

# PRODUCT QUALITY CONTINUES TO IMPROVE

Research house Ipsos recently announced the winners in its annual survey to find the best quality vehicles sold in South Africa, as well as the local plants producing the best quality vehicles.



*The Lexus ES was one of the top performers in the 2015 Ipsos Product Quality Awards.*

What comes through clearly from these in-depth studies, which includes vehicles sold from January to December 2014 by manufacturers and distributors responsible for more than 83% of the country's annual sales volume, is that product quality in South Africa continues to improve.

"Once again we have seen a marked improvement in quality during 2014, despite growing technological complexity in vehicles" commented the Ipsos Automotive Business Unit Director, Patrick Busschau. "Customers in South Africa are becoming increasingly demanding where product quality and general service levels are concerned, but the local motor industry continues to keep raising the bar or at least remains on a very high level."

The research of the customers' ownership experience follows a syndicated format with various manufacturers and distributors contributing ideas and funding. Any motor company can participate if they supply names for interviewing, agree to the rules of syndication and participate in meetings and decisions regarding the syndicate business in a transparent and open manner.

The studies are conducted using telephonic interviews with well over 30 000 vehicle owners over a 12-month period. Product quality interviews take place 90 days from purchase.

In the interviews, consumers indicate the problems they experience with their purchase in four categories, namely noise levels; appearance; static functional aspects (such as water leaks); and

dynamic functional aspects (such as steering and handling). These problems are calculated as problems per 100 vehicles (PP100), with a lower score the best outcome.

The industry average number of problems per 100 vehicles (PP100) has remained around the 30 to 40 mark since 2011, which is a huge improvement over the average 154 problems per 100 vehicles recorded in 2005.

Toyota fared particularly well in the latest study, especially where its light commercial vehicle (LCV) range is concerned. After being awarded with four consecutive Gold Awards, Toyota receives Platinum Awards for Best Overall LCV Brand (PP100 score of 33), Best One Ton Double Cab LCV Brand (PP100 score of 34) and Best Local Plant Manufacturing LCVs (PP100 score of 31) in the latest results. Toyota is also awarded with Gold as the Best Volume Passenger Car Brand (PP100 score of 31) and – along with Mercedes-Benz – was ranked first as the Best Local Plant Manufacturing Passenger Cars, with a PP100 score of 25.

As in the 2014 results, Mercedes-Benz continues to be a frontrunner in product quality. Not only did it receive a Gold Award as the Best Luxury Passenger Car Brand (PP100 score of 26), but after four consecutive Gold Awards, the E-Class was recognised as the Best Top Executive Model (PP100 score of 17) and received a Platinum Award. The A-Class received a Gold Award as the Most Improved Luxury Passenger Car (PP100 score of 22, compared to 39 in 2014). As mentioned before, it ranked alongside Toyota as the Best

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Local Plant Manufacturing Passenger Cars with a PP100 score of 25.

In the rankings for new vehicles that weren't included in the previous study, the Lexus ES was awarded Gold in the category for Luxury Passenger Cars (PP100 score of 10). The relaunched Nissan Sentra was the Best New Volume Passenger Car (PP100 score of 23) and Kia's new Sorento ruled the roost as Best New Recreational Vehicle (PP100 score of 22). The Best New Light Commercial Vehicle was the new Nissan Hardbody Petrol Double Cab (PP100 score of 24).

A clear indication of just how seriously manufacturers and distributors take product quality and the feedback from their customers about their vehicles is the high level of improvement shown in the Most Improved Awards. As mentioned, jumping from a PP100 score of 39 in 2014 to 22 in 2015, the Mercedes-Benz A-Class is the Most Improved Luxury Passenger Car, alongside the Audi A3/S3 Sportback which improved from 38 to 22. Likewise, the Ford Focus Hatch improved from a 2014 PP100 score of 59 to 29 in the latest

results, making it the Most Improved Volume Passenger Car.

In the category for Most Improved Recreational Vehicle, the Kia Sportage was the clear winner with a PP100 score of 34, compared to 55 in 2014. The Nissan Navara Diesel Double Cab also improved impressively from 56 to a PP100 score of 24 to be awarded Gold as the Most Improved Light Commercial Vehicle.

Looking at the entire spectrum of the South African vehicle market, Gold Awards were made to various manufacturers and distributors.

The Volkswagen Polo Vivo Hatch was the highest-ranked Entry Vehicle with a PP100 score of 30. With a PP100 score of 25 each, the Kia Rio Hatch, Honda Jazz and Toyota Yaris Hatch led the Small Hatch category.

The Top Hatch Gold Award winner was the Toyota Auris (PP100 score of 19), with the Chevrolet Sonic Sedan (24) and Nissan's Almera (26) pipping their competitors to the post for Gold in the Small Sedan category.

With an impressively low PP100 score of 10, the Lexus ES was the best Medium Sedan, the Audi A3/S3 Sedan (22), Nissan Sentra and Toyota Corolla (both on 23) were top of the Top Sedan log and the

Mercedes-Benz E-Class (17) won the Top Executive Vehicle. Mercedes-Benz also scooped the Sports Coupé class with the C-Class Coupé (13).

The Toyota Avanza (24) was the best MPV, with the Volkswagen Tiguan (13) rated as the best Small Recreational Vehicle and the Audi Q7 (13) as the best Large Recreational Vehicle.

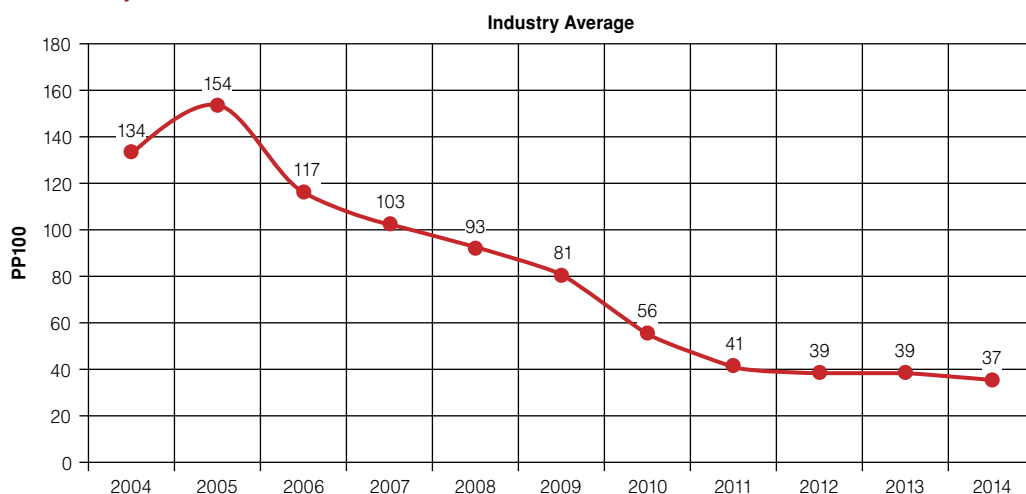
Nissan and Toyota were the clear leaders in the LCV categories. The Nissan NP200 (45) received a Gold Award as the best Three-quarter Ton Vehicle, the Nissan Hardbody Petrol Double Cab (24) was the best Petrol Double Cab and the Nissan Navara Diesel Double Cab (24) the best Diesel Double Cab. Toyota's Hilux Single Cab was the best Petrol Single Cab (26) and best Diesel Single Cab (31).

The Nissan NP200 (45) and Chevrolet Utility shared Gold in the Three-quarter Ton category, while the Ford Ranger Diesel Single Cab's PP100 score of 33 was enough to earn it gold in the Diesel Single Cab category.

"The local motor industry can be very proud of the latest Ipsos study results as a tribute to dedication to quality at all levels indicative of extensive quality improvement programmes and intensive staff training," concluded Patrick Busschau. ■

## Rankings

### Vehicle Quality Over Time



Source: Ipsos 2015

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## Editor's Note

Let's not talk about the ever-dwindling sales figures. That's depressing. For this month let's be glass-half-full people and discuss a few positives in the industry. And there is actually a lot of that. You just need to know where to look. It's all about improv-



ing, forging forward and finding better ways of doing things. For starters, the results of the annual Ipsos survey, which measures problems per 100 vehicles (PP100) are out. There has been improvement virtually across the entire board, proving that local manufacturers and importers are working harder than ever before to ensure that their products are of the highest quality.

The **2015 Kinsey Report** is also out and makes for very interesting reading. Unfortunately space constraints prevent us from including the full report on these pages, but you can see all the results on our website. [Click here to see results.](#)

We've also spoken to a few industry insiders to bring you their take on the current situation. Most notably, Markus Schaefer, Head of Worldwide Production and Supply Chain for Mercedes-Benz Cars, and Member of the Mercedes-Benz Passenger Car Board has hinted at the fact that the MBSA plant in East London will most likely producing the new C-Class. Also, the President of the TATA Motors Limited Passenger Car Unit, Mayank Pareek visited South Africa recently and said he believed this country is well poised for positive economic growth, and hence increased vehicle sales.

In other positive news, Renault SA is working on its new Parts & Distribution Centre east of Johannesburg. This is to ensure the ongoing supply of parts and create sufficient capacity for planned growth and model diversification in the years ahead. Also, with the fight for domination in market segment for light commercial vehicles showing no signs of letting up, we attended the recent launch of the new Ford Ranger ... and it's a kicker. Can't wait for Toyota to introduce their new Hilux early next year.

Really exciting and positive news is that, through an agreement with energy company Bio2Watt in 2014, BMW South Africa received the first green energy at its Rosslyn plant in Pretoria.

So you see, there is still plenty to feel positive about. Granted, Springbok rugby isn't one of them.

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## SA vehicle market continuing to weaken but exports booming

BY ROGER HOUGHTON

Sales of vehicles in South Africa showed the biggest year-on-year monthly decline in September, falling 9% to 55 322 units from 60 782 units a year ago. Passenger cars fell 13.2%, which was a surprisingly large decrease in view of the fact that many companies in SA now work on quarterly sales targets which really push sales in the last month of each quarter.

LCV sales remained relatively steady, while the truck and bus market decreased by 12.3%, probably reflecting a drop in business confidence.

Retail sales through the dealers represented 77.7% of the total, while the rental companies took 15.3%, which included 21.9% of the passenger car market. Sales into the rental channel have declined by 20.9%, year-on-year. In the eyes of WesBank this decline was heavily influenced by a sharp decline in tourism as well as aggressive competition from disruptive players in this space. Government sales constituted 3.7% of the September total and 3.3% of the volume went into industry corporate fleets.

NAAMSA commented that this downward trend in the market was likely to continue over the medium term. The organisation said the substantial decline in car sales showed that consumers were reluctant to purchase durable goods despite attractive incentive packages on offer by most of the dealers.

"Intense competition in the market continued to put pressure on margins throughout the automotive value chain," noted NAAMSA.

"Although interest rates remained unchanged last month, many factors contributed to the decline in sales," said Simphiwe Nghona, CEO of WesBank's Motor Division. "We had two fewer working days, continued depreciation of the rand and a general negative sentiment among both consumers and businesses."

Despite the decline in sales, WesBank's data shows that demand for vehicle finance was at an all-time high with total application volumes growing 6.7%, year-on-year. Used vehicle application volumes grew 2.4%, while demand for new vehicle finance was up 15.6%.



*Simphiwe Nghona,*  
*CEO of WesBank's*  
*Motor Division.*

"The declining new vehicle sales market is responsible for hyper competition between vehicle manufacturers, leading to very aggressive marketing activity – to the benefit of consumers," noted Nghona. "While buyers can use this to their benefit, they should keep the current economic climate in mind and carefully consider any vehicle purchase to avoid over-extending their credit positions."

Looking forward, NAAMSA anticipates that domestic new vehicle sales will remain under pressure, although the slight recovery in recent consumer confidence surveys and the Purchasing Managers' Index provides some hope of stabilisation in sales around current monthly levels. The organisation added that for the year as a whole, industry new car and commercial vehicle sales projections were likely to be revised down.

However, there was very good news on the export front which reached a new milestone of a record 35 181 units being shipped in a month. The vast majority of this volume is made up of cars and LCVs, with exports of trucks and buses tumbling drastically: year-to-date total exports at 672 units were 39% down on the 1 096 trucks and buses shipped in the first nine months of 2014. The reason is that most trucks and buses go into other African countries and many of these markets are suffering serious economic downturns due to the continuing low price of crude oil. ■

## MONTHLY SALES STATISTICS

The growing amount of advertising in AutoLive has made it necessary to relocate the four pages of detailed monthly vehicle sales analysis to the website [www.autolive.co.za](http://www.autolive.co.za).

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## Industry Insider

# Charles Bailey – A true motorman

BY ROGER HOUGHTON

Charles Bailey is a modest man, but behind that quiet facade is a wealth and depth of knowledge of the motor industry that few in South Africa can equal. He did it the hard way too, working his way up from a trainee administration clerk at Alderson and Flitton, the GM dealer in Pretoria, in 1970 and rising through the ranks to the position of managing director of the Volkswagen and Audi franchise in the McCarthy Group.

Although retired, he still keeps himself deeply involved in the business as the independent chairman of the Volkswagen Dealer Council. He also remains a fountain of knowledge about all aspects of the local industry and is a well respected commentator on the state of play in the retail sector.

*Everything ultimately boils down to people ... we must ensure that we have the right people with the proper skills to ensure we are in a position to keep our customers more than satisfied.*

“Having been involved intimately in all aspects of the retail business over the past 45 years I have witnessed many major changes in the way business is done but in my view everything ultimately boils down to people, be they employees or customers,” explained Bailey. “Satisfying customers must always be the focus of a dealer body but we, in the business, must in turn ensure that we have the right people with the proper skills to ensure we are in a position to keep our customers more than satisfied with the service they receive.

“In my view, people breed success in a business and I am very much in favour of a business ‘growing its own trees’ in terms of human capital. Effective training and active succession planning are vital to keep up standards and momentum in a dealership.

“I made it my business to know as many of my staff as possible, even when this number was around 1 250 people. I required up to date records of each employee’s ambitions and relevant goal-setting, together with progress reports. I made a habit of making unannounced visits to my dealerships on a Saturday morning which gave me the opportunity to talk to them informally and get the lowdown on

any problems they were experiencing and listen to the advice they had to offer,” he said.

He went on to explain that his objective with the Volkswagen Dealer Council is to ensure dealer profitability and sustainability in a tough world where there are big demands on dealer networks to meet sales targets, build or renovate facilities to exacting international standards and handle vehicles in the service centre that have many more high tech features. Increasingly complex ranges of vehicles put pressure on sales staff, who also have to keep up to speed in terms of the ever-changing offerings from finance houses.

There is big pressure on the after-sales staff to be accurate and up to date with processing paperwork for warranty claims, maintenance plans and the like as this is all subject to ongoing electronic scrutiny and audit by the vehicles manufacturers and distributors through advanced on-line systems.

“The dealers also have to face competition from various electronic media as well as from huge, dedicated auction houses in selling cars while at the same time learning to use social media to promote their own products and business units,” added Bailey.

“Advertising in the Smalls sections of daily newspapers, which was an effective avenue to market for many years, is now something of the past.”

Bailey entered the motor industry in 1970 after completing a spell in the SA Air Force. As mentioned earlier, he joined Alderson and Flitton as an administration clerk. He immediately started studying for the Institute of Chartered Secretaries’ qualification which saw him move to McCarthy Toyota in Pretoria five years later, from where he progressed to become a divisional head of McCarthy Toyota dealerships.

In 1997 he was appointed to head up the Volkswagen/Audi franchise in the McCarthy

network, a position he held until his retirement after 38 years in the McCarthy Group.

During his career in the retail motor business Bailey went through the full gambit of operations from parts and service to financial accounting, sales management – with a special fondness for the used car division – and network management.

Bailey lives in Pretoria East with his wife Wilna and they have two daughters, Lynith and Liesel.

The impact of Charles Bailey on the South African motor industry is very succinctly summed up in the following comments by Brand Pretorius, who headed up the McCarthy Group prior to his retirement: “During my tenure at both Toyota SA and the McCarthy Group, I had the privilege of observing Charles in action in the tough world of motor retailing. He is undoubtedly one of the best operators I have ever come across.

“Charles is an expert in the art and science of motor retailing. Very few people understand the intricacies of the business model of the franchise dealer better than he does. Very few people can match his management, marketing and financial knowledge. More importantly, he has few peers in terms of his ability to optimize returns on a sustainable basis. Lastly, Charles is in a class of his own when it comes to effective execution. He always gets the job done.” ■



*Charles Bailey has a wealth of knowledge of the motor industry few South Africans can equal.*



## People

### Local chemical engineer honoured by Volkswagen Group

The Volkswagen Group recently presented its “Best Apprentice Awards 2015” to young top achievers from all over the world at Group headquarters in Wolfsburg. The awards went to 45 apprentices from 19 countries on five continents. The award-winners demonstrated convincing performance and specialist competence during their apprenticeships. Throughout the world, the Volkswagen Group is training about 20 000 young people.

The awards were presented by the Chairman of the Board of Management of Volkswagen AG, Matthias Müller, the Member of the Board of Management responsible for Human Resources, Organization and IT, Dr. Horst Neumann and the President of the Global Group Works Council, Bernd Osterloh.

The 2015 “Best Apprentice Award” was the 15<sup>th</sup> of its kind presented by the Volkswagen Group and a total of 386 apprentices have been honoured since 2001.

This year South Africa was represented by local chemical engineer Sinazo Cebisa, who was one of the award recipients.

Said Thomas Schaefer, Managing Director of the Volkswagen Group South Africa: “VWSA is proud of Sinazo’s achievement. This is the recognition of our company’s investment in its younger employees with our flagship Graduate Trainee programme being one of the ways in which we train and nurture our young talent.”

“This is the fifth year in a row that VWSA’s apprentices have been honoured at this prestigious event,” concluded Schaefer. ■



Sinazo Cebisa with (from left to right) Bernd Osterloh (President of the Volkswagen Group Works Council), Matthias Müller (Chairman of the Board of Management of Volkswagen AG) and Dr. Horst Neumann (Member of the Board of Management responsible for Human Resources, Organization and IT at Volkswagen AG).

### Winner of the Agri SA Toyota Young Farmer of the Year announced

Anthony Goble, a farmer from KwaZulu-Natal recently walked away with the honours in the 2015 Agri SA Toyota Young Farmer of the Year award.

The competition starts with regional competitions which put all nominated farmers through an arduous process of evaluations. Once the regional winner, one from each province, has been chosen, they then compete against each other in the national competition.

“We would like to congratulate Mr Goble for winning this prestigious award. We are proud of him and all the finalists for their contribution to South Africa. Farming is not an easy profession and farmers often have to tackle all areas of the business by themselves, handling marketing, distribution on top of the day-to-day running of their

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## Obituary

BY ROGER HOUGHTON

**Jimmy Loubser**, a South African motor industry legend and a giant in his local community of Ermelo, passed away suddenly on October 11 at the age of 65. He was laid to rest at a very well-attended funeral on his farm outside Ermelo.



Jimmy Loubser.

Jimmy was the owner of a group which operated Ermelo Toyota since it was founded in 1974 and latterly Pongola Toyota too. Previously Loerie Toyota, in George, had also been part of the successful group. He was involved in several

other businesses, including a Total filling station and large property interests.

He was a keen motorsport enthusiast with a special interest in rallying. His debates with his brother Francois on the subject of Toyota’s motorsport programme were always lively! (At the time Francois was the Marketing Communications Director at Toyota SA and motorsport was his responsibility.)

Jimmy served on the organising committee of the Castrol Rally for many years and until fairly recently was very active on the administrative side of off-road motorcycle and quad bike racing.

He left the Toyota/Renault SA corporate fold in 1974 to become a retail dealer in Ermelo and made a wonderful success of this challenge, while also becoming involved in the upliftment of the community, serving on many committees and councils. He served on business bodies within the Toyota fold and his immediate business circles too.

He was awarded the Toyota Dealer of the Year award in 1984 as well as the MD’s medium

dealership award in 2001. In 2012 he received the Chairman’s Achievement Award and collected Divisional MD awards in 2013 and 2014.

Jimmy was known for his commitment, passion and great levels of exuberant enthusiasm, living life to the full. As a person he was larger than life and had an amazing presence and charisma that ensured everyone knew when he was in a room. He lived life on his own terms and was a tough businessman who did not tolerate fools or lies.

Delivering a eulogy at the funeral his wife, Noeline, the Dealer Principal at Ermelo Toyota, said: “Jimmy was a man who sincerely cared for his staff and other people and had an open hand. He would make a point of finding out how they were and how they were coping. He helped so many people financially without expecting anything in return.”

Jimmy is survived by his wife, Noeline, ex-wife Lorraine, sons Glen and Vincent, daughter Tanya, grandsons James and Leander and siblings Francois and Anita. ■



## People

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farms. This award not only awards farmers for their business acumen but also for the passion they have for the industry,” said Calvyn Hamman, Vice President of Sales and Marketing at Toyota South Africa Motors.

Finalists were nominated based on their performance in their respective region, and were subject to the rule that they are between 18 and 35 and must have been a member of Agri SA’s provincial organisations for at least two years. All finalists were nominated by their respective Agri SA provincial councils and were tested on a multitude of aspects, including their financial and business skills, farming skill and proficiency in management focusing specifically on their own contribution, independence and decision making authority.



Anthony Goble with the 2015 Agri SA Toyota Young Farmer of the Year award.

Goble farms sugar cane, bananas and macadamias in the Ndwedwe region of KwaZulu-Natal. He has numerous farms which he manages both owned by him and rented land from other farmers.

He is currently also assisting the South African Sugarcane Research Institute (SASRI) with sugar cane trials. ■



Delegates and officials of the Royal Thai Embassy recently visited the General Motors South Africa (GMSA) Struandale plant in Port Elizabeth. The delegation was led by Dr Chakaran Komolsiri (front), Trade Commissioner of the Thai Embassy. According to Komolsiri Thailand is one of the biggest suppliers of automotive components to South Africa. Thailand was constantly looking at ways to boost their exports to South Africa and to strengthen relationships with South African businesses. GMSA General Manager of Manufacturing Operations, Clayton Whitaker (right), accompanied the Thai visitors on a plant tour and noted that a number of components on the locally built Isuzu KB are sourced from Thailand. Both Komolsiri and Minister Counsellor of the Thai Embassy, Chavanol Phivnil (left) expressed great interest in the Isuzu KB production line.

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## AutoLive Exclusive!

Interview with Markus Schaefer, Head of Worldwide Production and Supply Chain for Mercedes-Benz Cars, and Member of the Mercedes-Benz Passenger Car Board.

BY STUART JOHNSTON

At the recent Frankfurt Show, *AutoLive* was fortunate to be granted an interview with Markus Schaefer, a qualified mechanical engineer who heads up the global Mercedes-Benz Production and Supply Chain for passenger vehicles. Under his portfolio, logically, falls the MBSA plant in East London, where C-Class sedans are built for global markets in both left-hand-drive and right-hand-drive form, one of these markets being the all-important United States.

Mr Schaefer is responsible for 26 plants and 70 000 people fall under his portfolio.

"I love to travel to South Africa, I have been visiting your country over the past 20 years, and I love to see the plant, the passion for building cars and the emotions of the people there," he enthused.

"A big part of the global strategy we see at the moment (for Mercedes-Benz) is that we are heading toward the two-million mark this year, and in five years we have doubled production. A big part of this strategy has been to connect all the new plants and plant expansions into flexible networks to ensure we are working hand-in-hand with each other. This puts us in a position, as far as South Africa is concerned, to satisfy markets around the globe. For instance, South Africa is helping the US plant to supply to the US market, and also support the Bremen plant, which is running out of capacity, to supply the European market.

*We are heading toward the two-million mark this year, and in five years we have doubled production.*

"So this is all new, and also, as front-wheel-drive and rear-wheel-drive plants work hand-in-hand in a very clean production network."

**AutoLive:** The new C-Class is a much more complex car than the previous generation. How difficult was it, when starting the new production at the beginning of 2014, to enable a smooth transition when implementing new laser welding, aluminium welding and other advanced technologies, at our East London plant?

**Markus Schaefer:** It's more like building an airplane now. With so much marrying of steel and aluminium. I think there were ten different new technologies we had to introduce to the

plant. This only succeeded because of our intensive training concept and our preparation for the new model which took us two years before production started. This was under the lead of the Bremen plant, which we call the lead plant for C-Class, and we engaged project leaders from Bremen to work hand-in-hand with South African project leaders in intensive training. There was also a lot of new equipment to consider, but our focus was on training, training, training. This of course happened with other C-Class plants around the world, (in the US, and in China) and because of our preparation, within six months, the entire new C-Class global network was up and running, an achievement probably unheard of in the whole automotive history, working over four continents. And here we are.

*The C-Class is selling well locally and we are exporting well ... Some years ago we were running at 40 000 to 50 000 production, now we are approaching 90 000 to 100 000 mark. We are not stopping there.*

**AutoLive:** When Dr Martin Zimmermann was in charge in the final days leading up to the transition, he said there would be a big increase in production at East London, up to 50 per cent. I believe the production increase is now at 100 per cent over what it was with the previous model. Do you see it expanding even further?

**Markus Schaefer:** Dr Zimmerman was optimistic, but not optimistic enough. The C-Class is selling well locally and we are exporting well, it is an exporting breakthrough. We are exceeding all expectations. Some years ago we were running at 40 000 to 50 000 production, now we are approaching 90 000 to 100 000 mark (at East London). We are not stopping there. We have plans which we will announce, in some detail, for some further investment. The quality is excellent, no doubt about it. The political circumstances are positive, so far, I hope they stay this way. And on that basis we are ready to engage in further investment.

**AutoLive:** A question of continuity of supply has been one factor in this. What about the increase of local components in the production, to make the costing more viable, given that we are so far away from major markets, such as Europe and the US?



Markus Schaefer heads up the global Mercedes-Benz Production and Supply Chain for passenger vehicles.

**Markus Schaefer:** That's the only downside, the distance away from Europe. We have made some steps for some localisation of components. We wish it could be more, but we have taken another step. And with 100 000 cars it makes more sense than 50 000 cars. And with more cars it will make even more sense.

*We have made some steps for some localisation of components.*

*We wish it could be more*

**AutoLive:** Planning for the next C-Class must already be underway. What are the chances of the next C-Class being built in South Africa at East London, and when will a decision be made?

**Markus Schaefer:** No decision has been made yet, we are not even halfway in the life cycle of the current model. It will be a decision based on our network. But I think South Africa has positioned itself in a very good way. But again, I was not very happy with the strike situation that we saw some time ago in the plant. We will hopefully improve the strike situation. But we have indications that the unions have talked about these situations, and hopefully for the future we see less impact of strikes. With this in mind, the commitment of the government and the APDP, we have some predictability. So I think the chances are really good.

**AutoLive:** Thank you so much. ■

## AutoAfrica News

### CBU exports into Africa continue to disappoint

The economic downturn being experienced generally by the BRICS nations is reflected in the disappointing new vehicle sales in emerging countries in Africa as a whole. The ongoing low price of crude oil is causing havoc on the African continent and having a direct negative impact on the export of completely built up (CBU) vehicles from SA into countries north of the Limpopo.

Year-to-date export volume at 35 234 units is 12% down on the 40 016 units shipped in the first nine months of 2014, which were already 23% below the figure for the same period in 2013.

Toyota is in its customary leadership position with 15 923 units shipped into Africa which equates to 45% of the total. Nissan is in runner-up position with 7 935 units exported and is followed by Ford (6 528) and GM/Isuzu (2 832).

Algeria remains the largest market, taking 7 946 units from SA between January and September, with Toyota (4 278) supplying the lion's share, ahead of Nissan (3 061).

Nigeria, which has been claiming to be the economic powerhouse of Africa is in the doldrums due to the low oil price with vehicle exports from SA amounting to only 3 998 units compared to 8 488 units a year ago – a drop of 53%! Angola, which is also very dependent on oil exports, is in the same boat taking only 3 224 units from SA in the first nine months of 2015. Even Kenya, with 3 708 exports is proving a better export destination this year.

Taken in isolation exports from SA into Africa this September showed an improvement of 29% over the same month a year ago at 3 227 units vs. 2 496. Toyota continues to lead the way with 1 724 units shipped last month (53%). Ford was second with 583, Nissan third with 359 and GM/Isuzu fourth with 339 exported units.

### MasterDrive takes on Africa

If you find the state of South African roads during rainy season and the occurrence of reckless drivers dismal, be warned the situation north of the border may not be that much better. If you or your company representatives travel beyond South African borders you will often face the same obstacles, maybe even worse.

While South Africa still leads the pack with one of the highest road fatalities per capita in Africa, our neighbours are not too far behind. Of the 51 African countries found in the Global Status Report on Road Safety from 2013, Namibia, Botswana, Swaziland and Lesotho all form part of the top 25 African

### African countries with the highest fatalities per capita

COUNTRY	ROAD FATALITIES/100 000 INHABITANTS/ YEAR
Eritrea	48.1
Libya	40.5
Nigeria	33.7
South Africa	31.9
Guinea-Bissau	31.2
Chad	29.7
Uganda	28.9
Lesotho	28.4
Mauritiana	28.0
Burkina Faso	27.7

countries with the highest fatalities on their roads. Others like Mozambique and Zimbabwe have become notorious for decrepit road conditions.

The good news for South Africans venturing beyond our borders is that MasterDrive has expanded its driver training operations into the rest of the continent. According to the Managing Director of MasterDrive, Eugene Herbert, they have offices in Swaziland and Botswana. "We aim to increase our presence within and outside South African borders. Our next area of interest will be Mozambique. There are high incidents of crashes in these countries and driver training is in high demand.

"The importance of driver training cannot be underestimated as the interest in Africa grows. A major barrier to entry is poor road conditions and we hope to provide a solution to that. Many South African companies have already expanded into Africa and now we are exporting our driver training as well," said Herbert.

MasterDrive already has a proactive presence in Africa because of previous training initiatives in the SADAC region. "Our work on the continent leads us to look for solutions to help drive economic growth in these regions. We also want to play our role in raising the driving standards of road users in countries with some of the highest fatalities per capita," Herbert concluded. ■

### Mozambique gets its first MAN dealership

Entrepreneur, engineer, aviator and owner of MAN's Swaziland dealership, Ernest Da Cruz, has expanded MAN Truck & Bus' Sub-Equatorial Africa dealer footprint by building a state-of-the-art sales and service dealership in Matola, just outside the Mozambique capital city, Maputo.

The new facility boasts a 1 200 m<sup>2</sup> workshop, a 400 m<sup>2</sup> parts department and 600 m<sup>2</sup> of office space. The workshop includes three service bays, eight repair bays and a wash bay.



Ernest Da Cruz, owner of Matola Truck & Bus in the oil dispensing room.

"Today's event goes beyond the basic task of establishing an automotive franchise. This new dealership is not just another outlet for selling trucks and buses, but represents a step towards establishing an infrastructure capable of supporting the immensely competitive transport industry in the region and to make it an essential partner in the development of the beautiful country of Mozambique," said Da Cruz at the official roof-wetting ceremony of Matola Truck & Bus Mozambique in September.

The new dealership is equipped with the very latest hi-tech workshop and parts inventory management systems, including a computerised oil dispensing system, a five-ton crane and a powerful server running cutting-edge inventory management software which links the Matola parts warehouse with its sister warehouse at Da Cruz's Swaziland MAN dealership.

"Our vision is to manage cost-effective business processes with minimum risks with appropriate approval by our management system ensuring market competitiveness by supplying products and services of the highest standards, on time and within budget," Da Cruz added.

Mozambique is currently one of Africa's star economic performers with annual GDP growth between six and seven per cent. "Foreign Direct Investment, particularly in port infrastructure development at harbours including Maputo, Beira, Nacala, Pemba and Quelimane are ramping up the nation's international logistics capacity," said Thomas Ferreira, Head of Export After-Sales, MAN Sub-Equatorial Africa.

"The absence of any significant rail networks from South Africa and other neighbouring countries to Mozambique make truck transport the predominant logistics provider on the sub-continent and this new dealership, which is perfectly located alongside the N4-Maputo corridor, will become an invaluable service and support centre for long-haul trucks running from Gauteng to Maputo and other ports in Mozambique," Ferreira stated. ■

## BMW Rosslyn plant gets first green energy

On 10 October this year, BMW SA received the first green energy from energy company Bio2Watt at its Rosslyn plant in Pretoria. Through an agreement signed in 2014, between 25 and 30 per cent of BMW Plant Rosslyn's electricity requirements will now be generated from renewable sources.

The BMW South Africa / Bio2Watt renewable energy partnership is the first commercially viable biogas project. The Bio2Watt biogas plant in Bronkhorstspuit is located on the premises of one of South Africa's larger feedlots (Beefcor) and an agricultural stronghold in Gauteng. The location provides the project with proximity to key fuel supplies; grid access and sufficient water supplied by Beefcor's storm water collection dams. The City of Tshwane is also a key supplier of waste to the project.

The biogas process relies on organic waste, which is directed into a digester where biogas is produced and then goes into a gas engine to produce electricity. This is inserted into the power grid for uptake by power purchasers like BMW.

At the Bronkhorstspuit biogas plant, about 40 000 tons of cattle manure and a further 20 000 tons of mixed organic waste per annum is fed into two anaerobic digesters that produce the biogas feedstock for a combined heat and power application.

According to Mr Tim Abbott, Managing Director of BMW Group South Africa, there is a



plan to transition the company's production facilities to be powered by 100 per cent from renewable sources by the year 2020. "We have increased the share of renewable energy as a percentage of total power consumed by the BMW Group to an impressive 51 per cent in 2014. Our vision is to draw 100 per cent of our energy requirements from renewable sources with the help of partners such as Bio2Watt."

Abbott added that BMW aspired to be the most sustainable company in the automotive industry. "Sustainability is one of the main drivers of our

business. We not only create added value for the environment and society, but also for the company itself – because sustainability management also cuts costs and generates revenues as well as profits."

The Bio2Watt plant in Bronkhorstspuit has the capacity to generate 4.4MW.

For more information on the BMW South Africa / Bio2Watt renewable energy project visit [www.bio2watt.com](http://www.bio2watt.com) and [www.bmwgroup.com/en/responsibility/svr\\_2014/index.html](http://www.bmwgroup.com/en/responsibility/svr_2014/index.html). A video explaining the process can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=moUsxjOFvYU>. ■

## Renault SA gets new PDC

Renault's new Parts & Distribution Centre, located in Spartan east of Johannesburg is under development and on track to ensure the ongoing supply of parts and create sufficient capacity for planned growth and model diversification in the years ahead.

The facility had to be redesigned to maximise stocking capacity, optimise efficient work flows and prepare the facility to accommodate the storage racking layout required. The new PDC measures 5 550m<sup>2</sup> and has a racking height that varies between 7.5 and 11 metres.

While the present PDC has 20 753 bin locations, the new facility will initially house 33 768 bin locations. The mezzanine flooring is the largest of its kind in South Africa and is of a modular design to allow for future expansion requirements to easily be incorporated. The two-tier mezzanine floors measures 880 m<sup>2</sup> and can effectively accommodate adjustable and perforated steel shelving, sliding dividers, buckets and label holders.



Based on current demand, Renault's new PDC is manned and geared to receive an estimated 12 containers per month.

The sheer size and scale of the facility is evident from the massive volume of materials utilised in its

development: 40 tons of steel was used in the construction of the mezzanine alone; heavy-duty racking comprising in excess of 80 tons of steel together with the 4 700 beams used equates to over 6 kilometres of heavy-duty packing space. ■

## Advertorial

# Maxe Premium Automotive Accessories - Putting Safety First



**“Fatal or serious injury resulting from a motor vehicle’s air bags activating inappropriately is a reality caused by inferior quality nudge or bull bars, meaning it is irresponsible for owners or dealers to fit non-approved equipment”, Maxe MD Kevin White says. “Why would anyone consciously put themselves and their families at risk by fitting an unapproved accessory to their vehicle?”**

A subsidiary of Autovest, South Africa’s largest original equipment manufacturer and approved supplier of automotive accessories, Maxe produces a range of bull bars, nudge bars, bumper protectors, side steps, side bars and sports / styling bars and tow bars using the highest grade of stainless steel (specifically marine grade 304) as well as in mild steel.

White says for the past 20 years the Durban-based manufacturer had placed increasing importance on the engineering and safety aspects built into its products. Backed by a 12-member strong research and development team, Maxe, working closely with the vehicle manufacturers, consistently sets new industry standards with safety at the forefront in these developments.

Nudge bars may seem like unsophisticated products anyone can make in a backyard facility, but consider the engineering that goes into the bars, and in making the brackets deform progressively – in combination with airbag deployment. Tests include measuring the bracket stress levels in a vertical (durability) and horizontal (front impact) planes; confirming the bracket durability in the most extreme off-road conditions; confirming the side step mounting bracket could withstand a vertical force while being sufficiently weak in lateral impact situations to maximise deceleration and simulating a frontal collision and airbag compatibility.

White says Maxe’s national representation and sound after-sales service ensured customers had access to technical back-up and high levels of service in the market. In being original equipment manufacturers, the company’s products also do not affect owners’ warranties on new motor vehicles, something consumers should bear in mind when adding accessories to their vehicle.

“In being a proudly South African company Maxe prides itself in its products being locally manufactured with a high level of local content. With 20 years of experience in the business, and a strong management team I believe Maxe is well positioned to maintain its status as the Premium Automotive Accessories provider in South Africa. All our products are manufactured to an exceptionally high standard and we have sustained ISO 9001 accreditation since 2007,” White says.



Maxe bars are available through the dealer network and Maxe are currently approved original equipment suppliers to Nissan, Toyota, Hyundai, Kia, General Motors, Renault, VW, Daihatsu, GWM, Ford and Mitsubishi. Maxe has capacity for supplying and fitting branded products for consumers on demand across the country. Within the trucking industry, the company currently produce truck bars and accessories for Freightliner, UD and Scania and are developing a product range for Volvo, Mercedes Benz, Iveco, MAN, Hino and Renault.

He goes on to say that, “The company has won Toyota’s Supplier Awards three times in the past four years and that Maxe is the only South African company to have air-bag compatibility (ABC) and durability testing credentials. He concludes that, “Maxe accessories are often copied, but never matched”.

**If you care about the safety of your family, don’t compromise - insist on Maxe accessories for your vehicle.**



FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Tel: (031) 713 2200 • Fax: (031) 702 3160

Email: sales@maxe.co.za • Web: www.maxe.co.za

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## Snippets

### POPULARITY OF CONVERTIBLES WANING



The attraction of open-top motoring is declining and sales of convertible cars has fallen by half from a peak in 2004 to 409 770 vehicles in 2014 according to an article in Bloomberg Business News. By contrast sales of SUVs/Crossovers have almost quadrupled to 12.3-million according to researcher IHS.

The burgeoning Chinese market is one of the reasons convertibles are losing popularity as few people in that country want to drive in smoggy streets without a roof and air-conditioning.

However, the distinction of top-down driving continues at the top end of the market and some very expensive convertibles, like a R4.5-million Rolls-Royce Dawn, were introduced at the recent Frankfurt Motor Show. There was also an open top version of the Mercedes-Benz S-Class.

Meanwhile Volkswagen is dropping its mass-market Eos and Renault has stopped production of its Wind and convertible Megane. New open top versions of the Ford Mustang, Chevrolet Camaro and BMW 2-Series may boost convertible sales by 2020 but the global total is never expected to reach the high of 2004 again. ■

### WWSA MANUFACTURES 500 000<sup>TH</sup> POLO AT ITS UITENHAGE PLANT

A Flash Red, Cross Polo destined for a customer in Austria was the 500 000<sup>th</sup> Volkswagen Polo to be manufactured at the Uitenhage plant, in South Africa earlier this month.

The milestone car left the production line in the presence of the Premier of the Eastern Cape Phumulo Masualle, the Deputy Premier of Lower Saxony Stefan Wenzel as well as the Executive Mayor of the Nelson Mandela Metro Danny Jordaan who were hosted by Managing Director of Volkswagen Group South Africa, Thomas Schaefer.

The Uitenhage factory supplies the Polo hatchback to all four-door, right-hand-drive



*From left: Danny Jordaan, Executive Mayor of the Nelson Mandela Metro; Thomas Schaefer, Managing Director, Volkswagen Group South Africa; Stefan Wenzel Deputy Premier of Lower Saxony; Phumulo Masualle Premier of the Eastern Cape; Dr Bernd Rinnert Consular General of Germany and Richard Botha, Head of Final Assembly.*

markets, including Britain, Ireland, Japan, Singapore, Malaysia, Australia and New Zealand.

"We have also exported over 390 000 vehicles since 2009, with the Uitenhage plant being the worldwide sole supplier of the Cross Polo derivative which coincidentally is the 500 000<sup>th</sup> vehicle to be manufactured today," said Schaefer. ■

### TOYOTA RETAKES GLOBAL SALES LEAD

Toyota has regained its global sales lead over the Volkswagen Group as the German grouping faces the consumer blowback from the emissions-cheating scandal. Toyota, which has been the world sales leader since 2012, sold 7.49-million vehicles in the first nine months of 2015 carped to 7.43 units sold by the VW group with deliveries showing a year-on-year drop of 1.5%. GM's sales for the first nine months dropped 1.9% to 7.2-million units.

VW led Toyota at the halfway stage this year but is now preparing to recall about 11 million vehicles worldwide and has stopped the sales of diesel models in several markets as it makes the engines comply with legislation. VW is also suffering from a slowdown in demand in its biggest market, China, with sales down 7.4% at the end of September. ■

### CONCERN ABOUT AGOA HICCUP

According to a recent article by Roy Cokayne in Business Report there are concerns in the local motor industry about stumbling blocks in finalising

the future Africa Growth and Opportunity Act between the US and SA. The big problem appears to be the import into SA of poultry from the US with apparent delays in meeting deadlines.

The AGOA has proved a very important tool in growing the export of automotive products from SA to the US, particularly in the form of built-up cars. According to the report there has been an increase of almost 270% in automotive products going from SA to the US between 2001 when AGOA came into effect, and 2014. In the same period automotive exports from the US to SA grew by almost 400% with total trade between the two countries amounting to almost R30-billion. ■

### CAR OF THE YEAR FINALISTS ANNOUNCED



The South African Guild of Motoring Journalists (SAGMJ) announced the finalist vehicle ranges for the 2016 WesBank / SAGMJ Car of the Year (COTY) competition earlier this month. This follows a vote cast by a 26-member Jury, elected by their peers, of an original list of 45 eligible vehicle ranges.

The finalists for the 2016 WesBank / SAGMJ Car of the Year competition, South Africa's premier motoring event, are (in alphabetical order): BMW i3, Citroën C4 Cactus, Ford Fusion, Honda HR-V, Jaguar XE, Kia Sorento, Land Rover Discovery Sport, Mazda2 Hatch, Opel Adam, Opel Corsa, Peugeot 308, Volvo XC90.

The competition now moves into high gear as preparations are made for two days of stringent evaluations at the beginning of February 2016. At these evaluation days – the most critical of which will be the scheduled procedures at the world-renowned Gerotek test facility near Pretoria – the COTY Jury will assess the cars independently, with routes and modules designed to test the vehicles in a similar way in which the average consumer would use them.

The South African Guild of Motoring Journalists has run the SA Car of the Year competition since 1986, with WesBank – one of South

## Snippets

◀ continued from previous page

Africa's largest vehicle finance institutions – as its headline sponsor since inception. Motul and Hollard Insurance supply support sponsorship. The winner will be revealed at a gala banquet on 8 March 2016. ■

### GOODYEAR SA AWARDED AS A TOP EMPLOYER

For the second year running, Goodyear South Africa (Pty) Ltd has been officially certified by the Top Employers Institute for its exceptional employee offerings.

“We are delighted to be officially recognised as a leading employer, we strive to continuously improve our employee offerings to give our employees a cultivating work environment” said Jean-Jacques Wiroth, Managing Director of Goodyear South Africa (Pty) Ltd

The Top Employers Institute globally certifies excellence in the conditions that employers create for their people. Crucial to the Top Employers process is that participating companies must complete a stringent research process and meet the required high standard in order to achieve the certification.

To further reinforce the validity of the process, all answers were independently audited, meaning this research has verified Goodyear South Africa (Pty) Ltd's outstanding employee conditions and earned them a coveted spot among a choice group of certified Top Employers.

The Top Employers Institute assessed Goodyear South Africa (Pty) Ltd's employee offerings on criteria such as: talent strategy, workforce planning, learning and development, performance management, leadership development, compensation and benefits and more. ■

### CONTINENTAL TYRE SA LAUNCHES NEW WEBSITE

Continental Tyre South Africa has launched its newly revamped website, [www.continental.co.za](http://www.continental.co.za). The site has been redesigned to reflect a fresh new look in keeping with the brand's global brand identity as well as containing the latest information on products, services, a dealer locator and tyre recommendations suited to most vehicles.

Site content and features include: dealer locator linked with google maps, tyre finder, improved search functionality, product highlights, tyre safety and replacement tips, independent tyre test results, latest news and videos, quick links to all tyre divisions, downloads, social media links and more.

The site also includes specific product information to help customers make informed decisions to suit their unique needs. Product changes and technical data are updated automatically in real time ensuring access to the latest information.

Created with the end-user in mind, the website has been designed using the latest technology so that the site is compatible with all browsers and smart mobile devices. ■

### HYUNDAI VIDEO SCOOPS ANOTHER AWARD

Hyundai Motor's “A Message to Space” campaign has won two bronze awards at the international Clio Awards in the Film Technique and Out of Home categories. This latest success completes a triple awards crown for the innovative film following other recent acknowledgement achieved at the Cannes Lions and New York Festivals awards.

Soon to reach 70 million views on YouTube, the “Message to Space” video has been the centre of attention on social media around the world since its launch in April. The creative campaign tells the

story of how Hyundai Motor sent a message from a 13-year-old girl to her astronaut father.

In the video, 11 Genesis cars write a huge message, covering about 5,55 km<sup>2</sup>, on the Delamar Dry Lake in Nevada in the US – an image the girl's father was able to capture from the International Space Station. The message was also recognised by Guinness World Records as the largest tyre track image created yet.

In a unique extension to the concept, Hyundai Motor invited viewers to create their own virtual message to share with loved ones, an opportunity taken up by more than 85 000 people around the world.

On top of its internet popularity, the video was aired more than 800 times on US national TV channels such as ABC, Fox TV, and NBC, as well as being covered by numerous high-profile print and online media including TIME, People and Forbes. The Clio Awards recognition follows four bronze honours at the Cannes Lions and New York Festival events—including the Third Prize Award in the category “Film: Use of Medium” at the 2015 New York Festivals World's Best Advertising awards.

To view the ‘A Message to Space’ video, visit the Hyundai Motor Worldwide YouTube channel <https://youtu.be/3EOAXrTrsOE>. ■



Hyundai's message to space.

## NEW PEUGEOT 208

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## Launch Drives

# Updated Ford Ranger remains king of comfort; still bakkie to beat

BY BRENT ELLIS

When the current Ford Ranger launched in 2011, it turned the large bakkie segment on its head. Here was a big, bold, brash and bulky bakkie which brought unprecedented levels of comfort and refinement to the segment – something the Toyota Hilux never did, and it was never threatened because of it. Ranger, however, slowly but surely managed to swing people towards the Blue Oval, and in several instances in 2015 the Ranger has outsold the Hilux.

Of course, some of that sales success has to do with the imminent arrival of the new Hilux, but I think a large degree of the shift can be attributed to the Ford's ability to feel like a car – something valued by the yummy mummies and butch businessmen who buy the higher-end 'lifestyle' derivatives in SA.

Pipping the new Hilux to the post by a few months, the updated Ford Ranger is now available,

and boy it is not messing about – it's out to remain at the top of the segment.

The new Ranger features a completely new front end which immediately links it to its new Everest sibling, and inside a new dashboard design is rather welcome. True, some of the lower derivatives retain the old dash, but on the higher end of the scale the new look has done wonders.

Ride comfort is still immensely good. Sure, there is only so much you can do when you use leaf springs at the rear, but even with an empty load box there is none of the choppiness you get in a Hilux or Isuzu KB, for that matter.

Technology levels have taken a massive leap forward in the new Ranger, with extras like lane-keeping assistance, adaptive cruise control, tyre pressure monitoring, forward collision warning, trailer sway control, rollover mitigation, a digital LCD instrument cluster, a 230V power socket and Ford's SYNC2 infotainment system available as model-dependent standard features.



A total of 33 derivatives (five of which are all-new) are available with the update, with the same 2.5-litre Duratec (petrol), and 2.5- and 3.2-litre Duratorq turbodiesel engines available.

Pricing has seen a modest increase across the range, with the bottom-of-the-range model coming in at R191 100. The range-topping Ranger 3.2 TDCi 4x4 Double Cab Wildtrak automatic now comes in at a R596 900, but it does have a really impressive list of standard features.

All models benefit from a 4-year/ 120 000 km warranty and all models barring the Base derivatives feature a 5-year/ 100 000 km service plan, with service intervals set at every 20 000 km. ■

# Does new Toyota Aygo bring X-factor?

BY BRENT ELLIS

Toyota South Africa has introduced the all-new, second-generation Aygo to the South African market. Following on from its successful predecessor, does the new, edgy design mean the new Aygo will be even more welcomed by the trendy youngsters to which the car is aimed? Well, Toyota seems to think so.

The new Aygo is a definite design departure, and while it is still part of the Peugeot-Citroën-Toyota alliance which also spawns the new Citroën C1 and Peugeot 108, the Aygo is totally different on the outside.

On the inside, the modern design which is shared with the other two cars, is crisp and clean. A large central hang-down section houses a smart touch screen infotainment system which includes Bluetooth and USB functionality, and really elevates the Aygo in its segment. The large speedometer is also smart, flanked by a digital rev counter.

It's comfortable too – still small on the outside despite being 25 mm longer than the previous model, but there is enough room inside at least for the two front occupants. Of course, the rear of the car is a little more pinched – Toyota has at least given the Aygo a 'double bubble' roof design to enhance rear headroom – and the 168-litre boot is still not particularly great for lots of luggage. As a city runabout however, the new Aygo is great!

Powered by a slightly updated version of the same 1.0-litre normally-aspirated three-cylinder petrol engine you got in the old Aygo, its 51 kW and 95 Nm are sufficient for the Aygo's designation as a city car. Fuel economy is claimed to be 4.4-litres per 100 km with carbon emissions of 102 g/km, and transmission is a normal five-speed manual.

Two models are available in the new Aygo range, and they are so closely matched that you would be foolish not to opt for the range-topping Aygo X-Play.

Both models feature remote central locking, electric front windows (louvers in the rear), air-conditioning, projector-style head lights, 14-inch



steel wheels with hub caps, the touch screen interface, ABS, BAS and four airbags. At R138 900 for the base model Aygo, it is a pretty decent package which of course comes with Toyota's reliability and resale to boot.

However, for just R1 000 more (and it's still cheaper than the most expensive of the outgoing Aygo models), you could opt for the Aygo X-Play, which brings a two-tone paint scheme (with either a black or silver roof), and leather for the steering wheel and gear lever. At R139 900, it's a no-brainer.

The Aygo was never the cheapest offering in the A-segment, and nothing has changed there. It is however fun to drive and good to look at, and with both models available with a 3-year/ 100 000 km warranty and optional service plan, should do well. ■

## Jaguar Land Rover creates job opportunities through Apprenticeship Roadshow

Jaguar Land Rover South Africa and sub-Saharan Africa (JLR SA and SSA) successfully wrapped up its third annual Apprenticeship Roadshow earlier this month. The roadshow sees Jaguar Land Rover visiting many South African schools and forms part of its commitment to addressing the shortage of technical skills in the country.

This initiative from JLR is unique in the local motor industry, and is supported by its countrywide network of dealerships. At the roadshow events high-school students are exposed to career opportunities in the motor industry and encouraged to

apply for the JLR Apprentice Programme. Rural and township schools are specifically targeted to give equal opportunities to these learners. In total, 75 schools were visited.

Learners are also shown that the motor industry offers genuine career opportunities, in an environment that is increasingly high-tech and premium, as workshops evolve to meet the demands of modern vehicles. Applicants to the JLR Apprentice Programme undergo a strict assessment process to determine suitability and aptitude. Successful candidates receive world-class training based on a

UK-based syllabus, and enjoy exposure to all Jaguar and Land Rover vehicles as well as the company's advanced vehicle diagnostic systems.

"It's vital to show students the exciting career path that awaits them in the motor industry. It's an accomplished vocation, and should not be seen as a last resort for employment," said Brian Hastie, Network Director of JLR SA and SSA. "Our technicians are well compensated – we encouraged them to develop their careers, think outside the box and go on to do great things."

Run in co-operation with the Manufacturing Engineering and Related Services Skills Education and Training Authority (merSETA) and Department of Higher Education, the Jaguar Land Rover Apprenticeship Roadshow reaches out to students in grades 10, 11 and 12 and emphasises the importance of excelling in science, mathematics and English.

Students who show interest can visit their local Jaguar or Land Rover dealership to apply for the Apprenticeship Programme. Following this, dealerships can assist with the development of apprentices by enrolling them at the JLR Training Academy, where they can study to become master technicians. The academy also accepts online applications, through [www.jagapprentice.co.za](http://www.jagapprentice.co.za) and [www.lrapptentice.co.za](http://www.lrapptentice.co.za). ■



## Maxifren sold to Aftermarket Solutions

Maxifren, the wholesale distributor of heavy-duty brake and clutch products to the independent automotive aftermarket, has been sold to Aftermarket Solutions (AS), a subsidiary of Imperial Holdings Group. Aftermarket Solutions was formerly the Midas Group.

The acquisition includes ownership of the brand name Ferobrake, which is a nationwide network of independently owned clutch and brake businesses that have the right to trade with the name Ferobrake; and exclusive distribution rights to Ferodo Commercial Vehicle Brake Linings in South Africa and some neighbouring countries by agreement with Federal-Mogul Motorparts, South Africa.

"The combined effort of Maxifren distributing Ferodo through Ferobrake will allow us to pursue our growth strategy for the commercial vehicle sector," said Stefan le Roux, director of the Commercial Vehicle Division at AS. "AS being the leader in the replacement automotive parts industry allows us to not only open up additional

marketing scope for Ferobrake, but also finance the future of Maxifren and enable the entity to grow its market position."

Established in 2005 by B&U Holdings, Maxifren has already undergone impressive growth, expanding from a warehouse in Epping, Cape Town into Gauteng. Under highly experienced senior management, the company has both grown Ferobrake's solid standing in the market and cemented its association with other Original Equipment brands, including Ferodo, Sachs and its own brand of Covata Clutch Systems.

*The nationwide Ferobrake dealership network will retain its identity, as will Maxifren and its warehousing structures.*

The nationwide Ferobrake dealership network will retain its identity, as will Maxifren and its warehousing structures. Both will, however, benefit from

the massive marketing and franchising insight, systems and resources that AS has built up over the years through Midas, ADCO, ACD, CBS, Motolek, Battery Hub and Silverton Radiator Services franchisees, with a 700-store-strong footprint in place.

Remarked Maxifren MD Barrie Taylor: "We operate in the same channel as AS, and use the same operating systems, so we don't anticipate much disruption as a result of the acquisition. Of significant importance is that where Maxifren is well connected internationally with Covata Clutch Systems, AS has for many decades been involved in the sourcing and procurement of many other brands, and this knowledge can only benefit us in growing Covata and other products too."

Federal-Mogul Motorparts, the American-owned Original Equipment supplier of vehicle safety products, among others, including Ferodo Commercial Vehicle Linings, and currently Maxifren's largest supplier, has pledged its support and will continue to offer services without any foreseeable disruption. ■



## 'Horizon – Next' defines TATA Motors' global view

On a recent visit to South Africa, the President of the TATA Motors Limited Passenger Car Unit, Mayank Pareek, said he believed South Africa is well poised for positive economic growth, and hence increased vehicle sales. "Similar to where India and China were a few years ago, when other established global markets were in negative growth territory.

"This is the time, right now, where your country is at a tipping point in its changing economic profile and, if things remain as is, this can provide for vehicle market growth over the next few years. You have all the factors in place, including an economically

active younger middle class; good road infrastructure; and solid, stable access to financing.

"I believe this growth thrust will be driven through the small car segment.

"In addition, the newer buyers want more and more for less and less. Cars today must be 'cool' with lots of accessories and the latest in technology, especially digital. This is what these customers can relate to and want. Good entertainment systems and in-car apps; all to be standard on top of the expected features relating to safety, comfort, convenience and low-cost driving."

"TATA Motors has its eye on expanding its vehicle parc in southern Africa. The group sees this region as its next horizon," he said.

Pareek also alluded to TATA possibly introducing a small SUV to the SA market in the not-too-distant future. ■



Mayank Pareek.

## Turning your smartphone into a mechanic

A new invention set to change how people look after their vehicles is now available in South Africa. Known as Drivebot, this nifty device can – with a flick of a thumb on your phone – check your vehicle for any hidden problems and provide simple instruction on how to deal with them. As a result, owners can save on repair cost before the problem becomes more severe.

The Drivebot device is plugged into an OBD-II port, usually found close to the steering wheel of a car. From here it accesses the same diagnostics that technicians usually use to check on a vehicle's health. Once paired via Bluetooth on a smartphone (Apple or Android devices), the Drivebot becomes a supportive information partner that constantly monitors your car.

Drivebot's range of information incorporates mechanical trouble alerts, trip logs, route advice and business-expense tracking. With the Drivebot plugged in, it sends alerts to a paired device and the App then relays instructions on what the user can do to fix it. The driver also receives maintenance reminders, which include those for tune-ups when the car reaches a certain mileage, or for tyre and brake rotation.

The trip log feature was designed to help support drivers who not only need the data to track expenses but want to make future decisions that will save on fuel. Route advice can also take into account efficient driving habits. More specifically, Drivebot can be programmed to monitor driving routes and suggest different routes which could save drivers both time as well as money. Furthermore, the device can tag business trips and export files to email for business-expense tracking. Drivebot's built-in flash storage can store roughly two months of trip data, and features a low-battery voltage alarm.

According to Gerhard Kriel, MD at Kriel Technology Group – the company responsible for the distribution of Drivebot, most cars sold in South Africa since 1996 are OBD-II enabled, thus compatible with the device. However, some car models might not support some of the features such as fuel consumption. The Drivebot team has compiled simple steps on how to know whether your car is compatible with Drivebot or not.

The Drivebot is available for purchase at Kriel Technology Group's online store at [www.ktgroup.co.za](http://www.ktgroup.co.za). ■

## Fleet management service providers now in a single source

Finding a specific fleet management service provider can be a difficult task because of the complexity of services required and the large volume of suppliers. Online searches for suppliers are often lengthy and one may not always find the right answer.

It is because of this difficulty that Nigel Webb of Latitude Fleet Services, a leading fleet management consultancy, developed an online portal, Fleetsolutions, which lists established fleet management service providers.

"As a fleet management consultancy, one of our strengths is that we not only know where to find established service suppliers, but have also worked with them and trust their capabilities," said Webb.

Currently, Fleetsolutions has over 25 supplier categories. While suppliers of tracking (telematics) and FML services are a major focus, there are also a large number of lesser known and often stand-alone services. These play an important role in reducing costs or improving efficiencies in areas like fuel, maintenance, accidents and claims management.

One also has to consider growing corporate governance, regulation and responsibility requirements such as driver training, health and safety requirements, management of dangerous goods, AARTO and eTolls.

"Fleetsolutions can provide you with a number of service suppliers in each of these categories. With the help of the online portal, customers can easily identify a range of fleet management services and established suppliers at the same time," Webb explained.

"We expect Fleetsolutions to add value to all fleets irrespective of their size." For more information visit [www.fleetsolutions.co.za](http://www.fleetsolutions.co.za). ■

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## Corporate Social Responsibility

### Ford helps to bring Christmas cheer

This year thousands of children at orphanages, homes and under-privileged schools around the country will be receiving a gift, with the special delivery guaranteed by the Ford Motor Company of Southern Africa (FMCSA).

For the second year running Ford will be teaming up with the Santa Shoebox project to bring Christmas cheer to needy children during the festive season. Each child will receive a present specially packed for them and for many it will be the only present they receive.

Last year the two Ford Transits enlisted to this cause covered 7 911km, helping to deliver more than 110 000 boxes and this year the job is expected to be even bigger.

“Ford is privileged to again partner and assist the Santa Shoebox project by spreading festive joy to children in need. This is a demonstration of Ford’s willingness to Go Further by supporting and giving to a good cause,” said Alisea Chetty, Corporate Communications Manager, FMCSA.

The Transit Van and Transit Custom, both powered by Ford’s proven 2.2-litre turbodiesel engine, have a combined load volume of 15m<sup>3</sup>, providing enough room to accommodate more than 1 400 shoeboxes at a time to be transported to those in need.

The success of the Santa Shoebox project is attributed to the personal nature of the giving. Each donated present is addressed to a particular child – their first name, age and gender made known to the giver. Each gift contains a toothbrush, toothpaste, a facecloth, soap, an outfit of clothing, education supplies, a toy and some sweets. The goods are packed into a shoebox, which is then wrapped and labelled for the recipient. Delivery of the colourful loads is then co-ordinated by the organisers and carried out by Ford.

The Santa Shoebox Project originated in Cape Town and has grown in leaps and bounds, with the number of Santa Shoeboxes growing from a humble 180 boxes in 2006 to an astounding 109 930



in 2014. The boxes are distributed to more than 1000 recipient facilities, through more than 60 satellites around South Africa and Namibia. A Virtual Shoebox option was introduced in 2014 allowing out-of-town and international donors to support the project and the SSB Legacy, a skills development training programme introduced for caregivers at the more than 1 000 Santa Shoebox recipient centres.

Ford fans and fans of the Santa Shoebox initiative can follow the festivities by using the hashtag #PresentsinTransit. For more information on the initiative or to get involved visit [www.santashoebox.co.za](http://www.santashoebox.co.za). ■

### GMSA donation saves young lives



A donation of medical equipment by General Motors South Africa (GMSA) will go a long way in saving the lives of children with respiratory distress and pneumonia at New Somerset Hospital in the Western Cape.

The handover of a high-flow nasal oxygen unit was driven by GMSA’s Employee Benefits Division through its Health and Wellness programme.

According to recent studies pneumonia and respiratory illnesses are responsible for the largest number of childhood deaths in South Africa. Malaine Hop Hing, GMSA Human Resources Manager, Benefits and Services, said one cannot put a price on human life, hence GMSA put their financial muscle behind such an import and life-saving project. “We believe that the high-flow nasal oxygen unit can make a difference in the lives of so many children who suffer from respiratory illnesses,” she said.

Doctor Donna Stokes, CEO at New Somerset Hospital, said with the new equipment staff are now able to stabilise children quicker, shorten their hospital stay and lessen the anxiety of having to receive treatment. Before GMSA donated the machine, children had to be transferred to the Red Cross Hospital for treatment.

The GMSA Health & Wellness programme was introduced in 2001 and targets GMSA employees, their families and communities as well as retirees who previously worked for the company. ■

### KIA engine donated to KZN school

KIA Motors Umlazi, with the support of KIA Motors SA, recently handed over a KIA Optima engine to the Chief Ngonyama Technical School in Ozwathini, a rural area north of Durban. The KIA engine will assist learners with the required practical training portion of Mechanical Technology in the school workshop.



The Chief Ngonyama Technical School, which opened in 1998, is a no-fee Comprehensive Technical School that, due to its location, serves learners from deep rural areas. According to Mr LV Ncube, the school principal, most of the school’s learners are orphans living with grandparents or and relatives who depend on social grants. The school has 19 staff members, which includes security, cleaning and administration personnel, with 422 learners being taught and exposed to modern technology.

“The engine will assist in having the learners see, feel and touch the engine as opposed to just imagining what an engine is supposed to look like,” says Mr Ncube.

KIA Motors Umlazi is one of the newest additions to the KIA Motors South Africa dealership network. According to Futhi Cabe, the General Manager of KIA Motors Umlazi, the dire poverty the teachers and learners endure is evident in every respect when one visits the school.

“As a corporate citizen with a keen desire to make a meaningful contribution to our community, and our belief in education as a key liberator, we were moved to do something that would make a significant difference in the lives of the individual learners and leave a sustainable legacy,” he said. “By donating the engine, the lives of both current and future technical learners at the school will never be the same again.” ■



## Corporate Social Responsibility

### Nissan continues to support and inspire positive change

As part of #NissanMagic, Nissan is giving 12 well-known South Africans the opportunity to make a lasting positive change in an area of their choice with the help of a vehicle from Nissan's wide range of bakkies, SUVs and passenger cars. In September, this opportunity befell vibrant young radio presenter and public speaker Siya Sangweni-Fynn

Sangweni-Fynn tackled not one, but two separate acts of kindness in Jozi while he had the keys to a Nissan Qashqai 1.6 DCI Acenta with CVT gearbox and even roped in a NP200 pickup to assist with activities in and around Johannesburg.

"I decided to return to nature for my month of #NissanMagic," said Sangweni-Fynn. During the month of September, he not only joined forces with the Johannesburg Junior Council (JJC) to clean up the Braamfontein Spruit in Johannesburg, but also established a vegetable garden at the Children's Memorial Institute in Johannesburg.

The young Sangweni-Fynn is a Durbanite and former Mayor of the Durban Youth Council (DYC). He has since made Johannesburg his home and is a core team member of CliffCentral.com, where he also presents a weekly show. The show, called unTapped Talent, unearths young local talent in various fields and was created to inspire other young people.

"While on DYC I was inspired by the energy and ambition of my fellow council members. This is why I decided to partner with the JJC to make a difference during my #NissanMagic month," he explained.

Sangweni-Fynn was the fourth person to carry the torch for #NissanMagic. He followed in the footsteps of other young South Africans such as Brent Lindeque and Danine Naidoo who each received a Nissan for a month and given free reign to make a difference somewhere in South Africa.



"The campaign was born at our Rosslyn plant in Pretoria, when several colleagues were inspired to make a difference in the lives of people in our city. We realised that we could harness this positive energy and grow it beyond our staff to our large dealer network and fellow South Africans and #NissanMagic was born," says Graeme Birch, General Manager of Marketing Communications at Nissan South Africa.

Follow the #NissanMagic on Twitter at @nissanza, Facebook.com/NissanSouthAfrica and on YouTube at Nissan South Africa. ■

### JLR launches new project to provide clean water to Kenyan children

Jaguar Land Rover (JLR), one of the world's leading manufacturers of premium luxury vehicles, has launched a new project in Africa as part of its ambitious Global CSR Programme.

JLR's Global CSR Programme was launched in 2013 as part of its 'Environmental Innovation' strategy. The programme invests in education, technology, health, wellbeing and environmental projects which will positively impact 12 million people's lives by 2020. The programme builds on the success of its UK education and sponsorship initiatives and will make a positive impact on communities in some of the 170 global countries it operates in.

Working with expert partners ClimateCare and Vestergaard, JLR is investing in a new smart water filtration technology project that will provide over 300,000 pupils in 375 schools across Bungoma County in Kenya with safe water. The project will



run for the next five years, helping improve students' health, education and employment prospects. Teams of LifeStraw staff will visit the schools each term to see that they are used correctly and to carry out further education, as part of a robust monitoring process. During the launch week, a team of

seven JLR employees from the UK and South Africa participated in the distribution as part of the company's employee volunteering programme, visiting schools across the region to gain a deep insight into the LifeStraw safe water for schools programme.

Said Nigel Clarke, Operations Director of Jaguar Land Rover Sub-Saharan Africa: "As a responsible business which is pioneering new technologies and innovations to reduce the impact of our vehicles, it makes sense for us to invest in new technologies which are tackling other sustainability issues around the world. These ambitions are embedded into the core of our business. That's why we have set ourselves an ambitious target to create opportunities for 12 million people globally by 2020. Through our support, we hope to inspire and create opportunities for our future consumers and employees." ■

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## Working Wheels

# FAW trucks helps to provide mobile medical solutions



*Menelisi Moyo, Managing Director of Mogul Medical Solutions with a trusted truck partner, FAW.*

Mogul Medical Solutions founded by Managing Director, Menelisi Moyo, is an inspiring enterprise and one of a kind in Africa. "Ours is an exciting, unique and innovative medical supplies service. We're the first, and only service provider across the continent that has a fully functional online purchase portal with over 8 000 lines on offer. We are also the only medical company with an online store on Facebook in Africa. We distribute across the whole sub-continent," Moyo enthuses.

"Furthermore, Mogul Medical is a certified M.I.B. body builder, which means we are certified to build bodies on any truck, and we can also build trailers, through Mogul's new Engineering Division, which builds all our mobile clinics and ambulances."

This is where FAW trucks and FAW Vehicle Manufacturers SA add to the equation with their reliable and durable chassis cabs, which in turn, provide good value-for-money and easy operation, as well as committed service, maintenance and parts supply from the company.

"We make use of the FAW truck brand because it adds to our efficiencies and helps us contain our costs," says Moyo. "Our business is of such a critical nature that we had to choose the best trucks in terms of reliability and cost efficiency."

Mogul's medical supply service is far-reaching and covers the widest range of products – from day-to-day consumable items, like surgical gloves, to wheelchairs. Customers include individuals, clinics

and hospitals. Major clients include many embassies across the continent and major international donor organisations like USAID, PEPFAR, UK Aid. Destination countries for Mogul's products include Ethiopia, Madagascar, Botswana, Zambia, and Rwanda – wherever there is a need for medical supply shipments to be moved either in a crisis or on a routine basis.

In South Africa, one of the largest clients of Mogul's efficient and cost-effective services is the SA Government and the Department of Health. All the hospitals and brick-and-mortar clinics in the Western Cape are sourcing medical supplies through Mogul Medical Solutions. Large NGO's supported by international funders, also source supplies from Mogul, as does the TB HIV Association, an NGO which focuses on HIV prevention and care; and uses treatment kits for Diabetes, TB and for monitoring Cholesterol levels.

It is in the area of mobile clinics that FAW Vehicle Manufacturers SA enjoys its most important relationship with Mogul Medical Solutions.

Two mobile clinics, built on the recently introduced FAW 8.140 FL truck chassis, have been commissioned into service. "These units were selected because the trucks can comfortably travel long distances from their base stations in the Western Cape to rural areas in the Eastern Cape and up to Clanwilliam. Our mobile clinics are also specifically equipped to provide circumcision services to rural communities.

*The FAW trucks are kitted out exactly to our NGO clients' needs and we brand them ... so that the acceptance levels in the communities where they operate, remains constant*

"The FAW trucks are kitted out exactly to our NGO clients' needs and we brand them in the well-recognised colours and with the logos of the NGOs, so that the acceptance levels in the communities where they operate, remains constant.

"We ran other brands and decided on FAW trucks because of their affordable offering, good quality levels and superb performance from an operating-cost perspective."



*The mobile X-ray clinic built on an FAW 8.140 FL chassis cab.*

Mogul Medical, together with TB HIV Association, also provides routine services to disadvantaged communities, and the national prison network for a variety of services, amongst others—a mobile X-ray testing facility.

"It is especially our Mobile X-ray Facility, also built on the FAW 8.140 FL chassis, of which I'm most proud," says Moyo. "The truck had to have a particularly strong chassis frame to carry the extra weight as the entire body is lead-lined. Over and above this, the drivetrain had to be powerful and efficient. It had to be of a high quality with superior durability to drive the unit efficiently en route to its destinations."

The company aims to provide to several NGOs, at least eight more mobile clinics, built on a FAW 8.140 FL chassis and bodied by Mogul Medical themselves. Their plan is to have these mobile facilities in service before the year-end. They will be kitted out as centres for testing for cervical cancer amongst rural women; circumcision trucks; HIV and testing units; surgical and trauma mobile clinics; mobile dental units; and mobile ear, nose and throat (ENT) clinics.

Mogul Medical Solutions is also looking into the specifications for a possible mobile, eight-bed hospital, to be deployed in major disaster circumstances.

Discussions are under way with several of the ambulance service providers for the supply of Mogul Medical Solution's innovative mono-cock, which cuts conversion time of ambulances by half and costs R100 000 less than prevailing current market prices for ambulance conversions.

Menelisi Moyo, is a passion-driven entrepreneur. "Providing medical supplies at an affordable price, efficiently and conveniently, is just good business. From this point of view, joining forces with FAW made perfect sense." ■



## Working Wheels

### Hino VP delivers new truck personally

Ernie Trautmann, the Vice President of Hino SA, who recently obtained his Code 14 truck driving licence, personally delivered a 6x4 Hino 700-Series 2848, the latest addition to the fleet of Transvaal Heavy Transport (THT), to the company's head office in Alrode. Trautmann is now actively encouraging his colleagues to follow his example and obtain a heavy duty licence.

THT, which has a total fleet of 65 bakkies, freight carriers and truck-tractors as well as more than 100 trailers, is a long-standing Hino customer, having bought its first Hino, a Super Dolphin, in 1986. There are currently 40 Hino trucks in the THT fleet, with the latest additions being two 6x4 700-Series 2 848 truck-tractors supplied by Hino East Rand and finished in the company's distinctive green and red colour scheme.

The company fleet includes the full range of Hino trucks, being six Hino 300-Series/Toyota Dynas, eight 500-Series, 20 700-Series and six Super Dolphins. In addition there are 10 Toyota Hilux bakkies and eight Toyota Avanza panelvans.

THT must be one of the longest running privately-owned transport fleets in South Africa, having been established by GHJ Swanepoel in 1961 and registered as a company in 1967. Sampie Swanepoel,

the son of the founder and present CEO, joined his father's business in 1986 and has continued on the very successful path walked by his father from those early days.

The company specialises in abnormal loads with a wide variety of trailers that can move loads of up to 100 tons. Most of the THT customers are in the mining and construction industries but over the years THT, with its versatile fleet, has undertaken transport contracts for companies and organisations in most sectors of the local economy. THT operates not only in South Africa, but also in Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Mozambique, with some contracts lasting several months.

Managing director Sampie Swanepoel says that in view of the comparatively short distances travelled each day by his trucks he keeps them for between 10-15 years or one million kilometres, so durability and reliability over a long period are critical and this is one of the main reasons he is so loyal to Hino.

Swanepoel says that dealer support is vital in an operation such as this and he has been dealing with Hino East Rand (previously Pat Hinde Toyota Trucks) in Boksburg since he bought his first Hinos and Toyota Dynas from them in the 1980's.



Ernie Trautmann, the Vice President of Hino SA being greeted by THT MD Sampie Swanepoel.

"The relationship between Hino and Sampie Swanepoel is very special and includes on-going, two-way feedback on the products he operates," explained Ernie Trautmann. "We take particular note of any criticism coming from THT and, if necessary, feed it all the way back to Hino Motors in Japan to ensure we have even better products in the future." ■

### FUSO introduces new addition to its range

FUSO Trucks Southern Africa, a division of Daimler Trucks & Buses has unveiled the light to medium-duty FUSO FA9-137 truck, the first vehicle to be imported by from the Daimler India Commercial Vehicle (DICV) plant in Chennai.

DICV is a 100% subsidiary of Daimler AG and is one of the leading manufacturers in the Indian commercial vehicle market.

"The robust FA9-137 is custom-tailored and designed to meet the ever-demanding customer requirements in Africa. This is a vehicle that represents a key step in FUSO Trucks Southern Africa's strategy in terms of enhancing customer satisfaction, perfecting operational excellence and demonstrating our commitment to Africa's growing markets," says Naeem Hassim, Head of FUSO Trucks.

The FA9-137 is based on the Canter light-duty truck and incorporates a newly-developed 4D37 diesel engine, boasting displacement of 3 907 cc, output figures of 100 kW at 420 Nm and a six-speed manual transmission.

With a Gross Vehicle Mass of 9.6 tons allowing a payload of up to 5 tons, the 4x2 freight carrier

configuration can be used in general distribution, courier, bakery, rental, as well as light tipping construction applications.

Being a versatile workhorse, what will additionally make this vehicle the an attractive choice for customers is its ability to be fitted with various bodies. These include dropside, van/box, curtain side, aerial platforms, cherry pickers, cranes, water drilling, tankers and light-duty tippers. ■



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## Motorsport

### Cronje is 2015 rally champ

Ford Performance rally driver Mark Cronje claimed his third South African National Rally Championship recently after a dominant performance on the Polokwane Motor Rally.



Mark Cronje.

Cronje went into the rally as the firm favourite, holding a 7.5-point advantage over 2014 title-holder and championship rival Leeroy Poulter and co-driver Elvéne Coetzee (Toyota). The Ford ace, partnered with co-driver Gerhard Snyman in their Class S2000 Ford Fiesta, simply

had to finish third to secure the title, even if Poulter won the rally.

"It was really tricky out there," an elated Cronje said with the championship in hand. "The pressure was on us not to make a mistake or push too hard and end up with a puncture. It was about trying to strike a balance between keeping it clean and still keeping up the pace. We didn't give the opposition too much thought so the win was a bonus.

"What a great end to a really tough year," he stated. "We've had to fight hard and make some tough decisions, and it really hasn't been easy.

"We couldn't have scripted a better final rally if we had tried. The car was faultless from start to finish thanks to the marathon effort of our team. They virtually stripped and rebuilt the whole car for the final event, and this victory would not have been possible without them."

Cronje won the first three rallies of the season on a trot, partnered by regular co-driver Robin Houghton. They backed this up with two second places and a single non-finish almost within sight of the end due to a broken steering arm on the sixth round of the championship. Despite not competing in the last two rallies of the year, Houghton earned second overall in the co-driver's championship.

With two solid victories to round of this year's campaign, with Gerhard Snyman fulfilling the co-driver duties in order to reduce the team's overall weight and go on maximum attack, Cronje secured the 2015 title - making it his third to go along with the consecutive championship victories in 2012 and 2013.

This is the 11<sup>th</sup> time a Ford driver has won the South African Rally Championship. ■

### Rousseau to take over as SANORA Chief Executive Officer



Siegfried Rousseau.

There will be a changing of the guard later this year at SANORA, the organisation that administers the Donaldson Cross Country championship in South Africa.

After seven years at the helm former South African champion Richard Schilling is to step down as chief executive officer of SANORA in December, and will be replaced by Siegfried Rousseau. Schilling will continue as president of the FIA Cross Country Commission which controls the sport worldwide.

Rousseau has been competing in national cross country events for 12 years, and is a three time winner of the Toyota 1000 Desert Race with Shameer Variawa in the Special Vehicle category. In recent seasons he switched to the Production Vehicle category, and has co-driven for Gary Bertholdt in the Atlas Copco Ford factory team and in a privateer Atlas Copco Ford Ranger. ■

### Local celebs go to war in new TV show

Local celebrities will strut their stuff behind the wheel in November when IGNITION debuts an exciting new television series. Speed Stars pits

a duo of famous contestants against each other in each episode as they undertake the ultimate driving challenge.

Over the course of 13 half-hour episodes, 24 South African personalities will receive training from experienced racing drivers, before being unleashed on the track to set the fastest lap time. The stars will also take part in a variety of tyre and road safety challenges which will not only improve their driving skills but also educate viewers.

The series will feature such big names as singer Kurt Darren, television personalities Boity Thulo and Lalla Hirayama, former Springbok rugby captain John Smit, actress and comedienne Tumi Morake and Darren "Whackhead" Simpson of 94.7, to name just a few.

The show will premiere on IGNITION at 9pm on Saturday 31 October. The first six episodes run until mid-December when the programme breaks for the year-end holiday. The second set of six episodes resumes on 13 February. The final, thirteenth episode, broadcasting on 26 March 2016, will feature the top three celebrities battling it out for the grand prize of an all expenses paid trip to Le Mans 2016 and R30 000 to donate to a charity of their choice, among other prizes. Viewers also stand the chance to win as each week they are invited to predict the winner of that episode's duel.

Speed Stars will broadcast on IGNITION, DSTV Channel 189 at the following times:

Saturday 9 pm, Sunday 9 am, Monday 1 pm, Tuesday 3 pm, Thursday 9 am and 9 pm and Friday 6 am and 6 pm. ■



Former Miss South Africa, Melinda Bam is one of the local celebrities taking part in Speed Stars.



# Back Page



## Maserati Ghibli Diesel

BY BRENT ELLIS

I know, you're not the only one who has difficulty taking that headline in. You read correctly – the gorgeous specimen of Italian design you see in this photo is, in fact, powered by the black stuff! The latest and greatest in luxury limos from Maserati, the new Ghibli represents a new breath of life for the brand, aimed at attracting new buyers with a more compact, more attainable product, which is more suited to daily use than its big brother, the Quattroporte.

But, with an entirely unconventional-for-Maserati diesel engine, does it work? I was very sceptical when I collected the keys, but a few hundred kilometres later, I was convinced.

Let's get to the looks, first. This is definitely the sister of the Quattroporte, but the Ghibli has obviously been on a welcome diet. That's not to say that the Quattroporte is fat, but there is no sense of driving a barge when behind the familiar steering wheel in the Ghibli. And that's quite strange – Ghibli is only three centimetres narrower and 50 kg lighter than Quattroporte, so clearly the diet is more visual than physical.

The big talking point with the Ghibli Diesel however, is of course its engine. The Maserati engineers have taken Fiat/Chrysler's 3.0-litre V6 turbo diesel and fettled with the exhaust system to create a truly unique sound. They've also tuned the motor to produce a maximum of 202 kW and 600 Nm.

Like the Quattroporte, putting the car into Sport mode lets more noise bellow out the back, and at idle this car sounds scarily close to a big American 'Super Duty' truck with a V8 diesel engine. In fact, up to about 3 000 r/min the V6 produces such a deep, off-beat sound that many people were convinced it was indeed a V8!

The other side of the coin, however, was that as soon as I told people this car was a diesel their faces changed into many different and never before-seen shapes. Somehow, a Maserati with a diesel engine just doesn't compute. That said, my own scepticism gradually turned into enthusiasm as my time with the Ghibli Diesel progressed, and I grew to love the fact that it only revs to 4 500-ish

and sounds far too quiet for a car with the Trident on its nose.

Let me assess the positives. Firstly, this is a Maserati you don't need to fill up every 20 minutes. Maserati claims 5.9-litres per 100 km on the combined average and while my drive returned over double that figure (12.8), the car I tested had a meagre 170 km on the clock, and I have no doubt that its consumption would be significantly reduced after a few thousand kilometres.

Secondly, the torque is so delightful, you can drive this car as both a cruiser or a seriously understated bruiser, depending on your mood. After every kilometre in the Ghibli Diesel, I couldn't help but think it would be an absolutely fabulous car for a long road trip – such is the comfort and ease with which it drives. However, if you find yourself remembering that the Maserati Trident is not about fuel-saving economy drives, putting it into Sport mode and playing with the superb 8-speed automatic gearbox in manual mode unleashes all that torque, to do with what you want.

In this driving mode too, you can hear more of the turbocharger whine and dump valve noises, and you can really get the car shifting. Performance stats aren't overly *Maseraterotic*, but this is not a slow car: 0-100 km/h is undertaken in 6.3 seconds and top speed is 250 km/h. Acceptable, especially considering it weighs just shy of two tons.

Rivals? Well, the Ghibli range is aimed squarely at the likes of the BMW 5 Series, Mercedes-Benz E-Class and the recently refreshed Audi A6 – and I guess the Lexus GS and Jaguar XF, if you really want to broaden the horizon.

At R1 370 000 before you've picked custom stitching, different interior finishes and your favourite wheels, the Ghibli Diesel is not cheap. Comparing apples with slightly less appealing apples, the Ghibli Diesel is R375 000 more than



*The new Ghibli, Maserati's latest and greatest in luxury limos.*

a BMW 535d Luxury, R498 000 more than a Merc E350 BlueTec Avantgarde, and a whopping R680 000 more than an Audi A6 3.0TDI – all also before ticking the options boxes. The Ghibli is however the quickest, longest, widest and most opulent of the lot, and it has the longest wheelbase as well.

What I find interesting though, is that the Ghibli Diesel compares rather well with the likes of an Audi A8 3.0TDI, BMW 730d and the Mercedes-Benz S350 BlueTec – each of which is priced within about R50 000 of the Ghibli Diesel, barring the cheaper 7 Series which is about to be replaced.

All of these *über* saloons feature the same sort of engine, produce the same sort of power and torque, claim to sip the same amount of diesel, are basically as quick as each other, and only trump the Maserati by being slightly longer and bigger in the back.

Regardless, the Ghibli Diesel is a car which turns heads and makes people think you've got too much money – and let's be honest, if you are willing to pay this sort of dosh for any of the diesel saloons mentioned above, you probably do.

The Ghibli Diesel is, in my opinion, for the discerning executive who values class, style and exclusivity, but who also has a little common sense left and is happy to go for diesel for all the benefits. Because if you're not someone who wants to drive a car like this everywhere like it's a two-seat sports coupé, making as much noise as possible, going as fast as possible, then the Ghibli Diesel makes a whole lot of burly sense. ■