



Guild International: Providing worldwide customers with cutting-edge welding technology

The MEL laser welder is derived from a fully solid state laser which has no moving parts and requires no special high price optics.

Located in Bedford, Ohio, USA, Guild International has been a world leader in the designing and manufacturing of coil joining and strip accumulating equipment for the steel processing, tube and stamping industries for 58 years. Dedicated to providing the highest quality and most technologically advanced customized machining solutions, Guild continuously meets the rigorous engineering and design expectations that clients value. Truly a global company, Guild International's equipment increases productivity and yield on thousands of installations worldwide on virtually all types of coil processing lines. *Stainless Steel World* had the pleasure of speaking with Guild International's Mr. Mike Wheeler, President & Owner; Mr. Lee Kothera, Vice President of Sales; and Mr. Mark Wagner, Sales Engineer. We discussed the company's latest milestones, its key machinery for the stainless steel market and why it should be the preferred company of choice worldwide for welding equipment.

By Candace Allison

Servicing the metals industry

Lee began our conversation by explaining that, “Guild International was started in 1958 by Mike’s father. It originally began as a small organization focused mostly on the tube and pipe industry, but over the years we evolved and went into the strip processing industry. It was then that we developed our reputation for being well-known in carbon steel, but especially the stainless steel and special alloys industries including silicon steel, titanium, Hastelloy, zirconium, etc. Today we service all of the metals industries whether its tube and pipes, stamping or strip processing.”

Mark continued that the Bedford, Ohio location houses all of Guild employees such as sales, engineering, accounting and operations as well as the spare parts department. The headquarters is actually made up of three main buildings: the workshop, the main warehouse and an office building, but there is also an auxiliary warehouse, which is one of the company’s newest additions. The main warehouse holds most of the spare parts inventory as well as all the smaller, yet important, pieces of equipment for the tube and pipe industry. These types of parts often have a very quick turnaround so in order to provide customers with the short lead times they require, it is essential for Guild to keep these parts in-house. In addition, the main warehouse is where the team stages the components for machines that are in the process of being built.

Recent milestones

When asked about the company’s latest milestones, Lee was quick to answer that it is definitely the laser welding that the company has recently become involved in at the customers’ request.



Lee Kotera: “ We service all of the metals industries whether its tube and pipes, stamping or strip processing.”

He clarified that clients had been asking for laser welding over the last several years but the company had been reluctant to branch out into this area because at the time the technologies were complicated and expensive. But that has now changed, which is a major boost in technology for both Guild and all of its clients. In fact, Lee told us that the company is in the process of completing an order to take one of the standard MIG-welding machines and retrofitting it with two 8KW fiber lasers. The actual retrofit will happen over the next few months. Mike further explained that the final product will be a dual laser welder that will be the first in the world for joining coil ends. It will be the most advanced fiber laser technology, not only in the United States, but also the entire global market.

Mark described yet another achievement the company is proud of as the recent streamlining of its manufacturing process. “As a team we are constantly looking for ways to improve, especially in terms of our manufacturing process. Approximately a year ago we promoted an employee to



Mark Wagner: “As a team we are constantly looking for ways to improve.”

become a Materials Manager because we felt we needed to keep better track of our incoming and outgoing components and equipment. The position was created to do just that: improve our process from start to finish. Prior to creating this role, our process was overall very good but sometimes in the middle of the order we needed someone to really keep track of everything, especially with some of our bigger machines as there are a lot of complex parts involved. It’s really paid off in terms of organization and saving money, which provides a more economical machine.”

Dependable products

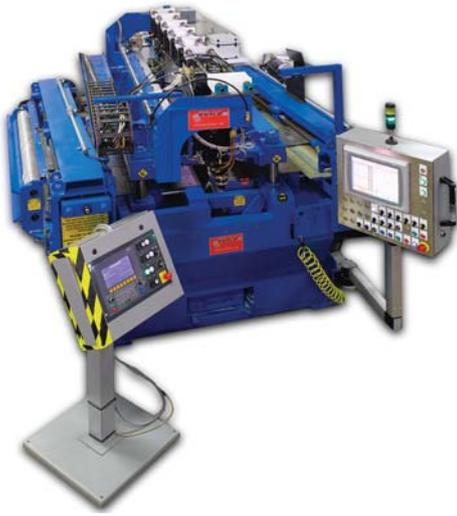
Guild offers a complete line of coil end welders for almost any application and metal, especially stainless steel and specialty alloys. The highly-skilled and knowledgeable engineering team is always ready to assist customers to determine their exact needs to ensure proper equipment design and compatibility with any existing equipment. In addition, the company also offers a well-stocked department of spare parts and is able to provide clients’ with a quote quickly and accurately for any spare part whether it is an old or new machine. It can also supply a machine operations manual or BOM along with the assembly drawings in either hard copy for PDF format. Just some of the spare parts that are always in stock include weld wheels, back-up bars, torches and torch parts, which can be shipped the very day a purchase order is received. In terms of Guild’s world renowned machining products, Lee clarified there are several key machines for the stainless steel industry including the MEL Laser Welder™, NB Overlap Resistance Welders, QMT and QMM Quicklap Seam Welders.



Mike Wheeler: “We have learned to appreciate the customs and expectations of customers worldwide.”



Bill Maruschak: “Our work force is dedicated and our sales and engineering team is innovative.”



The MEL laser welder is one of the most technically advanced laser welders on the market. The RCM series of zipwelders produce a high quality weld.

MEL Laser Welder™

The MEL Laser Welder™ is designed and engineered to be one of the most technically advanced laser welders on the market. It is derived from a fully solid state laser which has no moving parts and requires no special high price optics. The laser does not require any special gases, mirrors or special consumable parts to operate. This fully automatic machine requires very little operator involvement and is also much more maintenance friendly than the other laser machines currently on the market. It butt welds two coils together using a USA built fiber laser system. It can be used on a wide range of weldable alloys including carbon steels, stainless steels, silicon steels and aluminum. It can shear and weld material ranging from .015" (.381mm) up to about .400" (10.0mm) thick and almost any strip width. This system is designed for use on either start/stop lines or continuous lines such as pickling, rolling mills, etc. As a note, Guild keeps a small laser on the work shop floor for doing weld samples a potential customer's material.

RCM ARC welders (Zipweldertm)

The RCM series welders produce a high quality weld using either TIG, Plasma, MIG or LASER welding process to produce a very high quality butt weld. The two coil ends are centered, sheared, then moved into position and the welding process occurs. Strip thickness can range from about 0.5mm up to 16mm. Some of the wider applications are for strip that is 2,000mm wide. These machines are used on various types of lines ranging from anneal and pickle lines, to coil build up lines, galvanizing lines and tube and pipe mill applications.

NB Series Rollspot/Seam Welder

This cutting edge machine joins two overlapped coil ends together using the resistance welding process. The welds created with this machine are overlap welds created by the use of a weld wheel and a current wheel. Current passes from the wheel through the overlapped strip ends and a weld nugget is formed, joining the ends together. Depending on material and thickness, the welds can be made in either 'spot' mode or 'seam' mode. Light gauge material uses a steady movement of the weld wheels and a seam is made, whereas when welding thicker material the wheels will quickly stop on the strip and create weld spots. The thickness of the weld is equal to the sum of the strip thicknesses. The amount of overlap that is made can vary depending on options that are purchased, but can be as little as about 10mm (.375") on light gauge material. This machine can be used on

almost any process line, but is usually found on lines such as paint, tension leveling, etc.

QMT and QMM Quicklap Seam Welders

The QM Series Seam Welders produce very high quality welds that are generally no more than 10 percent thicker than the parent material. Welds can be made in less than 25 seconds using these welders, depending on strip size. This system includes two machines, depending on client requirements. The QMT is used for higher speed applications and the QMM is used on heavier gauge applications. It joins together two coil ends by resistance welding two slightly overlapped strip ends and the welds created are often almost as strong as the parent material. The QMT and QMM can shear, weld, and planish material ranging from about 0.1mm (0.004") up to about 3.0mm (0.125") thick, and as wide as necessary.



The NB Overlap welder is most commonly found on lines such as paint, tension leveling, etc.



The QM Series Seam Welders produce high quality welds that are generally no more than 10% thicker than the parent material.

Recent machines have been used for strip up to 1,900mm (76") wide. Any weldable material can be joined on these machines. The welder is designed for use on either start/stop or continuous lines such as galvanizing, tension leveling, tin plate,, annealing, etc.

Mark also explained that in addition to the spare parts offerings and the state-of-the-art welding systems Guild also provides rebuilding and refurbishing services for its clients. The company has been doing this for the past few years but because there are so many Guild machines all over the world, this has been a very successful endeavor for the company. Mark gave the example of recently completing an ARC welder upgrade for the stainless steel company, Aperam, in Belgium. That company had two older machines where the main shears, the most important component, needed replacement. Guild International was able to offer its services and successfully completed the upgrade.

Efficient production & rigorous QA

Mark detailed that the production process for all of the machines is very thorough and relies heavily on clear communication between everyone on the team. "We typically start our sales process working with the customers on the application side of things, helping to choose the right machinery while also following their specifications and as well as any other specifications. Once we have the established contract, we have some internal meetings with our department heads and our project people that will be involved. Lee, Mike and I typically run the meeting and introduce the customer

and we do a complete specification sheet on the machine to be built. After that, we have additional review meetings because at this point our purchasers are buying components, fabrication is getting started and engineering is in full swing."

He continued that anywhere from four to eight weeks later, depending on the project, "we have another review meeting to see where everything stands on the engineering and component sides, if there will be any delays or if there are any issues, etc. Then we meet with the end-user to see if there are any changes on their side, which can be pretty common. Things can change quickly and often so we have to be on top of it."

Mike confirmed that the entire company is "pretty big on Excel Spreadsheets" because detailed checklists are followed throughout the entire building process in order to ensure everything is done in order and properly, especially during quality control. Lee agreed that throughout the entire production process communication is always kept with the customer and even once the machine is installed and up and running that relationship is maintained as Guild is always ready to help with anything the client may need afterwards such as rebuilding or upgrading services. As a result, Guild retains its customers for a long time and often reaps a substantial amount of repeat business.

Bill Maruschak, CFO at Guild joined the conversation and interjected, "Our management group is strong and aggressive. Our work force is dedicated and our sales and engineering team is innovative and strives to make sure that

Guild stays "ahead of the curve" when it comes to providing equipment that offers state-of-the-art quality, specific to the needs of our customers."

A global presence

All of Guild International's products are available overseas and are part of production lines from Turkey to China to Mexico to South Africa. Mike detailed that the machines are sold one of two ways: either through the original equipment manufacturer (OEM) line builder or directly through the end-users themselves whether it be POSCO, Baosteel, AK Steel, etc. Guild is able to distribute the machines easily and quickly wherever in the world the client may need them.

This strong global presence is just one of the many reasons why clients should choose Guild's machines for their production lines. As Lee states, "Some of the worldwide factories our machines are installed in are huge with many different kinds of process lines. There are certain companies that specialize in laser welding, others that specialize in seam welding and yet others that specialize in resistance seam welding or spot welding. We do ALL of those. If a customer selects us we can supply every welding machine in their facility, not just one. This means it could reduce the spare parts inventory if there is to be service needed, we have a specialist that can come in and service all the different types of machines we provided. Other welder suppliers can't do that, especially on a global scale." Mike concluded that Guild's extensive history in exporting machinery throughout the world, over 50 years now, has enriched the Guild team by meeting and working with these customers. "We have learned to appreciate the customs and expectations of customers worldwide. It is much more difficult to travel around the world to find and support customers, but everyone at Guild has been enriched by this learning experience, which allows us to meet the unique requirements of our often distant customers."

Facts & Figures

Name:	Guild International
Founded:	Since 1958
Headquarters:	7273 Division Street, Bedford, Ohio 44146, USA
Products:	Laser welders, ARC welders, resistance welders and tube mill entry machines
Website:	www.guildint.com