

Making the Grade

Tregaskiss takes what it knows best, and takes it to the top

A first glance at **Tregaskiss Welding Products** sees a mid-sized Windsor, Ont. business that services a niche of the welding business—MIG welding to be exact.

Probe a little deeper, however, and you find a true Canadian success story.

Tregaskiss was chosen as one of Canada's 50 best-managed companies in 2005 and repeated in 2006. Besides its 100,000-square-foot headquarters and manufacturing facility in Windsor, the company maintains offices in the U.S., Barbados, Great Britain and China.

Celebrating its 40th year in business, Tregaskiss produces premium MIG welding torches and accessories for the automotive, shipbuilding, railcar, heavy machinery and agricultural equipment markets.

Two immediate questions come to mind: How does a company crack the top 50 two years running, and why settle on one niche (MIG) in an increasingly diversified welding market?

John Hughes answers the first question. He is a partner in the private company services group of Deloitte, one of the Best Managed program's sponsors.

"Why was Tregaskiss once again named one of Canada's 50 Best Managed Companies? Passion for change, innovation in applying leading business practices, and an ability to motivate employees were among the many characteristics that distinguished Tregaskiss Welding Products."

Tregaskiss is also a company bent on increasing its global presence.

In August 2006, Tregaskiss announced a joint venture with Browne Distribution International, LLC (BDI) that formed Tregaskiss International. This joint venture is responsible for bringing Tregaskiss brands to market in countries outside North America.

As for the second question, Tregaskiss stayed within the confines of

MIG welding to ensure that they were among the best at what they do.

"We've pursued a focused product strategy in the past primarily to allow us to achieve the highest level of quality in the products we manufacture," says Darren Grey, director of marketing and Canadian sales. "I think our company has now reached a point where our product quality and our business processes are very healthy.

"We've begun broadening our product offering this year, with plans to launch a number of new lines in North America. It's going to be a very exciting year for us."

THE HARD PART

Tregaskiss recently invested in an **ATK-600** Rockwell superficial type hardness testing machine from **Mitutoyo** because it offers the flexibility of measuring the hardness of thinner metals and plastics. At Tregaskiss, it is routinely used to ensure that materials selected for products are suitably strong for use in harsh welding environments.

"With our expansion into global markets, we've experienced a growing need to verify the quality of parts manufactured by new global suppliers. We've also had an increased requirement for the verification of benchmark-



the Mitutoyo Rockwell ATK-600 hardness tester gets frequent use at quality-conscious tregaskiss.

ing and failure analysis initiatives," explains Tricarico. "Our R&D and engineering departments have additional needs, including the testing of alternate materials that are being considered for use in our products.

"Having this equipment in our facility has eliminated the delays we experienced when using outside testing services."

Features of the ATK-600 include a large digital display, which helps reduce incorrect operation due to misreading. The measured hardness value is kept in the display by a hold function until the next measurement is performed. This reduces wasteful re-meas-

urement operation that result from not detecting the value.

An SPC interface is supplied as standard equipment to enable integration into a total quality control system that works with other measuring instruments, such as surface roughness machines, micrometers and calipers.

"For the welding industry, we foresee continued growth in welding automation, an area where our company is a major player," comments Grey.

"We feel that the continued success of Tregaskiss will depend heavily on our ability to design, manufacture and market innovative product enhancements and new welding products. That's where our investment in equip-

The Tregaskiss product line-up includes **Tough Gun** semi-automatic, automatic and robotic torches, consumables and accessories, **TGX** torches, and **Tough Guard** anti-spatter solution.

"Our quality policy is to earn customer recognition for excellence in everything we do," states Pat Tricarico, director of quality assurance.

"We understand that customers have a choice and our team works very hard to be the their number-one choice. To live up to the expectations created by the Tough Gun brand name, we absolutely have to deliver a quality product. Quality products require precisely manufactured and durable parts."

ment like the Mitutoyo hardness tester will pay off in the long run.”

LOOKING AHEAD

Tregaskiss' focus extends beyond itself



tregaskiss welding Products has been selected as one of Canada's 50 best-managed companies two years running.

to the future of the welding industry as whole. “We believe that the concern about an acute shortage of skilled welders in the future is justified,” says Grey. “We are involved in a variety of pro-

grams supporting welding education. In 2006, we were a major sponsor of the Canadian Welding Association's fundraising initiative in southwestern Ontario.

“The CWA will be using the funds raised to purchase welding equipment and supplies for donation to high schools during 2007. We sponsor the annual William Tregaskiss Bursary for deserving students in the St. Clair College Skilled Trades Program and also donate equipment to high schools.” **CM**

REFERENCE: Mitutoyo www.mitutoyo.co

WELCOME TO HARD TIMES

From testing machines to software, the gauntlet of hardness testing is being run

When it comes to hardness measurement, optimum speed, accuracy and accessibility are important. Companies such as **Newage Testing Instruments** and **L.S. Starrett** have enhanced their product offerings to accommodate these demands.

Newage Testing Instruments has developed Outline Software option for the CAMS System for its Microhardness or Macro Vickers testers with x/y positioning systems.

This program allows operators to “see” an outline of an entire test sample and place hardness traverses anywhere on the face of that outline. the application for this software is for any traverse applications like case hardness analysis and weld traverses.

In Microhardness testing systems, it is frequently difficult for the operator to determine the general location on the test sample, since the magnification of the lenses is too large to provide an overview. Using the outline Software option the operator can quickly get an overview.

The operator locates the edge of the sample, and initiates the outline process, the tester's image analysis system drives the X/Y tables to move the sample at high speed along the edge of the sample. the outline appears on the monitor as it is identified.

Once the outline is completely drawn, or partially drawn if stopped by the operator, the operator is directed to mark the starting points for predefined traverse locations within the outline. the operator then commences automatic testing and all the selected test positions are tested and the results displayed and optionally printed.

Printed outputs include graphing and data as well as overlays showing multiple traverses.

STARRETT

The no. 3817 automated digital hardness testing System from L.S. Starrett is capable of measuring all Rockwell, Rockwell Superficial, Vickers and Brinell Scales.

The system features one-touch automated testing with minimal operator involvement and closed-loop NTEP load cell technology. Preset dwell times and automatic cylindrical correction for hardness value comply with ASTM E-18 tolerances

A digital control panel controls hardness numbers from 1 to 1/100th point and there are built-in electronic conversion charts for cross-referencing hardness scales and approximating tensile strength. no mechanical or electronic adjustments required.

A detachable clamping device for oversized or irregular parts is available, as is a self-contained head assembly adaptable for special applications, and a fitted tray for indentors and anvils.



the I.S. Starrett hardness testing system.



newage's outline Software option brings hardness testing into the computer age.

REFERENCeS:

Newage www.hardnesstesters.com

L.S. Starrett www.starrett.com

Canadian Metalworking