



# road ahead

1st Issue 2016  
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Transport  
on the move



## Western powerhouses prevail

Inside SA's heavy  
duty conquerors

# Critical mass—Hunting for logistics solutions in challenging times

It has never been more critical to maintain the transport supply chains of Sub-Saharan Africa, with cargo and goods—which amount to mass—being of primary importance to the sustainable growth of Southern Africa's critical economies. With crime, spiking operational costs and tax on the rise, are you fully protected and up-to-date with developments?

Delegates can expect special guest appearances from the stars of Big Rig Bounty Hunters on History Channel, Shawn Zimmerman and Vince Jones, all the way from Ohio, USA. They will be discussing what has made them the premier truck retrieval operators in North America, while passing on knowledge to the South African market during their visit and vice versa.

The likable Americans will be joined by some of the finest minds and leaders from Southern African trucking, telematics, forensics, OEM manufacturing/assembly, fuel and supply chain risk management, which will take centre stage at this two day event at the splendid Spier Wine Estate in Stellenbosch.

Speakers and delegates will come together to discuss the rise of hijacking, truck recovery, tracking technology, OEM development in Southern Africa, road infrastructure, cost hikes, cross-border development, fuel and systems management.

The event will include an exhibition showcasing the companies that matter in the industry, and is set to be a regular date on the trucking and logistics calendar. Delegates can also expect live demonstrations from some of the experts to add a dramatic, practical element to the event, which will include hijacking, apprehension, rescue, surveillance, tracking, forensics, helicopter demonstration and corporate identity fraud.

Expect to see all the main players from the wide world of vehicle tracking through to the top OEM brass from Southern Africa's proud manufacturing base, as 400 knowledgeable delegates are expected to descend on the Mother City.



## Why the name Critical Mass?

It has never been more critical to maintain the transport supply chains of Sub-Saharan Africa, with cargo and goods—which amount to mass—being of primary importance to the sustainable growth of Southern Africa's critical economies, with crime, spiking operational costs and tax on the rise are you fully protected and up-to-date with developments?

## Confirmed speakers include:

- Shawn Zimmerman and Vince Jones, USA's top truck bounty hunters
- Stan Bezuidenhout, South Africa's premier Forensic Collision Homicide Reconstructionist
- Anthony Dobson, Owner and Director of Operations of One-Stop-Group, SA's own recovery agent
- Tony Sibanda, Director at Emcom Wireless
- Craig Lovell, National Operations Director SA of Intelligent Telematics
- Gerhard van Zyl, Operations Director of Professional Risk and Asset Management
- Nachi Mendelow, GM of Business Development - Africa, WiseTech Global
- Kyle Parker, Tracking expert and owner of Traceability Solutions
- Kathy Bell, Specialist in transport solutions at Standard Bank
- Professor John Evans, Diagnostics Manager at WearCheck
- Blayne Oliver, Business Development Manager at Green Diesel
- Janine Myburgh, President of the Cape Chamber of Commerce

# CRITICAL MASS

Hunting for logistics solutions  
in challenging times



## KEY FACTS:

### WHERE

Spier Wine Estate,  
Stellenbosch, South Africa

### WHEN

2016 (TBC)

### CONTACT

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## On the Cover



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Logistics & Transport  
South Africa



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## Foreword

## Setting the tone for 2016



**As the next Investing in African Mining Indaba in Cape Town looms in February, which represents a fair chunk of the logistics sector, investors have been urged to look beyond the gloom of the current slump and to start planning their next projects without delay.**

Africa's growing population and its demand for commodities and energy is a positive underlying factor that will promote future economic growth as soon as global conditions improve. It will require mining companies to plan now, while investing in skills and

technology to improve operational efficiencies and to meet growing challenges such as energy supply and water quality.

There is not enough time to bring a medium-sized mine on-stream and still benefit optimally from a buoyant market. South Africa's mining sector missed out on the last commodity boom due to minerals policy uncertainty and to companies' reticence to commit to projects early enough.

It has been a difficult period for most mining companies, and cutting costs has been the order of the day. But shareholders are soon going to be asking where their future returns are going to come from, and exactly what plans have been put in place to build their business up again.

It is imperative that mining companies take a strategic long-term view of their business, so they can invest timeously in well-researched studies and methodical implementation. They need to plan for how best to survive the downturns—while also considering how to invest in the future even when revenue is down. Africa is resource-rich and has much to offer the global economy, so the productive capacity of our mining sector must be preserved for better times.



Leveraging technology will be imperative—not just to make mining more efficient but to reduce pollution, conserve water and generate electricity sustainably in remote locations.

With climate change increasingly on the global agenda, we will need to become more carbon-efficient, and more electricity could be generated from renewable sources. As population increases and living standards in Africa rise, competition for water in certain areas will also increase between mines and communities.

*SRK corporate consultant Roger Dixon and Andrew van Zyl, partner at SRK*



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## Ed's letter

## Year of opportunity?



**Welcome to the opening edition of South Africa's premier logistics magazine Road Ahead, as we say hello to 2016, full of optimism and joy, after a very forgettable 2015 for the greater transportation industry.**

There are still plenty of challenges ahead of us. Mining related traffic is shrinking, and the total output of that sector has nearly halved in the last few years according to some reports. This means there is less need for commodity related transportation, as opposed to years gone by.

However, with the heightened demand for fresh produce, consumables and water, there is an opportunity for innovative logistics companies to spread their risk into other areas. With the fuel price maintaining relatively low levels, some respite for operators is welcomed, although the rand's well-documented problems remain a problem, especially for OEMs importing expensive trucks.

2016 must be the year for sizing key African opportunities. Trade between sub-Saharan African countries can and must be expanded, through a five-pronged attack of road, rail, sea, pipeline and air. All the modes of transport have the ability to complement each other, if managed in a streamlined, and most importantly, sustainable manner.

The road part of the equation certainly needs to be improved, with many OEMs complaining about the poor state of Africa's roads taking a slice out of their maintenance plans, which puts more pressure on manufacturers in substandard operating conditions with greater repairs needed.

We must not rely on Chinese investors to build roads for us—these should rather be fostered locally, giving us more control over the long-term vision of the upgrades, and not just giving external powers an easy channel to remove raw materials, instead of linking economies.

Back to more local news, it was heartening to see the City of Cape Town successfully challenging the implementation of toll roads in the Western Cape. The citizens of Cape Town really don't need to endure more daily costs, with the rand going for a ball of s\*\*t, road administrators should be trying to take some of the load off motorists and truck operators, and not burden them with unnecessary expenses. The road authority had just finished lengthy upgrades to the N2 in Somerset-West, before suggesting a toll road in the same area. It would appear that forward planning is not the central part of the agenda.

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# Kobus van Zyl

## Inside SA's truck mastermind

Daimler trucks is a true powerhouse of global trucking, from their heavy duty business with Western Star, Freightliner and Mercedes-Benz down to light commercial through their Fuso offering, cornering a fair chunk of the market in the process.





**The same can be said in a South African (SA) context, with the Daimler Group performing well despite tough economic times. Freightliner is arguably the premier long distance truck in the country, Western Star the number one recovery truck hands down, while Mercedes-Benz battles the likes of Volvo in the high-end market.**

Road Ahead was lucky enough to be invited to Daimler Trucks' 'Greatest Show on Earth' recently, where Daimler spent a small fortune putting on an unforgettable event on the banks of the Vaal River, including a helicopter ride to Soccer City, after a majestic sunset cruise down the river.

Daimler SA CEO, Kobus van Zyl was on hand for more on their outlook for 2016, keys to their success and much more. The no-nonsense Van Zyl, who holds a heavy duty truck license and helicopter licence, starts off by outlining his vision for 2016.

"Firstly I must say that normally the second half of the year is better than first half, and we also see the same with 2015, so there's reasonable activity, but we see the extra heavy for 2016 at best flat compared to last year."

There are obviously many factors and scenarios that go into fluctuations in sales figures, which are not helped by poor decision-making at governmental level, the falling rand with resultant operational cost hikes, not to mention strike action, which Daimler seem to have under control, for now.

"The main drivers are from external factors like customer confidence, business confidence in the economy and as you know this is quite tricky at the moment, where our confidence levels are lower than your lowest compared to the last couple of years, but it is actually how truck owners use this external information in terms of their replacement programmes. We find that especially in—let me call it marginal businesses—or marginal industries that customers tend to extend their replacement programmes, but fortunately for us, and this is what we experience, most customers stay with their replacement programmes and realise that this is just a cycle and that it will get better again, so I would say the main drivers are business confidence and secondly how that impacts on replacement programmes."

### **Advance driver aids**

Driver training, and advanced driver aids are saving companies millions of rands in recent times, with organisations acknowledging that more is needed. The days of truck drivers doing 24-hour non-stop shifts is thankfully coming to an end in reputable companies that put safety first, that is.

Van Zyl comments: "We realise that while technology is improving significantly in terms of assisting the driver in operating the unit I'm talking here of the automated transmissions and the lane assists and active safety systems. We know that the drivers are and will probably be the most critical influencing factor in the economic operation of the vehicle, so utilising our



switchboard system where we can actually track driver behaviour on a real time basis, not only at a high level but also down to, for example, how is the driver utilising the pedal, the fuel pedal; how the driver is using the retarders and the braking systems, and then using the factual data to tailor-make training programmes for specific drivers. This is what we do, and then we also have a very intensive 'train the trainer' programme where we want to assist customers to actually have their driver trainers fulfil the role on a more regular basis," he reflects.

Self-drive trucks in SA have been another big talking point, with companies looking at every avenue to save money in tight economic times. But Van Zyl questions whether the infrastructure is conducive to that.

"We are a long way from that, and to be honest with you we are a long way from self-driving trucks all over the world. Daimler has a couple of trucks registered both as freightliners Mercedes Benz [D1] which we are driving on the roads in Europe and America but we are a long way from that here. Obviously our intention with what we showed is just to show where we can take this as a technology leader, but in SA and Africa, in fact for the developing world it's a long way to go."

We also have a long way to go to convince the world that SA is a stable place to do business, with much unrest and labour action in 2014, while slowing down on the vehicle manufacturing side in 2015, with a three year agreement signed between labour and their bosses. These extended periods of 'work as normal' are vital to the growth of the truck manufacturing sector, which is one of the pillars of the SA economy, with mining taking a back seat, with shrinking GDP return.

Van Zyl discusses the stability of their assembly plant in East London: "We see a fairly stable manufacturing environment, and we monitor this very closely at our plant in East London. We are very heartened by the relative lack of industrial action the last couple of months where parties obviously were able to agree and finalise negotiations much faster without negative effects on the industry.

"We must not underestimate the effect of the electricity challenges in the mining sector, that there's physically not sufficient capacity to exploit the weaker—or the stronger dollar at the moment. We also see that obviously the Chinese economy, which is not growing at the rate it did for the last couple of years, is clearly also negatively affecting commodities and we see this in our customer base that there's definitely capacity in that segment, and I think that could be one of the reasons why the mining industry is tracking lower than in the past."

### **Fuel quality**

One of the biggest talking points and irritations to come out of 2015 was the lack of a reliable source of 50 ppm fuel north of the border. This is a critical problem for companies that want to run cleaner and more efficient Euro 6 engines, but cannot do so with the current state of premium diesel supply.

Van Zyl is trying to keep a level head in this regard: "Obviously we would love to see it tomorrow but there's been no clear indication from the stakeholders as to when this will be a reality. I can tell

you that apart from us and all other manufacturers being able to introduce the latest products available, which does not only have significant enhancement in safety technology but will have a significant fuel consumption benefit. Other manufacturers have had upwards of 5% better fuel consumption with the new technology, so clearly that will positively affect the total cost of ownership and profitability for the customer but also have a market positive effect on the carbon footprint in SA," he says.

Van Zyl has spent more years than he cares to remember in the logistics business in SA and has seen many changes from a technological, structural and operational standpoint, and goes on to outline how the demands of fleet managers have changed over the last 20 years?

"We have seen a huge improvement, or change in sophistication where fleets of trucks in the past were very much bought on specifically hardware as the main criteria but we see that more and more customers are looking at the total package and words like total cost of ownership, understanding operational risks, and these kind of things, the value chain are becoming the buzz words in the business and with all due respect we see far fewer tyre kickers buying trucks.

"Customers are far more sophisticated in analysing, for example, ways to finance the trucks, you know off-balance sheet, on-balance sheet, residual value, buy-backs and so on, and it's a very, very sophisticated game."

Talking about buy-backs opportunities in the second-hand market, both in SA and north of the border, we've seen a massive push for the second-hand market in Africa. This is largely due to unavailability of Euro 6 fuel, and therefore there is a high demand for five-10 year old Euro 3 trucks.

"We are very bullish to be honest about the second-hand market, more so north of us where traditionally those markets were dumped on by the European manufacturers and also the American manufacturers but with the introduction of better emission standards in these countries we see the pipeline of used trucks being dumped in Africa. We are very bullish about the used vehicle business. Our TruckStore which is a living example of this is doing really well, we're very happy with their performance. "

### **Pipeline vs. truck**

There has been a lot of talk of the new fuel pipeline from Durban to Johannesburg taking a chunk out of the logistics industry in that region, but Van Zyl believes that pipelines and trucks can work in harmony.

"We are of the firm belief that there are some products which are better transported in a pipe or a train. The introduction of the pipeline between Durban and Jo'burg has affected fuel transport, but I think the effect is far less than what was originally anticipated. We know that trucks will always be required for the second and third tier distributions so we have no issue with the co-developments between the road, the rail and the pipelines. To be very honest with you, the fact that there's been such deterioration in the road conditions, especially the rural roads is also affecting truck manufacturers negatively because of our warranty programmes and so on. We can see that there are issues with the road infrastructure."

With new Chinese trucks coming into the country at very cheap prices, Van Zyl needs to remind customers that it's all about total cost to owner, and not just worrying about purchase price.

"We use our total cost of ownership argument. There's a definite place for cheaper products in the country, there's no question about it, and so we don't actively target our Chinese competitors, but in our Daimler portfolio we use our different products to compete in the different segments and obviously with Mercedes Benz we tackle our premium segments, and with Fuso we tackle our middle segment. We believe that in the long run this is not going to affect our overall segment performance in the premium and the middle segments."

With Daimler's roots firmly in the USA and Europe it is somewhat surprising that Van Zyl alludes to the fact that they could learn a thing or two about how SA logistics companies operate and perform. I was expecting quite the opposite.

"To be honest with you we have many, many operators in SA that are at least on par, if not ahead, of what I have experienced in Europe, so from a transport operator perspective we are up there with the best, no question about it. Obviously we would like the introduction of cleaner fuels," he insists.

## 2020 fuel

As we move towards the next generation in fuel, and alternatives therein, Van Zyl outlines some of the options going forward, and some of the new technologies that are already in place.

"We have introduced gas vehicles in our bus business and pretty soon you will see CNG busses in some of the major Metros, dual fuel, so all of this is available. We also have dabbled a bit with hybrid-trucks in SA but there is no incentive for the customer to buy this vehicle. My wife buys at a certain supermarket because she knows its cleaner there and everything is more free-range and so on, and as a result we were able to introduce Euro 5 vehicles for some of our customers because the final customer is now willing to pay a premium for cleaner stuff. This is not the case in the rest of the industry. It's amazing, when we go to car shows in Europe the little board next to the car that has the CO2 emission and the font is three times the size of the price, because this is what customers look for and until we get defined customer demand supported by really targeted incentive schemes by our government we don't see that this will be hugely successful."

## Busses

The bus side of the Daimler business has been going from strength to strength with some large orders of late, as SA puts much needed resources into first-world public transport, which Van Zyl says we already have with the Gautrain.

"I drive past the Gautrain station here in Centurion and you can physically not find parking anywhere. We supply the busses to Gautrain as well, so we get the utilisation numbers and these are substantially higher than what was originally planned, so if you make the service available it is not long before customers start using it," he concludes.

*Gregory Simpson*



# Mercedes-Benz coaches hit 1 000 000km mark

**Mercedes-Benz Bus & Coach prides itself on offering the most impressive product line-up, backed by unmatched research and development. These chassis feature the best cutting-edge technology and it is this approach that sealed the deal when Autopax furnished their fleet with the three-pointed star.**

**“Continuous development and improvement of our bus and coach technology has always been a priority for us, and through consultation with our customers, we know exactly what their requirements are. We have always made economy, safety and comfort our priorities, but we are also cognisant that durability ranks high for our customers, such as Autopax,” says Shane Henry, Head of Mercedes-Benz Bus & Coach Southern Africa.**

“Before the 2010 Soccer World Cup, we had to recapitalise and we searched for a brand that epitomised comfort, luxury and the best value for money. Needless to say, we decided to choose Mercedes-Benz buses for our City to City and Translux fleets,” says Bongani Kupe, CEO of Autopax Passenger Services.

One of the major reasons why Mercedes-Benz is the preferred supplier of mobility solutions is its holistic view of the industries it operates in. Two of its value chain partners, Mercedes-Benz Financial Services and CharterWay, were critical factors for the Original Equipment Manufacturer being selected by Autopax.

“We opted to use the services of Mercedes-Benz Financial Services, as they were willing to negotiate with us, and because of their favourable terms, we are almost at the end of our finance term. What we also appreciate is the option of having our buses maintained at our depot or at Mercedes-Benz outlets. Lastly, we receive parts very quickly and our technical crew are in constant communication with Mercedes-Benz, if there is a query we cannot handle in-house,” says Kupe.



Passengers are one of the most important stakeholders for Autopax, and this was always their top priority for selecting the best brand possible.

“Mercedes-Benz is synonymous with comfort and this was imperative for our passengers. This is a brand that has stood the test of time and we were always certain we would be in partnership with them for a very long time,” he adds.

Just how long that would be is what ended up pleasantly surprising the entire Autopax team, including Albert Mpanza, Technical Manager for Autopax.

“We are currently sitting at 555 Mercedes-Benz buses in our fleet, but what is really astounding about that number is the fact that we have 13 buses that have travelled more than 1 000 000 kilometres. That is 1 000 000 hassle-free kilometres with not a single engine



failure,” says Mpanza. “All we have had to do is adhere to the Mercedes-Benz maintenance guidelines and we also conduct regular inspections. As part of the technical team, what we value the most is how Mercedes-Benz offers us continuous improvement for our workshop staff. This has contributed to the Mercedes-Benz buses being the only vehicles in our fleet capable of going over the 1 000 000 mark,” adds Mpanza.

“We cannot reiterate enough just how integral our drivers are when it comes to these buses reaching this milestone. They obviously drive them with a lot of care, otherwise they would never have made it,” concludes Nozipho Jafta, Marketing & Sales Executive at Autopax.





# Critical mass in evidence and the mistakes “accident investigators” make...

Critical mass: It’s not just about mass at all. In the context of the evidence needed to defend yourself or to win a legal battle, critical mass is the minimum amount of information needed to support your version, your claim or your innocence. After a road traffic collision, unless the evidence is so overwhelmingly stacked against you that you need to settle or plead guilty, the outcome of the trial sways heavily in favour of the party with the best information. But how much evidence should you collect to reach this “critical mass”?

**In this article I aim to illustrate that critical mass—when it comes to evidence—is more about quality than quantity. A favourite saying among litigators is that the devil is in the detail. They also say never ask a question that you do not know the answer to. Very early in my career as a Forensic Road Traffic Collision Reconstructionist I determined and as I have proven countless times since, critical mass is reached only when both the quantity and quality of a collision investigation is adequate. And quality can affect the quantity in more ways than I can count and for this reason accuracy is vital. Nowhere more so than after metal has met metal, blood has flown and spills have soiled the earth.**

In this article, we will address the concept of critical mass as it relates to the collection of evidence at or after road traffic collisions. We will explore when critical mass is reached and what is the least amount of evidence you need to gather in preparation for possible litigation or trial. We will help you see how much you need to know in order to reach critical mass in terms of evidence. And more importantly what kinds of mistakes “accident investigators” make that lead to the dismemberment of their efforts to contribute as they aim to. The mistakes that force their contribution below the “critical mass” limit.

When it comes to the investigation of accidents or collisions and incidents, there are numerous issues at play. The reason why the “accident investigators” in the heading to this article is in inverted commas is because there are far too many people doing “accident investigations” but too few who possess the skill or experience to actually do so to the required level of competence. While incidents are not dissimilar to collisions, this is the one that results in the greatest losses and the most liabilities or risks. We will consider road traffic collisions but other incidents are subject to the same logic and consideration.

Road Traffic Collision Investigation is a truly multi-disciplinary field of interest. Taking a couple of photos of your damages and that terrible spill—and a dead body or two, if you’re “lucky”—is hardly where skill and an experience qualification are needed. These days anyone with a cell phone can take photos or buy a cheap camera to do so and call their effort an “accident investigation.” But is this enough? Will you reach “critical mass” this way?

Let’s be clear—insurance loss adjusters or assessors are not actual “accident investigators” either. Their interest is quantum—the value of the loss. They are typically familiar with the cost of parts and labour related to the replacement of a lost item, repairs of damages or compensation for loss. The moment they start expressing opinions about how things happen or happened, they expose themselves to a host of challenges. If they are never required to go to court, never expected, asked or subpoenaed to testify and are never going to



represent themselves or their findings, no harm no foul. But the world is not that simple, regrettably.

Average police officers, traffic officers and METRO Police officers that are tasked with the responsibility of “taking a scene” are technically “accident investigators” as well, but their job is typically pre-defined: Detect a crime, identify the parties (or objects) involved, show how and where they were found. That’s it, as far as “accident investigation” goes: nothing more, nothing less. Their work will typically yield an accident report, a photo album and a sketch. Their work is typically completed at-scene or very shortly thereafter and then they move on to the next case when they are done or until they are called to testify. When they start to express opinions, they face the same challenges as assessors—they might move outside of their primary areas of expertise. Then the problems start: often, for you.

But what are those problems? How can or does it affect your collision, your claim, your criminal liability? In order for us to address this, we need to start at the end: at the judgment in a civil or criminal matter. Remember—there could be a claim against you, you could be claiming against someone else or you could be facing criminal charges. Even the criminal charges against your driver can expose you to risk—but more about that later.

In addressing this, we will ignore confessions and admissions of guilt. Those are beyond the need for discussion. We will address the issues that require judgment in a matter where a suspect either pleads not guilty or where there is a dispute regarding liabilities and where a trial runs to conclusion—those cases where the outcome must be determined by a magistrate or judge.

When judgment is made, a number of issues are considered. Firstly—and most importantly—the versions are considered. Many don’t realise this but as influence goes, the version of witnesses carries the most value. They were there. People do lie, but that is what cross examination is for—to test their versions. At the end of the day, the court believes what people can testify they saw for themselves.

So if there are witnesses, they must be found and they must be called to testify.

This is the first mistake accident investigators make—they let witnesses “get away.” They only take a name and phone number. No address, no e-mail, no alternative numbers, no ID numbers and not even their vehicle details. Part of the IBF 124-point investigation protocol includes the at-scene photography of all vehicles present. This makes tracing witnesses a lot easier, later. Without witnesses that were actually there, critical mass cannot be reached.

Next, the court will consider any physical evidence. There is a term called *res ipsa loquitur*. It means “the facts speak for themselves”. But people tend to confuse this term with the value of conclusion. Facts are things that are beyond argument.

They are the things that are available before the court and plain to see. Like a CCTV video of a car hitting a parked truck in broad daylight. If the evidence is so good that *res ipsa loquitur* can be applied, the court can render a finding based on that alone. But this is seldom the case in road traffic collisions.

Accident investigators make the mistake of believing that *res ipsa loquitur* is the same as “obviously”. It is not. Just because you can “obviously see that the car was speeding” is a lay opinion in the absence of analysis, proof and conclusion. At scenes, investigators make the mistake of forming an opinion based on their deductive reasoning—they think they know what happened and who is at fault because it is “so obvious”. What makes the 124-point IBF so effective is that it FORCES us to do the same investigation at all scenes—without considering what we see or of what is “obvious.” If an investigator only focuses on what is obvious, vital elements of evidence can be excluded. Things like checking lamps for states of incandescence or tyre conditions on dry road collisions. Both affect critical mass. Without “all the evidence”, critical mass cannot be reached because the elements that are relevant might only become clear in court one day, years later.

Lastly—there is expert testimony. The first issue is with the determination and acceptance of an expert witness. No person can declare himself an “expert witness”. He or she can be called as an expert witness, but ultimately the court will finally rule as to whether this status has been achieved, or not. In simple terms and without reference to specific cases and judgments, an expert is



basically any person who holds any qualification, skills, knowledge or experience that places him or her in a position to assist the court with understanding technical or complex concepts that extend beyond the scope or skill of the general person. This excludes the things you can “obviously see” and the conclusions that you can draw “because I can look for myself”.

Telling the court that you arrived, saw the cars and photographed where you found them, what damages you saw and who was involved is not expert evidence. That is something anyone could have seen, found or photographed. The moment the “investigator” starts saying “and it looks like...” or “and therefore it means that”, he or she is starting to express an opinion. In order to do so, he or she has to satisfy the court that they possess those unique qualifications, skills or experience that goes beyond that of the general public.

If a normal witness starts to testify about how they think things happened or about why they think it happened—they are expressing opinion and there will be objection. General witnesses to fact can only testify to facts. They can only say what they saw and did. Accident investigators make the mistake of expressing opinion in reports or in testimony. The moment those objections come, they start defending themselves. This is never received well in court and could result in all their evidence being excluded on the basis that they are unreliable or argumentative.

An expert witness, on the other hand, can express opinion. This is what they are there to do: to assist the court in understanding

concepts or ideas that the general population would not understand or grasp without clarification. The expert witness is there to help the court—nothing more, nothing less. He or she does not “represent” a client, they do not “defend” and they do not “prosecute”. They are not there to assign blame, guilt or innocence and they are not there to ensure any particular outcome. This is another mistake accident investigators make: they invest in the case—often emotionally. This can lead to their objectivity being called into question and their testimony being disregarded on account of bias.

Now that we’ve addressed some of the issues that influence and affect judgment, let’s talk about testimony. Going to a scene and taking photographs or even measurements is hardly where it all starts and ends. People forget that—where serious cases are concerned—cases will often end up in court. When it does, you might be called to testify. Almost all accident investigators—private and government—make the mistake of focusing only on their task at the scene and completely disregarding the likely lines of questioning they might face, as a result of their actions.

When you testify in court, there are a number of things you need to be very aware of. If you fail as a credible witness, critical mass is declared moot because all your evidence, your opinion and your value as investigator can be discarded, based on how you perform as a witness. This means that the quality of your work can be completely compromised by the quality of your actions. The actions of the investigator, in the absence of credibility, can be the reason for critical mass not being reached.



A common mistake of accident investigators is that they have no legal experience, training or qualification. The method of evidence collection, your right to do so, the methods used and the protocols you follow at a crash/crime scene can reflect very negatively on your testimony. As an example, if you started photographing a scene without following protocol, without declaring your presence, reporting at the Joint Operations Command (JOC) or seeking permission to enter a crime scene, your presence can be questioned. My DIY Accident Investigation Manual, 124-point Investigation Protocol and our training specifically covers this. Accident investigators make the mistake of not knowing how to gain legal access to crash/crime scenes. If this becomes apparent in testimony—during cross examination—it might result in embarrassment and emotional outbursts. What would your answer be if you were called to testify and you were asked: “Who gave you permission to take these photographs?” What if no one did? What if you just entered the scene and started taking happy-snappies? Accident investigators make the mistake of not knowing what rules, laws or protocols allow them access to crash/crime scenes and it places them in very uncomfortable positions in court.

Another common mistake made by accident investigators is that they refer to hearsay evidence. In most cases—especially criminal—hearsay evidence is not allowed. Investigators make the mistake of asking people to “tell them what happened” and then use those versions as a starting point for their investigation, report and testimony. Since hearsay evidence is not allowed, all evidence that follows would not be allowed. If an accident investigator’s report is based on (or only based on) the word of other people, the information that follows will not be allowed into evidence. Then critical mass will not be reached either.

Another common mistake accident investigators make is that they do not record everything they see, hear, experience and see. They take their photos and leave. They put them in a report and write that “these are the facts”. In this case, they are often cross-examined on source and method. A common question is: “How did you determine this?” The unskilled, untrained or inexperienced accident investigator will not realise that this is a trap that he could step into. If he answers along the lines of “someone told me”, he ventures into hearsay territory and his evidence will become weak. If he expresses any opinion such as “I determined that” or “I concluded that”, he might not be allowed to continue on the grounds that he is not an expert witness. Our training, the 124-Point IBF Protocol and my DIY Accident Investigation book covers the very methods used to ensure that all evidence is collected correctly, everything you experience is recorded correctly and that you are prepared to testify to your reports. If you cannot disclose or confirm the source of your information or opinion, you will not have reached critical mass either.

Next, we will consider the actual reports compiled by accident investigators and the actual mistakes they make. The first mistake they make comes in the form of the inclusion or compilation of statements. Inexperienced, unskilled or untrained accident investigators love including the “versions” of drivers in their reports. This sounds logical. Surely, you must include what the driver said happened, in a road traffic collision? Maybe, but not always.

When someone is involved in a collision with a company vehicle, the company often wants a version in a report. This makes them happy, since they can then dismiss the driver if he was found to be grossly negligent or if he acted illegally. Accident investigators are often appointed to do investigations for this purpose and are even asked to express opinions about fault. These often “slip through the cracks” as labour disputes are not subject to the same rules of evidence and scrutiny as court and criminal matters. Companies are happy because they can get rid of that “problem driver” and the accident investigator walks around very proud that “his investigation, report and testimony resulted in a favorable result for his client”. This is a mistake.

See—in criminal matters and in civil matters, there is a sequence of interaction. In very short terms, one party issues a summons, the other party shows intent to defend, they exchange heads of argument and then . . . . There is the discovery process or the criminal investigation. This is where either party in a civil matter can request the disclosure of any/all records deemed relevant or that the other might intend to use in or during trial. This means they can ask for all minutes, reports, documents or recordings used during the hearing of that driver you were so happy to get rid of. The police officer in a criminal matter can get a court order for the same and use it against the driver.

In both cases, it can also be used against the very client the accident investigator served. The problem comes with negligence or vicarious liability. If the owner of the vehicle is found to have been negligent in any regard with reference to (say) vehicle maintenance, criminal charges can be extended to include him or her. In the civil context, the more “wrong” your driver is, the greater your vicarious liability becomes! Vicarious liability is the degree to which the owner (or company) is liable for the errors and actions of an employee. This means that the accident investigation report and all the statements therein can be used against you or the driver in a civil or criminal matter. Suddenly, the “right to remain silent” is not achievable and critical mass is not reached.

But this is not where it all ends! Accident investigators also make gross errors at scenes, during their investigation. One of the most prevalent mistakes made by accident investigators—and this now includes police and traffic investigators as well expert witnesses—is poor measurement and the compilation of inaccurate sketches. In 15 years in this industry and after hundreds of trials, I have never once ever seen a properly compiled scale scene drawing or sketch. I have not seen a properly compiled scale scene drawing, including all relevant elements and I have not seen anyone use either the coordinate or the triangulation method of measurement properly. I’ve seen professors of mathematics draw scale drawings that completely do not represent the actual scene at all. I have seen so-called experts use Laser Total Stations to measure crash scenes and compile computer-generated drawings and still leave out a lane completely from their drawings. This is not only the most common mistake accident investigators make but rather the most unlikely task they are going to perform properly and effectively. But this is not because it is highly advanced, highly complex or impossible at all. In our training students are taught to draw accurate scene scale drawings in a day and more than 95% get it right the first time



around. The problem might be a lack of interest or poor training, but the results are the same; if the positions of vehicles and the general scene cannot be properly determined or measured, critical mass cannot be reached.

I use aerial photography and scaled images in a permanent 3D environment to produce highly accurate scale scene drawings. Not only does an aerial photograph include all elements small and large—there is also nothing that is present that cannot be seen, represented and considered exactly where they are. If an accident investigator intends to testify, and if he or she hopes to reach critical mass, the accuracy of his or her at-scene measurements is vital. If bends in roads, road widths, vehicle positions or the length of skid marks are not properly measured, analysis becomes impossible. Critical mass is never reached, to start with.

The last mistake accident investigators and even experts make is to learn through example only. We often see in trials that witnesses express opinions they were taught to express. Things like “it is commonly known that the perception reaction time of a person can be between 1.5 and 2.5 seconds” is often heard and even used in analysis. The mistake here is that investigators often refer to this because they were “told so in training” or because they read it somewhere. The same goes for the methods used for speed analysis, conclusions regarding lamp incandescence and opinions regarding more complex issues like crush or the old favourite: Principle Direction of Force (PDOF). Before accident investigators refer to the opinions or references of others (as a matter of fact), they almost always fail to explore all research or aspects relating to those “facts”.

As an example, the research by Greene, Lerner et al is very regularly used by reconstruction experts—especially those from the engineering fraternity. This is all good until you actually go and get a copy of their research and read that the research cannot be used for road traffic collision analysis and that the research was done for traffic light timing design. Accident investigators like to refer to values of between 1.5 and 2.5 seconds but this is in complete disagreement with later research done by Joseph Badger, Jeff Muttart and many others. So the take-away here is that accident investigators should do their own research and stay up to date with the latest research. As an example, if accident investigators bothered to actually acquire a copy of the research paper, they would see that one of the opening paragraphs include the following statement: The Human Factors Guidelines for Road Systems is not a guide to crash investigation or a comprehensive reference for safety diagnosis. So you would agree that reference to this work would be quite a serious oversight. Yet accident investigators are still taught to use this reference—even today.

When accident investigators are too lazy to do their own further research and simply quote what they have been told or what they have read in one incomplete reference, they stand the risk of being discredited at worst or of being forced to reconsider better references and to re-do their analysis or amend their opinion at best—often to the detriment of their original finding. If a witness is forced to reconsider his position and in so doing discredits his own original version, finding or opinion, critical mass can definitely not be reached.

While all aspects are not covered here, at least the following is needed for critical mass to be reached in terms of a collision

investigation, report or the testimony that stems from it:

1. The investigator must gather all evidence—not only the evidence he/she thinks is relevant.
2. The evidence must be collected in the correct way, legally and completely.
3. The investigator must know and understand the process of law in order for the investigation to be effective.
4. The investigator must record, document and retain all records, information and evidence found, observed or collected at the collision scene.
5. The investigator must know and understand the experience he or she will have in court while testifying, and align his at-scene efforts thereto.
6. The investigator must know the rules of evidence, the rules of testimony and the pitfalls he or she could face in court.
7. The investigator must fully understand his/her role, contribution, mandate and limitations when it comes to compiling a report and beyond—into trial.
8. The investigator must be familiar with court procedure, grounds for objection, the limits of his/her contribution and the effect his/her testimony can have on the outcome of the trial.
9. The investigator must be objective, clinical, professional and capable as a witness—whether expert, or not.
10. The investigator must know and understand the difference between opinion testimony, witness testimony, expert testimony and lay testimony and where he/she fits into the trial process.

If at least this is not achieved, critical mass cannot be reached. If critical mass cannot be reached, the accident investigator could—through his/her own inexperience, lack of skill or ignorance—end up effectively testifying against you, tipping critical mass in favour of the other side or of your guilt. Choosing an accident investigator and doing a proper accident investigation goes hand in hand. These are not issues to be considered lightly.

When you consider these mistakes, that are all typically and regularly made by accident investigators, you should be asking yourself if “Jim from the workshop” is still the right man for the job, whether you believe he should receive proper training or whether you should invest in some books for him to read to further familiarise himself with the most common mistakes he could be making right now, at your expense. Or perhaps you should be considering a longer-term relationship with an external expert. Someone who can and does know how to investigate collision properly, the pitfalls of the law, the proper way to testify and when to give you advice that will help you reach critical mass.

*Stan Bezuidenhout*

About the author: Stan Bezuidenhout is a Forensic Collision Homicide Reconstructionist with IBF Investigations with more than 15 years experience in accident investigation, reconstruction and court testimony across most of Southern Africa and abroad and one of our regular expert panelists. In all his cases in the Gauteng High Court in Pretoria, Stan's status as an expert witness has gone unchallenged.

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# De Rooy powers away with Dakar Rally

Gerard de Rooy did it again. After his victory with Iveco back in 2012, the Dutch pilot climbed back up to the top with his second victory in five years at the Dakar, while Hino proved to be ultra reliable.

**Therefore, he continues to be the only pilot capable of curtailing the Kamaz hegemony since the Rally takes place in South America, as the Russian brand had been the winner in six out of the seven previous competitions.**

Piloted by the Catalanian Moi Torrellardona and assisted by Polish mechanic Darek Rodewald – with whom he also won in 2012 – Gerard de Rooy was able to keep a constant pace with his Iveco Powerstar throughout the race. He won three stages, widened the differences when needed especially during the hardest special stages when they had to cross the north-eastern dunes of Argentina.

Saturday's last stage took place between Villa Carlos Paz and Rosario. The winner for the 180 km speed section was Hans Stacey, where Gerard de Rooy and Federico Villagra's Iveco trucks were able to make the most of the lead they held in general. The Argentinean pilot, who surprised everyone in his debut in the Dakar Trucks category, finished the competition in a spectacular third position and stepped onto the podium in Rosario.

Ton van Genugten, who joined Team Petronas de Rooy, also finished the Dakar with a great performance in fifth place. Despite having lost his fourth position to Stacey, van Genugten made it to the Top 5 with his Iveco Trakker. For the first time in the Dakar history, Iveco boasts three trucks among the Top 5 in the world's toughest competition.

In turn, the Catalanian Pep Vila also achieved his goal and arrived in tenth place after Stage 13. The seasoned pilot had stated that he stood a good chance of making it to the Top 10 provided that the Iveco leaders encountered no problems, and that's exactly what happened. He managed to keep Artur Ardavichus behind and eventually reached his goal.

In cars, Stephane Peterhansel won his sixth Dakar, and finishes his 12th Rally, including his participation in bikes. In this category,







the Australian pilot Toby Price won his first Dakar after taking a spot on the podium in the previous edition. Finally, in quads, the Patronelli brothers' comeback could not be any better: Marcos was the winner followed by Alejandro in second place.

### **Tyre edge**

The truck, fitted with Goodyear ORD off-the-road truck tyres in size 375/90R22.5 produced in Luxembourg, was crewed by driver Gerard De Rooy from the Netherlands with co-driver Moises Torrallardona from Spain and mechanic Darek Rodewald from Poland. Not only did the De Rooy team win the Dakar truck class, its Goodyear ORD equipped high-speed support truck driven by Ton Van Genugten finished the race fifth in the overall standings. For Gerard De Rooy it was the first time Goodyear truck tyres were fitted on the winner's race truck.

"Goodyear provided great technical support and counselling in advance of the Dakar, especially when it comes to tyre pressure recommendations. The conditions on the Dakar are without doubt as tough as you can get. They comprise the worst of everything, including sand, rocks and mud; so tyres are one of the most important factors. The Goodyear ORD 375/90R22.5 off-the-road truck tyres have been fantastic and a key element in us winning the event," said Gerard De Rooy.

"We congratulate Gerard De Rooy and team on their fantastic success, winning the overall truck classification of the Dakar 2016. This has been a challenging, extreme real life test for our Goodyear ORD off-the-road truck tyres. By winning the truck class and the fifth place in the fast assistance truck, Gerard De Rooy and his team have proved that these tyres deliver high

performance even in extreme off-the-road applications," said Benjamin Willot, Director Marketing Commercial Tyres at Goodyear Europe, Middle East and Africa.

The Netherlands-based De Rooy team had entered three trucks fitted with Goodyear ORD offroad truck tyres in size 375/90R22.5 for the 'Odyssey' Dakar 2016. These comprised the main race truck, driven by Gerard De Rooy, the truck of the De Rooy team member Ales Loprais and the high-speed support truck driven by Ton van Genugten. The choice of Goodyear ORD tyres was made after extensive joint testing with engineers from the Goodyear Innovation Centre Luxembourg, helping the team to achieve the best setup to optimise tyre performance in all the various conditions of the Dakar 2016.

### **Ultra consistent Hino**

Hino, the leading Japanese truck manufacturer and the first one from that country to enter the gruelling Dakar Rally, way back in 1991, registered its 25th consecutive finish in the 2016 edition of this gruelling, annual cross-country race which ended in Rosario, Argentina, on January 16.

The Hinos finished 13th (Teruhito Sugawara and Hiroyuki Sugiura) and 31st (Yoshimasa Sugawara and Takahashi Mitsugo) out of 41 trucks which completed the route of 9 217km. A total of 56 trucks had entered this year's two-week-long event which started in Buenos Aires on January 3.

This was the 25th time that Hino had participated in the annual Dakar rally-raid and Hino was once more the only Japanese truck manufacturer to tackle this epic event. Hino Team Sugawara once again had a 100% finishing record with its two all-wheel drive

Hino 500-Series trucks. The factory supported Hino trucks have finished the gruelling event each time they have entered

The team also scored a 1-2 in the Dakar Challenge for trucks with engines of less than 10 litres capacity, making it seven consecutive class wins and the third year in a row with them being first and second in the class. This was the 16th time Hino has won this engine capacity award in the 17 times it has been contested since 1996.

Hino, DAF, Kamaz, Scania, Liaz and Mercedes-Benz were the only six makes with a 100% finishing record in this year's race out of a field that also included MAN, overall winners Iveco, Tatra, Ginaf, Renault and Maz trucks.

*Sam Sithole*



### Did you know?

The race originated in December 1978, a year after Thierry Sabine got lost in the Ténéré desert while competing in the Abidjan-Nice rally and decided that the desert would be a good location for a regular rally. 182 vehicles took the start of the inaugural rally in Paris, with 74 surviving the 10 000 kilometre (6 200 mile) trip to the Senegalese capital of Dakar. Cyril Neveu holds the distinction of being the event's first winner, riding a Yamaha motorcycle. The event rapidly grew in popularity, with 216 vehicles taking the start in 1980 and 291 in 1981. Neveu won the event for a second time in 1980, Hubert Auriol taking honours in 1981 for BMW. By this stage, the rally had already begun to attract the participation of famous names from elsewhere in motorsport, such as Henri Pescarolo and Jacky Ickx.

The truck event was not run in 1989 after it was decided the vehicles, by this stage with twin engines generating in excess of 1 000 horsepower, were too dangerous following the death of a DAF crew member in an accident during the 1988 rally. Kamaz has dominated the truck category since the turn of the century, although it has come under increasing pressure from rivals such as Iveco, MAN and Tatra, which enjoyed much success in the 1990s. Hino, DAF, Perlini and Mercedes-Benz have also been among the winners in the past.



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# Technology: Greener and safer transport

State-of-the-art transport industry technology—like in-cab cameras, lane assist and proximity control—does not come cheap, but the high cost of this high-tech equipment is undoubtedly outweighed by its safety benefits, according to Lucky Maluleke, divisional CEO of Imperial Logistics group company Tanker Services

**When it comes to road safety, supply chain and logistics leader Imperial is putting its money where its mouth is, with the group having instituted a policy to install in-cab camera system “DriveCam” in every truck in its fleet.**

It is an initiative that began in 2013, Maluleke reveals, when Tanker Services snapped up the new technology shortly after its launch, and began a project to install and test in-cab cameras in its vehicles.

Imported from the USA, DriveCam is based on a dual-lens in-cab video camera and reporting software. Through its two wide angle lenses, the camera records what is happening on the road ahead of the truck as well as in the cab. Its built-in gravity sensor ensures that footage is stored whenever the vehicle is subjected to forward or sideways movement beyond predefined parameters.

Following on from the success of Tanker Services’ pilot project, Imperial took the decision to install DriveCam in all of its trucks. “The sole purpose of the camera is to mitigate risks for the client, driver, other road users and pedestrians,” Maluleke states. “It is used to determine whether the driver is steering off the road, falling asleep or driving irresponsibly. Basically, this system picks up any sudden movements of the vehicle, the alertness of the driver and whether he is complying with the rules of the road.

Furthermore, the driver is very aware that he is being recorded and that it is easy to identify a guilty party. If a driver does slip up, we are immediately alerted to the fact through the real time feed to our 24-hour control room. We are able to assess the situation and the driver, and take the necessary action, including additional driver training, where required.

“In the event of an accident, we will have footage prior to the accident and for a specified time afterwards. Imperial and our clients rely on this for investigation purposes.”

Maluleke notes that DriveCam has proved its worth in many instances, and cites several accidents in which the technology revealed that driver error was not the cause of the collision. “After analysing the videos, it was discovered that in 90% of the cases reviewed, it was not the driver’s fault. Confusion and contradictory eye witness reports could be eliminated, and the problem solving was much simpler.”

Far from resting on its laurels with the successful group-wide implementation of in-cab cameras, Imperial is continuing to investigate new technology that will further enhance safety. One

such option that is currently being considered is MobilEye. This Advanced Driver Assistance System incorporates features that include pedestrian collision warning, lane departure, forward collision warning, headway monitoring, intelligent head beam activation and speed limit indication.

“We are not too far from a time when trucks will be able to drive themselves,” comments Francois Ehlers, technical executive at Imperial Logistics. Nissan, Google and Hyundai have reportedly set 2020 as the year that we can expect the first self-driving vehicles.

Ehlers notes that trucks with automatic transmissions are already capable of some “green” driving techniques that exceed the capabilities of their human drivers. It is for this reason that Imperial—as a group committed to sustainability and environmental considerations—uses only automatic vehicles.

Ehlers elaborates: “The latest automatic gear boxes have a computer connected to the engine and gear box. This computer decides on the amount of torque that the driver needs and will select the right gear for a particular route or hill and for the power and speed requirements. It selects the optimal gear for fuel efficiency and environmental considerations. This is known as the ‘green band’. Some OEMs (original equipment manufacturers) are doing it better than others, but this so advanced that we cannot expect human drivers to achieve the same environmentally optimal driving.”

Every truck in Imperial’s fleet also has electronically controlled braking systems with both ABS (antilock braking system) and EBS (electronic braking stability). “We consider this, together with technology like lane assist and proximity control, to be essential in our business,” he stresses.

Ehlers, too, believes that the costs of transport technology are outweighed by the benefits. “There is always pressure to reduce costs, but we cannot put a price tag on safety. This is an area in which Imperial will not compromise.”

While some organisations may expect transport companies to offer the safest, highest specification vehicles for the lowest price, Maluleke’s experience has been of clients largely impressed with the technology and who recognise its benefits. “Ultimately, however, this is not about Rands and cents. It is about constantly striving for the safest and most sustainable business practices, because, as an organisation, we care about people and the environment,” he concludes.

*Staff reporter*

*Lucky Maluleke: HSS Executive of  
Imperial Logistics*



# Assembly of Hyundai commercial vehicles in full swing

The Hyundai H100 is one of the most successful products in Hyundai Automotive South Africa's Commercial Vehicles Division. The popularity of the H100 “bakkie”, as it is fondly known among appreciative customers, and its reputation as a trusted workhorse have made a compelling argument for assembling the vehicle locally, at the Hyundai plant in Apex, Benoni on Gauteng’s East Rand.

Opened in September 2014, the Benoni assembly plant was initially used for the production of the Hyundai HD truck range. Little more than six months later, at the beginning of 2015, the first H100 bakkie rolled from the assembly line. Since then, the assembly of imported South Korean components to finished vehicles has been ramped up to a rate of 240 units per month.

Not only does this ensure excellent value for Hyundai Automotive SA’s customers, it also creates jobs for local factory workers. According to Wade Griffin, Director of Commercial Vehicles at Hyundai Automotive SA, “The establishment of the H100 assembly line forms part of roughly R110 million Hyundai’s Commercial Vehicles Division has invested in the local economy.

There are financial rewards for us, but the most important benefits are job creation, and the testimony it bears to Hyundai’s commitment to the local automotive market.” The 1.3-ton H100 is one of the most successful vehicles in Hyundai Automotive SA’s model range – a fact that helped make an irrefutable case for local assembly. It’s a tried-and-tested international workhorse revered for operating under extreme conditions, and it has earned its position amongst the toughest light commercial vehicles available today.

“More than 60 000 H100 Bakkies have been sold since Hyundai automotive SA started its operations in 2000. It has become a workhorse for many smaller, as well as larger, established businesses and organizations in South Africa. It is also the perfect all-round vehicle for small family businesses, with a proven track record of reliability.” Griffin ensures the quality and durability of locally produced H100 bakkies are of the highest standard.

A full-time quality-control engineer is responsible for all operations at the assembly plant, while a team of five engineers from Hyundai Motor Company oversees the quality control procedures, as well as trains and improves the knowledgebase of the local workforce at the factory. To ensure the H100 is offered to consumers with competitive



pricing and added benefits, components of the H100, such as the engine, cabin, seats, tyres and different suspension elements of the ladder-frame chassis, arrive in South Africa in containers.

Packed economically to reduce freight costs, this helps keep costs to a minimum, especially compared to the importation of fully pre-assembled units. “Assembly at the Apex plant has increased the number of employees on the site to a total of 51, with further potential growth of the factory’s workforce. If one considers the indirect effect that the employment of a single worker has on those that he or she supports, at an average ratio of 6-to-1, then the establishment of the assembly has already touched the lives of about 360 people,” says Griffin.

Seeing as the H100 is produced in the same assembly plant as the HD trucks, another added benefit is that different permutations are possible through the customized fitment of different load boxes and canopies on the H100’s sturdy frame, e.g. the very popular tipper conversion. With its superior build quality and potential for customisation, there is an H100 for your business, no matter what the requirements.



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# King of the heavy duty

Few names hold the allure of Western Star in the heavy duty trucking industry, and have been a favourite of tow truck drivers and big rig haulers in the USA and Australia for nearly 50 years, while creating a cult following in South Africa (SA).

**Western Star was started in 1967 in Cleveland, Ohio, but by 1980, the original owner was insolvent, despite importing Semon E. "Bunkie" Knudsen, son of General Motors legend Semon Knudsen, and President of Ford Motor Company in 1969 - 1970.**

In 1990, Western Star Trucks was purchased by Australian businessman Terry Peabody, who turned around the company's fortunes over the next 10 years, introducing the famed truck on South African shores after the fall of apartheid in 1994.

In 2000 the company was purchased by the Daimler AG North American truck division, and has carried on going from strength to strength. In most people's opinion they are the premier tow truck company in the country, after considerable investment from the holding company.

Gregory Simpson caught up with Western Star Brand manager, Duncan Prince recently for more on the bulletproof build quality and heritage of these all-round value trucks.

## ***Can you tell us a bit about Western Star in SA and your background?***

Western Star has been in SA since about 1994. I've been involved with Western Star Trucks since 1997 and Western Star was bought by Daimler end of 2000, and launched as a Mercedes Benz South Africa brand in 2001. We're a long way down the track with Western Star; we're 15 -years-old under Daimler, and growing our market penetration significantly. Also the great service network and product support offered through our Daimler network has considerably enhanced customer's faith in the product and we feel that we've been very successful in the niche markets where we have this product.





***And this is arguably the best tow-truck in SA. What's been the key to that success?***

The big thing about Western Star being a good tow truck is in many respects the same as why it's good in other applications. It's because it's built for a precise purpose. Towing other broken down trucks is not an easy job, so it is not a job that is well done by a normal off-the-shelf truck. The reason that our Western Stars have done so well is that we've built the trucks to cope with that arduous application, exactly for that purpose. Also we've brought the trucks into a country with towing equipment mounted on them, made in the US and Canada, so what happens is, customers that have bought the product have got a complete package from us that is basically the best that money can buy. When the product gets to SA there's not a great deal of experimentation—you know of 'maak a plan'—or adaptation required. We know that it's going to work from the get-go and we've got trucks running in SA as tow-trucks that are now 17 and 18 years old and still earning living for their owners, so we think that's something to be quite proud of.

***And what's the maximum kilometre's you've seen on one truck?***

The maximum kilometre's that we've seen on one of our Western Stars is probably just under two million, but that in itself is not as significant as some of the hours that we've seen on our trucks. We've had some of our road-train trucks clock the other side of 40 000 hours.

Now just to put that in perspective: in a year there are give or take about 8 000 hours in a calendar year, 24 x 365, it is generally accepted that if you run a vehicle 24 hours a day, seven days a week with all of the stoppages for refuelling, driver changes, maintenance etc. If you can put 6 000 hours on a truck a year that is pretty good going, and what we've done is we've had trucks that are as old as eight years old and working it out, those truck engines have run for between 18 and 19 hours a day every day for eight years, which we think says quite something about the durability of our trucks. When you're running the trucks in mining applications you can't go as fast so you don't clock mileage as quickly but it's not to say that the truck is working any less hard.

***What have we got under the hood of the Western Star in terms of horsepower?***

This truck is equipped with a 15 litre Cummins ISX engine, it produces a maximum horsepower of about 530, or if you're talking metric that's 395 kilowatt, and it does 2 500 Newton metres—the bottom line is it just pulls like hell.

***And in terms of Euro spec what's this running at?***

The truck runs at Euro 3, we would have probably moved on to Euro 5, you know, if Euro 5 fuels were freely available everywhere. There are also of course still some advantages to Euro 3 in that they are very, very well proven products and very, very reliable too.

***If you had to get the crystal ball out, when might we see Euro 5/6 engines in SA?***

We are probably going to be getting to Euro 5 around 2020, but it is a

way away and I'm not even sure that the government will be ready by that stage, but the thing is the rest of the world would have changed to Euro 5 and we will find ourselves in a situation where just no one is prepared to build product that is anything less than Euro 5. We are a follower market, we take about half a percent of the global production of anything, whether it be trucks, wheelbarrows, tumble driers, microwave ovens, whatever, so in the rest of the world Euro 3 will not be manufactured in the next five years which will mean that, like it or not, we're going to go Euro 5 and hopefully reap the benefits of cleaner air and better fuel consumption.

***And in terms of manufacturing, where is Western Star built for SA shores?***

This particular truck is built in Portland in Oregon, that's in the North-West corner of America, in some respects it's very far away, but other side of the coin is that a great number of our trucks that we build are built for export and they're also built to run in applications which are very far from home, very far from help, so the vehicles are especially well built so that they can survive being far from their parents, if I can put it to you that way.

***It is not unusual for trucks that come to SA to have to be tricked up a bit, but this one you can drive as is, or do a massive amount of modification.***

Yes, well one of our big benefits on Western Star is that we believe we are one of the manufacturers who offer the highest degree of customisation and the most number of options ex-works out of any manufacturer in the world, and what we always say about

Western Star is that we offer at least 3 200 options and failure is not one of them.

***Why do most American trucks have bonnets, what are the pros and cons as opposed to cab-over?***

The main reason why North American trucks are bonneted started out with a union thing. Truck drivers in a union in the States refused to drive cab-over trucks because they said that put you first at the scene of an accident, whereas with a bonneted truck you are separated by six or eight feet of bonnet. Over time what has happened though is bonneted trucks are better aerodynamically than cab-over trucks, because you're pushing a wedge through the air rather than a square brick. The other thing is that bonneted trucks tend to cool better. What I mean by that is if you have very hot weather, you're travelling slowly, pulling big loads, you can get much more airflow through a bonnet than you can underneath a cab, and your radiator is only as good as the amount of air that you can put through it, so if a bonnet lets you put more air through that radiator that engine stays cooler and tougher.

***Why aren't all trucks like this then?***

Basically because SA tends to, in many respects, follow Euro regulation where overall length is dictated from bumper to end of trailer. Whereas in the US and Canada and also in Australia to some extent they legislate trailer-length only and they don't necessarily legislate tractor length up front.

*Gregory Simpson*



# Optimal retarder solutions for commercial vehicles

Voith has developed a retarder product line-up that offers the optimal solution for all known types of commercial vehicles.

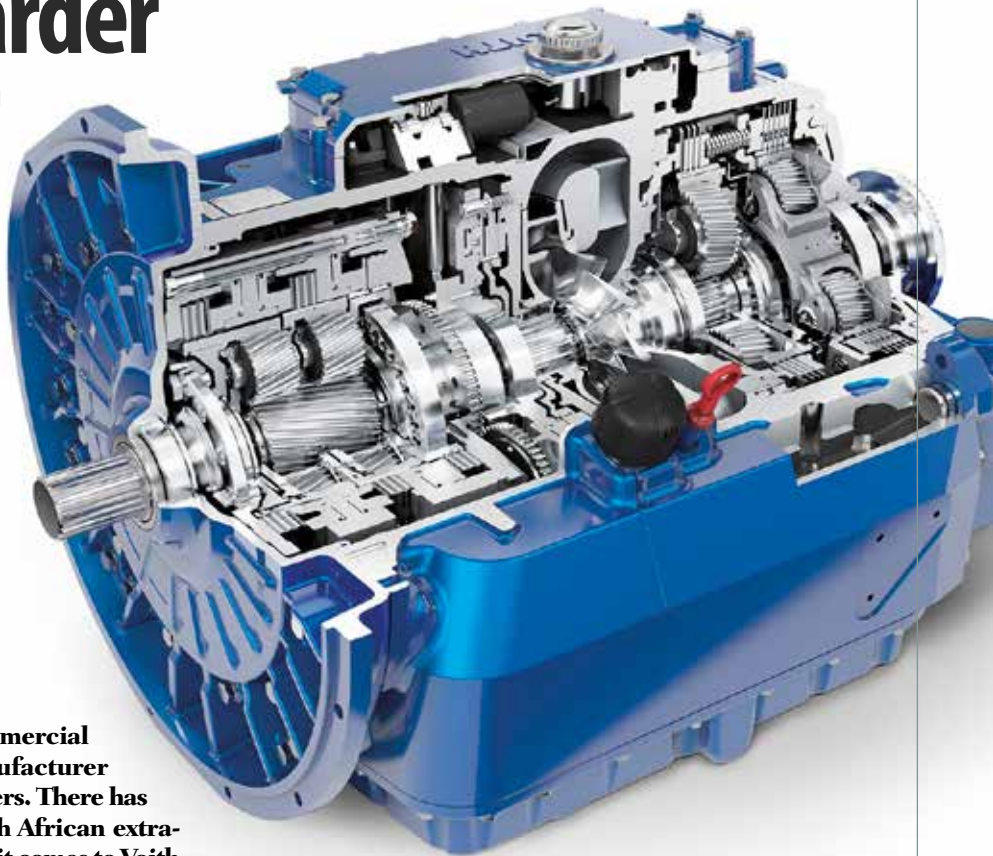
**Frederick Smit, vice president of commercial vehicles notes, “We are the only manufacturer featuring both inline and offline retarders. There has been phenomenal growth in the South African extra-heavy commercial vehicle market when it comes to Voith retarders. The market has grown substantially from a base of 10% to just under 30% in the space of five years.**

“This proves the realisable benefits for South African operators. The trend is expected to continue, especially as Voith retarders offer lower operating costs within this truck segment, thereby not only adding value but boosting the bottom line as well,” Smit comments.

Voith inline retarders are mounted directly to the transmission, or installed freely in the driveline and connected to the propshaft. The VR 120 is for medium-class long-distance buses and touring coaches, as well as for trucks, while the VR 123 has been developed specifically for applications in trucks, city- and midi-buses with a permissible weight of up to 18 t.

The VR 133-2, on the other hand, is for heavy-class coaches and commercial vehicles, as well as for special vehicles. This is the most powerful hydrodynamic retarder available from Voith, featuring a high braking torque in combination with a low weight. With offline retarders, the speed is increased in relation to the propshaft speed by means of a step-up gear. These highly compact retarders provide enormous braking outputs, even at low driving speeds. In cooperation with Daimler AG, the GO/VR 115 E transmission-retarder system was developed specifically for coach applications.

The 115 HV, on the other hand, was developed for the Mercedes-Benz Actros and Axor commercial vehicles, and is installed on the PowerShift transmission. The VR 3250 Volvo compact retarder is



deployed in the Volvo FH and FM truck series. Voith retarders really come into their own at high speeds, where safety is paramount. Here they are capable of producing an enormous braking power of up to 700 kW. With their high braking torques and low unit weight, Voith retarders convert huge quantities of energy effectively in the shortest time possible.

The fact that a Voith retarder features its own oil-supply system also means that the operating medium can be utilised up to its highest permissible operating temperature range. Friction brakes can reach temperatures of up to 1,000°C when operated over extended periods. This means that their braking effect declines rapidly, with the added danger of fissures developing and the brake linings themselves wearing out. Voith retarders, on the other hand, are genuine continuous brakes.

They offer safety reserves in critical areas such as demanding downward gradients and on motorways, and even in urban start-stop traffic. With secondary retarders, the braking power is not interrupted during gear-shifting, a definite plus in terms of overall safety. “The engine brake and Voith retarder complement each other in the sense of contributing to a cumulative braking power,” Smit explains. “The end result is optimum braking power at both low and high speeds.”

*Press release*

# IMPROVED HEALTHCARE FOR OUR VALUED EMPLOYEES

## THROUGH THE EXPANSION OF THE TRUCKING WELLNESS PROGRAMME VIA MOBILE CLINICS

The National Bargaining Council for the Road Freight and Logistics Industry (NBCRFLI) is incredibly proud to announce the improvement of our Trucking Wellness Programme via the purchase of new mobile clinics. Through the joint initiative of donors and the National Bargaining Council for the Road Freight and Logistics Industry (NBCRFLI), the five mobile Wellness Clinics that were used in the past have now been replaced with a fleet of sleek new Ford Rangers and Vito's.

This is a more innovative way of looking after our valued stakeholders in the trucking industry as we will now work on a system where we book a vehicle for ten days at a time and then service all companies within that specific region. As a result, we will be able to serve more companies than ever before and work towards a healthier and more vibrant trucking industry.

These robust Ford Rangers will operate differently to the Vito's as they will only be used for the transport of stock and personnel whereas the Vito's will be used specifically as testing centres. Once on site, branded gazebos will be erected as additional testing centres. Again, this new operating model will allow Trucking Wellness to function far more efficiently and cost-effectively. This is an exciting time for us, as we believe that this will lead to a more healthier, productive workforce.

This initiative is close to our hearts because a key contributor to the wellbeing of South Africa's economy is the wellbeing of our trucking and logistics workforce. If the trucking industry is able to move goods across the country efficiently, economic growth will be directly affected in a positive way. We understand that it is difficult for our hard working employee members to live a healthy lifestyle due to travelling long distances over extremely long periods of time. This sedentary lifestyle makes it increasingly challenging to follow a strict diet and exercise regularly. Additionally, many studies support the notion that long distance truck drivers are amongst the biggest contributors to the spread of HIV/AIDS, as they tend to seek comfort from sex workers when travelling long distances. Trucking Wellness is not only aimed at those employed within the Road Freight and Logistics Industry but also sex workers and driver partners.

It is incredibly important for companies to educate their truck drivers on the importance of their own wellbeing by hosting Wellness Days together with the NBCRFLI. These Wellness Days allow trucking staff to access a variety of healthcare services, including counselling and testing, TB screening and BMI tests.

To place emphasis on our desire to provide stakeholders with improved healthcare, the Wellness Fund Health Plan offers improved benefits and health services. These include, among others:

- **GP Consultations** are unlimited with pre-authorisation required after the sixth consultation.
- **Radiology and Pathology** are linked to GP consultations, as you must be referred by a doctor for this benefit.
- **Chronic disease management** is available for members that are registered for chronic medication.
- **Emergency Services** are available by phoning the number provided on the membership card.
- **Hospital Illness Benefit** will ensure that you receive some income while you are in hospital.
- **Accidental Injury Benefit** (casualty rooms) is for injuries sustained as a result of an accident.
- **Funeral Assistance Benefit** of R10 000 is payable in the event of the death of the eligible member.

If you would like representatives from Trucking Wellness or the Health Plan to visit your office for a Wellness Day, please contact [info@truckingwellness.co.za](mailto:info@truckingwellness.co.za) or **011 914 1610** for Trucking Wellness.

Go to [www.nbcrflihealth.co.za](http://www.nbcrflihealth.co.za) or call Affinity Health on **0861 00 11 31** for the Health Plan. You can also send a "please call me" to 079 409 1834 and Affinity Health will call you back.



[www.nbcrfli.org.za](http://www.nbcrfli.org.za)





# EXEMPTING COMPANIES FROM THE NBCRFLI'S COLLECTIVE AGREEMENTS

The National Bargaining Council for the Road Freight and Logistics Industry (NBCRFLI) realises that not all companies are able to adhere to the stipulations set out in the Main Collective Agreement. Such stipulations include, among other things, minimum wages, benefits, annual leave days, and hours of work. In such instances, companies are able to apply for exemption from the provisions of the Council's Collective Agreements.

## THE EXEMPTION DECISION MAKING PROCESS

In order to start the application process of becoming exempt one would need to fill in the Exemption Application Form on our website which is in the form of an affidavit. Along with this, the applicant would need to attach source documents related to the application. These documents include consultation with employees, financial statements, etc. The Independent Exemptions Body will then consider the application where the applicant is usually invited to attend a meeting and provide an oral motivation regarding their application. Within two weeks after the meeting, the Independent Exemptions Body will issue a ruling. If the application is granted, a representative of the Council (designated agent) will conduct an inspection in order to determine whether or not the company has complied with the provisions of the exemption. The designated agent may at any time enter any workplace in order to carry out the inspection.

## IF A COMPANY IS GRANTED EXEMPTION, DOES THIS MEAN THAT THEY ARE FREE FROM ACCOUNTABILITY TO THE COUNCIL ALL TOGETHER?

No, the company still has to comply with the stipulations that were decided upon and stipulated in the exemption license. However, it is also up to the Council to ensure that these stipulations are enforced. If it is found that a company has in any way not complied with the exemption, our designated agent may submit a report requesting the Exemptions Body to re-evaluate the exemption. If the applicant does not agree with the decision that has been made they may lodge an appeal to the Exemptions Appeal Body.

It is important to note that the Exemptions Applications and Appeal Bodies are independent from the Council and members must inter-alia have a legal background. These members are also appointed on an annual basis.

## HOW CAN COMPANIES EDUCATE THEMSELVES ABOUT THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE MAIN COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT?

It is imperative for stakeholders to become familiar with the Council's Collective Agreements and to abide by them at all times. The agreement is available on our website- [www.nbcrfli.org.za](http://www.nbcrfli.org.za). Last year, the existing legal version was translated into four of our official languages; namely, Afrikaans, isiZulu, isiXhosa and seSotho.



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# Major milestones galore

Hino remained the overall leader among truck brands in the Scott Byers Comparative Customer Satisfaction Monitor, which is the result of a quarterly survey conducted among thousands of South African (SA) truck operators on the Scott Byers database. Hino rated 97.58; with the runner-up scoring 95.84 and third-placed rated at 95.70.

**The overall figure is derived from each truck brand's performance in three categories: sales, service and parts. Hino came out top in service and parts and was second in sales. Hino moved up to first place in service from being the runner-up in the second quarter of 2015 with a score of 96.86. The national average in the category was 91.44, which was slightly up from 91.37 in the second quarter of 2015.**

Hino retained top spot in the parts category (four consecutive quarters) with 97.88, which gave them a clear lead over the runner-up on 95.30. National average in this category for the third quarter was 90.06, compared to 89.97 in the second quarter. Hino retained the number two position in the sales category but, the gap between first and second has shrunk.

"We are very proud of our ongoing strong performance in the Scott Byers Comparative Customer Satisfaction Monitor," said Ernie Trautmann, the Vice President of Hino SA. "Hino Total Support is the driving strategy in our operations these days and it is wonderful seeing the results in terms of looking after our customers, which is most important in the truck market, particularly here in SA where there are so many competitors. Our aim now is for Hino to be top overall in all three category rankings."

## Major milestone for Isuzu Trucks

Isuzu Trucks South Africa (ITSA) this week celebrated a major milestone when the 30 000 Isuzu trucks rolled off the production line at General Motors South Africa's (GMSA) Kempston Road plant.

This milestone was achieved during an eight year period of production under ITSA, after a joint venture for truck manufacturing was formed between Isuzu Motors Limited of Japan and GMSA. The consolidated company was then named Isuzu Trucks South Africa (Pty) Limited.

According to Marchand Mc Donald, Isuzu Trucks Plant Manager, this facility builds 47 different model derivatives, varying from 1.5 to 40-ton carrying capacity.

"On the drivetrain side we use four engine types and three different transmission types, a manual transmission, Auto-Manual-Transmission (AMT) as well as fully automatic transmission. The other interesting fact is that we build rear wheel drive trucks and

all-wheel drive trucks, like a 4x4. In addition, we build the traditional single cab configuration, as well as crew cabs," said Mc Donald.

Meanwhile, Mercedes-Benz South Africa (MBSA) added yet another milestone to its long and committed journey to the country, when the 125 000th truck rolled off the assembly line at its plant in East London.

The first truck was assembled at the then Car Distributors Assembly (CDA) in East London in 1962. CDA, the company that would evolve into MBSA, opened its doors in 1948 and was contracted in 1958 by Daimler-Benz to assemble Mercedes-Benz products. Since then, the commercial vehicles division of MBSA has assembled the Unimog, Mercedes-Benz buses, FUSO trucks, Mercedes-Benz trucks and Freightliner trucks.

## New MD of MAN Truck & Bus

In other news, MAN Truck & Bus AG has appointed Markus Geyer as Managing Director (MD) of the German commercial vehicle manufacturer in SA and the Sub Equatorial Region. Within the first quarter of 2016 Mr Geyer will assume responsibility from Geoffrey du Plessis who will leave from his position at the end of December 2015.

Markus Geyer is well known to the SA market from his previous position as regional head of Middle East and Africa, a position he held for five years and until recently he was also responsible for the 22 countries in sub-Equatorial Africa. Markus also served as a member of the board of directors of MAN Truck & Bus (SA) from as early as 2004.

His extensive experience of the local business environment, coupled with solid relationships with customers within the African region, will be instrumental to his success and of huge benefit to MAN customers throughout the region.

It is expected that Geyer will take up his full responsibility and post as early as possible in 2016. This is subject to all visa and permit requirements being timorously fulfilled. "Markus has my full support and the supervisory board of MAN Truck & Bus AG wish him the best of success in his new role in SA, a country he is very familiar with," said board member for Sales and Marketing, Heinz-Jürgen Löw.

*Roger Louw*

# UK's trucking meca

Keltruck Limited was founded in 1983 by company owner Chris Kelly and now stands as the largest independent Scania dealer in Europe. Today the company is managed by an experienced team of executive directors with several decades within the road transport industry and the Scania network between them.

**The UK truck powerhouse was founded in 1983 by company owner Chris Kelly and now stands as the largest independent Scania dealer in Europe. Today the company is managed by an experienced team of executive directors with several decades within the road transport industry and the Scania network between them.**

The UK based company, now employing over 400 staff, has locations over the Midlands and South Wales from 21 dealer points. Each Keltruck workshop is manned by factory trained technicians who have at their disposal all the hi-tech equipment essential to maintain modern commercial vehicles in today's competitive environment.

Expertise is not just limited to service and repairs but also encompasses tacho calibration, brake testing, laser axle alignment, speed limiter test and installation, automatic chassis lubrication, security systems, emission testing, tail lift facilities, paint facilities, MoT facilities and specialised A.D.R. and tanker service bays.

They provide an 'all makes insurance' approved accident repair service for cabs, bodywork & chassis in its specialist repair centres, equipped with the latest cab jigs and laser chassis straightening equipment, with a team of skilled specialists to provide a repair of outstanding quality.

Keltruck's head office in West Bromwich, England houses the world's largest Scania truck recycling facility, specialising in removing parts from end of life and salvaged vehicles which are then available for dispatch worldwide at competitive prices. Used (recycled) Scania

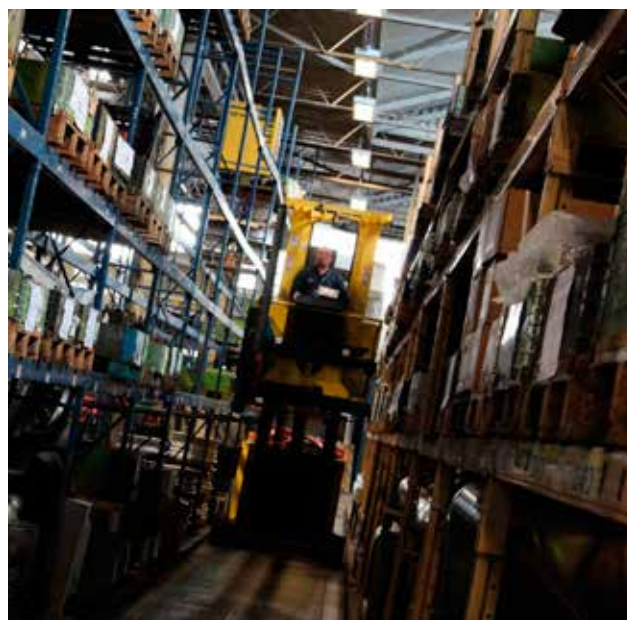
cabs, parts and assemblies can be seen at [shop.keltruck.com](http://shop.keltruck.com) and export enquiries are welcome.

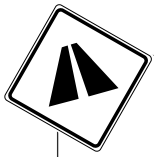
The company is active in the used truck export market, exporting all makes of quality used vehicles & parts across the globe. With a comprehensive stock of vehicles on display from 18 tonne rigids to 44 tonne three axle tractors at varying ages and mileages.

An extensive range of quality used trucks suitable for export markets is displayed at the company's Used Truck Export Centre in West Bromwich, with an updated up-to-the-minute database that can be found online.

With an experienced and dedicated export operation in place, Keltruck can handle the shipping and logistic requirements to the containerisation of vehicles and workshop repairs or modifications, keeping everything under our roof for a seamless transition. All their vehicles and parts can be collected or delivered all over the globe, with existing customers in Europe, Africa, South Africa, the Caribbean, the Middle East, the Far East and Australasia.

## Media release





# West Coast meander

In the month's edition of Road Ahead motoring, we went on a fun-filled road trip up the West Coast of South Africa (SA) in the 2016 Mazda CX-5 to the award winning Piekenierskloof Mountain lodge in Citrusdal and Cape Nature's Rocherpan Nature Reserve.



**The new CX-5 is the perfect vehicle for the open road, with its 2.2 TDI eating up the road with little trouble, allowing you to cruise along at around 8l/100km at 140 km/h, while barely slipping the juice at lower speeds.**

The interior is very comfortable, with plenty of leg room for rear passengers, while boot space is a touch limited as a result. The slanted back windscreen gives the car great lines, but does hinder boot space somewhat compared to a square backed SUV, which you don't see very often on SA roads.

After a relaxing drive up the N7 towards Citrusdal, we reached our first overnight destination of Piekenierskloof Mountain lodge, which has won countless awards for being the premier family getaway in the region.

The resort is split up in the main lodge, and has breathtaking views down the mountain towards Citrusdal, a full restaurant and bar, indoor pool and games room for kids. Not to mention a crystal clear pool outside to lounge around, sipping the afternoon away.

Then there are luxury self-catering units with thatched roofs, which we stayed in. Our particular unit had three bedrooms and an ideal outside braai place to wind down after a hard day's activities. And activities there are a plenty, with a spine-tingling zip slide down the valley, mountain biking, hiking, bird watching, sunbathing, 4x4ing, chess and putt-putt to name just a few.

The area also boasts some of the nicest driving roads, and I was able to find a quiet one with no traffic to test out the top speed of the CX-5. She pulled hard out of the gate, and in no time it was up to 160km/h, putting the foot flat to the floor and barrelling through the air at over 200km/h, making it the fastest city clicker SUV that I've ever driven.



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After all that fun and games, it was time to head on over to our second destination, an hour and a half away at Rocherpan Nature Reserve just outside Velddrif. We decided to take the scenic route to Elands Bay and cut back down along the gravel road along the coast.

The CX5 was very similarly at home on the fast sweeping bends of the tar road, as opposed to the technical gravel sections once you reach the coast. The AWD system on the CX-5 is first class, never putting a wheel out of line, and makes driving on gravel a pleasure, for even novice drivers. Thankfully they have fitted regular tyres on the car, as opposed to low-profile tyres in the previous year's model, making for a firm ride.

Within no time we reached the beautiful Rocherpan, a world famous bird oasis, and a fantastic place to unwind, getting away from the stresses of city life. It is fast turning into one the jewels of the Cape Nature accommodation offerings, and is as close to five star bush self-catering as you'd hope to find.

The Shoveler unit that we stayed in was brand new, with a gorgeous deck overlooking the bird sanctuary, perfect for sundowners and of course, with the braai going at fever pitch.

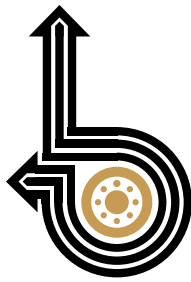
There's plenty to do, or not to do if you just want to 'veg' out. For the active visitor, mountain bikes are on offer, and there are plenty of hikes around the reserve. The reserve also boasts several kilometres of unspoilt beach, which is a prime fishing spot for anglers, provided you have a permit.

In terms of eating out, you'll find some options in Eland's Bay and Velddrif, although don't expect any five star cuisine out there; it's more true West Coast tucker.

All in all, a good time was had by all at both venues, while the CX-5 proved itself as one of the premier mid-sized SUV in SA.

*Gregory Simpson*





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**SOUTHERN AFRICAN BUS OPERATORS ASSOCIATION**  
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# 2016 National Conference & Exhibition

**09 & 10 MARCH 2016**

**CSIR INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTRE**  
**BRUMMERIA, PRETORIA**

Register online at [www.saboa.co.za](http://www.saboa.co.za) or  
contact Cynthia on 011 511 7641 / [cynthia@saboa.co.za](mailto:cynthia@saboa.co.za)

**REGISTRATION CLOSES 26 FEBRUARY 2016**

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