

Premium Product, Competitive Price

Find Vanderbijlpark on the map and put a pin in it. This is the place where a new range of valves and actuators from AR Controls, destined for international markets, was developed. It's a proudly South African moment for AR Controls director Julien van Niekerk. "SA Mechanical Engineer" took a trip to the Vaal Triangle to find out more.



A respected international player, AR Controls has been building business partnerships and customer relationships since 1995, with a focus on premium products that reduce customers' total cost of production. The company's new IncoValve & Controls range offers even more customers access to innovative and cost-saving designs.

"It's taken us a long time to develop this new range," says Julien. "We acquired IncoValve & Controls in 2015, and funded most of the research and development into the new range. It has been a lengthy process, and we are very excited now to have the finished product."

The finished product is a range of highly-engineered premium butterfly and ball valves and actuators, with applications in numerous industries, including mining, mineral processing, and oil and gas.

Range

Butterfly valves are available in concentric, high-performance double-offset, and triple-offset severe-service designs in various material, trim, and connection configurations, from PN10 to PN100.

Ball valves include one-, two-, and three-piece flanged and screwfloating ball valves, and metal-seated, trunnion-mounted, and severe service ball valves, available in pressure classes up to Class 2500 in various material, trim, and connection configurations.

Stainless steel and aluminium alloy rack and pinion actuators, high-performance, high-torque output scotch yoke actuators, and stainless steel and standard linear actuators form part of the new range. All actuators are available in either double-acting or fail-safe, with the latter being achieved through spring return or air failsafe reservoir designs.

We adopted the latest manufacturing methods and procedures, and used the latest CAD software and flow analysis in our designs

Accessories to complement the product range include valve lockouts, solenoid valves, switchboxes, feedback sensors, positioners, and air-filter regulators available to any customer specification.

The IncoValve products are rugged, practical, affordable, and reliable. Julien says one of the design challenges was to develop a premium product that was both affordable and globally competitive. "We adopted the latest manufacturing methods and procedures, and used the latest CAD software and flow analysis in our designs."

SA MECHANICAL ENGINEER

October 2017

Publication of the SA Institution of Mechanical Engineering, incorporating News of Associate Organisations



MILLION RAND NAPKIN SKETCH

WHAT'S BOTHERING SA'S YOUTH?

AR Controls acquires IncoValve & Controls



Standardisation and automation not only keep production costs low, but are integral in obviating some of the most common maintenance problems encountered by end users.

Lowest unit cost

While the designs may make use of the latest technology, it is not over-designed or over-engineered. "Engineers want to make products and processes as simple as possible. We need to conform to standards and requirements so that we have high safety and integrity levels, while trying to achieve the lowest unit cost," Julien comments.

Importantly, the range is 'green', with a low carbon footprint, a must if you want to compete globally. The products are designed in Vanderbijlpark, and manufactured overseas. "It is just too expensive to manufacture in South Africa," he adds.

Client response has been good. "The valves and actuators are due to start arriving at our premises from the middle of November," Julien tells us. Some products will be airfreighted to meet orders as soon as possible. A full inventory of stock will be in the country by end February 2018.

The company is now eyeing the oil and gas industry for future growth, and will use its global positioning to build IncoValve & Controls on an international platform

Stockholding

High inventory levels mean customers don't have to wait for products or parts. To accommodate the new IncoValve range, together with an ever-increasing client base, AR Controls will be acquiring a building across the road from its current premises in order to house its inventory. This will take its storage space to over 10 000 m².

Traditionally strong in the industrial sector, notably mining, with customers in North, West, East, Central and South Africa, as well as in North and South America and Europe, the company is now eyeing the oil and gas industry for future growth, and will use its global positioning to build IncoValve & Controls on an international platform.

Boom territory

Oil and gas might not be in boom territory now, but has good long-term growth prospects. "We are positioning ourselves so that when things improve, we are ready to start doing business. Sentiment can turn around very quickly," Julien points out.

The overriding sentiment at AR Controls is positive. "I am very excited about getting our product out into the market, and showing that we have the necessary skills in South Africa. Yes, we are manufacturing offshore, but we have a full range of valves and actuators that we sell on a global scale – and it comes out of Vanderbijlpark," Julien concludes. "I am incredibly proud of what we have achieved, and excited to witness our growth and development."

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