also saw the separation of Rotocon's operations into two distinct divisions – Rotocon Consulting & Service and Rotocon Finishing Machines – and the simultaneous emergence of a new collection of Rotocon's own Ecoline brand of finishing machines (see Ecoline successes, page

19). So far as structure is concerned, Rotocon Consulting & Service is the arm that embraces installations, training, after-sales service, maintenance, spare parts and consumables, while machinery sales fall under the umbrella of Rotocon Finishing Machines.

Offering the best service in South Africa

'But we don't only sell machines,' comments Pascal Aengenvoort, as he takes up the story. 'We are more than just agents; we provide the full-service package,' he explains, 'and we want to be the best when it comes to service.'

And that certainly has been achieved, judging by the numerous compliments that fall from the lips of customers interviewed by PPM.

Furthermore, putting their money where their mouths are, the Aengenvoorts have employed additional fully-trained technicians, bringing to five the number of Rotocon technicians dedicated to customer service. And, representing another major investment, a dozen Rotocon-branded vans can be seen driving around South Africa – bringing after-sales service, maintenance, cutting tools and spare parts to customers, whenever and wherever required.

This technical and maintenance assistance aspect is extremely important, Pascal insists. 'If something goes wrong, we can and do respond immediately.'



► Principals and customers: the lynchpins

Cementing the cornerstones of Rotocon's strategy of bringing the entire gamut of production technology to customers in the narrow-web printing sector has been the meticulous choice of complementary overseas principals.

By investing in leading-edge technology sourced from Rotocon's comprehensive line-up of overseas principals, South Africa's narrow-web fraternity can assemble all the equipment and consumables needed to compete in today's demanding market for labels and packaging – from prepress to printing, via digital and analogue technologies, to all manner of ancillary and finishing systems.

It all started in 2009 when the fledgling business was named as the local partner for RotoControl. Then, following a clearly defined strategy, the Aengenvoorts carefully assembled an ever-increasing number of complementary principals allowing them to offer a full suite of technology to their burgeoning list of customers, that now includes all of South Africa's leading label printers – such as First Impression Labels, Paarl Labels, Rotolabel, SA Litho, Uniprint, Universal Labels & Packaging, and many more besides.

Following that original fountainhead agreement with RotoControl in 2009, MPS, AVT and Pantec were added to the list of principals in 2012; and this already impressive collection was further enhanced by the addition of Wink Stanzwerkzeuge in 2013, Screen in 2014 and Matho in 2015. And, last year, completing the roster (at least for the time being!), four new partnerships were unveiled – respectively with Erhardt+Leimer, Kocher+Beck, Cheshire Anilox Technology, and UV Ray.

► RotoControl takes local market by storm

It's no secret that a major contributor to the Rotocon success story was the establishment in Germany of a RotoControl. Headed by Michael Aengenvoort's eldest son, Marco, RotoControl's mission was to provide high-speed inspection, cutting and rewinding equipment for the labelling industry; and Marco wasted no time in announcing that his father's fledgling business had been named as the South African agent for these leading-edge finishing machines.

'South Africa was seen as a key market for RotoControl,' Michael now relates, 'and with years of industry experience and strong local support gained during my tenure with Rotoflex, my business was RotoControl's clear partner of choice to provide direct sales and service to printers throughout South Africa.'



Michael and his two younger sons, Patrick and Pascal, were immensely enthusiastic about distributing these finishing machines from their newly-established Cape Town headquarters and immediately set about marketing them to customers throughout the country.

And right from the start the project was a roaring success!

RotoControl machines were soon acclaimed for their high-speed and consistent quality, while the Aengenvoort family quickly built a reputation for top-quality, reliable service.

In early 2012, installations of RotoControl machines were completed at Multiprint Labels in Johannesburg and at Triocorp Labels in Durban.

Chris Bobbert, then MD of Multiprint Labels, had invested heavily to improve his company's capabilities and a RotoControl RSC Series 340mm slitter-rewinder, with an added die station, fitted the bill for his finishing requirements.

'We have very high standards and we've invested in RotoControl because it offers us the highest quality and return on investment,' he stated at the time.

Hot on the heels of Multiprint's installation came the news that Durban-based Triocorp had commissioned a RotoControl RSC 340mm slitter-rewinder. This had been ordered at the previous year's Labelexpo Europe, where Triocorp directors, Fergal Casey, Bob Anthony and Anthony Hill, had witnessed the RSC's comprehensive capabilities and were greatly impressed. Since they already enjoyed a rewarding relationship with Michael, Patrick and Pascal Aengenvoort, they didn't hesitate to purchase RotoControl technology.

Later in 2012 it was First Impression Labels' turn to be named as the latest owner of a RotoControl machine – a RSC 440.

'We opted for RotoControl as it's designed with an exceptional servo-drive system,' explained Vaughan Cumming, operations director. 'Additionally, we count on Pascal and Rotocon staff to provide ongoing service and support. We were impressed by the fact that machine installation and operator training were completed in just one day.'

And First Impression Labels is yet another example of intense customer loyalty – just this month, PPM reports the company's purchase of its second Screen Truepress Jet digital label press and an Ecoline RDF-330 – both from Rotocon (see page 18).

In 2013 came the news of RotoControl's 25th sale in South Africa, with the signing of an order at Propak Africa by yet another Durban customer – an RSC 440 for Avvo Labels.

'With that order, we reached an amazing milestone, 25 RotoControl finishing machines sold to South Africa's narrow-web converters, an achievement made possible thanks to the support and loyalty of our customers,' comments Michael Aengenvoort.

Already well satisfied with the performance of RotoControl machines at both its Johannesburg and Cape Town facilities, Rotolabel evaluated the technology required to finish booklet labels for pharmaceuticals, and settled on a RotoControl BL440 booklet/leaflet label machine featuring

a Longford OS700X leaflet inserter, plus a RotoControl RSP 440H bi-directional inspection machine.

Also in 2016 – following RotoControl's acquisition of LeoMat four years earlier and the subsequent integration of the two product ranges – came news of LeoMat finishing machines being rebranded as RotoControl machines.

At the time, Marco Aengenvoort, RotoControl MD, reported a lucrative four years since the acquisition of LeoMat. 'In addition to sales growth, our product portfolio broadened with machines for finishing digitally-created labels and production of end-to-end booklet labels,' he said.

This rebranding reinforced RotoControl's commitment to providing premium finishing equipment to narrow-web printers and converters.

▶ Customised stroboscopes for narrow-web printers



An adjunct to the RotoControl connection is its joint venture with another German company, Rheintacho (a rotational speed measurement technology business).

In 2014, this collaboration led to the development of customised stroboscopes to help narrow-web printers with any number of measurement, observation and inspection tasks.

One result of this joint venture was a light-intense, long-lasting and compact stroboscope designed to meet the needs of label and packaging converters, a particularly versatile instrument for the observation of very fast-moving materials.



Fast movement in slow motion

Stroboscopes = RHEINTACHO



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Just one example is the RT Strobe 3000 whose powerful electronics provide high illumination intensity (up to 10 megalux for each individual flash). Because of the extremely short flash duration (<5µs) precise, sharply-defined images are captured regardless of the speed of movement.

Working with RotoControl, Rheintacho took this performance one step further and designed a customised alternative stroboscope, named the RT-3015. Of critical importance to RotoControl in this design is the ability to switch input signals (internal/external control), and the elimination of ventilators to prevent failures caused by dust and to improve durability. Additionally, it's built with Rheintacho-designed bulbs with an extra-long lifespan.

Here in South Africa, one RotoControl customer in Durban reported running his RotoControl finishing machine, built with a customised Rheintacho stroboscope, five to six hours a day, sometimes six days a week, with no loss in performance.

At last year's Labelexpo Europe show in Brussels, Rheintaco unveiled yet another technical highlight – a hybrid system for print inspection using standard and LED UV light sources.



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► MPS partners with Rotocon



In 2012, marking Rotocon's appointment as local distributor for MPS, the Aengenvoort family hosted a week-long visit from Eric Hoendervangers, MD of MPS, who enjoyed a whirlwind tour of the country, meeting existing and prospective MPS customers in Johannesburg, Pretoria, Cape Town and Durban.

Eric was impressed with the positive reception from those he visited and praised the level of product knowledge and professionalism demonstrated by his hosts – Patrick and Pascal Aengenvoort, and Akhmuth Sayed.

'The visit proves that MPS has appointed the right representative for our products in South Africa,' he commented at the time. 'During our meetings, it was evident that the Rotocon team is well connected and I'm sure we'll enjoy a successful partnership.' And that was certainly a prophetic declaration!

Comments Patrick Aengenvoort: 'We were honoured to host one of the owners of MPS, underlining the importance they place on the South African market. That visit back in 2012 helped to reinforce the fact that MPS not only offers high-quality presses but at an attractive price-point for our local market.'

The same year, at an open house at MPS headquarters in The Netherlands, coinciding with interpack 2012, label printers and converters were treated to live demonstrations of the newly-launched EB flexo and EF multi-substrate presses. Among visitors were a number of South African label printers hosted by Rotocon.

As Michael Aengenvoort emphasises, such visits underline his company's dedication to introducing South Africa's printing professionals to the latest European technology. 'These trips cement our relationships with our customers,' he adds, 'and allow us to share latest developments.'

These comments have subsequently been borne out with multiple sales of MPS presses to South Africa's leading narrow-web printing companies such as Rotolabel, GM Graphix, JMB Labels and Paarl Labels, and further afield Zimbabwe's LabelCo.

It was Rotolabel's 2013 acquisitions of Flexo Process in Durban that brought a two-year-old seven-colour MPS flexographic press into the company's Cape Town plant, propelling it into flexographic printing from its traditional letterpress technology.

The MPS EF boasted seven colour stations, six of which had UV and infrared drying capabilities, allowing water-based and UV inks to be used. Equipped with free-running impression rollers, it produced crisp dots and minimal dot gain and accommodated material thicknesses between 15µm and 450µm. The new press marked a significant turning point for Rotolabel.

'The self-adhesive label market is exceptionally competitive and we needed to diversify,' MD Wicus Maritz comments. 'With the MPS, we could take advantage of opportunities to supply unsupported film products such as wraparound labels.'

He also remarks on the proximity and helpfulness of the Rotocon team, for spare parts and servicing requirements.

And not content with just South African sales, a two-fold contract signed at Labelexpo Europe 2015 with Zimbabwean printer LabelCo marked that country's first MPS press and RotoControl slitter-rewinder.



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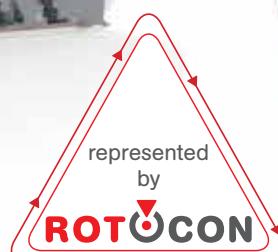
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'As we were moving into shrink film production at the time, the combination of the high-end MPS EF 430, eight-colour multi-substrate flexo press and the RotoControl slitter-rewinder was highly suitable,' comments Costa Mutzuris, LabelCo director. 'Both machines had excellent reputations, plus back-up service and support. It was a pleasure to work with Patrick and Michael Aengenvoort of Rotocon and Arnaud Fleuren of MPS. They provided invaluable assistance and advice throughout the decision-making process.'

Also ordered at Labelexpo Europe 2015 was Africa's first MPS EB label press – an eight-colour EB370 equipped with UV-drying – installed at JMB Labels in Johannesburg in 2016. At speeds up to 165m/min, it brought minimised set-up waste and reliable and repeatable quality.

The press is more than living up to expectations, confirms JMB Labels' co-owner Aslam Monia. 'More than 80% of our turnover is label work, and an investment was needed to improve capacity and flexibility. Although it's a

smaller, less costly machine than our previous MPS press, it suits our needs perfectly.'

Previously, he adds, the company didn't have sufficient capacity to seek out the new business that abounds in the flexographic label printing market. 'Now we can do more wraparound and shrink sleeve work, while ensuring superior customer service,' he confirms.

'Our decision to invest in a second MPS press was easy

considering the proven success of our MPS EF press and the dependable support we had always received from MPS and Rotocon.'

Additional equipment was supplied by another Rotocon principal, Wink, including magnetic dies and print cylinders and Wink's revolutionary Wink GapControl adjustable anvil system.

Rotocon's service is always impeccable, Aslam insists. 'Once you buy equipment from Rotocon, you become part of the family. The Rotocon team truly understands and pays attention to our needs and, importantly, also supplies all necessary tooling.'

At about the same time, Label-it invested in a second MPS press for its Randburg plant – this time an MPS EF330 eight-colour press. In the words of co-founder, Richard Laroque, it was 'an easy decision', as Label-it had been very satisfied with the print quality and the low maintenance costs of its previous MPS press. 'Being able to move jobs from one press to the other thanks to compatible tooling is a huge advantage in providing reliable service,' he remarks.

Last year's crop of MPS sales included an MPS EF 430 for Universal Labels & Packaging. Comments CEO, Brett Prawde: 'This is our fourth MPS press, and I guarantee not our last. Over the past 15 years, we've built a strong and honest relationship with MPS, which is rare these days.'

In addition to MPS presses, Universal purchases its flexible dies, print cylinders, and rotary dies through Rotocon.

► Vision control, foil savings – get it all from Rotocon

Another two critical agencies were soon added to Rotocon's line-up of products for the labelling and narrow-web sector – Advanced Vision Technology (AVT) based in Israel and Pantec GS Systems based in Switzerland.

Explains Pascal Aengenvoort, 'Almost all RotoControl units sold in South Africa were then (and still are) equipped with AVT vision systems, so it was a natural progression for us to take on local representation.'

Among recent installations are those at Uniprint (Durban, KZN) and CTP flexibles (Cape Town, Western Cape).

It was just a year after reporting the commissioning of an AVT Helios S automatic inspection system with two WorkFlow Links for integration with two slitter-rewinders at Uniprint that the company purchased more AVT equipment in late 2017 – this time two Helios S units installed on Nilpeter offset presses, plus a WorkFlow Link on a rewinder.

Says Uniprint MD, Grant Hubbard: 'The quick payback period on our first investment supported the decision to install further AVT inspection systems and the professional training provided by AVT and Rotocon ensured that staff members were quickly comfortable with the systems.'

Adds Lorne Andersen, production and technical manager: 'The AVT Helios S systems are valuable extensions to our finishing capabilities, and we can rely on Rotocon to provide outstanding service and support through its Durban office.'

Helios S automatic inspection system delivers 100% quality assurance. Its user-friendly design deploys dedicated, advanced algorithms that detect any defect,



including colour misregister or variations, misprints, text errors, spots, splashes, die-cut problems, barcode errors or missing labels. The system works seamlessly on any substrate including self-adhesive labels, embossed metallised substrates, reflective holographic foils and laminates.

The WorkFlow Link is an optional add-on module for Helios S that utilises information recorded on-press to automatically stop a rewinder, avoiding unnecessary stops on non-defective products and significantly improving overall production efficiency.

Comments Grant Hubbard: 'We're fortunate to have a forward-thinking, customer-minded business partner like AVT, continually leading the marketplace in innovation.'

Rotocon's Michael Aengenvoort adds: 'When a world-class label printer such as Uniprint places trust in AVT by installing these inspection and process control systems, it's a testament to AVT's market leading position.'

And at CTP flexibles, three Fischer & Krecke presses are now augmented by a factory-wide inspection system that includes AVT's WorkFlow Link for Packaging. This provides a connection between printing and finishing for efficient removal of defective material, improving efficiency by reducing the need for manual inspection and allowing converting machinery to run efficiently.

Another component is AVT's Argus E Turbo that combines 100% print inspection with high-resolution viewing and process control capabilities.

This system detects an array of print and material defects, including colour variations, doctor blade streaks, misprints, low-contrast defects, misregistration, spots and splashes. Throughout the print process, random defects

are automatically marked according to pre-selected quality thresholds. If a defect occurs, operators quickly and efficiently address the problem.

Thibault Dejaiffe, AVT's regional sales and marketing manager, sums up: 'We're delighted to extend cooperation with South African customers with the support of our long-standing partner, Rotocon. It's great to see our inspection systems helping printers of labels and flexible packaging to increase profit margins and enhance their market positions in the region.'

Flat-bed foiling saves costs

At Labelexpo Europe in 2011, Pantec's Rhino stamping system achieved noteworthy results on structured paper at 120m/min with perfect register. Demonstrations of this flat-bed technology proved that in-line hot foiling increases efficiency, saves costs, improves press performance and reduces lead times.

'Flat-bed hot foiling allows the use of less expensive foils and tool costs are a fraction of those associated with rotary foiling,' explains Pascal Aengenvoort. 'Many printers focusing on premium labels with a high percentage of foiling now put Pantec's Rhino system at the top of their investment lists,' he adds.

The following year saw Pantec taking part in Label Summit Africa held in Cape Town, and, according to Peter Frei, Pantec's CEO, the exercise proved that local label printers were ready for efficient, high-quality finishing. He was extremely satisfied with response to his company's in-line foiling and foil-saving systems.

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The management and staff of **PACKAGiNG & Print Media** congratulate **Rotocon** on ten years of success – and look forward to reporting on the next decade's continuing success stories.

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► Wink joins the orchestra

Over the years, Rotocon's sales have covered more than printing presses and ancillaries. Such capital goods from RotoControl, MPS, Screen, Ecoline, Pantec, AVT and Matho are now supplemented by key agencies for consumables – with two prime examples being Wink die-cutting systems and Kocher+Beck screens – thus completing the circle and allowing Rotocon to become known as a one-stop shop.

It was in 2013 that Rotocon added another string to its bow by taking on local representation of German company, Wink Stanzwerkzeuge (to give its full name), almost immediately reporting positive response from South Africa's label printing community, particularly in the face of ongoing moves from solid to flexible dies.

Kocher+Beck (K+B) is a complementary, more-recently acquired agency for the supply of screen exposure and mounting equipment, allowing in-house production of print-ready screens, using K+B's TecScreen material (see page 20).

Wink's extensive product portfolio includes premium die-cutting systems such as SuperCut flexible dies and SmartGap adjustable anvil cylinders (replacing the earlier GapControl product), and ultra-precise magnetic and printing cylinders.

As Michael Aengenvoort points out, die-cutting labels is a demanding process, with several factors influencing the choice of tooling. While some applications can be run with standard, uncoated flexible dies, most need specialised coatings or hardening to guarantee efficient processing.

Elated by positive response to Wink's products in South Africa, Ludger Bastubbe, Wink's area sales manager for Africa, enjoyed a marathon visit to South Africa in 2015, during which he visited 40 customers in five days. He was greatly impressed! 'The label converters we visited were organised, friendly and extremely happy with our products. There were no complaints at all!' he said at the time.

'Although we had been serving the South African market for some time, our real breakthrough came with Rotocon's appointment. The Aengenvoorts provide crucial technical skills and local market insights. In addition, they share our customer-focused philosophy – not only offering the best products but also the best service. The South African market plays an important part in our global growth strategy and in Rotocon we've found a reliable and proactive partner, supporting us on our path to success.'

According to the Aengenvoorts, Wink's flexible dies have fast become the benchmark in terms of quality and delivery times; and this statement is endorsed by a number of local printers, for instance Andrew Mantell (when at HP Labelling, before its acquisition by SA Litho), who, with Pascal Aengenvoort, visited Wink's headquarters in Germany, and witnessed the daily production of some 600 flexible dies.

'They're able to manufacture and ship dies to South Africa within 48 hours,' reported an awestruck Andrew.

At that stage, HP Labelling had been using Wink flexible



dies on a small scale but was steadily moving to flexible dies. 'For the future, we'll concentrate on flexible dies for quick turnaround times, favourable pricing and good quality,' Andrew asserted.

Another happy customer is Henk Crous of Sign & Seal. 'We have converted completely and are now only using Wink flexible dies – with huge benefits!' he declares.

Echoing these sentiments is Uwe Bögl, MD of RakoTampersel (now All4Labels). 'We've moved entirely from rotary dies to flexible dies,' Uwe confirms. 'With this move, our business has become more time and cost efficient, and cutting results are excellent and consistent.' Wink is now his company's sole supplier and he's completely satisfied with the quality of the flexible dies and Rotocon's reliable service.

Also expressing approval is Teresa Adinolfi co-owner of Long Run Labels.

'Having a trustworthy die supplier, such as Rotocon, who recognises our specific converting needs has been invaluable,' she says. And production manager, Lance Zeeman, concurs: 'Rotocon understands the need for reliability and, with Wink flexible dies, we know we're getting a top-class product that provides a perfect precision cut time and again.'

As more and more brand owners demand 'just in time' service, minimising downtime is vital, and Rotocon's impressive service levels ensure a smooth production process. 'Patrick Aengenvoort is always ready to go the

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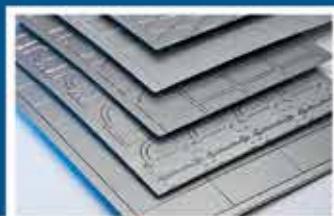


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extra mile and the longest we wait to receive a Wink flexible die manufactured in Europe is three days. That's pretty impressive!' Lance declares.

Another happy customer is Donald Wilds, Rotolabel Cape Town's warehouse and logistics manager. Here Wink products in daily use include magnetic die-cutting plates.

He outlines a catalogue of benefits that Rotolabel has gained through the use of Wink dies: 'From a business point of view, dies are produced quickly, which means we can offer better delivery times. In addition, the flexible dies are easy to store, as they take up very little space compared to bulky rotary dies. And, in the production environment, they make ergonomic sense as we don't need to use expensive lifting equipment.'

He also emphasises the time savings gained in setting up a magnetic die compared

Asked about Rotolabel's purchase of two SmartGap adjustable anvil systems, Donald is quick to confirm that these are entirely living up to expectations. 'They work very well and we've had no complaints from machine minders or the technical department,' he reports.

Donald is in very much in favour of using Wink and Rotocon as suppliers. 'What's particularly pleasing is their attitude that "the customer is king". No matter what size your company, you're important to Wink and Rotocon,' he notes.

Also content to deal with Rotocon is Steve Piper of Universal Labels & Packaging.

'We've supported Rotocon over the past few years and are now using Wink dies in both our pressure-sensitive and in-mould label divisions,' Steve explains.

Universal Labels, he adds, has moved away from solid rotary dies to the more cost-effective flexible dies. 'Shorter

run lengths and multiple changeovers have contributed to this change,' Steve continues. 'But another contributor is the reduced delivery time for flexible dies that allows us to offer shorter turnaround times. This also helps us to keep our customers happy and maintain a market-leading 48- to 72-hour turnaround time in our digital division even when a new die is required.'

The team at Universal Labels has also installed a SmartGap system. 'As we produce many substrates with different backing thicknesses, all requiring accurate die-cutting, the SmartGap allows us to maintain our drive to meet the ever-changing requirements of the local FMCG market,' Steve maintains.

'We're very happy to be associated with Rotocon and Wink as suppliers of top-quality products and service to our business.'

And KwaZulu-Natal, too, has its fair share of satisfied Rotocon customers, one of whom is Vaughan Cumming, operations director at First Impression Labels (FIL).

He has nothing but good things to say about the high-quality products and excellent service provided by Rotocon and the Durban-based team.

In fact, on the subject of Wink dies, he's emphatic. 'If it's not a Wink die, we don't use it!' he declares.

In addition, FIL has a Wink SmartGap system installed on a Rotocon finishing machine. 'It's a very simple system, but really works well,' Vaughan comments. 'As a result, we decided to purchase a second SmartGap system for another machine,' he adds.

'We're fortunate to have a supplier like Rotocon, and particularly the top-rate service we receive from Durban branch manager, Akhmuth Sayed. It really is a win-win relationship!'

► Screen digital label presses snapped up

In 2014, Screen partnered with Rotocon as its specialist reseller of Truepress Jet digital label presses in South Africa, a development soon followed by news of local sales.

The first went to First Impression Labels (FIL) in Durban in 2014 (and now FIL has just purchased another Truepress Jet – see below); and the second sale was to HP Labelling in Cape Town in 2015.

'I've just enjoyed a highlight in my 40-plus years in the label printing industry,' declared HP Labelling's irrepressible CEO, Chris Bobbert, on a visit to his Cape Town branch to witness results attained on the Truepress Jet L350UV. 'This new digital press is truly amazing!'

Several key trends persuaded HP Labelling that the time was ripe to move to digital. One was the steady move from offset to digital printing; the other was growing demand for labels to perform more sophisticated functions as vehicles for marketing promotions and for regulatory information.

So why choose Screen and why go for inkjet rather than toner-based printing?

'Not all digital presses are born equal,' asserted Chris Bobbert. 'The Truepress is the *crème de la crème* of digital





machines. Running at 50m/min it's considerably more productive than any toner-based press,' he insisted.

'The Truepress delivers everything today's label buyer expects from a leading printer – fast turnaround and first-class quality,' commented David White. 'With the Truepress we can meet all these demands,' he maintained.

The press can handle short, medium and long runs and can print on a range of substrates including transparent film and metallic foil. Its print speed makes it one of the fastest label printing machines in the sector, without any

compromise on quality – text is pin-sharp and images photorealistic. 'And it's easy to maintain,' commented Andrew Mantell. As operations manager, he particularly appreciated the automatic printhead cleaning function that cuts maintenance to less than 15 minutes a day. 'Also important is reliable technical support guaranteed by Rotocon,' he added. And with field technicians receiving extensive training at Screen, Rotocon is well positioned to ensure top-quality technical service and back-up, an observation heartily endorsed by Chris Bobbert. 'We've received excellent support from the Aengenvoort family,' he confirms.

And now, most recently, a fourth sale has been confirmed – a second Screen Truepress for FIL.

Back in 2014, FIL's owners, Sandra and Vaughan Cumming, were the first in this country – indeed in Africa – to realise the breathtaking potential of moving into the digital era with a Screen Truepress Jet L350UV.

And now history is repeating itself! A Truepress Jet L350UV+ has recently joined the ever-expanding arsenal at this dynamic enterprise.

According to Vaughan, the first Screen press was running 24 hours/day, five days/week, resulting in throughputs of over a million metres of labels/month, placing FIL in second place globally among Screen's largest ink users.

Clearly, he said, the time had come to invest in a second digital press.

But that isn't the end of the story. FIL has also added a Rotocon Ecoline RDF-330 to its digital capability repertoire. Featuring a full-rotary flexo print unit, a cold foil/lamination unit and a die-cutting station that can be used in semi- or full-rotary mode, this machine provides servo-driven digital label converting and finishing.

'For many years, we have turned to Rotocon as a trusted and resourceful partner for our technology investments in label printing and converting,' comments Vaughan. 'We embraced digital label production four years ago with the continent's very first Screen Truepress inkjet label press, and haven't looked back.'

► Matho joins the line up

German company, Matho, boasts a fine reputation for the production of cutting units and waste management systems and its most recent move into an ever-growing global market was the appointment of Rotocon as its South African representative in 2015, adding yet another dimension to Rotocon's impressive and growing list of overseas principals, with products that are entirely complementary when it comes to meeting the needs of Rotocon's customers.

Matho has customers around the world for its cutting units and extraction systems, particularly in the labelling, folding carton and flexible packaging sectors. These machines cut and transport production waste into a plant's waste disposal system and thanks to their modular structure can be designed to suit a converter's specific requirements.

'This flexibility is a major factor,' explains Pascal Aengenvoort. 'Matho's ability to supply and install a

bespoke system and to offer subsequent upgrades ideally suits changing production requirements.'

Among many examples of Matho technology in action around the world is a sophisticated waste extraction system fitted inline on multiple label printing presses. In addition to the matrix and edge trim, the system extracts the confetti to provide a cleaner environment and allow smooth press operation.

Known as the Cuttopress CP-6000, this particular system can be integrated with existing equipment. It has an air return facility with filter and handles most waste, including difficult substrates. Featuring a single central pipe for extraction, offering great efficiency and minimising power consumption, the system involves fewer staff in waste collection.

The end result is presses running smoothly and continuously, while waste is recycled and converted into energy.

► Ecoline is instant success

Strictly speaking, Ecoline can't be described as an overseas principal, since this is Rotocon's own line of finishing equipment launched in early 2017. The series is, however, produced by overseas machine builders.

As Michael Aengenvoort explains, South African label printers – especially smaller operations and start-up ventures – have to carefully balance quality with economy when making technology investments. 'Such printers look for competitive pricing but the highest possible specifications,' Michael remarks. 'For this reason, we hand-picked machine builders who could produce to our stringent specifications, while balancing our need for cost efficiency.'

In fact, it was back in 2014 that the Aengenvoorts identified perfect partners for this enterprise, and Pascal spent time overseas not only ensuring absolute compliance with Rotocon's specifications and helping to fine-tune design and programming matters, but also gaining valuable technical expertise to be shared with Rotocon's technicians back home.

But even then they were cautious and, as Michael puts it, 'tested the water very carefully' before making the big decision to launch the Ecoline range.

'The first Ecoline finishing machine was actually installed three years ago,' Michael related at the time of the launch in 2017. 'We wanted to ensure it was running perfectly before embarking on further sales.'

Now that has proved to be the case, and during the last year orders for these machines have been coming in thick and fast.

So what exactly is on offer?

'The Ecoline range fits perfectly with our existing portfolio,' Michael replies. 'We offer two products – the Rotocon RCSI-330 designed for inspection and slitting of printed labels; and the RDF-340 digital label converting and finishing system.'

By March 2017, the purchase by Spec Systems in Johannesburg of two RCSI-330 lines had already brought to ten the number commissioned in South Africa. Since then numerous units have been sold to printers around the country, and even as far afield as Sydney, Australia.

Last year's impressive catalogue of Rotocon sales included a dozen Rotocon Ecoline RCSI inspection-rewinders, plus three Ecoline digital finishing machines.

Early news came from Stellenbosch, where Label Mountain, a walk-in, mini-size label factory serving the Stellenbosch Wine Route, had given pride of place to a Rotocon finishing machine. In mid-2017, PPM reported that Cape Town's Future Labels' latest investment in a Rotocon RCSI 330 slitter-rewinder, complete with an Erhardt+Leimer SmartScan inspection system, was again raising the bar when it came to meeting customers' quality and service demand, and almost simultaneously proclaimed that Durban's GTV Label Master had replaced two existing rewinders with one Rotocon Ecoline RCSI 330 finishing machine.

In September, an eye-catching headline was 'Ecoline goes down under!' – in Australia, Avonlea Labels, owned by ex-Capetonian Mike Ellis, was the latest in the growing number

of customers for Rotocon's Ecoline finishing machines.

And yet more orders have rolled in so far this year.

In the Cape Town suburb of Brackenfell, Exco Print has joined Rotocon's growing list of customers, having recently commissioned an Ecoline slitter-rewinder, fitted with an Erhardt+Leimer SmartScan inspection system.

In Johannesburg, in addition to a new MPS 340 press, Rotocon supplied Zippy Labels with two Ecoline RCSI-330 slitting inspection rewinders; and in a continuous quest for operational improvements, Triocorp has replaced two existing rewinders with one Rotocon Ecoline RCSI 330 finishing machine at its Durban facility.



► Another feather in Rotocon's cap



In 2017, among a crop of three new principals, was Germany's Kocher+Beck (K+B), a company that enjoys a worldwide reputation for screen printing technology.

As Michael Aengenvoort explains, rotary screen printing is a valuable feature when producing labels for leading brands. 'To compete in highly competitive markets – such as wine, beauty, speciality foods – image is everything. And screen printing provides effects that take labels to another level,' he maintains.

This is clearly the case, as most of today's narrow-web presses – whether flexo, offset or digital – are equipped with rotary screen units.

Meeting the need for specialised screen printing plates for such units is K+B's TecScreen, a high-definition, precoated printing plate, made of a nickel-plated stainless steel, photopolymer coated and protected against mechanical damages with a carrier foil.

Costs are always an issue in the label market but TecScreen provides label printers with an opportunity to use the advantages of screen printing at affordable cost. Available in most common roll widths, it features a high-contrast red coating that facilitates visual inspection and increases reliability.

TecScreen grades cover all common printing tasks, such as wire cloth grades for fine line and text work (for instance, for pharma labels), while other grades offer differing resolutions and colour applications for classic screen printing, such as a white background or decorative elements. Coarser grades allow spot coating and printing relief varnishes. TecScreen's range is also applicable for printing Braille and hazard symbols.

An important aspect of this agency is the supply of peripheral equipment, including consumables such as adhesives, adhesive tapes, screen fillers and welding threads, as well as devices for screen production such as dryers, washout boxes, welder terminals and assembly towers.

Rotocon's first sale of a K+B system was to Limitless Labels in Paarl, allowing this start-up label printing business to produce print-ready screens in less than an hour (compared to waiting weeks for imported screens).

'This is essential when we're meeting very tight deadlines for labels and a simultaneous demand for top quality,' says MD, Jean van der Walt.

At the time of commissioning the system, K+B's TecScreen product manager, John Fehrenbacher, was visiting from Germany, conducting training on screen-making techniques with members of the Limitless Labels production team, including Cecelia Steyn (now the company's chief screen-maker).

According to Jean, a new MPS press is on his shopping list. 'We've had nothing but exemplary service from the Rotocon team – with the purchase of a refurbished Nilpeter press, including bridging finance, and the installation of the K+B TecScreen system. We would have no hesitation in ordering the new MPS through Rotocon.'

► Rotocon ties up with Cheshire



Established as one of Europe's leading suppliers of anilox rollers, UK-based Cheshire Anilox Technology has invested in the latest fibre laser systems, the most technologically advanced ceramic coatings, and inspection and volume verification systems.

At last year's Labelexpo Europe, Cheshire introduced TactiLoX, a new anilox for producing visually-striking, tactile, bi-dimensional flexo-printed textured labels.

This new engraving reproduces the tactile effect of rotary screen, allowing printers to achieve a two-dimensional feel to the package without the use of embossing or expensive tooling. This ground-breaking engraving technology is said to offer the highest release of lacquers and varnishes available in flexo printing.

'With our product mix for label and flexible packaging applications and our experience with on-site installations and service, Cheshire's anilox technology is a valuable addition to what we can now offer South African printers,' says Michael Aengenvoort.

► Combining productivity with extreme accuracy

Among the most recent batch of overseas principals to be added to Rotocon's ever-expanding list of principals are Erhardt+Leimer (E+L), Cheshire Anilox Technology and UV Ray.

Last year, one of Rotocon's numerous sales was an E+L Nyscan 100% inspection system installed on the slitter-rewinder at Label Link in Cape Town, where it's proving to be an invaluable quality control tool.

Says Label Link's owner, Wiaan Stemmet, 'As we've grown, inspection has become increasingly important, especially with our fast-developing focus on labels for exports, a sector that demands strict standards.'

The E+L system combines high productivity with extreme accuracy, and, most importantly, prevents defective material from reaching end customers. 'This is a world-class machine,' Wiaan continues, 'and provides our customers with complete peace of mind when it comes to quality control. In addition, it requires minimal operator training because it's easy to use with one-touch set-up.'

The Nyscan camera system provides 100% print inspection on running webs, combining quality checking, web monitoring and label counting in one operation.

With complete accuracy at the highest speeds, it stops immediately when a defect is detected. What's more, it distinguishes between different types of defects and classifies them (eg missing or damaged labels, unremoved matrix, printing defects or impurities, splices and flags).

A patented LED illumination feature also offers major advantages: a front light provides 100% web video for colour images and homogeneous images on reflective materials such as gold and silver, while a back light is typically used to avoid shadows on clear labels.

'Nyscan is the perfect solution for nearly all die-cut labels with repetitive repeat, including wine labels, clear-on-clear, non-printed and alternating labels,' notes Michael Aengenvoort.

In common with all Rotocon customers, Wiaan is keen to express his pleasure at the service received from the Aengenvoort family. 'We're delighted with the efficiency of this installation, and the training received,' he confirms.



Erhardt+Leimer 

Providing further synergy between Rotocon's principals is a strategic alliance between Erhardt+Leimer and AVT that has broadened product portfolios and strengthened services for customers, both OEMs and end users, by bringing together their combined experience and technological skills.

In the field of label inspection, E+L's Nyscan and AVT's Helios platforms are enhanced through combined support expertise.



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► Adding UV capabilities



► Blazing the Rotocon trail



Michael Aengenvoort is always quick to pay tribute when deserved – whether he's speaking about the loyalty of his staff or Rotocon's esteemed customers, or whether he's acknowledging the impressive capabilities of his overseas principals. However, in compiling testimonials from such partners and customers for this ten-year review, something else becomes patently clear – these people sing Rotocon's

In Cape Town Sign & Seal's owner, Henk Crous, has determinedly taken his business to fresh levels – particularly into the realm of sophisticated, added-value labels for upmarket wine labels. However, to meet growing demand for increasingly sophisticated labels, he took a further step in his strategic investment programme – this time in the shape of a UV Ray curing system, retrofitted to a Mark Andy 2200 eight-colour press.

'Last year, we started to run out of capacity and had to take fast action,' Henk explains. 'To meet demand, it was clear that we needed to improve our flexibility, and especially we needed additional UV capability,' he explains.

Having enjoyed a long association with Rotocon, especially for his tooling requirements, Henk had no hesitation in turning to Michael and Pascal Aengenvoort for advice. The result was the addition of an Italian UV Ray curing system, bringing the press bang up to date in terms of UV flexo capabilities.

According to Michael, a prime benefit of the UV Ray installation – only the second in this country (the first was at First Impression Labels in Durban) – are the ability to upgrade an older machine with a competitively-priced UV curing system.

Henk Crous agrees that this compact system is easy to use. 'A plug-in port on the side of each brick allows us to obtain an online breakdown of faults, plus diagnostics and maintenance plans from UV Ray's headquarters in Italy,' he reports.

'We're delighted with this investment.'

praises as highly as Michael sings theirs! It's an enviable and resounding chorus.

There can be no doubt that these people constitute a potent and dedicated army but something else is also apparent – the unwavering commitment to brand Rotocon that plays a major role in the company's success.

Underlining this commitment is a fleet of Rotocon delivery vehicles that keep the company's logistics under control while ensuring the Rotocon name is seen on the country's roads, and the company's energetic public relations exercises through regular newsletters, the supply of T-shirts to customers, and regular advertising and reports of success stories through the pages of PPM.

Another recent manifestation was co-sponsoring Team Woolworths Rotolabel in the 15th edition of the Absa Cape Epic Race 2018.

Representing Team Woolworths Rotolabel was Grant Watson (Rotolabel) and Brett van Coller (Woolworths). 'Without great partners like Rotocon, an event of this magnitude would not be possible,' says Grant.

Michael Aengenvoort is pleased to co-sponsor Team Woolworths Rotolabel and applauds Grant and Brett in successfully completing their third Epic races, and in record times. 'It's truly an exciting race for South Africa and the world,' Michael comments.

And, finally, moving down to the all-important bottom line, the company is in excellent financial health. 'Not only do we enjoy excellent relationships with our suppliers and principals, we also have an unblemished record when it comes to paying our bills. This is an excellent base from which to enter the next decade and we're looking forward to another ten years of success,' says Michael.

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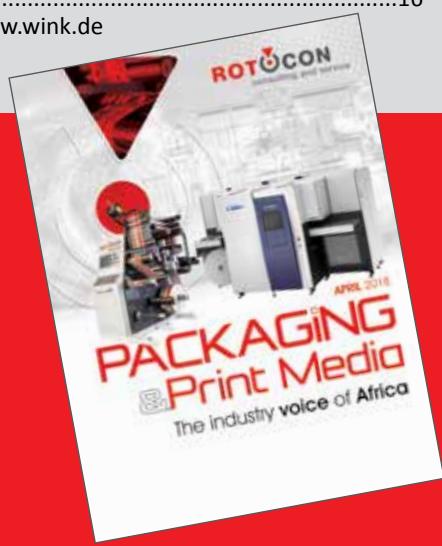
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