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EXPANDED METAL STILL POPULAR CHOICE FOR SPECIFIERS

Few products can claim to be as versatile as expanded metal, largely as a result of the reliability, durability and economy represented by the simple idea of slitting and expanding a solid sheet of metal into a lattice of diamond-shaped meshes.

Andrew Mentis, a leading engineering and manufacturing company in Elandsfontein, was the first company to begin manufacturing expanded metal more than sixty years ago, and is today considered the leading supplier of quality expanded metal in a variety of sizes and materials.

According to Elaine van Rooyen, marketing manager at Andrew Mentis, a myriad of applications are served by expanded metal because of its inherent structural integrity which is not compromised during the manufacturing process.

“During the manufacturing process no material is lost, and in fact the original sheet of metal can be expanded into anything up to ten times its original size. The result is a mesh which is considerably lighter than the equivalent area of the original piece of metal expanded,” Van Rooyen says.

The expanding process creates a network of rigid strands which add strength, while allowing free passage of light and air. As the metal is expanded to an area longer than its original length it is lighter than the original equivalent mass used prior to expanding. The raised mesh or Mentex, as it is called, can be put through an additional process in which the raised meshes are flattened into the same plane as the sheet of metal expanded. This is known as Flatex.

With extensive experience in the various applications of expanded metal, Andrew Mentis manufactures both the raised and flattened meshes, and according to Van Rooyen the correct selection of the appropriate mesh depends on the application at hand.

Typically, both Mentex and Flatex expanded metal is manufactured from high quality local mild steel, but can be manufactured from any other ductile metal. The product is normally supplied unpainted, but readily lends itself to any of the normal finishing processes such as painting, stove enamelling, plating and galvanising.

Mentex and Flatex expanded metal is available in a comprehensive range of sizes, mesh sizes and thicknesses and the fabrication of the expanded metal in any form is done with ease. The mesh can be bent, shaped to radii, angled or notched while maintaining its inherent rigidity. It is also available in various mesh sizes, from mini meshes with small openings of 1.4 mm by 2 mm, and with a thickness of 0,4 millimetres, to larger meshes with 115 mm x 300 mm openings, and a thickness of 6 mm.

Van Rooyen says that expanded metal has found applications in mining, construction, food and other industries. It is used for screens, grates, shelving, racks, protection guards, internal partitioning, burglar proofing, fencing, reinforcement, walkways, platforms and stairs, beds, garden furniture, braai grids, filters, dividers, scaffolding, truck bodies, tunnel and shaft linings, grain silos and even decoratively - to name but a few applications.

“In an industry where quality pays in the long-term, a great variety of customers are bound to benefit from the extensive experience and expertise within Andrew Mentis, especially when it comes to the application of expanded metal. The uses of expanded metal are many and varied and are limited only by the vision, creativity and imagination of the designer. Its versatility is endless,” Van Rooyen concludes.

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FROM : CORALYNNE & ASSOCIATES
TEL : +27 011 422 1949
EMAIL : communicate@coralynne.co.za
WEBSITE: www.coralynne.co.za

FOR : ELAINE VAN ROOYEN
ANDREW MENTIS (PTY) LTD
TEL : +27 011 255 3200
www.mentis.co.za