

Young gun furnace consultants shake up the industry

Sue Charlton | *Special Contributor*



TERTIUS PIETERS AND MALCOLM THERON
AFC is already a strong competitor in the smelting industry

Allied Furnace Consultants (AFC) may be the new kid on the furnace consulting and project engineering block, but it brings an enormous amount of experience to the table along with a new approach to consulting within the industry.

Established by **Tertius Pieters** and **Malcolm Theron** a mere 18 months ago, AFC is already a strong competitor in the smelting industry.

AFC specialises in offering a diverse consulting, engineering and design service for the furnace and furnace fabrication industry.

AFC has extensive knowledge in the melting and smelting sectors with the complete design and turnkey project management of pyrometallurgical plants, as well as designing specific furnace equipment with the specific aim of improving the performance of existing equipment.

AFC also fabricates critical and less critical equipment for the arc furnace sector at its factory based at Jet Park, Gauteng.

Pieters, marketing and process director says, "When we established AFC, our initial aim was to add value by means of a smaller task team, focused engineering company that would be both dynamic in its approach to customers as well as cost-effective. AFC has been extremely successful in this regard to the extent that we have invested in the development of a medium-sized fabrication factory to support the business in terms of quality.

"As a direct result of this investment, we have also been able to increase the value chain to the

benefit of the client and AFC.

"This development has put us in the enviable position where we can fabricate with full design and engineering support, and, by the same token, design, engineer and supply confidently with the technical and hands-on support of the fabrication factory."

Pieters said: "AFC can offer a straight forward replacement or upgrading of plant, or we can offer to improve efficiencies within the plant in terms of recommending new processes and equipment. We pride ourselves on our constantly upgraded body of knowledge and applications, and we can make recommendations on an alternative system that would improve the service and maintainability.

"Our approach with the customer is to offer a re-evaluation of the current systems, processes and equipment. However, we will take on board any customer considerations and endeavor to give the customer, exactly what the customer wants and desires."

Pieters adds: "We are very pleased to announce that AFC has been contracted to do the design and engineering of a new smelting facility, Metal Recovery and Slag Processing Plant, being planned by Vus'ithemba Project Solutions and MSM— both led by Entrepreneur **Anton Mecchi**— partnered with various specialists. We are currently in the feasibility study phase and this is a great vote of confidence not only in the design and engineering capacity of AFC, but also in our ability to successfully

project manage a large contract of such value."

Theron comments "We have been extremely fortunate to establish a credible reputation for quality products and delivery since AFC's inception in 2005. We have completed numerous projects which include studies for operational improvement and have designed, fabricated and installed grillage cooling systems, furnace shells, refractory linings, lining monitoring systems, water-cooled roofs and furnace feed systems.

"AFC has successfully done turnkey and reimbursable projects and studies for most of the major players in the smelting industry in South Africa as well as having been contracted to supply detailed engineering packages to international companies based in India and Australia."

Professional capacity

AFC's industrial capacity includes but is not limited to furnace shell and water-cooling systems, furnace water-cooled roofs and cooling systems, furnace water cooling and pumping systems, refractory designs, tap-hole designs, ladles, slag pots, ladle-transfer cars, ladle and launder heaters, specialised lifting equipment, casting bay layout, project management, three-dimensional draughting capabilities, assistance with commissioning and operation of arc furnaces and lining monitoring systems.

Pieters concludes "We, at AFC, take great pride in our product and service. We are professional and serious about AFC. We work to ISO standards throughout. We have a well-trained and extremely experienced workforce. The first 18 months in the life of AFC have provided us with a huge learning curve from which we have benefited. We may be a new, small company but we are versatile, committed and never hide anything from our clients. We believe in presenting the facts, options and possibilities. We deliver a tailor-made consultancy, something that our clients and potential clients will be hard-pressed to find elsewhere. We offer price competitiveness, professionalism, industry-progressiveness and attention to detail. That is something that only a small, exciting, new company can offer. We are completely client-focused."

AFC

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