

Ideas en Metal, Spain, produces metal tubular structures for buildings and sports installations with innovative and flexible laser tube systems.

From the anvil to the **laser**

Job shop



When talking about entrepreneurship, we often forget the basic principles: vision and risk taking. Ideas en Metal of Gijón in Spain, has the emblem of vision impressed in its corporate name **“to turn ideas into metal products”** and having the vision to take risks.

Ideas en Metal is the latest company founded by José Antonio Hevia Corte in 2000 to produce metal tubular structures for industrial buildings and

sports installations. Mr. Hevia has been an entrepreneur for many years, starting out with sheet metal working 61 years ago when anvils were still used to bend steel sheets and guillotine hand-operated shears to cut them. Today, Mr. Hevia smiles when he thinks about the **considerable changes** that he has witnessed throughout his life. But whenever he sees the laser tube cutting systems that have been installed in his workshops he is still amazed: “laser cutting has always been an eye-catcher, even if you already know what it is all about, it’s always like the first time. It has no tools; it is a universal machine that allows us to do whatever we want without being bound to a specific sector or application”.

From the idea to the product

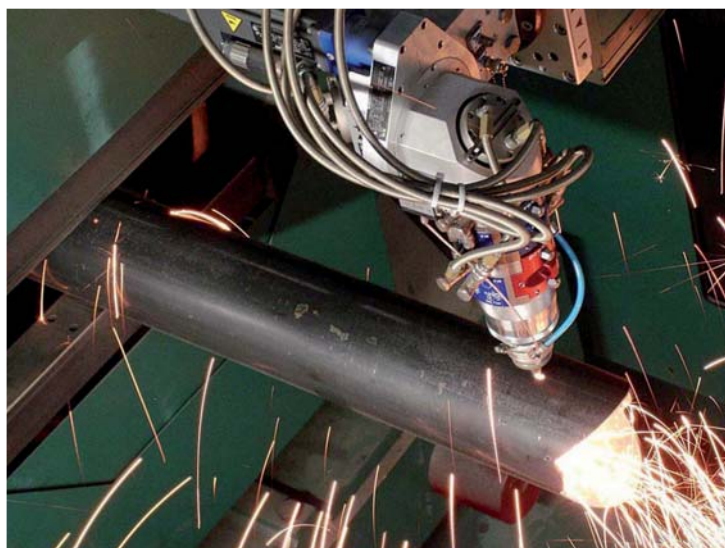
“This is the industrial project around which our Ideas en Metal have been conceived” says Mr. Juan José del Campo Gorostidi, Board Member of the company. “We immediately decided to develop a range of completely new products: tubular structures for buildings. For this reason we chose innovative and flexible production systems like the laser tube and robotized welding”.

The machines we have are extremely flexible and **easily suit any market so that we can capture every opportunity** that arises without having to review the production process. This is what happened with solar panel supports. Today’s market does



Juan José del Campo Gorostidi

José Antonio Hevia Corte



not leave any room to specialise in specific product lines because product lifecycles are getting shorter and shorter and changes are so fast that no other strategic choice is left. Besides flexible machines, we have also invested in fully integrated design and engineering so that we can go from the idea to the (metal) product”.

“Our fleet of machines includes three laser tubes (one LT651, one LT712 and a Jumbo) for tubes ranging from 12 to 508 mm, two tube bending machines for up to OD130 mm, welding robot and flat laser systems for flat sheets that cover **four areas of activity**: structures for construction, as already mentioned, metal components integrating flat sheet and tubular parts, renewable energy and our own products”.

Our show room

This is a truly enviable fleet of machines like very few other companies in Europe. For example, the Jumbo, laser cuts tubes up to 508 mm or open profiles starting from a length of 12 m, a new wide range of applications are available now since laser cutting has only just been introduced. Even the ability to integrate tube elements with flat sheet from the design level is a considerable competitive advantage. The workshop of Ideas en Metal is a showroom by itself.

“The first laser tube that we bought was actually used to produce the elements for the structure where we are at right now” recalls Mr. Hevia. “How could we have put on the market a product that we were not using ourselves? It is solution that offers many advantages, changing the method



of site work. These structures are ideal for large areas that do not require columns. They are easy to assemble on site, because the work is done safely at ground level and then they are raised using hydraulic jacks, as they are both light and resistant at the same time. This is a technical solution that is spreading very quickly".

"La novia"

In Ideas en Metal there are various signs of special and unusual approach to the factory. Each machine has a "new" name. The DYNAM4 tube bender of BLM, for example, has been renamed "la novia" given to its sinuous movements. The

laser tube machines have been named after a great Asturian businessman Luis Adaro, a personal friend of Mr. Hevia. It may sound a bit strange but it simply recalls Mr. Hevia's entrepreneurial culture: "people work, create but do not live forever. A factory, on the other hand, is a place that can last much longer by continuously improving and innovating it. That is how it survives peoples' lives and outlives them".

At 75 years of age, Mr. Hevia Corte has still not finished with surprises and is already thinking about a new project. Just whisper in our ear. "I'm working on it for 2010".

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