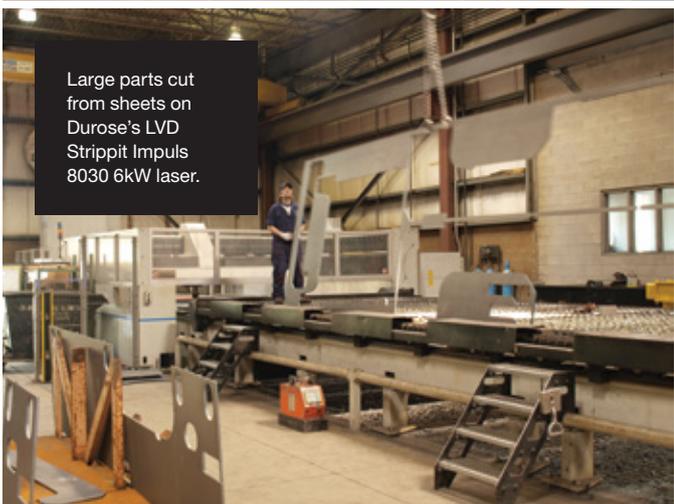




## AN INTERNATIONAL REPUTATION



Angelo Maggiolo, owner.



Large parts cut from sheets on Durose's LVD Stripit Impuls 8030 6kW laser.

### Durose Manufacturing, Guelph, Ontario

BY DOUG PICKLYK

From New York City landmarks and NFL stadiums to forestry and mining machinery, Guelph, Ontario's Durose Manufacturing Limited has cut, formed, rolled and welded steel that keeps buildings up and helps industries dig deep.

A longstanding fixture in Guelph, Durose had been in business since 1944, still located on the same street where it was founded. The business was originally started by Sid Durose as a small one-man welding shop. For health reasons Durose had to sell the business in the early 1950s, and despite two changes in ownership since he sold the business, the Durose name has endured.

The company's current owner, Angelo Maggiolo, joined the business in May of 1962 as a 21-year-old shortly after

arriving in Canada from Italy. Maggiolo had minimal welding experience, but he understood the process and was a skilled layout man. He recalls his first visit to the shop—it was very small and had no indoor plumbing. The only other workers were two brothers who were partners in the business, so Maggiolo was the first employee. He was offered \$1.25-an-hour to start, and that was more than he was being offered by a competing business down the road, so he stayed, and he has never regretted that decision.

As the business grew through the '60s Durose began working on more complex, large-scale, projects. "Because I knew layout, people came to know by word of mouth that we could handle the complex projects," says Maggiolo. He pulls out a photo album showing projects from the early '70s, including a massive metal elbow for an intake shaft destined for a nuclear plant that was used to draw in water from Lake Erie to cool the facility.

The company has also fabricated air intakes for the Rogers Pass in B.C., as well as major projects across the U.S., South America and in Europe.

Maggiolo took over the business in 1974, changing the company name from Durose Welding to Durose Manufacturing to better reflect the broader range of

fabricating services the company offers.

Durose has experienced continuous growth, adding floor space and people over the years, even though that was never Maggiolo's primary goal. "I've never believed in being big, because I don't think that's the answer," he says. "But every time work slowed down we would put on a little addition to the facility, often just to keep our good workers busy."

Today the plant covers close to 140,000 sq. ft. and the company's services range from cutting, rolling, bending, drilling, tapping, machining and welding, to a paint shop and engineering services.

Maggiolo endorses continuous improvement in the shop and the adoption of new technologies. "Without the new technology we wouldn't even be here," he says. "Not only us, but everybody else as well. Without the new technology you're not going anywhere. That's what's replacing the know-how of the skilled trades people."

Like all manufacturing businesses, the challenge of finding skilled workers leads to incorporating more automation and sophisticated machinery on the shop floor. Some of the company's more recent installations include an LVD Strippit PPEB-H 640 CNC hydraulic press brake, adding a new level of precision and process automation to their operation.

The brake has over a 640 ton pressing force and 20-foot



long working length, and its Touch-B control simplifies the operating process. Durose also has an LVD Strippit Impuls 8030 6kW laser that it's had for a number of years. Capable of cutting plate up to 1" thick on a 10- x 24-foot bed, it's used for the more precise cutting work at the plant.

With clients demanding higher tolerances these days, the necessity of installing more automated and higher precision technology is a must. "Customers today build a wheelbarrow with the spec of an airplane," laughs Maggiolo. "It's too bad, because there's a cost to keep



Touch-screen control on their new LVD Strippit PPEB-H 640 CNC hydraulic press brake.

that tight of a tolerance, but that's what they want."

To meet these increasing demands, Durose has also installed a VTEC double column machining center for drilling and some machining. Maggiolo's son Martino explains that for some of the intensive high-volume work they're doing they have to hit tolerances of 25 microns. "It couldn't be done without a machine like this," he says pointing to the VTEC. "It's very accurate, very precise."

The machining center has been operating for just over a year and a half, and initially the company had a challenge maintaining accuracy due to temperature swings in the plant from the morning to the afternoon. "The machine was moving 100 microns," says Martino. "So we had to place sensors all over it, and now it's constantly measuring the temperature of the part, temperature of the air and making adjustments to the machine."

In order to keep the business growing the company has learned the necessity to diversify, servicing multiple industry sectors in various geographical markets.

The company's specialties range from architectural fabrication to heavy-duty fabricated parts including attachments for industrial equipment for many Fortune 500 companies around the world. Projects have included very recognizable sites including the Home Depot center in Los Angeles, where the LA Galaxy soccer club plays. "Every piece of steel came from our shop," says Martino. "We sent 80 trucks from Guelph to L.A."

Durose also supplied the tubular steel supports for the roof of the Georgia Dome, home of the Atlanta Falcons in the NFL, and a lot of work in New York City, including curved circular staircase sections for the iconic Rockefeller Center.

Closer to home, the company also provides custom large part metal rolling for hundreds of local shops.

Growing the business has never been limited because of their location, notes Maggiolo. For him the key to sustain-

ing a viable business lies in the company's capabilities and its integrity. "We just happen to be in Guelph, but that has never been a problem. Tell the truth and do what you say you're going to do," he says, "and don't be afraid to tell someone if something can't be done."

There have been some bumps along the way, and he clearly remembers the tragedy of September 11 as a shock to the company. They were working on a variety of projects at the time, including a job for the Pentagon, work in Pennsylvania, projects with the aerospace industry and also work at the World Trade Center. "We were affected very hard," he says.

He also notes that they're still recovering from the recession of 2008 as well. "It's coming around, but it's taken a little longer for us because we got caught—we had a lot of business in the U.S., and we had companies in our own backyard who didn't even know who we were. We had to change that, and in order to do that we hired sales people to spread the news that we are here."

He notes that competition is stiff everywhere, and with the Internet clients can get competitive bids from around the world with the push of a button.

Looking forward, he does anticipate the business will continue to grow, especially as the U.S. market picks up steam.

"We're going to get bigger," he says with confidence. "This shop can handle 130 to 140 people, and right now we're at about 100 employees." There's room to expand their existing location if necessary, but he says they won't add space until the company is running closer to full capacity. "You have to be running three shifts these days before you start expanding, because the margins aren't there to support an empty building."

Durose has already secured approvals to expand if necessary, and for Maggiolo, who at 74 years old still comes into the office regularly, the prospect of adding more space seems almost inevitable.

After all of these years he claims that he's been very fortunate with the decisions he's made, but it's also been a strong work ethic and his business integrity that has built Durose into a metal fabrication shop that is recognized locally and around the world for the work it does. **CM**



Large part welding at Durose Manufacturing.