



DAMUS

UNDERPINNING TRINIDAD
& TOBAGO'S PROSPERITY



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Damus is a privately owned company fulfilling an essential role in advancing the upstream and downstream oil and gas industries that promise to define the Caribbean over the coming decade

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As we have recently seen in our extensive coverage of Trinidad & Tobago's state oil company Petrotrin and its engagement in the exploration, development and production of hydrocarbons as well as the manufacturing and marketing of petroleum products, this island nation's near term future is largely defined by its onshore and offshore resources. Major and junior exploration companies are scrapping over new licences and preparing to pour billions of dollars into development projects.

To succeed, though, they need to partner with competent local companies that can provide the support services they need, and this is where Damus, a key supplier to Petrotrin as well as the private sector, comes in. Established in 1973 the company has established some nine subsidiaries and affiliates since the time of its acquisition by the Mahabir family in 1981. Since then it has grown to become not only the largest mechanical fabrication and construction contractor in Trinidad & Tobago but the largest in the whole eastern Caribbean region. With a permanent staff of 200 augmented by a temporary workforce that can vary from 500 to over 2,000 depending on current projects, its services focus on the design, manufacture, procurement, installation and maintenance of almost every class of equipment required by the industry.

Damus' headquarters is at La Romaine to the south west of Trinidad. There it operates a twelve-acre yard which used to house its main fabrication operation until it built a much larger shop at Point Fortin, 30 kilometres to the south. This houses a



Damus welder at work
at the La Romaine
facility

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50,000 square foot workshop, over 160,000 square feet of warehouses and an office building on a 30-acre site, with the capacity to turn out 300 tonnes of steel fabrication a month based on working one shift per day. Twenty-four hour operation will add an incremental eighty percent of production. The 24,000 square foot workshop at La Romaine is now mainly used for light fabrication work and the submarine pipe fabrication that the company performs for Petrotrin's offshore Trinmar operations.

It is worth dwelling for a moment on this work, as it illustrates Damus' innovative approach to solving customers' problems. "Petrotrin is investing significantly in its Trinmar fields" confirms Director of Overseas Operations Stuart Mahabir. There are two ways of installing the undersea pipelines that link the rigs and transfer crude onshore – you can either use a specialised pipelaying ship to position continuous coil or join sections in situ from specially adapted barges. However high mobilisation costs and availability issues make the former a very expensive operation.

Trinmar continues to use Damus'

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Atlantic LNG Plant built by Damus

“THE WORK DONE FOR BECHTEL ON THE 15 MILLION TPA LNG PLANT AT POINT FORTIN WAS A MAJOR MILESTONE FOR THE COMPANY”

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pipelaying barges, on which pre-fabricated sections of pipe – ‘pipe strings’ – are welded together in situ. This is the most effective solution for the client, and was made more effective when Damus re-engineered its barges to enable them to operate in sea conditions that would have

delayed the work in the past. “This is industry best practice. The work is now done higher above water level – it saves both money and time,” says Mahabir.

Pipelaying is a good example of the bread and butter work that Damus does, however in recent years it has distinguished itself by taking on and successfully completing some very high profile and complex projects. The first such project to be landed in 1998 lasted nearly a decade and involved the construction of a four-train gas liquefaction facility at Point Fortin with a total capacity of 15 million metric tonnes per annum (tpa) for Atlantic, one of the world's largest producers of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG).

The EPC contractor for the \$5 billion project was Bechtel Corporation of the USA, and Damus was Bechtel's main mechanical



300 TONNES

Monthly capacity of Damus' Point Fortin fabrication site



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Advantage Lab Services Ltd

subcontractor, completing train one in 1999, trains two and three in 2002 and 2003, with train four finally being commissioned in 2007. “That was a major milestone for the company,” recalls Stuart Mahabir with pride. “At the time the Point Fortin facility was the fourth largest in the world.” Damus’ contribution included installation of all above ground piping, static and rotating equipment, spool and utility tank fabrication.

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More recently the company completed its largest job ever, showing its diversity in the very different field of power generation. Between 2009 and its commissioning in 2012 Damus was the main mechanical contractor for a new 720 MW combined cycle power plant (CCPP) built by Germany’s Ferrostaal GmbH for Trinidad Generation Unlimited (TGU) at La Brea. At the \$740 million plant’s official opening in October 2013 Trinidad’s Energy Minister Kevin Ramnarine hailed it as the nation’s most efficient, producing electricity at half the unit cost of other sources.

Damus’ client list includes such major companies as BP, BG, BHP Billiton, Repsol and, of course, Petrotrin. To work with these companies presupposes best practice enshrined in certification, such as ISO 9001:2008, which assures the company’s quality management system (QMS) and the Safe-to-Work (STOW) accreditation. STOW assures not only safety but also environmental performance, stresses




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Mahabir. "Achieving that accreditation in 2012 was significant in that it confirmed that our workers were trained, approved and recognised by the industry accepted regulatory body in the local energy sector. It affirmed once and for all the company's record of compliance."

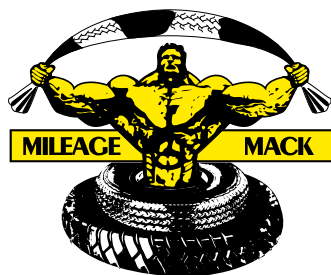
Being a large employer, Damus recognises the

importance of a well-trained and accredited workforce, he continues. "We operate a mixture of internal and external training, with an in-house syllabus for our junior engineers covering structural design, mechanical design and other topics. We also offer financial incentives to encourage them to acquire qualifications that may be required for our contracts."

Though the global economic situation is reflected in a current slowdown regionally, Damus is planning ahead for the O&G boom that is in the making. The port of Galeota on Trinidad's south-eastern tip is central to Trinidad and Tobago's deepwater acreage and its shallow water acreage on the east coast. It is also close to Venezuela, Guyana, Suriname and French Guiana. If Port-of-Spain is becoming the Houston of the Caribbean, as Minister Ramnarine states, he also proposes that Galeota should become a significant energy services hub for this part of the Caribbean. "We are planning to build a new fabrication facility on the east coast of the island," says Mahabir. "It makes sense for us to improve our facility at Galeota to



BP Bombax Subsea Manifold, built by Damus



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take advantage of investment that is going to increase over the next five years.”

While activity levels are reasonably high offshore, Damus continues to seek out downstream project opportunities. One significant opportunity coming over the horizon is a proposed \$850 million petrochemical plant at the Union Industrial Estate in La Brea, to be built by a consortium led by Japan’s Mitsubishi Heavy Industries (MHI). The plant will produce a million tonnes a year of methanol and 100,000 tonnes of dimethyl ether (DME). If the project goes ahead, it would be the first new downstream energy plant in Trinidad and Tobago since 2010. Damus, as the only regional company with the experience, capacity and track record in delivering projects like this is well placed to capture particular construction elements of such a project.

Meanwhile Stuart Mahabir is looking further afield in a region that is increasingly grappling with the conflict between traditional industries like tourism and fishing and the oil trade. Curacao, with its huge independent refinery is a case in point. But Damus will always maintain its standards, he assures: “We are proud of our reputation and our brand. We will always conduct business in a transparent way and never tarnish the good name we have established for ourselves. We hope our customers continue to recognise our efforts in providing excellent contracting services to the local and regional oil and gas industry.” **BE**

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