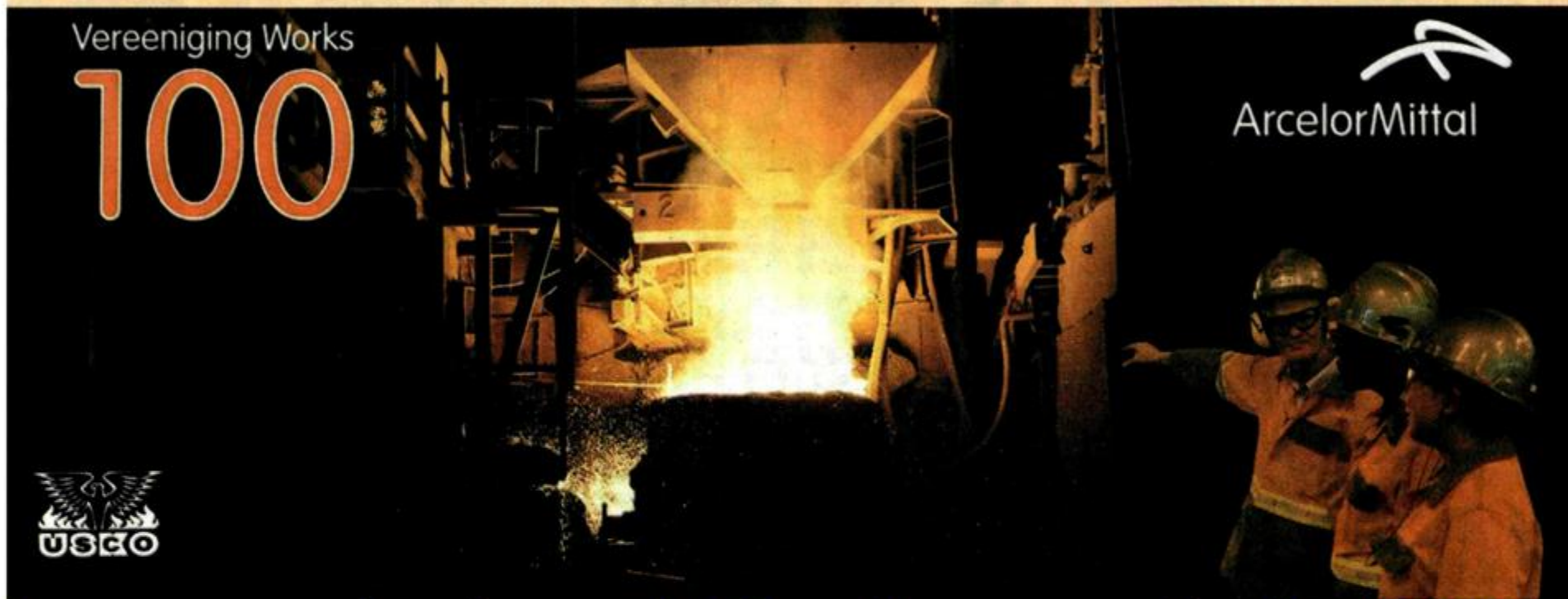


Advertorial



Vereeniging Works celebrates century of steelmaking in SA

Pride is a word used by everyone associated with ArcelorMittal South Africa's Vereeniging Works when talk of the plant's upcoming centenary celebrations comes up.

Carel Combrinck, executive manager of Operations and a 25-year veteran of the steel producer, says his years at the plant are filled with rich memories and rewarding anecdotes.

A highlight of which was seeing the company become a global player and make significant contribution to the town of Vereeniging and South Africa in general.

Steely resolve

The subject of his fond memories started its existence as the United Steel Corporation (USCO), registered on November 15, 1911 for £250 000.

Notable industrialists Sammy Marks and Horace Wright were the pioneers of South Africa's first steel plant.

The then Transvaal Administration invited tenders for the purchase of 15 000 tons of scrap lying at the Pretoria railway workshops at a fee of £1 per ton with one condition - that the

successful tender would be required to erect a steel plant to convert the scrap into steel.

Horace Wright was awarded the tender. Wright and Sammy Marks then formed USCO.

The location of Vereeniging was chosen for the terrain along the Vaal River, as it offered sufficient slope for drainage and the area was downstream from Rand Water Board's pumping station.

At that time, Vereeniging had approximately 500 inhabitants and had, nine years earlier,

witnessed the signing of the Vereeniging Treaty ending the Anglo-Boer War.

On August 1 of 1913, the heating furnaces, the press and the mill were started for the first time with the first steel ingot produced teemed at the Vaal Works of USCO on September 1 of 1913.

In 1991 Iscor gained full control of USCO and renamed Iscor "Vereeniging Works". Iscor became part of the Ispat group. The name changed to LNM and currently USCO is known as ArcelorMittal Vereeniging Works.