



Warm up for Europe

Airxcel, with its ambitious plans for growing its presence in the European market, draws its strength and dynamism from thirty years of experience

Words Renato Antonini

Airxcel continues its penetration of the European market with its Airxcel Europe division, headquartered in Italy. The American group's long-established strategy has not changed: Airxcel has always been a supplier for both OEMs and the aftermarket. Today, Airxcel Europe supplies around 90 percent of RV manufacturers, and its operations in aftermarket sales continue to grow. There are however differences between the requirements and habits of European and American consumers, and the company has therefore created special products for the European market, in part by modifying their existing products. This is very clear when we look at Aqua-Hot's plans for penetrating the European market with its hydronics systems, which are well known in the US marketplace.

Aqua-Hot arrives in Europe

Aqua-Hot has entered the European market, eager to make an impact with its sales and service network and products. This entry by the American manufacturer, a member of the Airxcel group, promises to revolutionise the RV manufacturer supply chain. The arrival of new heating systems is an important event - it's not every day that RV manufacturers see the opportunity to diversify their on-board heating and hot water systems. Aqua-Hot

has already presented its products to various groups in the industry, with a number of installations already under way, and has also created a sales and service network in partnership with the major component distributors on the European market. Aqua-Hot, established in 1984 in Denver, Colorado, has a strong presence in the North American

RV market. It is the leading American manufacturer (with a 97% market share) of hydronic heating systems, featuring fluid circulation in special radiators. The company decided to enter the European marketplace after it was acquired by the Airxcel Group in 2019, soon followed by the setting up of the Airxcel Europe division, with head offices in Italy.

"Aqua-Hot products for the American market have traditionally been designed for large motorhomes," says Filippo Zampese, Product Manager Heating Systems for Airxcel, "while the European market demands products like the new Aqua-Hot 100 DE, a compact and lower-cost model which is nonetheless perfectly suitable for RVs up to 9 m in length, thanks to its overall power rating of 6.5 kW. The system generates heat with a diesel burner (5 kW), but it also

features electrical heating elements (1.5 kW) which work when the vehicle is hooked up to an external 220 V mains supply. The system is compact, is easy to install even in





The plus points of Aqua-Hot 100 DE

- Hydronic heating (using fluid radiators) does not dry out the air and offers heating comfort comparable to that of residential heating systems
- Diesel + electric power (5+1.5 kW)
- Burner installation under the flatbed
- Continuous hot water production for washbasins and showers
- The tankless system facilitates use in the winter and means that the system runs without pressurisation
- Compact footprint, lightweight
- No complex modifications to the vehicle's furnishings are required: only 3 small convection heaters need be installed

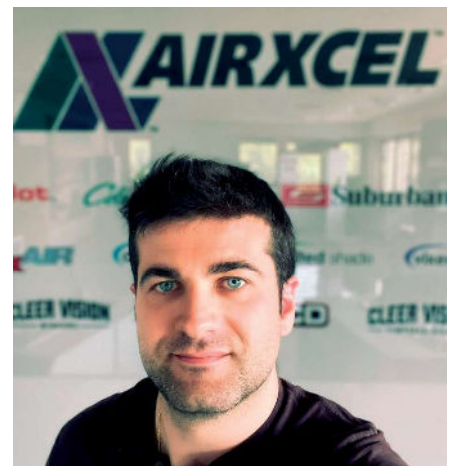
smaller vehicles, and the burner fits under the flatbed. It is also relatively lightweight at just 20 kg, largely because it does not have a water storage tank."

The Aqua-Hot 100 DE produces hot water continuously (3.5 l/min) for the washbasins and shower, and thus offers excellent occupant comfort. The vehicle is heated by a system of pipes connected to convection heaters: up to three can be installed, one for each of the three usual zones of the compartment (living area, bedroom and bathroom), but one can choose to install just two or even only

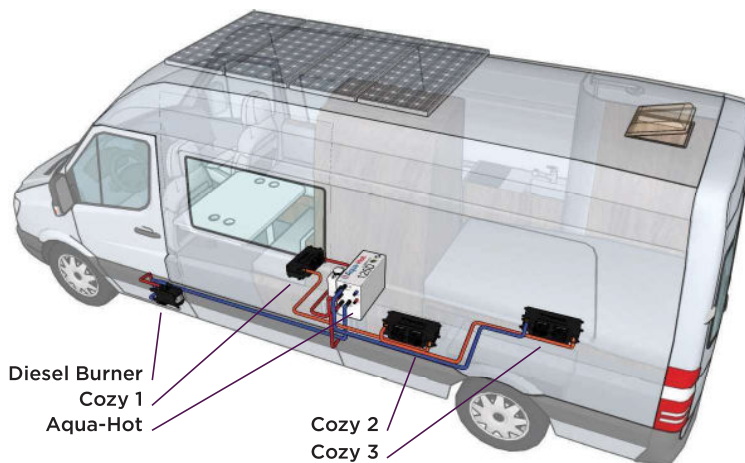
one in smaller vehicles. The convection heaters are compactly sized and heat the compartment up very quickly with their fans: there is therefore no need for extensive adaptation of the vehicle's furnishings. The system requires about 15 minutes to reach temperature after being turned on. It also features low diesel consumption: when up to temperature it burns just 0.3 l/h, and 0.45 l/h at maximum power.

Air heating

The fluid circulation Aqua-Hot 100 DE is already available, but 2023



Filippo Zampese



Airxcel family of brands for the RV industry



About Airxcel

Airxcel began in 1991, when the Coleman Company spun-off their Coleman RV Air Conditioner division to a group of company executives. Since that time, the company has continued to grow through innovative product development, market expansion and strategic acquisitions. Airxcel provides industry-leading products in recreational vehicle heating, cooling, ventilation, cooking, window coverings, interior and exterior sidewall and roofing systems under the brands: Aqua-Hot, CAN, Cleer Vision Windows, Cleer Vision Tempered Glass, Coleman-Mach, Dicor Products, ECI, Maxxair, MCD, Suburban, United Shade, Vixen Composites. Airxcel is headquartered in Wichita, Kansas, and has 11 facilities across the U.S. and Europe.



The Aqua-Hot Gen 1 is a compact Forced Air Heating System with 10L Water Heater in an all-in-one unit

will see the presentation of another heating system, the GEN-1: this is a heating unit that combines hot water production with heating for the interior of the vehicle. This product is destined to be a big seller, designed as it is for both the European and American markets. It will be available in Europe in two versions: one equipped with a 4 kW diesel burner unit and up to 1.8 kW electric heating elements, and one 6 kW gas burning unit, also with up to 1.8 kW electric heating elements. There will

also be a petrol burning unit for the American market. This is a plug&play unit designed for installation in the most commonly used European combined heating system housings, and will also be compatible with air and water duct fittings.

"Airxcel's philosophy, which sees us as fully fledged partners for our clients," says Filippo Zampese, "enables Aqua-Hot to offer all our products as Open Source (RV-C ready), and thus easy to integrate into the vehicle's master control panel."



CAN and outdoor cooking

In 2019, following ten years of growth in the RV sector and a strong position in the world of nautical equipment, CAN became a member of the Airxcel group and the first member of Airxcel Europe. Its core business is still cooktops for campervan cookers, however the company has larger plans for the future.

"After having consolidated our presence in the conventional OEM cooktop sector," says Lorenzo Bellini, Product Manager for CAN, "we are now looking at the retrofit and outdoors equipment markets. Cooking outdoors has a vast panorama of opportunities, and we have a lot yet to discover. But nonetheless, our new challenge is the market for outdoors cooking products. This segment covers a variety of product categories, going far beyond the everyday campsite barbecue. In the European market, for instance, the so-called 'urban camper' segment is growing fast, i.e. minivans with elevating roofs which, since they have limited interior space, greatly benefit from the option of cooking outdoors."

But CAN's attention to its OEM clients for cooktops has not diminished, and their offering goes beyond the



Lorenzo Bellini

pages of their catalogue. For instance, the company develops custom models in co-design with the client. And let's not forget that CAN also makes kitchen sinks, whether integrated into the cooktop in a single moulding, thus boosting the unit's functionality in a small footprint, or installed separately to give the interior designer greater freedom of expression.

