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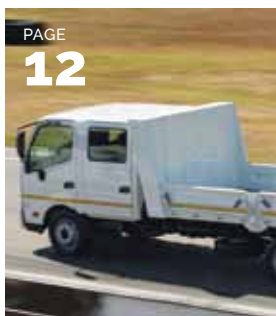
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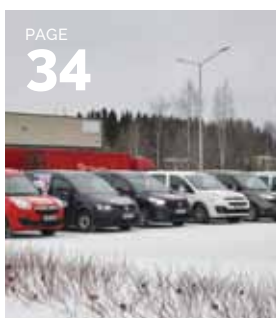
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# TRUCKS OF TERROR

## – really?

The National Minister of Transport, Dipuo Peters, says minibuses and trucks are to blame for the deaths on our roads. Really?



CHARLEEN CLARKE

I have a stalker. One of our readers sends me regular (anonymous) SMSes. The person in question (I am assuming it is a male because of the tone) took exception to a tongue-in-cheek article that I wrote last year, after meeting Minister Dipuo Peters. He's particularly peeved at the fact that we had a glass of wine together (incidentally, neither our minister of transport, nor yours truly was driving).



Fifteen people died when a taxi and a truck collided head-on, on the R41 in Randfontein, during April.

Our decadent alcoholic beverages are always mentioned in his many messages. "The way to improve road safety and keep death off the road is to have more drinks with the useless minister of transport" reads one SMS. "The way to reduce the carnage on our roads is to have more drinks with the minister" proclaims another.

Now I am certainly not here to fly the flag for the minister of transport. However, calling the poor woman "useless" is somewhat unkind. I certainly don't agree with everything she says or does – I have made this very clear in the past – but she is far from

the worst minister of transport we've had, or the most useless.

I believe in giving credit where due, and she has certainly added a sympathetic air to her ministry. After the recent long weekend (April 29 to May 2, which saw 179 fatal collisions and 237 lives lost), she really did seem moved by this massacre.

"This past long weekend was one of the saddest moments in the history of our country, with many lives lost on the roads and scores injured. In the recent past, things have looked much better and promising and we could see light at the end of the tunnel, but today things are so bad, really bad, that many of our people; fathers, mothers, children, the rich and the poor alike, are immensely affected by the scourge of road carnage that is mercilessly wiping out our loved ones," she noted.

Peters was particularly perturbed by the four major collisions that claimed about 30 lives throughout the country. In Randfontein, 15 lives were lost when a truck collided with a minibus taxi. In George, five people were killed when a sports utility vehicle crashed into a sedan.

Nine people died when a minibus crashed into a trailer near Nyl Toll Plaza in Mokopane, Limpopo, and one person died in a multiple car collision involving four cars on the N2 between East London and Mooiplaas in the Eastern Cape.

"Most worrying are the causes of these major crashes, which include drunk driving, overtaking when it is unsafe to do so, reckless and negligent driving, as well as speeding," she continued.

She then went on to apportion blame. "The major crashes were mainly caused by the minibuses and freight transport and this is quite a significant number and too ghastly to contemplate." (sic)

I'm not sure that it's entirely fair to blame our industry. Take the Randfontein accident, for instance – news reports have claimed that the truck was not to blame and that the taxi swerved into the truck.

Having said that, playing the blame game isn't going to achieve anything.

So what is the solution then? Peters seems fairly upbeat. "We are not disillusioned, nor over ambitious. Nobody ever said that it will be easy. The road we traverse is full of challenges and there are many detours since this road is under construction. But this detour is nothing else but a temporary inconvenience, and this, too, shall come to pass," (sic) she commented.

In order to rectify this situation, she has "instructed the Road Traffic Management Corporation (RTMC) to speed up the process of establishing the Traffic Law Enforcement Review Committee to deal, among others, with the determination of norms and standards for the traffic law enforcement fraternity, as well as the integration of all traffic law enforcers."

"The intensified collaboration and engagement between the Department of Public Service Administration, the RTMC, provincial governments and labour formations will pave the way for the introduction of a 24-hour work shift within the traffic law enforcement fraternity; ensuring the availability of officers on the road at all material times.

"Informed by the ever-escalating road carnages,

I urge the RTMC to move with urgency and unprecedented speed to conclude engagements with the Department of Justice and Correctional Services, as well as the National Prosecuting Authority, to reschedule traffic offences with a view of introducing mandatory minimum sentences," she reported.

Incensed by the deaths on the road, our minister of transport was driven to quoting Winston Churchill: "The era of procrastination, of half measures, of soothing and baffling expedients, of delays is coming to its close. In its place we are entering a period of consequences," she proclaimed. "We will spare no effort and leave no stone unturned in ensuring that our roads are safe!"

Personally, I think that Peters is over complicating the required solutions. We don't need fancy words or quotations from Churchill. We need proper policing! We need honest traffic officers, who are passionate about improving road safety – and not collecting bribes!

It's really quite simple.

I will share these thoughts with our minister of transport when we next quaff a glass of wine ... (sorry dear stalker, I couldn't resist that!) **F**



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# A question of **CULTURE?**

The annual Nampo Harvest Day is an event that I tend to look forward to immensely. This year we had scary near miss en route, though



GAVIN MYERS

**A**s I write this, I'm en route to the ever-exciting Nampo Harvest Day (read about it on page 22) in the hot and sunny Free State. We've just had breakfast in Parys.

Anyone who's made the journey will know that that's probably not the best idea. While it's smooth freeway sailing to that point, the road between Parys and the Nampo show ground in Bothaville (about 100 km) is rough enough to make you - involuntarily - enjoy your breakfast twice over.



The Free State: where the roads are bad and the drivers (mostly) worse.

Normally, my stomach is strong enough to, well, stomach that. This year, though, it was a problem. Not because the road is any worse (happily, they are rejuvenating a particularly bad section just outside Parys), but because we were very nearly involved in what could have been a rather nasty crash.

Finding ourselves behind a dawdling old Mercedes (which I will call *dom*, for short), our driver decided to take advantage of the relatively smooth section we were on and go for an overtake.

Not a particularly risky manoeuvre - most vehicles ahead of us had done the same thing - except that *dom* saw this as the perfect time to pick up a bit of speed and wander across the broken white line - squeezing us over to the very edge of the on-coming lane.

"Hey-hey-hey!" our driver shouted. I looked in the passenger-side mirror and have never before seen two vehicles come so close without touching.

Thankfully, we got through without incident (other than trying desperately to keep breakfast down while calming our nerves). The whole thing got me thinking about how our behaviour is dictated by our culture.

I've written about this topic numerous times from a local perspective, and many advanced-driving and road-safety experts continuously assert that South African drivers need a change of culture. We are largely acknowledged to be too arrogant, aggressive and impatient when on the road. In fact, this applies largely to all road users - even pedestrians.

Nonetheless, yesterday I happened to watch a video about a German ambulance that had to get through a gridlocked freeway to an accident. From the in-vehicle camera, it was amazing to see drivers - up to probably 100 m away - who had very little room to manoeuvre, pulling out of the way with a real sense of selflessness and urgency to create an almost perfect path down the middle, so that the ambulance could get through as quickly as possible.

(If you haven't seen the clip, make sure to check it out on the **FOCUS** YouTube channel!)

This thought flashed through my mind as I saw the rear left corner of our vehicle just make it past *dom* as he pulled out of his lane. Had the unthinkable happened and he had clipped us, would we have been as lucky to have emergency services get to us with minimal delay?

I'm not sure, but I hope that the next time we head off to Nampo *dom* will be nowhere in the general Free State area ... **F**

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# Keeping your view CRYSTAL CLEAR

Clean front windscreens lead to better observation and better driving



Over the years of auditing heavy vehicles, I have been amazed at how many truck drivers fail to keep the front windscreens of their vehicles clean. Many start their journey with a dirty windscreen and without checking that there is sufficient water in the windscreen washer holder.

Windscreen wiper blades are often also a forgotten check item. Without good wiper blades the windscreen cannot be properly cleaned while driving.

Dirt and mud often splash up onto the front windscreen when driving in rainy weather, which can result in very poor visibility – especially at night, or at sunrise and sunset. Recent statistics recorded on the N3 route show that 60 percent of the daily recorded accidents occur at night.

Good driving requires more than the ability to master the controls of a vehicle; it requires constant observation and assessment of the road ahead and everything that is happening in the surrounding environment. The more that the driver can see of what is going on around the vehicle, the more clues he or she will pick up of likely road hazards.

The view from cab enables the driver to assess what is happening ahead and around the vehicle and then adopt the relevant advanced driving skills of identifying the road hazard, anticipating what may happen, deciding what action to take if necessary and then executing the action.

Without a clean front windscreen the driver cannot always see what is happening and, therefore, cannot apply his or her advanced driving skills, increasing the risk of a crash.

Observation is not enough, however; the driver needs to have the eyes of a detective looking for clues that could be the start of a road hazard.

Here are a few examples:

- A truck approaching, or travelling in front in the same direction, with a load that is not secure – the load could fall at any minute;
- A vehicle emerging from a side road or farm gate may not stop;
- Smoke in the distance could mean that it is coming across the road, resulting in zero visibility ahead;
- An approaching vehicle starts to overtake a slower vehicle and you can see that there is not sufficient room to accommodate all three vehicles;
- Skid marks on the road could be an indication that you are approaching a high accident zone;
- The traffic starts to slow down. A high number of tail-end crashes occur on many of the long-distance trucking routes;
- An approaching vehicle starts to wander across (or off) the road;
- Deposits of road-building material on the side of the road could be an indication that there are workmen and machinery on the road ahead;
- Animals or people on the side of the road ahead;
- Poor weather ahead.

Keeping the front windscreen clean, identifying road hazards early, anticipating what could happen, deciding what action to take if necessary and then executing the action – all reduce the chance of being involved in a crash, which could save lives. **F**



One of this country's most respected commercial vehicle industry authorities, VIC OLIVER has been in this industry for over 50 years. Before joining the FOCUS team, he spent 15 years with Nissan Diesel (now UD Trucks), 11 years with Busaf and seven years with International. Do you have a comment or thought you would like to share based on this column? Visit [www.focusontransport.co.za](http://www.focusontransport.co.za) and have your say!

## MESSAGE FROM A FAN

Hello **FOCUS** on Transport Team!

My name is Ntando Sangweni. I have been doing a lot of research about the trucking industry as I want to buy my own trucks in the very near future.

I just wanted to express my gratitude for the work that you do. Your reviews give accurate and relevant information for people who wish to understand or improve their understanding of trucking. Your analysis is invaluable for all people in this industry.

Keep up the great work. Sterkte!!!

**Ntando Sangweni**

*Thank you for your kind words Ntando. We are happy to be at your service! – ed.*

## CATCHING A LIFT

I was on my way out recently, on a Friday afternoon at about 14:30, when I came across this taxi with some children in, and on, it.

The driver also went through a red traffic light at the intersection of Kempston and Stanford Roads, which is one of our major intersections.

Isn't it strange that members of the public always seem to notice these things? At that particular time, our famously competent traffic department was busy protesting about the introduction of Port Elizabeth's new metro police force. Apparently they feel threatened by it.

I really did not know whether to burst out laughing, or stop at the side of the road and shed a tear.

**Roy Thompson**

*Thanks for sharing, Roy. We agree, this is truly horrific and just unreal – ed.*



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**FOCUS**  
ON TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS



# Reinventing THE WAGON



Scania is celebrating 125 years of innovation in 2016. From its founding in 1891, to today's connected vehicles, Scania has stood steady through both good and bad times

**S**cania's roots stem from the privately owned wagon-building company Vabis, which was established in Södertälje, Sweden, during 1891. However, the Scania link didn't happen until 20 years later, when Scania-Vabis was created through the amalgamation of Vabis with the Malmö-based, privately owned machine-manufacturing company Scania.

Today, Scania is one of the world's leading manufacturers of trucks and buses for heavy transport applications, as well as of industrial and marine engines. The company has grown to employ some 42 000 people and operates in 100 countries.

Scania concentrates its research and development activities in Sweden, while production takes place in Europe and South America with facilities for global interchange of both components and complete vehicles.

The company has celebrated a proud heritage of innovation since the early 20th century. Scania-Vabis designer August Nilsson developed a four-cylinder, overhead-valve engine in 1923, for example. The engine's power and reliability proved to be a major benefit in truck and bus operation. In 1936, it developed its first diesel engine, which really impressed the trade press during test drives.

"To my surprise, I could hardly hear the engine. However, I certainly felt its effect as the bus shot forward like an arrow," wrote one journalist.

That pretty much set the tone for the company's future engineering efforts. In 1969, the 261 kW (350 hp), 14-litre, turbodiesel V8 engine was launched and was immediately crowned Europe's most powerful truck engine – despite pioneering Scania's philosophy of high-torque output at low engine speeds.

Another notable award came in 1996, when the 4-series was crowned International Truck of the Year, a year after being introduced.

In 2000, Scania's millionth vehicle rolled off the assembly line, while in 2010 it again gained the world's most powerful truck engine title with the 544 kW (730 hp) V8. Just last year, the company delivered its 150 000th truck with activated connectivity.

So, what does this proud (and far more detailed) heritage of innovation mean for the company's future as it embarks on its next 125 years? At the moment, globally, the company is undoubtedly on an upward trend.

For example, Scania has just won its largest-ever order in Europe; British transport operator Eddie Stobart Limited having ordered more than 2 000 trucks! Incidentally, this is the fourth such order from the Scania operator since 2010 – the first two being for 1 000 vehicles and then 1 500-unit orders following in 2012 and 2014.

Currently, a great focal point of Scania's future is global sustainable transport. Just one example is the research happening at the Integrated Transport Research Lab (ITRL) at Stockholm's KTH Royal Institute of Technology.

A joint initiative between KTH and Scania, ITRL brings together various researchers and the business community to conduct the research that could solve global transport-related environmental challenges.

Ulf Ceder, senior manager at Scania's Research and Development Support Office, oversees future transport solutions. "Scania has a holistic view of the transport system in which different forms of transport, infrastructure, policy and business models are all linked together," he explains.

KTH's research currently focuses on the efficient goods transport in urban environments; automation and multimodal goods transport; automated public transport; and next-generation private car transport.

"Cities are primarily seeking solutions for their increasingly large congestion costs. So, Scania's



solution isn't to sell more cars or trucks. We have to be able to help cities with solutions for their problems. For our part, this represents a different and more complex approach to business, involving other solutions," Ceder explains.

"One of the problems we face today is large-scale waste in the transport system: loads that are significantly under capacity and poor use of infrastructure capacity. This isn't a problem we can solve ourselves, but, through cooperation with others, our knowledge will benefit both Scania and the community. It's an important part of our sustainability work," he continues.

Scania's hard work is certainly paying off. The company's recently launched hybrid distribution truck has been awarded the prestigious Green Truck Future Innovation 2016 award by leading German trade magazine *Verkehrsrundschau*.

This hybrid solution allows an 18-t distribution truck to operate solely on electric power for up to two kilometres. Such operations are primarily intended for night-time city distribution in noise-sensitive areas, or driving through warehouses and underground car parks where exhaust fumes must be avoided. In the electric mode, the sound level is below 72 dB.

Locally, too, the company is setting the tone for future transportation; it has a bus running on Ethanol derived from sugar beet in Cape Town and has just launched its first bus in Africa powered by compressed natural gas. Says Steve Wager, MD of Scania South Africa: "There are many 'green' ways of powering vehicles, and Scania is a leader in this field."

Wager, is convinced that innovations like this are essential in a rapidly changing, and increasingly competitive, commercial vehicle market. "As the pressure on transporters' margins increases, they are focusing more and more on

the cost of ownership and vehicle uptime. At Scania, we feel we are experts in supporting both of these demands.

"Scania will continue to grow only if we are able to continue to offer our customers outstanding innovation and customer service," he adds.

With that in mind, here's looking forward to another 125 years of invention and innovation from this most admired of Swedish commercial vehicle brands. **F**



# Big trouble for MEDIUMS?



Things aren't looking particularly good within the medium commercial vehicle (MCV) sector. The month of April 2016, for instance, saw a massive 24,3 percent decline in sales (over the same month last year). Is this a sign of things to come, or will the market recover? CHARLEEN CLARKE reports ...

**I**t's been a decidedly lousy year for the MCV market segment. In fact, the last two years have been somewhat troubling.

Back in 2013, this segment notched up annual sales of 11 584 units. In 2014, the MCV market was showing signs of developing a sniffle ... with a mere 11 024 sales. Last year, it appeared to have got a cold, with just 10 488 units changing hands.

This year, however, it appears to have contracted the flu.

January wasn't too bad; the market only declined by 98 units, or 15,6 percent. February was even better; reflecting a decline of just 12,9 percent, but then came March, with a thundering decline of 343 units, representing a 31,3 percent crash in this sector. April's almost equally dismal performance saw January to April clocking in at 2 073 sales, versus 3 236 in the same period last year.

This market crash has taken many by surprise, as Kobus van Zyl, executive director of Daimler Trucks & Buses Southern Africa, points out. "The dramatic decline in the MCV market has certainly caught us by surprise. As we normally do, we are analysing the root causes. At this stage it appears that sales across all channels are down, especially government procurement," he tells **FOCUS**.

However, Frank Beeton, **FOCUS** columnist and Econometrix consultant, says that we cannot read too much into the dwindling sales figures. "When one looks at the National Automobile of South Africa (Naamsa) sales figures, MCV sales are 23,2 percent down this year, while the entire truck market over

3,5 t gross vehicle mass (GVM) has reduced by 12,3 percent year-on-year.

"However, please remember that, because there is no detailed reporting (instead, estimated volumes) for Mercedes-Benz, these numbers are potentially inaccurate. Mercedes-Benz is an important player in the MCV segment with the Sprinter and Fuso Canter. Because of the lack of accurate Naamsa data, any market commentary can only be guesswork," he warns.

Having said this, Beeton notes that, if one takes the reported volumes at face value then combined sales of vans and buses are down 33,6 percent (826 units versus 1 244 units). "On the other hand, combined sales of trucks and tippers are down 14,3 percent (1 648 units versus 1 922 units). Therefore the problem is more serious for van-derived units than chassis/cab units," he reveals.

The vast majority of vans are converted into long-distance taxis. "Currently, sales of minibuses, especially Toyota Quantum/Nissan NV350, are very strong. Are we seeing a possible switch by taxi operators from converted MCV vans to light commercial vehicle minibuses?" he ponders.

Beeton adds that FAW and Fuso have some attractively priced new bottom-end models in the heavy commercial vehicle (HCV) segment. "So, maybe we are seeing a possible shift from MCV to HCV by some operators. However, the lack of Mercedes-Benz detail could hide the full effect of this," he explains.

In addition, Beeton says that the run-out of UD's MCV models in 2015 could have pulled some sales

forward from 2016. "We also suspect major incentive activity from Isuzu late in 2015, which, too, could have pulled some sales forward from the early months of 2016. This has, however, been denied by the company," he tells **FOCUS**.

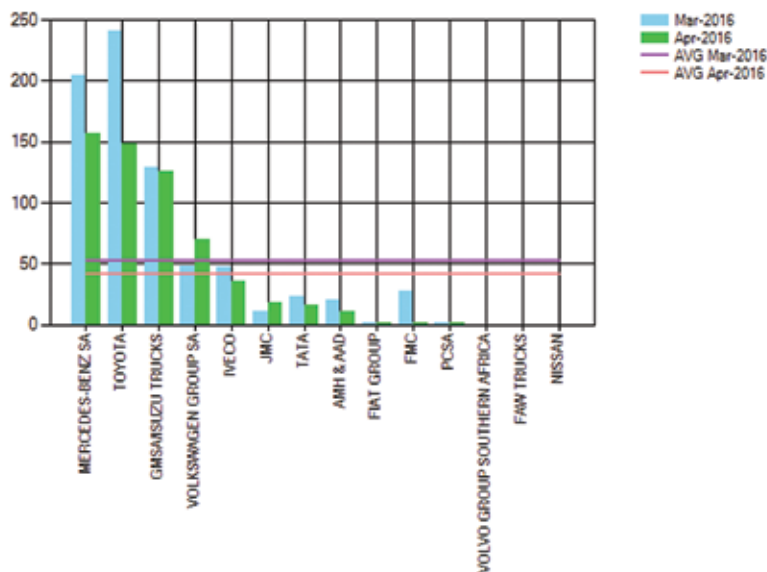
Craig Uren, chief operating officer of Isuzu Truck South Africa, says that there's nothing sinister or surprising at play. "In the previous two downturns – 2001 and 2009 – the MCV sector was also the hardest hit. This sector of the commercial market is sensitive to price and economics.

"A lot of the customers are not major fleets, and they struggle to get finance. In these circumstances, banks always run when the small guys need them; they are risk averse. These smaller companies are under pressure to survive so they stop buying; it's not rocket science," he reveals.

Leslie Long, senior manager: marketing and demand planning at Hino SA, paints an identical picture. "The reason for the decline in the MCV sector can be described in a single word: economy. The market is down, not only because of the South African

MEDIUM COMMERCIAL SALES	YEAR	SALES
Total Sales April	2016	588
Total Sales April	2015	771
Total Sales March	2016	742
Total Sales March	2015	1 087
Total Sales January-April	2016	2 073
Total Sales January-April	2015	3 236

The MCV segment is struggling due to the current downturn in economic activity, among other factors.



economy, but also because of the world economy.

"MCV sales are hit hardest because of the high percentage of smaller fleets and owner-drivers. Customers are either postponing purchases, or failing to obtain finance as banks are tightening up on approval criteria," he agrees.

Stanley Anderson, marketing director of Hyundai Automotive South Africa, agrees that the downturn in the economy is a major factor when it comes to the MCV sector's woes. "The economy is in a downturn; there is less economic activity and there are fewer requirements for MCVs," he tells **FOCUS**.

However, he says two other factors are also coming into play. "There were price increases in the first quarter of 2016, which



impacted on sales (there were very few increases last year). Also, there is a lot of uncertainty as the elections draw near, and this has caused customers to extend their replacement cycles," Anderson maintains.

Like Anderson, Jaco Steenekamp, general manager: sales and marketing at Volkswagen Commercial Vehicles, says that the downturn in the MCV market isn't only due to the economy. "The decline of the

In fact, we have revised our outlook on the total truck market from 28 000 to 25 000," he tells **FOCUS**.

This doesn't mean that the Hino team is not still reasonably upbeat. "We couldn't have hoped for a more positive start to 2016, particularly as we have not introduced any new products during this period," explains Ernie Trautmann, vice president of Hino SA.

While he's obviously mindful of current market conditions, Trautmann is not going to let this drag him down. "We are very aware that we are currently operating in a very tough market and have to ensure we continue to build on relationships with all our customers, both old and new, as we face a year of falling sales and rising costs," he says.

Hino wants to be the top-selling truck brand in South Africa by 2020. "As such, the objective for Hino and its dealers is to stay positive this year, which has started in an environment of doom and gloom," he tells **FOCUS**.

Uren is adopting an equally



**ABOVE:** Mercedes-Benz is an important player in the MCV segment with the Sprinter (pictured here) and Fuso Canter.

**RIGHT:** Sales of minibuses, especially the Toyota Quantum and Nissan NV350 (pictured) are very strong, which could indicate a switch by taxi operators from converted MCV vans to light commercial vehicle minibuses.

MCV sales in April can be attributed to the down buying from 22-seaters to 16-seaters, due to the problems with the issuing of driving permits for the 22-seaters," he says.

So, that's the current situation. Are things likely to improve? Isuzu's Uren says the MCV market will bounce back – in time. Hino's Long says that this won't be any time soon.

"I don't see any miraculous recovery in the short to medium term. We have seen a very negative outlook from both Mike Schussler and PSG when it comes to the world economy. Business and consumer confidence, in both South Africa and worldwide, is very low with very few indicators showing signs of recovery.



pragmatic and positive approach. "The industry has been through declines in 2001 and 2009 and the strategies we applied then are no different to what we require today to keep our business on track and even to grow. Success comes with being able to analyse the problems and institute growth and development strategies, without pressing the proverbial panic button," he says.

There you have it. The MCV market has the flu, which can cause some misery, but, just like the flu, this, too, will pass. No one needs to panic – just yet. **F**

# TOUGH TIMES



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# No PART-TIME JOB

GAVIN MYERS chats to Erwin Stroebel – regional manager: Eastern/Southern Cape and Border, Retail Motor Industry Organisation (RMI), and director: Motor Parts and Equipment Association (MPEA) – about the current state of the local parts industry

**I**t's a tough job supplying parts to the South African market – there are more than 3 900 models of vehicles currently on local roads, with some of them having more than 25 derivatives! The demand is huge, and sales, says Stroebel, are buoyant.

However, as with every industry, challenges are posed by local and international conditions.

"Labour uncertainty and rising labour costs, along with the uncertainty of electricity supply that coincided with its rising cost and the weakening rand, have all posed serious challenges for the aftermarket parts industry," Stroebel explains.

"Consumers are opting to repair and maintain older vehicles instead of replacing them, which positively assists the sale of aftermarket parts, but negatively impacts the consumer's disposable income. This has, however, resulted in smaller component manufacturers becoming marginally more profitable, with imported products now being more competitive," he adds.

For a number of reasons, the price of parts is going up, says Stroebel: "As a lot of parts are imported, the price of metal and the exchange rate affect the local parts industry. The currency weakness also has an effect on the oil price, which impacts the fuel price. Consumers are trying to drive less, which means they service less often and this obviously also pushes up prices."

Naturally then, one would expect consumers to go shopping for cheaper parts. Those emanating from the east immediately spring to mind, though Stroebel suggests that there are some local importers "bringing in A-grade parts" from China.

"There are also unscrupulous dealers bringing in cheap, bad-quality parts. By way of example, some lamp and light distributors import lower-priced Chinese products. This has a negative effect on locally manufactured parts, which also affects local job security," he says.

We then get to the issue of "pirate parts", a term Stroebel warns consumers to not be confused by ... It is important to remember that original equipment manufacturer (OEM) and original equipment supplier (OES) parts are made by the same manufacturers, but supplied under different brand names.

On the other hand, private-label parts and pirate parts are trickier. Private-label parts are generally sold with some form of guarantee and someone to back up that guarantee. "In many cases, these are sufficient for the cash-strapped consumer," says Stroebel.

True pirate parts are deliberate counterfeits. These are often copied illegally and passed off as the real thing, and are of very bad quality. As the saying goes; if it's too good to be true, it probably is ... "These are the parts that consumers must stay away from," warns Stroebel.





"The use of 'pirate' parts is always an emotive issue in the independent aftermarket parts industry," he adds. "A pirate part is as we've described, but I do sometimes think the term is bandied about by some who want to scare the consumer into believing that the OEM's parts are superior to an alternative aftermarket parts ... As we've discussed, these are very often the same parts supplied to OEMs, as well as into the aftermarket industry, but generally at more affordable prices.

"It is common knowledge that no OEM can manufacture all the components required to assemble a vehicle, or to sell as OEM parts in the aftermarket. All MPEA member companies sell premium, branded alternative parts and, without exception, OEMs procure these products from the same original equipment suppliers as our members do," he continues.

Owners of older vehicles – for which parts are no longer made by an OES – might find this notion worrying. However, Stroebel notes that the MPEA caters for these models through various private-label brands.

"Suppliers of these brands need to conform to rigid quality criteria ... such as ISO:TS 16949, other ISO standards, SAE and comply with letters of authority where applicable. These quality requirements vary per product, but all safety-critical and high-risk products sourced by MPEA members are continuously sent to independent accredited facilities for testing," he assures.



It doesn't matter how small the product is. "Even a small item like a radiator cap, if faulty, can lead to engine failure!" Stroebel says.

The obvious way to ensure you are buying safe products is to deal with an accredited RMI and member. "Consumers need to buy from recognised retail outlets that they trust, and know that the supplier will honour its warranty. All parts that are sold are covered by the Consumer Protection Act (CPA), with an implied warranty of six months, although some offer warranties of 12 months and more."

Stroebel suggests that buyers always compare the cheaper brand's price to that of the premium brand. "If it is too cheap, when compared to other private-label brands in the market, ask why. Also look for OEM logos and approved brand logos."

While the CPA is meant to help protect the consumer, those who do find themselves in a worrying situation can contact the Motor Industry Ombudsman of South Africa, who enforces the CPA.

It may be a tough job supplying parts, but, if done wisely, it needn't be tough when buying them. **F**

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## Driving tomorrow, **TODAY**

Modern-day vehicles are far removed from their forebears. **FOCUS** unpacks the technology to see what is most likely to find its way under the skin of tomorrow's trucks

**T**he technology that will underpin the trucks of tomorrow is already here. The unrelenting drive to reduce vehicle fuel consumption and greenhouse-gas emissions, improve the safety of all road users, and increase the efficiency of the supply chain, is forcing engineers worldwide to think differently.

The answer – at least for now – does not seem to lie in what new form of vehicle powerplant we can invent, but, rather, how we can apply the abundance of technology we already have at our disposal.

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into each connected truck, which allow all the components to work together. This is more than in the United States National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) rocket that took Neil Armstrong to the moon!

These are the components that will become commonplace in tomorrow's vehicles. The viability of the technology was proved a couple of months ago in the European Truck Platooning Challenge. (You've already read much about this concept on the pages of **FOCUS** thus far this year.) Did the challenge achieve its goals?

According to Dutch Minister of Infrastructure and the Environment, Schultz van Haegen (his ministry initiated the challenge), the results of the first-ever major platooning tryout are promising. "Truck platooning ensures that transport is cleaner and more efficient. Self-driving vehicles also improve traffic safety, because most traffic accidents are due to human error.

"As the test shows, the technology has already come a long way. It is also clear that we Europeans need to better harmonise rules of the road and rules for drivers. This will open the door for up-scaled, cross-border truck platooning."



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Indeed, the issue of legislation is just one of the factors delaying widespread availability of the technology.

"As this is not a scientific study, the results are in the form of hypotheses, conclusions and recommendations. These will yield building blocks for the future testing of the European harmonisation process. The blocks – assembled with our partners: the truck manufacturers, various governments, road authorities and research institutes – clearly show our starting point towards actual realisation of truck platooning in Europe," says Loes Aarts, senior consultant Road Freight Transport, Rijkswaterstaat, Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment.

Surely, the basic mechanicals are still relevant, though? Of course they are, although many claim that the diesel engine as we know it has reached its zenith (modern trucks are a third more fuel-efficient than those of 30 years ago), and any further mechanical gains in fuel efficiency and emissions reduction will come from the after-treatment processes and/or using "greener" fuels. For the time being, at least, the diesel engine seems to be staying put.

Following a 2015 rulemaking hearing, conducted by United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

and National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the Diesel Technology Forum claimed that, by 2023, diesel engines will still power between 95 and 97 percent of all medium and heavy-duty vehicles.

"This is despite the introduction of alternative fuels and powertrains, including all-electric, and fuel-cell vehicles, as well as continued introduction of natural-gas powered vehicles," says Allen Schaeffer, executive director of the Diesel Technology Forum.

"Today, manufacturers of commercial trucks, engines and their components produce the cleanest, safest and most fuel-efficient technology in the world, and over 95 percent of those vehicles are powered by diesel engines," he adds.

"Now achieving near zero emissions, clean diesel technology powers the overwhelming majority of medium and commercial trucks today, and, thanks to these improvements, is poised to continue as the prime powertrain technology for commercial vehicles in the future," Schaeffer says.

"The engine may look and perform somewhat differently, and may be burning different kinds of low-carbon fuels, but, in the end, it will still be a diesel engine and an integral component in meeting the needs of a growing economy and a cleaner and more sustainable future."

At a high level at least, it would seem to be a case of the more things change, the more they stay the same. Tomorrow's trucks are already here today. **F**

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# STRENGTH

in the face of hardship



The agricultural sector has been facing adversity and there were noticeably fewer visitors at the 2016 Nampo Agricultural Trade Show. Yet, those who made the trip were serious about what they wanted. As ever, the many suppliers were happy to oblige, writes GAVIN MYERS

For as long as we can remember, Nampo has never once failed to impress. For the past decade, exhibitor numbers have been well above 600 – at times closer to 700 – while visitor numbers peaked at 73 552 in 2011, settling above 69 500 in the last two years.

These numbers are not to be scoffed at – especially for a trade show that this year is half a century old, and has grown to be one of the largest of its kind in the southern hemisphere.

However, something was different in the lead up to the show this year. The summer of 2015/16 was particularly brutal for South African farmers. Rains were late and few. Crops and livestock died, forcing many to give up their proud way of earning a living.

What would this mean for Nampo? Would many exhibitors pull out? Would as many visitors attend?

According to Nampo Harvest Day chairperson, Cobus van Coller, it is especially important that producers visit the show in a year of drought. "It is vital that producers talk to one another, exchange information and find out what can be added to one's farming enterprise to add further value," he says.

No matter, the **FOCUS** team had to attend. Toyota SA came to our aid, giving us the use of an all-new Hilux for the trip to Bothaville. This was the same

model as the 2.8 GD-6 Raider we reviewed in the May edition, and just about every analysis we made in that review held true on this journey.

The improved ride made the 500-km round trip perfectly bearable; the new 2.8-litre engine consumed just 7,9 l/100 km, being whisper quiet and strong in overtaking at the same time; while the improved interior creature comforts eased our weary city-slicker souls on the way home.

Then there were the many admiring (and jealous) glances we received driving in and out of the Nampo grounds – the Free State is Toyota country, after all!

Once we were in the show grounds this was clearly evident at the Toyota stand, which was one of the busiest.

You can't risk mentioning these fierce bakkie rivals in the same breath at a place like Nampo, but, over at the Ford stand, it was a similar scenario. The main attractions there were the very pretty Mustang, very loud Ranger rally truck and the very amusing strongman challenge.

According to Eben van der Linde, Ford regional sales manager for Free State, Northern Cape and Natal, there was a measured 5,5 percent growth in interest on the stand compared to last year. "We've created a feeling of fun and excitement on the stand with these attractions, but the buyers are really interested in the





Admittedly, we don't know all there is to know about farming equipment, but, take our word for it, it comprises some very serious pieces of machinery indeed!

Even the tyres are impressive! Chatting to Adriaan Coetzee, marketing operational manager, business to business, Michelin Tyre Company SA, it was clear that Michelin had attracted its fair share of interest – even from the younger set.

"The kids are really attracted to Bibendum (the Michelin Man), but our feedback is good and we've had quite a few sales. This year we promoted the Bidblade hard-surface tyres in particular, which are suited to industrial applications," he explains.

Naturally, most players from the trucking and related industries were present, too.

"This is the 15th time that FAW has participated at Nampo. We've recognised the patronage and loyal support of the multitude of agricultural

customers who have, over the past 22 years that FAW has been present here, remained committed to our brand," says Cheng Zhang, marketing and strategy manager at FAW Vehicle Manufacturers SA.

Over at the MAN stand, it was encouraging to note that even second-hand vehicles were being sold off the show stand!

"Our flat-deck MAN from the TopUsed division sold on the first day," exclaims Deon Otto, head of truck sales and support, private capital dealers, MAN Truck & Bus SA. "Even though we're here with all our latest technology, the TGM 18.280 with cattle body

has been a big hit, and there has been nice feedback about the VW 24.250," he motions. "This is one of the shows that, in my opinion, you have to be at."

Somebody who has certainly been introduced to the charms of Nampo is Iveco South Africa's new MD, Carmelo Impelluso. "I've never seen a fair like this. In Europe there isn't anything similar; only those dedicated to trucks. I wasn't so convinced when I heard about it, but I get it now. It's interesting and a nice opportunity for me to be here," he smiles.

The Volvo Group was at Nampo in full force, too, with group brand UD featuring a very interesting – and given the drought issue, appropriate – attraction at its stand. This was a UD Quon fitted with a specially equipped



Transit chassis cab and the small Transit Connect panel vans. Our representative from Ford Credit is taking applications at the stand, and we expect to do numerous deliveries at the show."

There were all the other usual bakkie and light-commercial suspects at the show, too. With the stands of Nissan, Isuzu, Volkswagen, Tata, Mitsubishi and Foton all alive with excited agriculture-types eager to find their way into the driver's seats of the latest models. As usual, the opportunity was there to do just that on the 4x4 demonstration track. Even Suzuki previewed its new LCV – the Super Carry.

Of course, the beloved bakkie is but a small portion of the exhibits at Nampo – in number and size ...

water tanker, from which hot-and-bothered visitors could conveniently quench their thirst.

"The tanker is usually based at the Vryheid area and does 25-km round trips every day to the nearest safe-for-consumption water source, which it then delivers to local churches and schools," explains senior marketing manager at Volvo Group Southern Africa, Laureen Stock.

Daimler Trucks put on a mighty display; with examples from the Mercedes-Benz truck and van range, Fuso, Freightliner and Western Star drawing unbridled attention. In fact, the vans were seemingly among the most popular.



High levels of industry support are certainly aiding this spirit. Engen, for example, handed over R1 million to Agri SA for drought relief at the show. "We understand the negative impact exerted on agriculture by the current drought and we hope that our donation will help to make a small contribution in assisting farmers," says Mike Stead, Engen's manager: Commercial Fuels.

"Although Grain SA was unsure of the effect that the past season's drought would have, we are impressed with the positive



"The agricultural sector benefits from our van model offerings, such as the Mercedes-Benz Vito Mixto, which is a workhorse and people carrier all in one, and the Mercedes-Benz Sprinter – which ticks all the right boxes when it comes to moving staff members from one site to another," says Nicolette Lambrechts, head of Mercedes-Benz Vans Southern Africa.

It would seem that, despite the adversity presented by conditions this season, it will take a lot to fully dampen the spirits of the South African agricultural industry ...

attendance figures of the 50th Nampo Harvest Day," says Jannie de Villiers, CEO of Grain SA.

"Rain in the grain-producing areas recently, has had a positive effect on the state of mind of the producers. Although it did not rain money or grain, it has instilled hope, and the positivity among producers is noticeable and heartening. Although grain producers haven't finished harvesting yet, they are planning the next crop at full speed ..." he concludes.

Here's hoping the next crop will be back up to full strength – because we know Nampo will be as ready for it as ever. **F**



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# 10, 50, 100 and COUNTING

Long-standing respect and admiration on the part of both Isuzu Truck South Africa and its agricultural customers has paved the way for future relationships

**T**his is a big year for Nampo and Isuzu Trucks alike. The former celebrated its 50th anniversary, while Isuzu Truck South Africa (as an independent entity) turns ten and its parent company, Isuzu Motors Japan, celebrates its 100th birthday. This is the type of endurance that appeals to the agricultural sector ...

Lisa van Aswegen, customer care and marketing manager at Isuzu Truck South Africa, agrees. "There is a lot of brand strength with Isuzu Trucks," she notes. "Farmers want products that are tried, trusted and reliable – they are very loyal to a brand and I find we have a very good record of reliability among them."

"Many farmers have been very loyal to Isuzu bakkies over the years and have supported the truck brand right from the old SBR and the JCR models. They've progressed with us because they trust the reliability of the brand," Van Aswegen says.

It's no surprise, then, that the vehicles on the Isuzu Trucks stand at Nampo 2016 were applicable to the farming community – and priced to go.

"Farmers come here looking for a good deal. The FXR 17,360 double-deck sheep carrier has been sold on the show. With this model you have the option of putting a drawbar trailer behind it, and

farmers like it because it has sufficient power to do the job," Van Aswegen explains.

Also on the stand was the FTR 850 AMT with a grain body. "There has also been a lot of interest around this combination, because, over the years, the farmers have become accustomed to the AMT technology. They are asking for it more and more."

The *piece de resistance* was undoubtedly the NPS 300 4x4, which has been used for two years as a support vehicle at the Dakar rally. "This truck has gone straight from production line to finish line at Dakar with no modifications. The members of Team Ride SA, who had it as their support vehicle, were on the stand on Tuesday – they were amazed with the NPS 300's 4x4 abilities on the rugged Dakar terrain."

"If it's tried at Dakar, believe me there is not a Free State farm on which it will get stuck!" laughs Van Aswegen.

While many of these three models are sold into the sector, Van Aswegen explains that the smaller N-series is also popular with the farming community for smaller jobs on the farm, or for going into town with smaller loads. "Much of what we sell into the industry is also sold into related industries that support the sector," adds Van Aswegen.

Of course, a good truck is one thing, but farmers

understand what it costs to run their vehicles ... In addition to buying a cost-effective vehicle with good fuel consumption, they also consider economical cost of operation.

"It's not only about buying and selling trucks; we add value to the whole life of the truck. The farmers see the full picture and where our value chain can be of benefit to them," Van Aswegen explains, detailing the suite of support offered by Isuzu Trucks.

"We need to add value to their business, so we look at providing bodies made from lighter materials without compromising on their strength, which will add extra payload capability. In addition to KANU/ACT, we collaborate with many body builders all around the country who have the expertise in specific bodies to give the customer the best deal.

off-the-shelf plans and if there is a specific operation, that has either very high or low kilometres, we custom-make the package specific to the application."

Related to this is the Isuzu Trucks genuine parts scheme, which aims to make genuine aftermarket parts affordable. For those who have used trucks, or have an older fleet, the brand's drivetrain remanufacturing joint venture ensures further quality through the supply chain. The components carry warranties and are manufactured to the Isuzu Trucks factory standards.

"We've assessed our dealer footprint throughout the country and where our trucks are running, and we have strategically placed our approved truck service centres to cover the gaps. These are able to service vehicles and attend to breakdowns in remote areas," Van Aswegen continues, before asking a pertinent question.



**LEFT:** Young and old alike were drawn to the ex-Dakar NPS 300 4x4.

**BELOW:** The FXR 17360 double-deck sheep carrier was sold at the show.

“  
Of course, a good truck is one thing, but farmers understand what it costs to run their vehicles ...



"We are in charge of the quality control and the supply chain so the end product is of Isuzu Trucks quality. That sells confidence in the Isuzu Trucks brand through the supply chain," she says.

Beyond the purchase, the Isuzu Trucks service and maintenance plans present a "budget" figure that allows the customer to see upfront what it'll cost to run that truck.

"We've given consideration to the rates, because we have good history of the cost per kilometre. There are

"Why do customers buy an Isuzu truck? They are buying a relationship; a full service package with the truck, aftersales support, value-adds and the relationship of trust. It's a give-and-take relationship – we might need to provide a solution to a unique operation and here we collaborate with the customer to give the best for the application.

"We're with this sector for the long run – through good and bad times," she says with the confidence that comes from a 100-year history. **F**

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## Good news and **POSITIVITY**

When times are tough, friends are few. This belief does not apply to Hino South Africa and its relationship with the local farming community – at this year's Nampo Harvest Day, the company's quest was to give back to a sector that has been suffering

**H**ino's vice president, Ernie Trautmann, is a man who likes positivity and good news, and so Hino partnered with two significant entities to spread a bit of goodness at the show. The first of these is agricultural organisation AgriBonus.

"AgriBonus looks after farmers' interests, helping them to do things in the industry that, individually, they would not be able to do. We donate a percentage for every Hino and Dyna that is purchased by AgriBonus and MyBonus members to the AgriBonus loyalty programme. These members can then redeem this against products from other AgriBonus partners," Trautmann explains.

The other partnership that came about for Nampo 2016 – but has both entities excited to carry on beyond the show – was with Mohau Community Care. The Mohau Group donated the 74 bales of lucerne you see adorning the trucks in the pictures, which were to be donated to local farmers in need.

Belinda Labuschagne, Mohau Group marketing manager, explains the motivation for making the donation: "We've gone through a very bad drought and there is a definite need for this; people call us on a daily basis and ask if we can deliver feed to them, because their animals are starving – and if there are no farmers, there is no food.

"When Hino's Marius Cramer contacted us and said Hino would like to purchase the lucerne for Nampo to donate to farmers in need, we discussed it with Mohau Group MD Jannie Bezuidenhout and we thought it would be an excellent way to continue with Mohau Community Care, so we asked Hino to send the trucks and we filled them."

"This is a very practical example of making a difference," Trautmann adds. "It's a good-news story, which the country needs; we need positivity."

Interestingly, this is something Trautmann and his team noticed at Nampo. "There is still a lot of positivity among the people here," he notes.

This was so much so that the vehicles on the brand's stand attracted much attention – partly because of the variety of vehicles on display, and partly because the vehicles were carefully selected to show the greatest range of applications that could benefit farmers.

The first of these was, interestingly, the 300 Bus. "I have not seen many buses on show here, and visitors have been impressed by its quality. We can build buses with 25 to 65 seats through many of our partner bus-building operations," Trautmann says.

A second type of passenger-transport vehicle that garnered a fair bit of attention was the 500 4x4 people carrier, designed to carry a large number of people into difficult areas.



The 300 Crew Cab, which was packed full of lucerne – 36 bales – demonstrated the ability of this model to safely carry a voluminous load and people. "It's amazing to see how many bales you can fit on the back of that vehicle," Trautmann exults.

Then there were the big guns – the 500 cattle truck (which was sold at the show), and a couple of 700 truck tractors. "We can provide for so many different applications, including the big, tough interlink trucks," reiterates Trautmann.

Big and tough, though, is not the main buying criteria for a farming application. Simplicity, adaptability, cost of ownership and first-class support, are even more important.

"One of the biggest advantages that Hino has is that we know the farms are located in remote areas of the country ... We have a large country, but we have 65 Hino dealers nationwide to provide support, so there should be one close to most farmers to provide parts, service or advice. We see this as one of our strengths," says Trautmann.

"Then again, Hino is a simple-technology type of brand – farmers tend to stick to the more basic requirements; not many of them have to have the bells and whistles. When you are in a remote area, if your vehicle has too many features it can create issues. We like to interact with the people who visit

us here because we get many ideas from the sector that we can take back and evolve into our future products."

An interesting point raised by Trautmann is Hino's willingness to adapt to different requirements and to work with a customer to provide a vehicle that meets unique needs. He says that being "practical people" is something that goes down well with farmers ...

"For example, some of our trucks are running cattle in the Northern Cape area. The roads there are so bad that the stones actually damage the trucks quite badly. Working with a farmer, we designed a protective kit that we fit upfront to trucks we sell in that area," he explains.

It's easy to get a real sense of how Hino works to meet its customers' needs when Trautmann introduces Sampie Swanepoel to the conversation, who's visiting the show as a guest of the Boksburg-based Hino East Rand dealership.

Swanepoel runs Transvaal Heavy Transport (THT), a loyal Hino customer for the past 40 years and one that makes extensive use of the versatility provided by the Hino range of vehicles.

"Our business focus is diverse – from one-tonne bakkies to crane trucks to 120-t abnormal low beds. Among others, we service the construction, mining, manufacturing, steel and power industries with a fleet

“  
An interesting point raised by Trautmann is Hino's willingness to adapt to different requirements.



that is 90 percent Hino (including Toyota bakkies). The oldest Hino we have is a 1989 Hino Dolphin, which is still going strong with 1,5 million kilometres!" Swanepoel exclaims.

What is it about Hino that THT loves? "Hino vehicles offer durability, reliability and longevity. Those three things to us are the most important outcomes of our relationship with Hino. This also applies to the company's aftersales and customer service and the how it looks after us. Hino is interested in our business and advises and assists us when we need it. In 40 years I've not had a problem with any aspect of Hino – the total Hino deal is first-class value," he grins.

It's not only long-standing customers who show interest at Nampo. Says Trautmann: "We've noticed how many emerging farmers are here. Their interest

is explicit: they know what they want, they have the knowledge and they understand the industry. They ask serious questions and are serious buyers."

This is certainly something that pleases Trautmann and the Hino team – it is, after all, a good sign that there is still some positivity in the agricultural sector.

"South Africans are quite resilient and Nampo is not about a specific season or year; it's a long-term thing. It's always an honour and privilege to be here. We're fully committed to Nampo and to the agricultural sector," he reiterates.

That's some positivity that should make anyone feel good. **F**



**CLOCKWISE FROM RIGHT:**

Members from Hino's 65-dealer network were given the opportunity to work the stand. The 500 cattle truck attracted much interest. Hino SA and Mohau Group Ventures joined forces to help farmers in need.



# A BUS-LOAD of value



GAVIN MYERS drove the Hyundai H1 2.5 Automatic Bus and found there is nothing even remotely offensive about it



Why change a winning recipe? That old adage must've been plastered around Hyundai's offices when the H1 fell due for its mid-life refresh. As we discovered earlier this year at the local launch of the revised model, the humble H1 leads the local multi-purpose vehicle sales charts – so Hyundai can be forgiven for sticking to its guns.

Indeed, the styling updates are subtle, with a mildly revised front bumper and grille and new

16-inch alloy wheels. The interior updates are more substantial. The dashboard is more modern and upmarket in look and feel, and houses a new electronic climate control and a Bluetooth-equipped sound system.

On the point of features, the new H1 comes with everything

you need. Features include rear park-distance control; cruise control; electronic stability program; anti-lock brakes with electronic brakeforce distribution; and driver, passenger and side airbags.

The 2.5 Bus also features full leather upholstery and the middle row of seats is adjustable, so occupant comfort is high. Given the H1's 5,15-m length and 1,92-m width and height, space, is also abundant. There is 842 litres of cargo space behind the rear seats.

To cart around nine passengers and 800 litres of cargo requires a bit of power. The 2,5-litre variable-geometry turbodiesel engine delivers 125 kW at 3 600 r/min and 441 Nm between 2 000 and 2 250 r/min.

Despite the small torque band, the engine delivers its grunt around town in a smooth manner. Coupled to the five-speed automatic gearbox, the overall ride is quiet and refined. When overtaking, though, the gearbox does tend to give too much slip and cause the engine to rev a bit too high instead of making full use of the torque.

Hyundai claims the H1 2.5 Automatic Bus will consume 9,8 l/100 km in combined driving.

On the road the H1 feels heavy, but, in spite of its size, it is stable and compliant thanks to its McPherson front and five-link rear suspension.

It is priced at R599 900, which includes a seven-year/200 000 km warranty, five-year/150 000 km roadside assistance and a five-year/90 000 km service plan.

Part of the reason the H1 has always been such a winning recipe is that it offers such a lot of value for almost all buyers. It's a likeable bus that covers all the bases rather well. **F**



**ABOVE:** Easy access and more than 800 litres of cargo space.

**RIGHT:** The revised dash looks and feels more upmarket.



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**Commercial  
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The Transporter range includes the Transporter Panel Van, Panel Van Sport, Crew Bus, Single Cab and Double Cab.



Celebrating its 30th anniversary, the highly respected week-long Arctic Van Test was once again held around Helsinki and in northern Finland during the first two weeks of February

**S**ix light commercial vehicles took part in what proved to be one of the warmest events on record. They were the Citroën Berlingo, Dacia Dokker, Fiat Professional Doblo Cargo, Opel Combo, Renault Kangoo and Volkswagen Caddy. The Ford Transit Connect was also supposed to take part, but, unfortunately, the test vehicle was in an accident just before the appointed date and Ford didn't have time to replace it.

While the Citroën Berlingo and Volkswagen Caddy were equipped with the latest Euro-6 engines, the rest had Euro 5s. The most powerful engine was the 1.6-litre MultiJet II in the Fiat Doblo with its 77 kW (105 hp), while the Caddy's 2.0-litre TDI engine had 75 kW (100 hp).

The Citroën Berlingo used its 1.6-litre HDi engine with 73 kW (98 hp), while both the Kangoo and Dokker were powered by the Renault Group's 1.5-litre dCi engines; offering 67 kW (90 hp). The engine with the lowest capacity was the Combo's 1.3-litre CDTi with 66 kW (88 hp).

Every vehicle had front-wheel drive traction and all had five-speed manual gearboxes, with the exception of the Doblo, which had a six-speed unit.

#### SLIPPERY CONDITIONS

Each vehicle had 250 kg of cargo on board and was equipped with Nokian Hakkapeliitta studless winter tyres and fuelled with renewed Neste Oil Pro Diesel during the whole test. For the first part of the test, held in Helsinki and surrounding areas, different

measurements were made and the initial sections of the urban drives were held.

In northern Finland, additional urban tests were undertaken in Oulu, with the open-road sections moving from Oulu via Arctic Circle to Iso-Syöte, followed by handling tests at Pudasjärvi airport. The early morning cold-start tests were recorded at Iso-Syöte.

This year was unusually warm with winter temperatures close to 0°C – not particularly Arctic! As for the road conditions, these were extremely slippery.

The abilities of both the drivers and vans were pushed to their limits – especially on the minor roads and during the handling tests, which were, literally, on a sheet of ice. Impressively, the vehicles functioned well on these extremely slippery conditions and the traction provided by studless tyres amazed the international trade press taking part.

#### CITROËN BERLINGO VAN 1.6 BLUEHDI 100 L2 PRO Agility in the city

The Citroën Berlingo's Euro-6 engine worked well in the urban areas and got positive remarks for its silence and pleasant drive. When driving in the city, the latest Berlingo's start-stop system worked very efficiently and the good functionality of the suspension added to the overall appeal of the driving experience.

Visibility from the cabin was noted as good, especially when reversing. The Berlingo and the Kangoo were the only test vehicles that had three



**CITROËN BERLINGO VAN 1.6 BLUEHDI 100 L2 PRO**

seats in the cabin.

The Berlingo has an opening hatch in a dividing wall that allows longer objects to be put in the cargo space. However, the bulging dividing wall reduces a bit of the usage of the vehicle's side door.

Negative comments were received about gear shifting while driving and the ergonomics inside the cabin. According the test drivers, the Berlingo didn't perform that well in the category of handling on the minor roads and in the dedicated handling test.

#### Test points 178

- |              |               |
|--------------|---------------|
| + Visibility | - Handling    |
| + Engine     | - Ergonomics  |
| + Suspension | - Cargo space |

#### FIAT DOBLO 1.6 MULTIJET II L1

##### High-performance

Having the most powerful engine in the Arctic Test 2016 was not enough for the Fiat Doblo to finish ahead of the least-powerful Opel Combo. The Doblo gained best marks for its performance and it also got the laurels in the acceleration comparison. The drivers liked Fiat's suspension. Noted, too, was that the Doblo Cargo was the only vehicle in the test with a six-speed gearbox.

Like the Opel, the Doblo has the largest two-piece, side-mirror set-up in the test, but the A-pillar disrupts the view. An armrest between the seats enhances comfort when driving long distances. Fiat's Traction+ feature adds extra grip when driving on slippery conditions, but only works when the speed is under 50 km/h.



**FIAT DOBLO 1.6 MULTIJET II L1**

While the Doblo's engine was the most powerful, it had the poorest performance in the fuel-economy tests. The vehicle tested had tyres that were 10 mm wider than recommended by the factory, which might have something to do with its overall fuel-economy performance.

#### Test points 183

- |                |                   |
|----------------|-------------------|
| + Acceleration | - Visibility      |
| + Mirrors      | - Heater controls |
| + Suspension   | - Fuel economy    |

#### DACIA DOKKER VAN 1.5 DCI 90 AMBIANCE

##### Most cost-efficient

The Dacia Dokker surprised many in the test, in a positive way. Despite being the cheapest vehicle there, it is still very functional. Besides having the lowest price, the Dokker was also the most fuel-efficient. Its engine received praise for its flexibility and high torque levels. The group also liked the simple design of the cabin with its easy-to-use functions – even for those driving it for the first time.

The Dacia's heater got the best result in cold-start test. Unfortunately, it was not possible to test the heaters in really freezing temperatures.

The Romanian brand received low marks for its uncomfortable driver's seat. Other critical comments related to noise inside the cabin, as well as from the side-mirrors and the wipers. The Dokker got least points in the handling test.



**DACIA DOKKER VAN 1.5 DCI 90 AMBIANCE**

#### Test points 183

- |                  |                          |
|------------------|--------------------------|
| + Cost-efficient | - Seats                  |
| + Simple design  | - Handling on slick road |
| + Engine         | - Visibility             |

#### OPEL COMBO VAN 1.3 CDTI L2H1

##### Strongest carrier

The Opel Combo had the most spacious cargo area. With 1 175 kg load capacity it has over 400 kg more payload than the next van on the list, making it the most suitable for moving heavier objects.

As they are essentially the same vehicle, both the Combo and the Doblo's side mirrors were noted as exceptional. Their two-piece side mirrors are large and are proper commercial vehicle mirrors. While the



wing mirrors provide good rear visibility, the A-pillar blocks the forward view a little, especially to the front-left on these left-hand-drive vehicles.

The Combo, which has the smallest engine, got the thumbs down for on-road performance and its lack of torque in the city. That said, its fuel economy was noted. Its gear ratios in the city were also seen as the weakest. Besides that, Opel's start-stop system excelled in the city.



**OPEL COMBO VAN 1.3 CDTI L2H1**

**Test points 186**

- + Heaviest load capacity      - Gear-ratios in the city
- + Mirrors                              - Torque in the city
- + Doors                                - Visibility

**RENAULT KANGOO EXPRESS MAXI 1.5 DCI 90**  
**Best cargo space**

The current Renault Kangoo received best points for its cargo space and received merits for its durable surface and numerous load-securing hooks.

On the negative side, it scored poorly for its side-door loading access, which is exceptionally narrow because of the shape of the dividing wall.

Storage places around the cabin and the simplicity of van's interior were ticked as good by test drivers, as was the quality of the materials used. The driver's seat was noted as comfortable.

The Kangoo proved reliable in the drivability tests, with the suspension settings and especially the engine power-to-weight ratio receiving positive remarks. All over visibility was excellent, particularly in the reversing module. However, the Kangoo's side mirrors are small.

**Test points 187**

- + Suspension                              - Mirrors
- + Cargo space                              - Side door
- + Visibility                                - Adjustment buttons on the radio



**RENAULT KANGOO EXPRESS MAXI 1.5 DCI 90**

**VOLKSWAGEN CADDY 2.0 TDI BLUEMOTION LAUNCH EDITION**

**All-round Champion**

The test group really enjoyed the Euro-6 engine in the new fourth-generation Volkswagen Caddy. Having the highest displacement in the competition might explain the positive reception, and points to why Caddy4 received the best points in drivability, both in the city and out on the open roads.

Top points were also given to the driver's seat, which was evaluated as the most comfortable and for the cabin in general. The Caddy 4's steerability was also rated highly by the panel, as were its smooth clutch and gearbox shifting and its strong brakes.



**VOLKSWAGEN CADDY 2.0 TDI BLUEMOTION LAUNCH EDITION**

The Caddy was criticised for its visibility and side mirrors and its interior space wasn't top of the list either.

By scoring most points all round, the Volkswagen Caddy4 was elected overall winner of Artic Van Test 2016.

**Test points 188**

- + Engine                                      - Visibility on side windows
- + Drivability                                - Traction control system
- + Ergonomics                              - Little room for folders, etc

As regular readers of **FOCUS** know, this magazine has been appointed an associate member of the International Truck of the Year (IToY)! **FOCUS** is the sole South African magazine to have joined this prestigious body. One of the advantages of this association is access to exclusive articles, specially written for **FOCUS** by ITOY jury members. This is one such article.





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# PRIDE, PASSION

and perseverance

GAVIN MYERS recently had the privilege of interviewing a true stalwart of the South African Transport industry. His is a story of learning, creation and dedication to the healthy future of the industry

**W**

here do you begin when the topic of discussion is a dynamic career, filled with genuine passion and enthusiasm for the transport industry? One that has, so far, spanned 63 years and left a lasting legacy, yet is still going strong?

For Hans Theunissen, the genesis was 1956 – three years after he began his working life as an apprentice at the South African Railways.

"I was contracted to Cummins and Donaldson, who were leading entities in terms of engine-failure investigation. My whole focus on the industry changed to one of preventative maintenance – understanding what makes engines fail prematurely.

"I completed my apprenticeship with a totally new view of what causes engine failure, and what you do

to prevent it," he recalls.

This period spawned Theunissen's passion for preventative maintenance. During this time, until the early 1990s, he gained further experience at various original equipment manufacturers (OEM) dealers and transport entities.

Over the years, he successfully conceptualised and conducted various industry tests; one of his proudest being the Fleet of Perfection article that featured in the *SA Transport* magazine in 1984.

"That will never be equalled again – it was built on motivation, giving people pride and excellence. We covered 2 000 vehicles across the whole of South Africa; you could eat off every one of them!"

Theunissen even created and patented the Poni trailer ... "I was standing in Pretoria with Stephanus Loubser – who was the president of Nissan – and

we were looking at a bakkie without a bin on it. I said that it would make an interesting concept for a truck tractor, so he gave me one to develop. It's been the most successful conversation to date, because they are still building them using four-tonners as truck tractors," Theunissen recalls.

In 1994, after an already impressive 40-year career, and at a time that he should've been considering a well-earned retirement, Hans happened to have a conversation with Brand Pretorius, who was then still at Toyota.

"He said that, with my experience, I should start a consultancy to benefit the industry. Shortly after I gave it some thought and, driving past Amanzimtoti, I realised that everything is sick and we need to heal it ... so I called it Healthy Transport Practices (HTP)."

Today, HTP, and the associated Wheels In Motion (WIM) brand, pride themselves in being able to give mechanics and workshop staff the understanding and experience to prevent mechanical failures – not just to fix them.

"Engines are made to last, but people make them fail. During my years based in Durban I coined the phrase 'servicing to destruction'. People were working on vehicles, but components were still failing," Theunissen explains.

"Today, there is an over-reliance on computers – machines can't touch, feel, hear or

see. This basic manual diagnostic ability must be there ... Remember, the most important bolt or nut in a vehicle is the loose one that's not detected. We teach people to be observant and aware of the total picture. It is a skill that is absolutely disappearing," he says with despair.

"In the past, mechanics were highly qualified and skilled artisans. They had pride and they were driven and disciplined. Today that focus is not there. We try to engage the head and the heart – instilling a sense of responsibility and passion."

While the HTP and WIM brands are now long-established partners to many South African OEMs and operators, it is this drive that, at the age of 80, keeps the technical director both interested and hands on.

"The one goal I have is for preventative maintenance to never die again. It died around 1985, when major companies – like Cummins, Caterpillar and Donaldson – lost their schools, that taught people about preventative maintenance systems, to the bean counters ... My dream is that it must never die again – we must take it forward," he exclaims.

While Theunissen sees workshop issues as a major industry problem, there are also others. One of these is the quality of drivers. "Drivers are accountable for 80 percent of the welfare of the vehicle, yet they have no mechanical knowledge," he explains. "They also get a code 14 licence in a four-tonne vehicle with an empty trailer and then get into a 600 hp vehicle with a 40-t load on the back ... two totally different animals!"

"The trucks today are sophisticated and the risk factors are vastly different. Drivers are just put into a vehicle and expected to drive; they are not educated to ensure they can

drive the specific type of vehicle effectively," he adds.

Happily, Theunissen emphasises that the ability to learn is ever present. "Something I've learnt throughout the years is that the answer to any question should never be more than four people away. The secret, though, is to make sure you ask the right four people. In transport, you can know everything by knowing the right people who are specialists in their field. At 80 I'm still learning every day."

Theunissen's sons, Billy and Louis, probably sum up his incredible career best: "His lifelong ambition is to leave as many people as possible with the knowledge he has gained in the technical field, and to give them the passion needed to keep the wheels turning. His goal in life is to develop people to be successful."

Surely, there can be no greater legacy than that. **F**





# MODEL

relationship!

It's not every day that 101 trucks are handed over to a transport operator. But, then again, the relationship between this supplier and its customer is pretty special, too, as CHARLEEN CLARKE discovers ...

**T**he relationship between Mercedes-Benz Trucks and Bakers SA Limited is something of which dreams are made – for both parties. On the one hand, Bakers SA Limited is an extremely loyal customer – which means Mercedes-Benz can “bank” on its patronage, so to speak. There is, however, a very good reason for that loyalty – as I wrote in my Steering Column last month, Mercedes-Benz is more than a supplier; it's a partner.

This synergistic relationship, which stems back to the 1980s, has now culminated in a landmark deal for both companies – Mercedes-Benz recently delivered a whopping 101 Actros trucks to the Pietermaritzburg-based company.

Each Actros bears the number, 786, on its cab. That's because the 28 letters of the Arabic alphabet are assigned numerical values – and “Bismillah ir-Rahman ir-Rahim”, the opening phrase of the Quran, equate to the numerical value of 786. In English, this means “In the name of Allah, the most Merciful, the most Beneficent”. So, to those of the Muslim faith, 786 equates to that expression.

According to Abdul Tayob, chief executive of Bakers SA Limited, the number is there to “reduce harm”. “Sometimes things we consider a bounty can cause harm. For instance, too much rain can cause a flood. So, by putting 786 on our trucks, we are asking Allah to reduce the harm that can potentially come with the bounty,” he tells **FOCUS**.

The deal was concluded by Dave Walker, sales and transport consultant at Garden City Commercial, who has had a 28-year relationship with Bakers SA Limited. “I specifically use the word ‘relationship’ and not ‘dealing’ or ‘selling’ because, in today's business environment, transactions are concluded by being close to your customers, by knowing their needs, by knowing in depth how their business ticks, and by knowing where they are going ... business is about partnerships and relationships,” he tells **FOCUS**.

Walker first started dealing with Bakers SA Limited when Aboobaker Tayob (the founder of the company and now its chairman) was still actively steering the ship. “He was amazing. In the early days, the company wasn't able to employ sophisticated tracking technology; it didn't exist, but Mr Baker, as I like to call him, was always at his office at 04:00, scheduling trucks, loads and drivers ... without the use of mobile telephones or tracking technology. And, somehow, he always knew where all the trucks, loads and drivers were,” he recalls.

This obsession for detail even shone through when Aboobaker Tayob was once in hospital for major surgery. “As he was coming out of the anaesthetic, he had all the nurses lined up and instructed them which truck to take where, what load to pick up and its delivery point,” relates Walker with a chuckle.

Fast-forward a couple of decades and Mr Baker's son, Abdul Tayob, is doing an equally good job of steering the business today. He is obsessed with



Garden City Commercials means that we received the best deal possible. That is why we decided on an all-inclusive package with all the value chain partners: FleetBoard, CharterWay and Mercedes-Benz Financial Services. We look forward to even more success from this relationship," adds Tayob.

Kobus van Zyl, executive director: Daimler Trucks & Buses Southern Africa, is similarly upbeat. "It is no coincidence

**LEFT:** A true relationship – the teams of Mercedes-Benz and Bakers SA Limited at the vehicle handover.

**BELOW:** The new additions on the road to prosperity.



running a company that is nothing less than world-class; everything that Bakers SA Limited does is geared towards achieving this goal.

With the acquisition of the 101 Mercedes-Benz Actros truck tractors, the fleet now stands at "just over 600". Abdul Tayob is confident that ordering the trucks was the right decision. "This is the single biggest order that Bakers SA Limited has concluded with Mercedes-Benz Trucks and, as in the past, we are sure that we will reap the benefits," he tells **FOCUS**.

There are a number of reasons Bakers SA Limited remains loyal to the Mercedes-Benz brand. "From a technical side, the trucks' reliability, improved safety and low fuel consumption mean we could not have made a better choice.

"I have to add that the relationship we have with both Mercedes-Benz and our local dealer Mercedes-Benz

that, as Daimler Trucks & Buses, our aim is very much in line with the vision of Bakers SA Limited. We want to be the benchmark commercial vehicle solutions provider that makes a real difference in the lives of our stakeholders.

"This includes everyone from our shareholders to customers and the various charities we support. This alignment is one of the major reasons this relationship will continue to move forward at such a rapid pace," he comments.

"This landmark transaction has been the result of a rock-solid relationship between Bakers SA Limited and Daimler Trucks & Buses. By continuing to focus on our two core strategic business pillars – best people and operational excellence – we continue to be the supplier of choice for ever-growing businesses such as Bakers SA Limited," concludes Van Zyl. **F**

# ISUZU

expands US  
market presence



In his monthly review of global news for local truckers, FRANK BEETON records Isuzu's plans to expand its presence in the important United States (US) truck market; reports on some new Sprinter developments and speculates that more may be on the way; unpacks Volvo's latest publicity stunt; and details Eicher's new entry to the Indian light truck market

**N**orth America is an extremely important market for Japanese truck and diesel-engine manufacturer Isuzu Motors Limited. Since its own initial entry into that market in 1984, Isuzu has established itself as the leading supplier of low-cab forward-control trucks.

An important element of Isuzu's North American success was a marketing and manufacturing partnership with General Motors (GM). This added some 470 GM dealers to Isuzu's own 250-strong network, and led to petrol-engined derivatives of the trucks, which were built in GM plants. This arrangement was unilaterally terminated by the

American company in 2009, by which time Isuzu had sold more than 400 000 units in North America.

In 2014, however, a revised cooperative arrangement between Isuzu and GM was announced. As part of this, North-American assembly of Isuzu-sourced products (including those carrying Chevrolet branding), would now be carried out by Spartan Motors in Charlotte, Michigan, and not, as before, in General Motors' own plants.

Since then, another cooperative venture has emerged, which will see GM sourcing a range of conventional (bonneted) trucks from Navistar International Corporation. This vehicle configuration, which remains important in the US market context, will



be built by Navistar and not in GM's own production facilities.

#### **Latest American Isuzu and Chevrolet truck line-ups**

The initial range covered by the revived Isuzu/GM arrangement is based on Isuzu's N-Series "low-cab forward-control" light truck line-up. It includes Chevrolet-branded models, badged as the 3500/4500/5500 range, all with the choice of 6.0-litre, GM V8 petrol engines and Hydra-Matic, six-speed fully automatic transmissions. These will be offered alongside Isuzu's own 3.0-litre and 5.2-litre turbodiesels.

The models developed, built and supplied by Navistar, which will come to market in 2018, are conventional cab Class 4/5 trucks (roughly 6.4 – 8.9 t gross vehicle mass (GVM) ratings) and will be sold with Chevrolet branding.

During the period before the GM partnership was revived, Isuzu was obliged to make a new set of arrangements to safeguard and consolidate its position as a supplier to this important market, and to ensure the continued availability of petrol-engined N Series trucks.

Accordingly, production was relocated, in September 2011, to Spartan Motors, Inc. – a well-known specialist manufacturer of emergency, recreational, defence and delivery vehicles – and this

arrangement has continued into the second era of partnership with GM.

#### **Isuzu's American F-Series**

With the new arrangements now in place, Isuzu has announced, at the 2016 Work Truck Show in Indianapolis, that it will be expanding its North American range to include a larger F-Series FTR-designated model, which will compete at the upper limits of Class 6 (GVM ratings from approximately 8.8 to 11.8 t).

This forward-control (cabover) 4x2 model will be powered by Isuzu's 5.2-litre, four-cylinder 4HK1-TC turbocharged diesel, driving through an Allison 2000 Series fully automatic transmission. The specification will include eight wheelbase options, allowing body lengths of up to 14.2 m.

During April, Spartan Motors held a groundbreaking ceremony for a new 8 000 m<sup>2</sup> assembly plant in Charlotte, which will build Isuzu's F-Series trucks from mid-2017. It seems that Isuzu will not be offering a

petrol-engined variant of the FTR to North American operators, but rather selling the fuel economy, operational and vehicle-mass benefits of a relatively small displacement diesel engine and large fuel-tank capacity to that market.

#### **NEW SPRINTER VARIANTS, BUT IS THAT ALL?**

Mercedes-Benz has announced the introduction of new Sprinter van variants for the European market. It has a 5.5 t GVM rating, up from the previous five tonne limit, and new Euro-6 engine output ratings of 84 kW (114 hp) and 105 kW (142 hp), replacing previous 70 kW and 95 kW versions. The higher power options of 120 kW (163 hp) and 140 kW (190 hp) will still remain in the catalogue.

Mercedes-Benz says that the increased GVM availability is intended to address the requirements of operators in the building, passenger-transport, ambulance and fire-services sectors, which often require vehicles to be tailored to their particular requirements, and have previously needed to seek special authorisation for increased operating masses.

These new enhancements have been applied to the present generation Sprinter range, but we cannot help thinking that something far more significant may be lurking in the wings, possibly awaiting revelation at this year's IAA Show in Hannover.

Other European van news includes the upcoming introduction of Nissan's NV300 replacement for the European Primastar model. Last month, in our report on Fiat Professional's new Talento van, we mentioned that this product would be manufactured at Renault's recently upgraded Sandouville plant in France, alongside its Renault Trafic and Opel/Vauxhall Vivaro siblings, in addition to the new NV300.

The Primastar was previously manufactured in Barcelona, Spain, and the new arrangement reflects a further consolidation within the Renault-Nissan alliance, adding an additional 100 000 units to Sandouville's annual production volume.

This plant had previously been used to build Renault's larger passenger car models, but falling demand prompted a €230 million investment in facility changes, and a shift to commercial van production.

#### **Further Daimler/Renault links in the offing?**

No specific details of the NV300 have emerged as yet, but it can be expected that it will be similar to the Talento with diesel engines rated up to 110 kW (145 hp), a payload capacity of 1.2 t, a load volume of 6 m<sup>3</sup>, but feature some unique Nissan front-end styling.

However, the intriguing question still remains regarding future cooperation between this Renault-led van grouping and Daimler AG. As we have noted previously, the joint van-building venture between Mercedes-Benz and Volkswagen, which produced the respective brands' Sprinter and Crafter ranges, is due to terminate in the second half of this year, which, as you read these words, is almost upon us.

Daimler and Renault-Nissan have enthusiastically >

advanced their cooperation over the past five years, covering some 13 joint projects. The most recent of these have been the groundbreaking on a joint Mexican assembly plant, and the announced development of a Mercedes-Benz branded one-tonne pickup derived from the all-new Nissan NP300 platform. Other cooperation in the commercial vehicle market – in the form of the Mercedes-Benz Citan light van, spun off from the Renault Kangoo – is already well established.

The question whether this cooperation will extend upwards to involve future replacements for Mercedes-

#### The evidence mounts

Notwithstanding its hugely successful history, with more than three million units sold, Sprinter is now becoming an increasingly important global product, with growing success in the hugely significant North American market.

As we reported earlier, Daimler Trucks has announced that a new van manufacturing plant is to be opened in Charleston, South Carolina during this year to build the "next generation Sprinter" for the American market.



“  
Will Mercedes-Benz continue to compete  
in this class for any length of time?”

New European variants of the Mercedes-Benz Sprinter range feature improved GVM ratings and more powerful engine outputs.

Benz models, such as the Vito and Sprinter, remains unanswered. Possibly, this may encroach too closely on Mercedes-Benz's proud truck culture to happen, but economic priorities may well intervene. Renault can offer a real critical-mass benefit in these commercial vehicle classes, which will argue strongly in favour of extended cooperation.

In our report on MAN's impending entry to the van business with a product spun-off from Volkswagen's (VW's) new stand-alone Crafter, there was considerable evidence that VW's current Sprinter-influenced design configuration (which was entirely logical when both products were built in the same Daimler-owned plant) is about to be changed.

In the new independently developed product, rear-wheel-drive will be supplemented by front- and all-wheel drive options. Will Mercedes-Benz continue to compete in this class for any length of time with just a mildly facelifted Sprinter? We don't think so!

It was also announced that €450 million (about R8 trillion) is being invested in modernising the two German plants in Ludwigsfelde and Düsseldorf, and that the latter would become the global competence centre for the Sprinter product family.

Even though these announcements suggest a continuation of an independent course for Sprinter, we still wouldn't bet against some form of cooperation with Renault in the medium/heavy van arena.

#### VOLVO MOVES A SERIOUS PAYLOAD

The Volvo Truck Group has established a recent tradition of conducting spectacular stunts to illustrate new product features. Readers may well remember the "Ballerina Stunt", in which highliner Faith Dickey walked a tightrope stretched between two moving trucks; the "Jean-Claude Van Damme Splits Stunt"; and others of that ilk.

Although these stunts were all obviously over-the-top, there can be no doubting their popularity and





# You're not buying this.

What you're buying is so much more than a truck. It's a commitment. A partnership.

A whole system designed and built around the working life of a vehicle. Founded on the principle that Total Operating Costs are more important than initial purchase costs.

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Reliability is a huge deal as well. So you won't be surprised to hear that Scania trucks deliver the highest levels of uptime in Southern Africa, and our wholly-owned dealer network focuses all its energy on minimising downtime.

Driver capability is another big cost area, which our driver training programmes are tailored to help you manage and develop. The same goes for our finance and insurance approach. We believe in understanding the daily needs of your business, rather than just looking at the risk.

Also our new Fleet Management System is the perfect embodiment of our partnership attitude, giving you access to amazing detail on everything from coasting to heavy braking, and then the coaching support you need to help manage not just your fleet, but your entire cost base.

So if you're just buying trucks, we're probably not the supplier for you. But if you believe what you're actually buying is a partnership, a commitment, a total transport solution, then we should talk.

**There is a better way.**





Volvo reminds us that 750 t equates to the combined mass of 150 fully grown elephants, or four Boeing 747 Jumbo Jets!



effectiveness in generating huge publicity for the brand.

During March, Volvo announced the availability of up to two forward and reverse crawler gears in its I-Shift automated transmission range. Crawler gears have extremely high numerical reduction ratios, allowing the vehicle to operate at very low speeds, in this case 0.5 – 2 km/h, while increasing tractive effort, and reducing the tendency to break traction into wheelspin.

The available crawler options include a single 19:1 ratio for direct-drive transmissions, a single 17:1 ratio in overdrive gearboxes, a lowest ratio of 32:1 in the case of the twin crawler option, and a lowest reverse ratio of 37:1 when dual reverse crawlers are fitted (note: "low" ratio equals high numeric ratio).

#### The plot thickens

Volvo claims that its products equipped with the crawler gear I-Shift option can move off from standstill drawing a gross combination mass (GCM) of up to 325 t. While this is spectacular enough, the company decided to reinforce the point by doing something even more outlandish in the Port of Gothenburg, Sweden.

A 300-m long "road train" was assembled consisting of a FH16 prime mover coupled to 20 trailers. By double-stacking 40 containers loaded with spare parts on the trailers, a combination mass exceeding 750 t was built up.

The "mix" was completed by the addition of Magnus

Samuelsson, former holder of the "World's Strongest Man" title, who was tasked to drive the rig, and British journalist, Brian Weatherley, to act as passenger/observer.

The task set for the rig was to move off from standstill under its own power and cover a distance of 100 m. This was duly achieved after the fifth-wheel base plate was reinforced, all couplings were thoroughly checked, and every one of the 204 tyres supporting this incredible load set to the correct pressure.

Volvo claims that the 551 kW (750 hp) FH16 used for this exercise was in a totally standard configuration, fitted with the heaviest axle options from the available product catalogue. Volvo placed the feat in context by reminding us that 750 t equates to the combined mass of 150 fully grown elephants, or four Boeing 747 Jumbo Jets!

#### Volvo's appetite for publicity

Up to 2013, we reported extensively on manufacturers' efforts to develop and produce the world's most powerful production truck. However, the final implementation of Euro-6 emission standards at the end of that year appeared to have put some kind of lid on that particular subject.

For the record, the title holder up to September 2011 was Volvo Trucks, with its 551 kW (750 hp) version of its FH16 flagship, which assumed ascendancy at that time. It had surpassed Scania's 537 kW (730 hp) V8 Series (introduced in April, 2010), Volvo's 522 kW (700 hp) FH16 with D16G engine (announced in



Making up the 750 t payload for Volvo's highly spectacular crawler gear promotion.

September 2008), MAN's 500 kW (680 hp) TGX with D28 engine (introduced in 2007), Volvo's 492 kW (660 hp) FH16 (launched in 2006) and Mercedes-Benz "Black Edition" Actros, with 456 kW (612 hp) of OM 502 power (launched in 2004).

The frequency of Volvo's name appearing in this list does indicate that the manufacturer truly understands the value of publicity, and had deliberately diverted its efforts into alternative directions once the power race option lost its potential.

Taken in isolation, engine power outputs are impressive, but somewhat meaningless. For a truck to be an effective transportation tool, it needs an appropriate mix of engine power, torque, transmission ratios, final drive ratios, aerodynamics, brakes and a host of other factors that, in recent years, have become increasingly subject to electronic management.

We are not sure if Volvo's feat in moving 750 t with a standard production truck will lead to a spate of similar events, but it does present a new arena of possible challenge for other brands to consider. Moving huge tonnages a short distance does not represent a practical transport task, but it does say much about the safety margins built into modern vehicle design.

### EICHER'S NEW LIGHTWEIGHT

Staying with the Volvo Group, but moving to the opposite end of the payload spectrum, we have recently noted the launch of Indian affiliate Eicher's new Pro 1049 light truck model. Part of the Pro 1000 range first announced at the end of 2013, this new model is rated at 4 995 kg GVM. With its 2 750 mm wheelbase dimension it can accommodate a 3 068 mm cargo body.

It is powered by Eicher's four-cylinder, 3.3-litre E483 turbocharged and intercooled diesel, which develops 70 kW (95 hp) and complies with India's Bharat Stage III (equivalent to Euro 3) emission standards.

The specification includes a five-speed synchromesh transmission, power steering with tilt/telescopic steering column adjustment, hydraulic braking system with air option, exhaust brake, and semi-elliptical steel leaf springs front and rear.

The Pro 1049 is typically intended for use in agriculture, consumer goods distribution, parcel/courier services, and other similar small payload, "last-mile" delivery applications.

Notably, it is marketed under the Eicher Trucks & Buses banner, this being a component of the 50-50 joint venture between the Volvo Group and Eicher Motors Limited, which trades generically as VE Commercial Vehicles Limited.

The Eicher Pro 1000 Series, which participates in the five to 14-t GVM category of the Indian domestic market, carries what appears to be a heavily facelifted version of the Mitsubishi Canter-derived cab, which was carried over from Eicher's earlier cooperation with that Japanese manufacturer.

### Local implications?

We have seen no further evidence of the impending re-entry of Eicher products in to the South African market under Volvo patronage. Earlier announcements made by Group executives raised expectations that these products would fill some of the gap left in the Group's local product line-up by the final run-out of UD's U41 Series early in 2015, but this subject has not resurfaced in recent press briefings.

The availability of suitably positioned products from the Eicher source to replace UD's aging local MCV and HCV product line-ups seemed to present a logical future direction for the Volvo Group to defend its substantial recent participation in these market segments, once the current UD-sourced products were discontinued. However, this possibility now seems to have diminished, and we await news of further developments in this area with interest. **F**



Global FOCUS is a monthly update of international news relating to the commercial vehicle industry. It is compiled exclusively for FOCUS by Frank Beeton of Econometrix. Do you have a comment or thought you would like to share based on this column? Visit [www.focusontransport.co.za](http://www.focusontransport.co.za) and have your say.



## SIZANANI BULK CHOOSES DAF TRUCKS FOR THE LONG HAUL

Ten DAF XF 105,460 truck tractors have been added to the Wozani Berg Gasoline (trading as Sizanani Bulk) fleet. Two more of these trucks, which are specifically built for the long haul, are currently on order, with a requisition for a further 15 units pending.

Sizanani Bulk operates a fleet of highly specialised gas and fuel tankers that service a targeted client base, transporting liquid petroleum products throughout South Africa and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries.

Alec Jackson, DAF sales executive for Babcock's Westmead branch in Durban, says a number of factors contributed to clinching the sale of the DAF XF 105 trucks to Sizanani Bulk: "The DAF fuel consumption has already proved to be the best in the Sizanani Bulk fleet, with a saving of up to four litres per 100 km, per vehicle.

"With that comes a complete package from Babcock comprising: correct pricing; a finance package to suit the client's needs; a comprehensive service and maintenance package with a 24-hour breakdown service; the Executrax onboard monitoring system; as well as extensive after-sales support," he adds.

Babcock, the sole importer and distributor of DAF Trucks in southern Africa, recently held a mini-workshop for Sizanani Bulk's driver trainers to familiarise them with operating the vehicle and making the most of the aerodynamic design.

According to Babcock, the key development criteria behind the DAF XF105 long-haul trucks are: low operating costs, best driver satisfaction, and high reliability.

The PACCAR MX engine in the XF105 comprises 25 percent fewer parts than previous models, dramatically increasing reliability and reducing operating costs.

The company says that the XF has the most spacious cab in its class, while Adaptive Cruise Control, Forward Collision Warning and a DAF Camera System make driving safe and comfortable.

In addition, DAF MultiSupport offers a fixed rate per kilometre for repair and maintenance and gives customers the benefit of increased vehicle availability and reduced administration, while the DAF International Truck Service (ITS) is on 24-hour standby.

## BPW HEADS INTO AFTERMARKET



BPW Axles has acquired a majority stake in the JMR Trailer Parts Group, as part of its global strategy to expand its presence in the aftermarket arena. JMR Trailer Parts currently forms a major role as a BPW spare parts distributor in southern Africa.

JMR has eight branches throughout South Africa, offering a wide range of quality trailer parts and accessories to more than 1 500 transport companies. This acquisition will allow BPW to better understand the aftermarket and expand its product solutions for transport companies in a customer-orientated manner.

BPW has no intention of distributing solely through JMR (protecting its other distributors' right to a fair opportunity to compete), while JMR has no intention of distributing and promoting only BPW products.

The parent company of the BPW Group, BPW Bergische Achsen KG, repositioned itself in 2013; promoting its commitment to partnerships in the transport industry as a system partner to vehicle builders, as well as a mobility partner to vehicle operators.

Product support forms a mayor part in these partnerships and, hence, this acquisition is in line with similar actions in Europe.

Prior to 2015, the BPW Group's direct involvement in the aftermarket was limited to European countries outside Germany. Since then, BPW has started establishing a spare parts presence within Germany through its subsidiaries.

At the beginning of 2016, BPW Bergische Achsen KG also acquired a majority stake in PE Automotive GmbH & Co. KG, one of the leading suppliers in the independent aftermarket. This will open up opportunities in the local market for the BPW/JMR partnership as well as for other existing BPW distributors.

## COMMERCIAL VEHICLE SALES REPORT FOR APRIL 2016

Note: For the time being, Great Wall Motors SA (GWM) and Mercedes-Benz SA (MBSA) will only report aggregated sales data. The GWSA and MBSA commercial vehicle market split volumes are estimates based on historical trends and forecasting techniques. The totals listed below do not include MBSA figures.

Light Commercial Vehicles < 3 501 kg	Total: 12 192
AMH	642
Fiat Group	35
Ford Motor Company	2 500
GMSA	1 971
GWM	94
Jaguar Land Rover	10
JMC	21
Mahindra	128
Mazda South Africa	68
Mercedes-Benz SA – estimate	13
Mitsubishi Motors SA	2
Nissan	1 319
Peugeot Citroën SA	9
Renault	22
Suzuki Auto	4
TATA	128
Toyota	4 627
Volkswagen SA	599

Medium Commercial Vehicles 3 501 – 8 500 kg	Total: 588
AMH	11
Fiat Group	2
Ford Motor Company	2
GMSA	126
Iveco	36
JMC	18
Mercedes-Benz SA – estimate	157
Peugeot Citroën SA	1
TATA	16
Toyota	149
Volkswagen SA	70

Heavy Commercial Vehicles 8 501 – 16 500 kg	Total: 378
FAW	66
GMSA	95
Iveco	8
Mercedes-Benz SA – estimate	42
TATA	27
Toyota	82
Volvo Group Southern Africa	100

Extra-Heavy Commercial Vehicles > 16 500 kg	Total: 737
Babcock DAF	7
FAW	20
GMSA	49
Iveco	72
MAN	73
Mercedes-Benz SA – estimate	289
Powerstar	30
Scania	125
TATA	14
Toyota	33
Volvo Group Southern Africa	314

Buses > 8 500 kg	Total: 71
Iveco	13
MAN	13
Mercedes-Benz SA – estimate	16
Scania	40
TATA	4
Volvo Group Southern Africa	1

\*Source: National Association of Automobile Manufacturers of South Africa (Naamsa).

## SA DRIVER IS BEST IN THE WORLD!

A South African truck driver has been named the best in the world. Well, in the Daimler world, that is. The driver in question is Marshall Hendricks from Imperial Fast n Fresh, and he's won the worldwide FleetBoard Drivers' League.

A total of 19 438 drivers from 359 companies in 18 countries took part in the 2015 FleetBoard Drivers' League in the period from June 1 to October 31, 2015. FleetBoard Driver's League is a driving competition run using Daimler's FleetBoard telematics system to determine driver scores.

"There are so many factors that determine what makes a good driver, such as braking, accelerating and using the correct gears at all times. The Daimler FleetBoard system makes it so much easier to access and



(From left): Paulus Mkhize (left) and Bert Koning, from BK Advanced Training. Pieter Adriaanse (left) and Marshall Hendricks both did an astounding job in the competition.

understand the information from the truck. I would often log into the system to see how I was doing against the other drivers, and this meant we had a high and very healthy level of competition," says Hendricks.

In the local FleetBoard Drivers' League, Pieter Adriaanse from Imperial Fast n Fresh took second position, followed in third by Paulus Mkhize from Willowton Logistics. To round off the southern African accolades, the top three fleets were: Makali (first), Anderson's Transport (second) and Plantation (third).

The three drivers all received tickets to Germany. It's going to be an especially memorable trip for Mkhize; his flight to the local FleetBoard Drivers' League awards function was his first ever!

Hendricks won't be participating in the competition this year, because he will be training other drivers. He predicts that Adriaanse will win the 2016 contest. Watch this space!

DELIVERING THE DAILY DOSE

When the decision was made to expand its fleet of local delivery vehicles, Clinigen South Africa opted for two new Iveco Daily 50-170 panel vans over its other consideration – an eight-tonne truck.

"The space utilisation per trip is better when running two smaller five-tonne vehicles," explains Benjamin Miny, MD – Africa, Clinigen South Africa.



Clinigen SA's Benjamin Miny (left) and Etienne Bezuidenhout take delivery from Sue-Ellen Fouché of Truck Centre Wadeville.

"We do more than 2 000 deliveries a month, each of which could be one box or 30 pallets."

The company has experienced impressive growth over the last five years and, with a 1 600-pallet warehouse, its delivery requirements have grown in sync – so Iveco Truck Centre Wadeville was contacted to supply a solution.

"The experience of dealing with Truck Centre

Wadeville and its sales executive Sue-Ellen Fouché has been excellent from the beginning. If you ask for something, they make it happen immediately," says Etienne Bezuidenhout, warehouse manager, Clinigen South Africa.

"The reasons we chose the two Ivecos included their competitive price and ability to take up to five Euro pallets of between 300 and 500 kg," Miny adds.

"The Ivecos can also accommodate an air-conditioning system with very little modification. The Medicine Control Council regulations state that we must transport medicine at the required temperatures, which can be below 25 to 30°C or between 2 and 8°C. We've also insulated the sides and added temperature monitoring systems to ensure compliance, as well as installing a deck in order to have optimal space for the pallets."

The vehicles will run local deliveries in a 200 km radius of Gauteng, and Miny explains that the company has saved 25 percent by purchasing the Daily vans, compared to enlisting a courier company.

The Daily delivery vehicles are a hit with the drivers as well. Says Bezuidenhout: "They run beautifully. They are a bit longer than our previous vehicles, which the drivers have had to get used to, but they can't stop talking about the driving experience. They are so chuffed with the vehicles."

"Because we deal with medicines and there are patients waiting for them, we need to make sure we get the product to where it's required. The new Iveco vehicles allow us to control those deliveries and the customer experience," Miny concludes.

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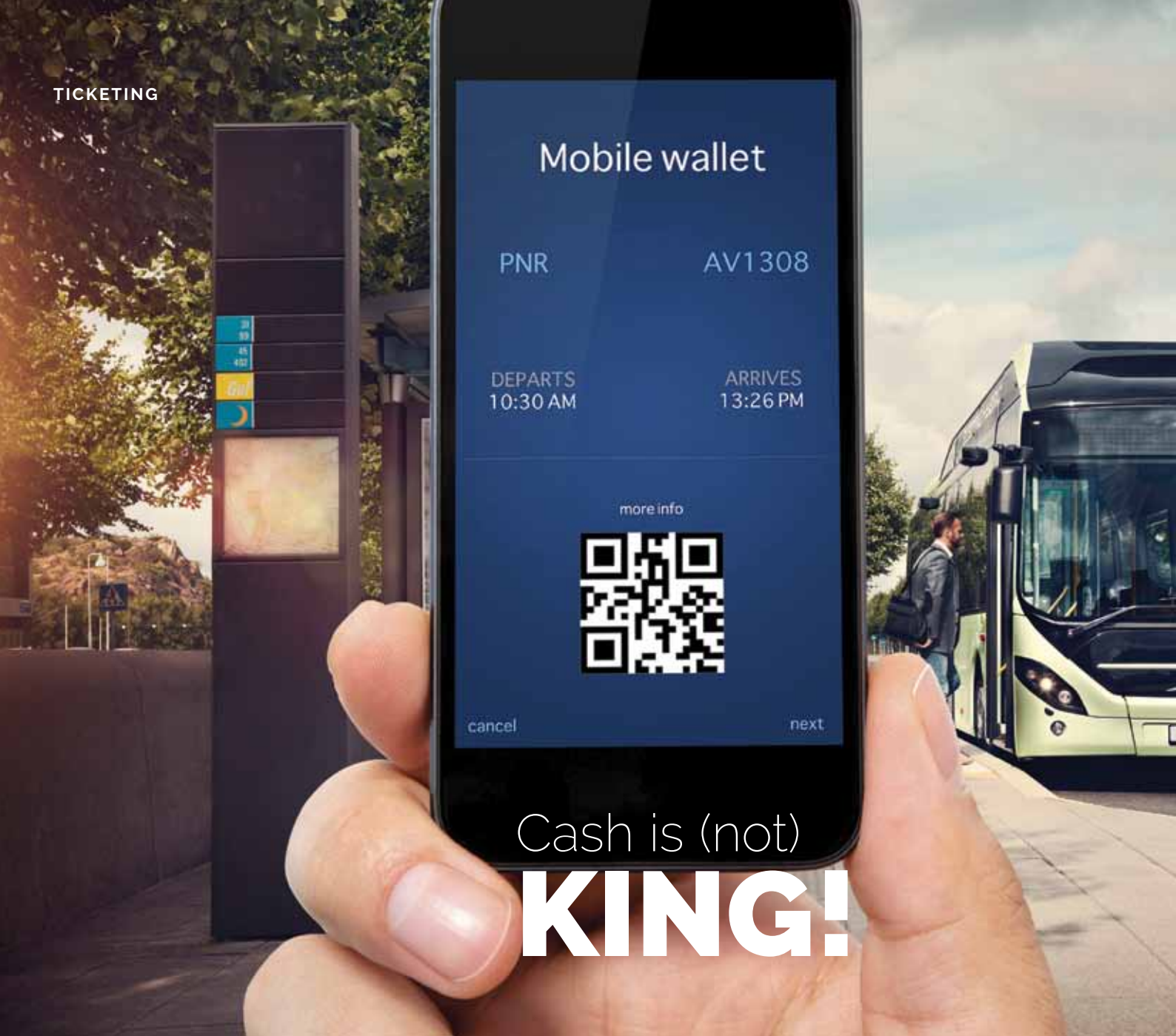
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## THE NEW VOLVO FMX

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Cash is (not)  
**KING!**

Many bus services around the country now offer their passengers some form of cashless fare solution. PETA LEE asks what benefits these systems have returned and what the future may hold in this regard ...

**A** cashless society is on the horizon – and South Africa is right up there with the rest of the world. Time is money, and money is time: dealing with cash invariably consumes precious time. Apart from this, in many parts of the world, including on this continent, wherever there's cash, there's the possibility of crime.

It makes sense, therefore, that less cash equals speedier transactions, and eliminates the opportunities for criminal activities. Increasingly, transport services have picked up the option of dispensing with cash fares and, instead, offer an alternative solution.

This trend follows international examples. In Poland, for instance, Warsaw City cards have proved that contactless technology is a highly effective means of

fare collection in mass-transit environments.

According to a white paper published by Verifone, apart from accelerating the flow of bus and train travellers in stations, this form of automatic fare collection eradicates cash and fraud issues.

The paper cited other examples of widely used contactless smart cards: Hong Kong's Octopus card, South Korea's T-money (bus, subway and taxi), London's Oyster card and Japan Rail's Suica card.

Here in South Africa, the roll out for cashless fares has been slower, but is, nevertheless, moving forward steadily. Leading the charge into this modern era of e-ticketing was the successful rollout of the Muvo SmartCard in Durban in 2012.

Commuters using People Mover and Durban Transport buses throughout eThekweni municipality



were the first South Africans to use this contactless stored-value card (powered by Standard Bank), to pay their fares.

The Almex Electronic Fare Collection system – in cooperation with the National Department of Transport and Standard Bank – developed the card on the basis of the EMV contactless credit cards from MasterCard.

It combines two essential functions: commuters can top up the cards with cash at charge stations (so it essentially works like a portable prepaid debit card). Bus fares are paid by passengers tapping the card against the electronic ticketing device installed on the bus, which automatically debits the correct amount from the funds, or trips, stored on the card and presents a receipt. Using the card is cheaper than cash or ticket fares.

Apart from being used as a smartcard for e-ticketing on buses, the Muvo Card can be used as a way of making cashless payments wherever EMV contactless cards are accepted.

In a country where many people live on, or below, the breadline and have no bank accounts, the Muvo Smartcard is hugely advantageous. Cash, as well as multi-journey trips, can be stored on the smartcard. Commuters can conveniently buy the cards from kiosks at depots, municipal Sizakala centres, and mobile Muvo smartvans.

The card can also be reloaded with cash, which can be used for retail purchases of up to R3 000 per month: the maximum payment per transaction is R200. For additional security, cardholders have to enter a PIN number at the time of card reload, or when making retail payments.

Then there's Cape Town's MyCiTi, bus service and its myconnect card – also providing a convenient way to travel. Every passenger needs a myconnect card to travel with MyCiTi, except children under the age of four, or less than one metre tall, who travel free.

This card-based bus fare system saves commuters the hassle of finding cash, cuts down on queue time at the ticket kiosk and, conveniently, passengers can also load enough money in advance to enable them to travel for a week, month, or more.

Vix Questek, "South Africa's leading provider of solutions for public transport", is a further option. With more than 25 years' experience in the sub-Saharan market, Johannesburg-based Vix-Questek provides solutions for automated fare collection, fare evasion and even passenger counting solutions.

Its mobile P-Wallet is a secure, quick and convenient way for passengers to buy bus tickets via their cellphones, after which they receive an SMS confirmation. The payment is redeemed by presenting the card to a remote, unmanned load terminal at depots.

Bigger bus companies, like Greyhound and City to City, allow passengers to book tickets via their store account cards, like Edgars, for convenience purposes.

The future is open to amazing possibilities: in Hong Kong, more than 11 million Octopus cardholders can now pay for their groceries, as well as transport and parking, using a single contactless card.

In Britain, Oyster and Visa operate a co-branded, multi-application card for transit and retail payment. Under this arrangement, users benefit from Oyster and Visa's "wave and pay" function on a single card to quickly and securely pay for low-cost items while travelling around London.

In *The War on Cash* (Corbett Report, January, 2016) the author wrote that Norway was the latest country that had "jumped aboard the cashless society agenda with DNB, the country's largest bank, calling for a total end to cash. The story sounds shocking only to people who haven't heard the similar stories from Sweden, Denmark, India or Israel ..."

While it's highly unlikely we will ever see the end of cash in South Africa, or become a totally cashless society, the advantages of electronic transactions replacing some cash deals, particularly on this continent, are massive and speak for themselves. **F**



A recent newspaper article has underlined an ominous situation in Gauteng. Sooner or later someone will have to intervene – and it may have to go all the way to the Constitutional Court, which has recently pronounced in favour of both the “little man” and the community at large

**I**n the *Sunday Times* of April 17 we were told that a “feasibility study” on the expansion of the Gautrain is expected to be released within six weeks. “It’s all sketched out in the Integrated Transport Master Plan (ITMP) commissioned by transport MEC Ismail Vadi in 2014,” according to Gautrain CEO, Jack van der Merwe, who was also the chairman of the ITMP steering committee.

I have to repeat a previous column (August 2015) here. Contrary to Van der Merwe’s claim, precisely nothing is “all sketched out” in the ITMP. The meagre public transport component was covered by Annexure F, which was quietly removed from the ITMP website in June 2015. The ITMP now has no public transport content. Why are we being misled like this?

There have been several feasibility studies into the Gautrain over the last 16 years or so. The most recent one is an Economic Impact Report produced by auditing firm KPMG in 2015. (Considering KPMG recently broke ties with one of its clients, claiming “reputational risk”, maybe it should tread just as carefully with the Gautrain.)

The KPMG presentation includes some big numbers – R20 billion contributed to provincial gross domestic product over six years, residential property values up by R12,9 billion, R10 billion worth of retail development due to the Gautrain, and so on. We are told that “for every one rand spent on the Gautrain, 73 cents is added to the provincial economy”.

Even if all these figures are correct, they do not justify the conclusion (repeated twice) that “substantial future economic gains can be derived

from an expansion of the Gautrain system”. It seems likely that the next “study” will merely continue this charade.

Significantly, the KPMG study makes no mention of the annual patronage guarantee of over R1 billion, a figure which will simply go into orbit if any expansion takes place. As with the missing Annexure F, ignoring something won’t make it go away!

The “property development” theme also needs to be interrogated. If there has been some increase in property values, let the developers themselves make a contribution to both the capital and ongoing costs of any passenger rail scheme.

Higher rate payments alone won’t be enough. If we are looking for a precedent, back in 1907 the Johannesburg City Council required property developers in Bez Valley, Kensington and Malvern to pay a total of £35 000 up front, before extending the tram tracks further into these suburbs.

As for “retail” development, I wonder whether the R10 billion quoted by KPMG includes the Mall of Africa, which is the most recent example of how the community is being failed by feeble public transport in Gauteng.

During the first week of May, a taxi shootout at the Mall resulted in one death and a number of injuries. The reason for the shootout was entirely predictable – a dispute over routes. For those not familiar with Gauteng, the Mall lies slap in the middle of a huge area, stretching all the way from both the West and East Rand to Pretoria, which has no formal public transport (sorry, but the Gautrain and its

underperforming feeder buses don't count).

This area should long ago have had a scheduled network of standard bus and minibus routes in place, which should only have to be "tweaked" where necessary to cater for major developments such as the Mall.

Sadly, our researchers, business schools, think tanks and non-government organisations have nothing worthwhile to contribute. As recently as 2014, a South African university awarded an MSc (civil engineering) degree for a thesis on the Gautrain passenger forecasting that included the following:

The...systems listed below...prove the government's dedication towards the vision of moving people from private vehicles to public transport.

- Gautrain – Rail service between Pretoria and Johannesburg;
- Passenger Rail Association South Africa (Prasa) improvement plan;
- Rea Vaya – City of Johannesburg bus rapid transit (BRT);
- City of Pretoria BRT;
- City of Rustenburg BRT;
- City of Ekurhuleni BRT.

Sorry, but the continuing absence of Annexure F "proves" the exact opposite. Bland quotes like these mean nothing to the hapless users (and non-users) of public transport, not only at the Mall of Africa, but in most other parts of Gauteng!

So, bring on the feasibility study! **F**



Vaughan Mostert lectured on public transport issues at the University of Johannesburg for nearly thirty years. Through Hopping Off, Mostert leaves readers with some parting food for thought as he continues his push for change in the local public transport industry.

## BUS STOP

# YOUNG TRANSPORT DESIGNERS' VISION FOR IVECO BUS

With a demand for new and fresh ways of thinking in a rapidly evolving transport sector, the design department at CNH Industrial has collaborated with design schools around the world to work closely with designers of the future.



The CNH Industrial Design team, Iveco Bus and *L'École de design Nantes Atlantique* (The Nantes School of Design) in France recently held an event to showcase the results of their Paris Bus 2035 project, created especially for the School's Transport Design students.

As part of Paris Bus 2035, students of the School's newly established Transport Design programme were asked to propose ideas on what future buses could look like in the city of Paris.

The 15 students presented their concepts at an event in Nantes on May 20. The presentations included digital sketches, 3D models and mock-ups,

which initiated a dialogue between the students, academic faculty and the CNH Industrial Design team.

"Paris Bus 2035 challenges students to envision where transportation will be 20 years from now. We asked them to come up with something that would serve as a monument for the city, much as the red double-deck buses have come to symbolise London.

"We wanted them to incorporate a very French DNA in their designs which would evoke attention to detail, quality and all-around luxury," explains Claire d'Achon, senior industrial designer responsible for the CNH Industrial Bus product ranges.

An alumnus of The Nantes School of Design herself, d'Achon, together with the entire design team, has contributed to enriching the students' understanding of bus design – from the exterior structure, to interiors and the services that a bus can offer.

One of the project's participating students will be chosen for an internship programme at CNH Industrial's Bus Design department in Vénissieux, France, where they will work closely with d'Achon and the Bus Design team.



FRANK BEETON reports on a new take of a four-year-old theme in the London bus sphere

**B**ack in 2011, we reported on the reveal of London's New Routemaster double-deck bus design. Built by the Northern Ireland-based Wrightbus organisation, this bus combined elements of proposals submitted by sports car manufacturer Aston Martin, as well as bus, coach and truck designers, Capoco Design.

The finalised layout, included overall dimensions of 11.2 x 2.55 x 4.4 m, with a seating capacity of 62, and provision for 25 standing passengers plus one wheelchair bay. The three entrances were positioned at the extreme front (opposite the driver), immediately behind the set-back front axle and at the rear nearside corner.

These were complemented by two staircases leading to the upper deck; one opposite the central entrance, and the other in the traditional rear offside corner position.

The technical specification included a diesel-electric hybrid drive system, made up of a high-performance, low-emission diesel engine driving a generator to charge a lithium-phosphate battery pack, a regenerative energy-recovering braking system, and electric drive wheel motors.

The first of these buses entered service in February 2012 and, to date, deliveries and orders have totalled 1 000 units. They have been spread across several London operators, and have reportedly been well-received by the travelling public.

New Routemasters have not been without fault, however, with the most significant being battery

unreliability, which has led to excessive reliance on the diesel engine and increased emission levels.

However, the design philosophy, while establishing itself as an iconic presence on London's streets, has argued against flexibility in layout or specification, and Transport for London subsequently issued a requirement for a generally similar vehicle, but with shorter overall length, two doors, a single staircase and an alternative driveline configuration.

Not wishing to lose its prominent position as a supplier of buses to London, Wrightbus, in conjunction with Volvo Bus, moved swiftly to develop an alternative design, dubbed SRM, to meet these requirements.

Unlike the fully integral New Routemaster, the SRM is 10.6-m long and is built on a Volvo B5LH Euro-6 hybrid chassis. The B5LH is powered by Volvo's I-Sam parallel hybrid system utilising a D5K five-litre Euro-6 180 kW (240 hp) diesel engine, 120 kW (160 hp) electric motor and 12-speed I-Shift automated transmission.

The SRM closely follows the New Routemaster design in terms of exterior appearance, and makes maximum use of common components. Passenger capacity has been set at 87 all up, including 21 standees, providing four more seats than the New Routemaster.

An initial order for six units was placed by RATP Dev-owned operator London United, and these buses will enter service in September on route 13 from Golders Green to Aldwych. It is intended that the SRM/Volvo B5LH combination will also be made available to operators located outside London. **F**



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