

THE FUTURE OF POWER BOATING

Buster

Buster Boats

World-class aluminum welding precision
with Kemppi X8 MIG Welder

2017

Never missing a beat – or a boat

Buster Boats is a well-known aluminum boats manufacturer and a market leader in its industry. They excel in producing highly reliable, low-maintenance boats, and in R&D. Kemppi solutions, such as the X8 MIG Welder and WeldEye welding management software, as well as joint R&D are signposts on the road to success for Buster Boats.



Buster Boats are manufactured at the **Inha Works** located in Ähtäri, Southern Ostrobothnia region of Finland. The boat range varies from four meters to over nine meters, from 2 horsepower up to even 700 horsepower. “The key to our success at Buster Boats is based on good quality and strong product development and R&D,” director of operations **Harri Hinttala** from Buster Boats comments.

The Buster story began in 1976, when the Fiskars group decided to move the manufacture of aluminum boats from the Kellokoski Works to the Inha Works. Durability, safety and ease of use were taken as the starting points when designing the new boat range. The first boats were unveiled in the summer of 1976 under the names Fiskars 12 and Fiskars 14. The following year, the range received its own name, Buster. A series of 60 Mini Busters was made, later supplemented by Buster, Buster R and Work Buster models.

During that time, exports to Sweden, Norway and Central Europe also started. Through the years, almost 125,000 Buster Boats have been manufactured for satisfied boaters around the world. Buster is trusted by both recreational and professional users. Buster Boats was recently sold to **Yamaha Motor Europe**. “The future is looking bright,” Hinttala says.



A rising R&D tide lifts Buster Boats

Today, around 70 per cent of the production is exported from Finland. Inha Works is Europe's largest manufacturer of aluminum boats, and Buster, with its already achieved iconic status and successful performance in many tests, is the most popular boat brand in the Nordic countries, mainly Finland, Norway and Sweden. Buster Boats have been made to withstand even tough conditions: they have even been used to sail around the North Cape from the Arctic Ocean to the Atlantic.



The Inha Works employs about 150 persons in Ähtäri, of which 30 are welders. **Kimmo Multaniemi**, the foreman of boat production, oversees welding and the final frame features. "At the moment, we have about 70 welding machines at the Inha Works. Of those, 60 are Kemppi welding machines," Multaniemi explains. Three boat manufacturing phases are carried out at the Inha Works premises: sub-assembly and parts manufacturing, welding, and final frame features. The company uses MIG and TIG welding. For example, TIG welding is mainly used in the visible parts of the boats for neater seams. "Our customers appreciate good craftsmanship," Multaniemi says.

To meet customer expectations, the welders must have proper tools and means. "Welding aluminum is quite demanding, and this calls for first-class welding machines. One of our main challenges in aluminum welding is also keeping the workplace clean and tidy. Also, all welders must be trained for the job and their qualifications are regularly controlled. We have daily quality controls and an inspection record is made of each boat," Multaniemi explains. "Our main reasons for cooperating with Kemppi are exceptional customer service, good quality and reliability. Our welders like to use the Kemppi machines because the Kemppi customer service listens to their feedback," Multaniemi adds.

According to Kimmo Multaniemi, the key success factors for Buster Boats are quality, long traditions and good product development. These are also the attributes Buster Boats looks for when choosing a partner: "Our cooperation with Kemppi goes a long way back and this is why we have decided to continue on this path. Kemppi has been a good supplier for us because we have also been able to participate in the R&D of new products." The joint R&D with partners is pivotal for Buster Boats. "We want to do R&D with Kemppi to have even better machines. That benefits both of us." Multaniemi also highly values the meaning of new innovations for the welders. "I've always lived by the philosophy that the easier it is for my welders to work here, the easier it makes my work for me."

A good example of this philosophy is how the SuperSnake subfeeder was acquired to the Inha Works: The first the SuperSnake was tested at the Inha Works for a short period on two different



production lines. After the one-month trial period ended, the welders gave feedback to both Multaniemi and Kemppi. "Actually, it was the welders that made the final decision. They promptly said 'let's take this, it's good'. Now we use the SuperSnake on our new boat model, Phantom," Multaniemi says.

Shifting gears with the X8 MIG Welder

Also Kemppi's new X8 MIG Welder was warmly welcomed at the Inha Works. The outstanding performance and the improved usability made a convincing first impression. X8 MIG Welder is developed to meet the most demanding expectations for welding productivity and quality. It is a system for unparalleled performance, usability, and management of industrial welding, enabled by the newest IoT-based technologies. The X8 MIG Welder solution consists of Kemppi's unique high-duty and upgradeable power source with all-in-one wire feeder, ergonomic welding guns, intelligent welding, brazing, cladding and gouging software, and one-of-a-kind Control Pad for total welding control, including the new digital WPS feature. The wireless device is a fast and easy solution for changing system and welding settings, adjusting and controlling welding values, or viewing WPS content, which has not been available before. With the Control Pad, the whole system can be operated with confidence and unforeseen efficiency.



"What we expected to have from the X8 MIG Welder was of course new technology, something to make the aluminum welding processes easier to set and trace," Multaniemi lists. For example,

the X8 Power Source's wireless user interface, Control Pad, enables effortless parameter setting from the welder's post without leaving the welding area to set up the equipment. "Our first experiences with X8 MIG Welder have been positive," Multaniemi adds. Additionally, for years, Buster Boats used to manage welding qualifications manually and each qualification had to be renewed individually. The introduction of the WeldEye solution has shifted the gears in welding management at the Inha Works, making welder qualification management a much faster process.

Multaniemi says that even though manual welding cannot be made much faster, the Inha Works highly appreciates usability that also helps to save time. Saving even one minute per boat can lead to 2,000 minutes less production time in one year. "Many small streams make one big river," Multaniemi aptly remarks. Multaniemi explains that the Inha Works has analyzed all products and operations openly, and all tasks have been scrutinized to the point that all the workers know to the minute how much time they can spend for each operation. This is a base for the performance-related pay that is applied throughout the Inha Works.



New levels of usability and performance

High-quality welding requires careful preparation. When comparing the X8 MIG Welder with standard MIG welding equipment, its usability aspects in terms of innovative and user-friendly wire feeder, wireless user interface for power source and digital WPS speed up the setup configuration easily by 30%. When you can speed up the setup configuration process, you have more time to focus on welding itself. "X8 MIG Welder is a first-class equipment for demanding, high-quality aluminum welding in terms of both arc performance and usability," Multaniemi praises.



To meet the best usability practices, Kemppi has also shaped the welder's most important tool, the welding gun, for maximum comfort. The X8 MIG Welder redefines ergonomics in welding guns: the hand grip, mobility and stability have been optimized to meet the requirements of the most demanding welding tasks. "The welding gun is really good. It feels better than the previous one. And the most important thing for the welder is the operational reliability," welder **Kari Urrila** comments on his first experiences with the X8 MIG Welder.

"The Control Pad was easy to use and we got the needed functions to work with it," Urrila adds. Urrila, who has over 20 years of welding experience, was also impressed about the X8 Wire Feeder. "The wire feeder is really good. It's placed lower than in the previous models and it's neater to insert the wire into the feeder." Urrila praises the additional equipment tested at the Inha Works. "Both the work light and the ball-and-socket joint are really good. It's vital for a pushing welding technique that the wire is kept straight. That's an improvement."

