

Mattei: Over Seventy-five Years of Compressor Leadership

Italy makes amazing race cars (Ferrari), top-tier watches (Bulgari) and luxurious shoes (Gucci) and they also make some of the finest air compressors on the planet, respected by auto body and mechanical shops throughout the world.

Mattei's General Manager **Jay Hedges** knows air compressors inside and out after two decades in the industry. He's been with Mattei for nearly three years, overseeing North American Operations for the company that developed the first rotary vane compressor in 1958.

For nearly a century, Mattei's machines have been in use worldwide for industrial and automotive applica-

veloped the technology, so we're in a good position. Recent patents generated by our research & development department are evidence of our drive to continually exploit proprietary vane technology and advantages. Collision repair facilities benefit from the performance and efficiencies of our rotary vane compressors versus traditional rotary screw compressor systems. With a focus on both current and future compressor models, Mattei will reduce maintenance and energy costs while delivering ever increasing efficiencies."

Mattei's compressors are sold in the U.S. exclusively through distributors and a handful of re-sellers, such as *Keystone Automotive* and a network

compressed air user to have 100% back-up air compressors at the ready. Therefore, corporations can't tolerate a compressor failing. Whether you're fixing 50 or 500 cars monthly, the compressors in any size shop must be reliable because if they go down, it will obviously affect their production."

Cubic feet per minute (CFM) is the key power rating when it comes to compressors and Mattei's rotary vane compressors lead the industry in that regard. "More air with less energy; that's our reputation and we are proud of that. Our machines produce more CFM per horse power than any other rotary or piston compressor on the market. This is one reason why our compressors are great, because they represent a value for body shop owners and that's why they've been a big success in the collision industry as a whole."

Mattei's rotary vane compressors are more efficient than screw rotary

compressors and deliver 90% mechanical efficiency, according to Hedges. "As the speed decreases, the compressor's efficiency increases, offering straight-line energy savings," he said. "And they're more durable, because our vane compressors are designed for low speeds and long life and backed by a revolutionary 10-year warranty. Our vanes are designed for 100,000 hours of service without bearing changes or rebuilding an air end, twice the life of most rotary screw compressors. They just don't break down, because they feature direct drive and in-line operation, while using fewer moving parts."

Mattei's Optima Series is ideal for high-volume body shops, according to Hedges. "The variable speed feature is highly coveted by collision repair companies because they will optimize energy savings for collision

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Mattei's General Manager Jay Hedges showing body shop owners the company's products at their Collision Repair Compressed Air Training Center in Baltimore, Maryland

tions. Body shops throughout North America have embraced the company's rotary vane compressors because they're more efficient and durable than comparable products on the market, Hedges said.

Mattei was founded in 1919, when a young Italian Army Engineer named **Enea Mattei**, started exploring the compressed air industry, an industry that hadn't even been fully born yet. In 1934, he invented the world's first portable air compressor and after many years of growth and technological advances, his namesake company become a leader in the world of compressed air technology.

Hedges cited several reasons for Mattei's success worldwide: "We de-

of 200 independent distributors throughout the country. Big collision chains that currently use Mattei's compressors include Caliber Collision and Cook's Collision, Hedges told us.

"Big collision chains are attracted to these rotary vane compressors because they can save a lot of money through the machine's ability to conserve energy and the low maintenance required. Large companies want a reliable compressor, that when routine maintenance is performed by qualified techs it will not cause unscheduled downtime. Any equipment failure costs you money, but when your compressor is down you are essentially shut down. It's obviously critical for operational consistency. It's rare for a



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facilities with varying levels of plant air demand. One of the best things about Mattei's vane technology is that this machine has no ball or roller type bearings because there is no thrust loading. Thrust bearings are subject to B-10 and L-10 design life considerations and the thrust forces deteriorate those bearings making them the most-common parts to fail in rotary screw compressors. This is a big deal."

Dan Wittenberg is the general manager of Keystone Automotive in St. Cloud, Minnesota. He has seen a spike in popularity of Mattei's rotary compressors within the last few years, and he tells us why: "We're seeing

more body shops in our region making the transition to using waterborne paint, and these Mattei rotary air com-



Mattei's AC tank-mounted units like this one are highly respected by body shops worldwide

pressors are ideal for waterborne, because they provide more airflow. Plus, they're greener overall when compared to piston-type compressors.

They will shut down automatically when demand for air drops so it won't pump air all the time. A smaller shop requiring intermittent usage is a perfect application for a Mattei rotary compressor.

"It's easy to operate and maintain and the new computer-based rotary vanes are on the technology's leading edge," Wittenberg said. "The three major advantages of the Mattei rotary vane compressors over the rotary screws are: 1) They cost less to operate, because the motors will run less. With the cost of electricity, this is a big deal for a body shop watching its bottom line and 2) Durability—the rotary vane compressor will last longer and it can handle any amount of usage you can throw at it. 3) They're quieter than any other compressor on the market.

You can stand right next to this machine and have a conversation, which is a breath of fresh air, that's for sure."

Wittenberg and Keystone performed extensive product research while looking for a better air compressor and he discovered that Mattei's rotary compressor is the best on the market, he said.

"We always do our homework before we take on a new product, and the Mattei was a no-brainer. Keystone has been researching products for 85 years in this industry, so we know what our customers want. The Mattei rotary is in the big leagues and the package is very reasonable, so we're excited to be carrying them."

The extensive support and hands-on service provided by Mattei is another big plus of working with a leader, Wittenberg said. "The cus-

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Mattei's Stacked ERC compressor is an ideal fit for body shops who value the machine's durability and energy-saving features

tomter service is exceptional. When we call Mattei for any reason, we get a well-trained individual on the phone and the follow-up is the best we've encountered. They won't leave you on hold and they speak our language. We needed a part recently and they got it to us the very next day."

Will Keystone be selling more Mattei rotary air compressors in the U.S. in the future? Wittenberg agrees enthusiastically. "It's a beautiful unit and with the easy set-up we'll definitely be selling a lot more as this region starts changing over to waterborne more aggressively. Once shops find out about these compressors, they will see the value and they'll want one or more, because it will save them money and last longer.

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