

Red Point Alloys:

When it comes to valve manufacturers Red Point Alloys are proud to be the exception to the rule, for they are no run-of-the-mill company. They revel in the fact that they run against the flow of many of the concepts promulgated by their competitors. Far from bringing them into difficulties, this mentality had brought them unprecedented success. Located in Zoetermeer in The Netherlands, they have today become a world leader in the supply of tailor-made valves in special materials to a wide variety of demanding customers working in such industries as petrochemicals and chemicals, offshore and onshore, and pharmaceuticals. In contrast to many other manufacturers, they make time to get to know the needs of their customers well and service them accordingly; for they are renowned for coming up with innovative, cost-saving and unique solutions to challenging situations. With their order books brimming, Valve World called in on Managing Director, Luc Daverveldt, and Export Manager, Taco van der Wilde, to find out the reasons behind their success.

By John Butterfield

“First and foremost,” says Luc Daverveldt we are an ambitious, enthusiastic, and knowledgeable team at Red Point Alloys. We could not have got where we are today without being this.” And indeed, starting out in 1987 as a trading company specializing in solving the daily challenges of their customers, they quickly established themselves as a reliable supplier for pipes, flanges, fittings, and special components in exotic materials in a niche in the market that was not filled at the time. Right from the beginning they had their own machine shop with CNC machines that enabled them to adjust standard components into special, tailor-made products to meet client specifications. Quality, products in exotic materials, and tight delivery times became their hallmark. Twenty years on, many of the multinationals that started out with them – companies like AKZO, BP/Amoco, Conoco-Phillips, DOW Chemicals, DuPont de Nemours, Statoil, and Shell are still regular customers which says much about their designs, products, and their ability to bind customers to them. “Our mission statement today,” says Mr. Daverveldt is to be an innovative and flexible partner to end-

users and their suppliers for valves and their components in exotic materials. In particular we are specialists with regard to special demands and circumstances, extraordinary applications, hard to obtain products and short delivery times. We live up to this to the full.”

Standard vs. special production

When it comes to talking about everyday production, Red Point Alloys’ order books may look very different from those of the average valve manufacturer. For whilst standard production for most valve manufacturers will entail the mass fabrication of series of valves in standard materials, Red Point’s daily business revolves around producing standard valves in exotic materials like duplex and super-duplex and nickel alloys such as Hastelloy®, Inconel®, Monel®, and Alloy 20, titanium and other corrosion-resistant alloys. Luc Daverveldt takes up the story: “A standard valve for us is any ball, check, gate or globe valve whose basic dimensions comply with international standards such as ANSI, API, DIN or MSS. However, our specialty is that we supply them in exotic materials. They form our “bread-and-butter” orders. Red Point man-

ufactures on demand large series (for projects), small series but even caters for one-off requirements, all with short delivery times as a standard feature.

The production of valves in standard materials is just not part and parcel of our delivery program.” Alternatively, customers will regularly place orders for valves with Red Point in standard materials such as stainless or carbon steels when they need them to be specially engineered, so again working against the flow of most valve manufacturers.

Getting to know the customer

Another difference and one of the reasons for their outstanding success is that they actually make the time and effort to really get to know their customers well. Mr. Daverveldt continues: “It’s not something a lot of manufacturers will do but we find it extremely beneficial in establishing a good long-term working relationship. We’re therefore not just interested in getting the client’s order specifications down on paper and then getting on with the job, we’re just as much concerned about the



against the flow



The automated warehouse cassette storage system ensures the routing of base materials and components.

A final check before shipment to the customer. Staff in the photo are from left to right Ted Jansen, Luc Daverveldt, and, Taco van der Wilde.

reasoning behind their project choices and processes. Once we understand these, we can come up with some truly innovative solutions for them.” As such the company’s engineers will regularly sit down with customers to work out specific requirements and dimensional aspects of a particularly demanding valve application before going off to design and develop it with the customer in an agreed-upon timeframe. Mr. Daverveldt: “The combination of producing a wide variety of special valves in special materials to short delivery times has become a challenge in which we excel. We normally, for example, aim to get general arrangement drawings back for approval with our customers within a week of order placement”.

A recent case study illustrates this teamwork between Red Point and its customers well. “An Australian mining customer,” says Mr. Daverveldt “came to us needing valves in titanium grade 28. It’s

not an easy material to get hold of. There’s often a delivery time involved of around a year for a minimum tonnage. After that you then have to start making the valves, which makes project planning difficult. As the delivery dates for this project were tight, we mulled over this difficult scenario with our customer to see where we could come up with the material elsewhere outside our normal sourcing. By using our combined networks, we happened to come across a batch of old heat exchangers in the USA that contained the needed metal. We had them melted down and converted into bar within nine months. Four weeks later we had the finished valves shipped to our customer – a saving of several months on normal production times and ensuring that project deadlines were more than adequately met. That’s finding solutions for the customer!”

Sometimes consulting Red Point Alloys for solutions may even result in proposals

which their customers had not even thought of, but which prove to be far more viable, cost-efficient or less time-consuming for them. For unlike many companies they will not just go out and follow their clients’ specs, they listen, ask questions and come up with answers. To demonstrate this Mr. Daverveldt quotes a challenge posed from a German client who called with an urgent request for some twelve-inch gate valves with demanding specifications. Inevitably, these valves were needed almost immediately and, according to the client, would need extensive testing in order to be certified for use in a hazardous environment. In fact the test requirements were so extensive that other manufacturers were simply unable to meet the target deadline. Red Point carefully ran through the specific requirements the valves would have to meet with the customer, and realized that, in fact, less stringent tests could be applied to achieve the appropriate certification. They were thus able to manufacture, test, and deliver the valves within a very short timeframe, to the great satisfaction of the client.



Red Point Alloys makes use of the latest 3D CAD design and CNC machines.



Quality a high priority

Another benchmark of Red Point that runs against the grain of many valve manufacturers is that they do not compromise on quality. This is shown by their long history of certification: approval by Stoomwezen in The Netherlands in 1989, ISO 9002 certification since 1993, ISO 9001 certification since 1999, and CE/PED approval from 2002 onwards. Quality approval does not end here, however, as Red Point works to project-based qualifications and certification as well. Every individual valve is hydro- and low-pressure air-tested in-house. Further, LPE, X-ray and US testing, etc. can be carried out upon request as can specific customer specification testing to meet project standards and individual customer specifications. They also arrange performance and cycle testing using local laboratories. In addition, their fully automated warehouse cassette storage system ensures that the routing of base materials and components used in each valve is traceable. Mr. Daverveldt continues: "We keep a ten year record of each valve which we have produced and we ensure that during this period spare parts are either available

from our stores or on a very short delivery time. Even after this time our responsibility to clients does not end as we will continue to deliver parts upon request."

Production from bar reduces lead times

Against the flow also means that Red Point produce their valves from bar stock material or forgings rather than from castings. "Because of this we do not have long lead times for casting deliveries and, likewise, no problems with casting qualities," says Mr. Daverveldt. "We always have a large stock of base material (60 tonnes) in different grades in stock. All non-wetted parts are standard stock items and wetted parts are made to order in-house which gives us maximum control over all production aspects." These factors provide them with considerable production flexibility, enabling them to meet tight turn-around and delivery times, which is something that you do not consistently find in valve manufacturing companies. However, flexibility does not end here since the company just as easily handles the production of large quantities of valves for multinational projects (approximately 95% of

their work), as those for small series projects, or even single valves.

Ensuring your customers' tight turn-arounds are met also means investing in state-of-the-art technology. As such Red Point uses the latest CNC machines, a modern ERP system, and a sophisticated 3D-CAD design system. The CNC lathes are true high-tech metalworking machines that are capable of turning, milling, drilling, and tapping in one continuous process. Moreover, the modern manufacturing equipment is supported by advanced software applications. By combining computerized fluid design and finite elements method software, they are able to determine the essential points related to strength, current, and temperature during the design phase. Following on from this, the entire design process is enhanced, enabling them to considerably reduce the time in getting products to the marketplace. "Automation, technical know-how and a dedication to perfection has brought the company to the respected position that we fill in the marketplace", says Luc Daverveldt. "To maintain our position, new developments in sealing are



Two innovative and unique solutions to challenging situations: (left) a duplex gate valve; (middle and right) titanium grade 28 swing check valves. The latter valves were produced especially quickly to meet the needs of an Australian mining company.



closely followed by our engineering department and new technology is adapted into our products as soon as its added value has been proven.”

Sales network

Red Point Alloys now exports to more than sixty countries, having recently also added a new sales office in Shanghai. To guarantee that they are in close contact with the marketplace, whether this be in Europe, Africa, South-East Asia, the Middle-East, North- or South-America, or the Pacific region, they work through a network of local trading houses. “As such we are always near to our customers and are in touch with their needs”, says Taco van der Wilde”. Our great strengths lie in our products, our use of international specifications, and our ability to source materials. Our technical ability to produce special components is also unparalleled.”

Their strategic location, within half an hour of Amsterdam Airport and Rotterdam Seaport, two of the largest shipment ports in the world, also makes sure that shipments can be arranged very rapidly to clients. “Our experienced export shipping

personnel are, moreover, used to the different certificate, extensive and detailed project documentation needs and packing requirements from worldwide customers so this never poses us with undue surprises or difficulties,” he comments. “The future

looks very bright,” says Luc Daverveldt “so you will inevitably find us working wherever specialty valves and components are needed or where end-users need solutions to the challenges they face working in harsh and hazardous environments.” ■

Taco van der Wilde tells us about his work

“If I was to sum up my job in four words”, says Export Manager, Taco van der Wilde, “I would say that it is fun, varied, and very satisfying. This obviously needs further explanation. The fun and varied part comes from the way in which we work. There are never two days the same. One minute, I might be talking to clients in China and a few minutes later I may be on the phone to someone in the USA or Europe. The conversation might revolve around a large project involving deliveries of a multitude of our various speciality valves in exotic materials or simple concern the challenges posed by one very unique valve. That’s what makes it so interesting! Moreover, because of Red Point’s accumulated expertise and knowledge in a wide range of application fields covering anything from chemicals to desalination processes and from oil-rigs to mining, we have accumulated a group of customers who work in demanding, even hostile environments (high temperatures and pressures, and corrosive atmospheres) where nothing but the best will do. It’s therefore exhilarating to come up with the right solutions to their challenges and save them money at the same time.



People who do not know us will sometimes phone up and ask us to quote model sizes, series numbers and prices. However, this is not the way we work. We’re in the business of offering unique solutions so we need to spend time getting to really know and understand our customers requirements. Our answers cannot be filled in on a specification sheet. We’re not afraid to devote this time to them. Practice has taught us that we can often provide solutions which had not even initially been anticipated by our clients but which work out far more economically and lasting in the long-run. Our customers tend to stay with us for many years which is the way we like it”.