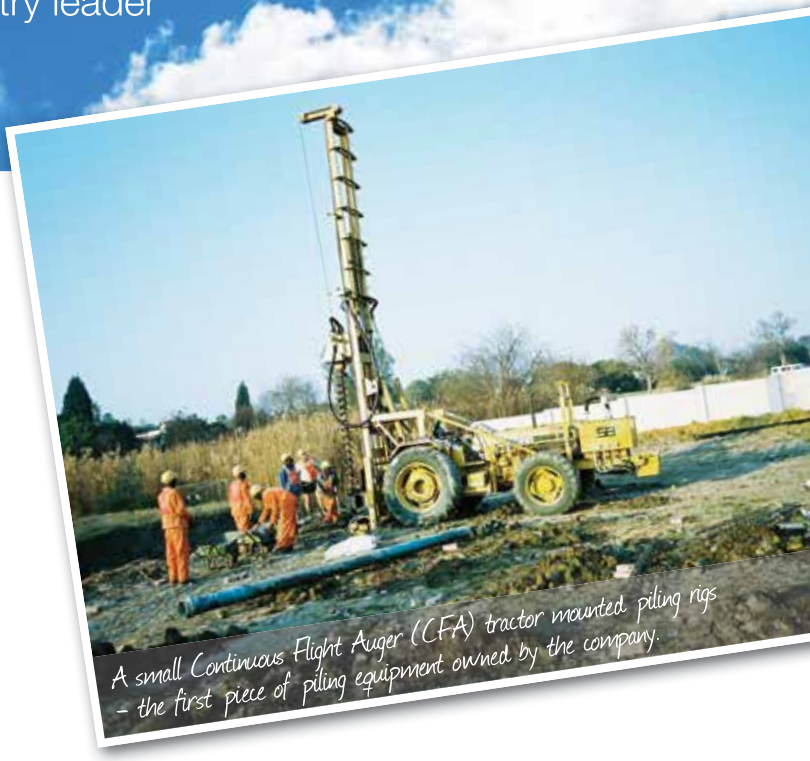
A trip down memory lane

– from geotechnical small player to industry leader



A small Continuous Flight Auger (CFA) tractor mounted piling rigs – the first piece of piling equipment owned by the company.

Stefanutti & Bressan (S&B) first entered the piling sector as early as 1996, when the company began undertaking piling projects in Durban and coastal areas. One of its first projects was for the KwaZulu-Natal's La Palma Terraces in La Lucia, where it utilised a small Continuous Flight Auger (CFA) tractor mounted piling rigs. These tractor rigs, with their six-metre masts, were capable of forming piles to a maximum of 450mm in diameter and (by adding flight to the mast) up to ten metres deep.

Over the years Stefanutti Stocks' ability to invest and purchase modern equipment contributed to it being able to offer a more comprehensive range of services. Its capabilities expanded to include a broader range of pile types in all possible soil conditions, lateral support and compaction grouting projects.

A contract for the PFG glass factory in Springs – a project that consisted of bulk earthworks, lateral support and piling – was one of the company's first major contracts in the Gauteng area. Other project highlights included the award, by Bombela Civils Joint Venture, of several Gautrain contracts to Stefanutti Stocks Geotechnical in 2008. This included six lateral support sites along the route; the lateral support for the Gautrain Station Rosebank entrances (both of which required contiguous piled walls with anchors and shotcrete arches); and the consolidation grouting of 49 pier positions in Centurion.

The piling project to the Kusile Power Station saw Stefanutti Stocks Geotechnical, leading the 50/50 joint venture. The ground conditions at the power station necessitated extensive piling including the casting of some auger in-situ piles – 1.8 metres in diameter and up to 25 metres deep.

As basement developments in upmarket areas like Sandton, Menlyn, Brooklyn and Rosebank increased, Stefanutti Stocks participated in a number of high profile lateral support projects, including at Sandton City, and a number of Menlyn Maine office blocks as well as a couple of developments in Windhoek, Namibia.

The company's expertise expanded to include the design and supply contract for deep foundations to transport infrastructure, mixed-use office accommodation and bridge foundations across Africa. In the last two years it has undertaken deep-pile foundations for bridges in Namibia, Western Cape and Mpumalanga.

Since it first started operating over twenty years ago, the new plant, equipment and technology, as well as its piling rigs with torque in excess of 28-ton metre, has seen production rates double (at least!).

In comparison to the humble first CFA tractor piling rigs, with their capacity of piling up to ten metres deep, the company's plant now includes a fleet of powerful geotechnical and piling equipment, that enables it to do CFA piles of 900mm in diameter and up to 25 metres deep in one go.

Who knows what the next two decades will bring?

The increasing geotechnical fleet, circa 2010.

One of Stefanutti Stocks' large rigs – capable of forming CFA piles of 900mm in diameter and up to 25 metres.