



EXPLORING DIFFERENT POSSIBILITIES

AF Compressors has created a niche for itself in the PET market and is attracting interest from the world, thanks to its well-equipped training centre



Jani Demirovksi and Gaetan Hage



Group photo taken at the Egypt Market Seminar.

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A view of the compressor room

■ BY DEEPA NARWANI

AF Compressors is a privately owned company formed in Liege, Belgium in 1870. Back then, the company used to produce pneumatic hammers needed for tunnelling in the local mining industry. In the early 1900s, the company started manufacturing reciprocating compressors for the coal industry.

During the decades that followed, the company continued to develop its heavy duty compressors especially for the steel industry. In the 1960s, when Ateliers Francois SA was formed, a range of oil-free reciprocating compressors were developed and successfully used in the brewing industry.

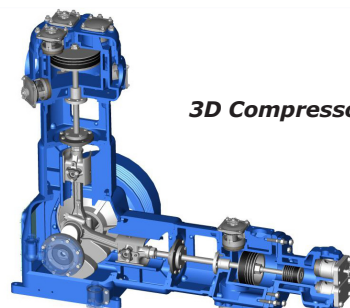
During the last 25 years, most of the beverage industry, for practical and economic reasons, converted from the glass bottles to PET packaging. With the emergence of the PET (plastic) bottle industry in the early 1980s along with a constant R&D philosophy, thanks to their numerous subsidiaries, the company's customers today are spread over 145 countries throughout the world.

Jani Demirovksi and Gaetan Hage of AF Compressors said, "Thanks to our early presence in the Middle Eastern Region, AF Compressors quickly became a reference of oil-free compressed air supplier for most of the Industry."

They added, "The growth of 10 to 15 per cent per year was sustained thanks to three major factors — the demographic growth of the Middle East, the influx of foreign works in the region and the awareness of the population about the quality of the beverages."

As one of the leaders in the industry, AF Compressors products were mainly sold via the SBM's (Stretch Blow Moulding Manufacturers) in the ratio of 90/10, which were later on changed to 50/50 once it opened facilities in the Jebel Ali Free Zone.

With the establishment of AF Compressors Middle East in Dubai in January 2008, its warehouse facilities enabled the company to create round-the-clock deliveries of spare parts. This, supported by the number of service engineers, created trust and reliability among users of compressors



3D Compressor

within the beverage industry, not only in the UAE but also within the Gulf region.

"As the bottling industry is a small world, our reputation quickly spread around and we succeeded in installing our compressors with most of the major bottlers, such as Al Ain Juice, Al Ain Water, Coca Cola, Mai Dubai, Masafi, Milco, Pepsi Cola, and many more," said Jani and Gaetan.

Following their establishment in Jebel Ali, the market responded positively and the number of installed machines tripled within less than five years. With compressors becoming a standard reference in the region, the company attracted lots of newcomers and set up a training centre in the UAE.

Jani and Gaetan said, "Thus, we established the first 100 per cent dedicated oil-free compressor academy in Dubai, the first such centre in the world of PET."

As Dubai has become a hub between Africa and Asia as well as the rest of the world, the training centre receives customers from all over, who send their maintenance and production staff to the UAE to gain skills in a friendly and safe environment. The company also recently started to explore the possibilities of installing oil-free low-pressure piston compressors within most of the food and beverage industry, as well as other applications such as cement industry, power plants, pharmaceutical industry, etc.

As of today, AF Compressors have a base of over 50 installations of such type of oil-free, low-pressure machines commissioned in oil refineries, cement factories, glass industries, food industries, etc., and is slowly but steadily becoming a major player within these markets.

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