SHOWING SA THE E-MOBILITY WAY

On 18 August, Port Elizabeth-based newspaper The Herald covered the handing over of a 100% electric vehicle to Nelson Mandela Bay mayor Danny Jordaan.

On the front page is a photograph of a pleased-looking Mayor Jordaan behind the steering wheel of a red Nissan Leaf, keen to start his three-day stint of silent, emission-free motoring.

The initiative was part of an awareness campaign drive by the uYilo e-Mobility Innovation Programme run by acting director Hiten Parmar.

uYilo was established in March 2013 by the Technology Innovation Agency hosted by the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University to fast-track development and commercialisation of key technologies to support a South African electric vehicle (EV) industry. The five-year national multi-stakeholder programme seeks to ready SA for the introduction of e-mobility by creating new business opportunities and generating the know-how to support electric vehicles.

Currently supporting relationships exist with BMW South Africa, the Department of Science & Technology, Eskom, First National Batteries, General Motors SA, the Industrial Development Corporation, Imperial Green Mobility, Mercedes-Benz SA, Nissan SA, Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality, Powertech Batteries, the South African National Energy Development Institute, Shamwari Conservation Experience and the Department of Trade and Industry.

It’s fair to say that Parmar is passionate about the programme and the potential it holds for South Africa. Referring to a recent article published by EV Obsession, which refers to South African EV sales as humorous, Parmar explains that some people are surprised and uncertain when they are confronted with an electric vehicle. The hand-over of the vehicle to Mayor Jordaan would go a long way to create awareness around EV vehicles as the future of greener transport systems.

In addition the uYilo programme is also running a number of projects to promote e-mobility and serve as platforms which will enable the knowledge creation and technical know-how in the field of EV technologies.

One such project, run in partnership with Imperial Green Mobility, Shamwari Game Reserve, Tracker and Powertech Batteries sees an electric 4x4 ATV being used by Shamwari Game Reserve in their rhino anti-poaching programme.

In conjunction with SANEDI, Shamwari Game Reserve and Tracker, a fully electric game...
viewing vehicle will also be used within Shamwari’s Conservation Experience Programme.

uYilo also approached Nissan South Africa to use one of its Leaf EV’s as part of a field testing programme. The car will be utilised to determine user patterns, usage modes and energy cycles. It is not intent of the programme to modify the vehicle systems in any way, but to use it as tool to facilitate the development of other technologies. The deployment of these platforms will service to identify technology gaps, test new business models and eliminate interoperability issues between eco-system components. Emphasis will be placed on creating credible data that can be used for marketing purposes and to create awareness of e-mobility as a viable alternative.

uYilo’s facilities are situated on NMMU’s North campus and consist of a live testing environment for the testing of EV or related components and a national battery testing laboratory which has the capability to test lead-acid and lithium-ion batteries.

One of the current key development projects in the live testing environment includes the installation of a solar array system, to serve as phase 1 of a renewable energy source, and scoping an energy management system to optimally manage the best source of energy between the solar array and the battery storage which will then be supplied to EV charging stations. The system will also facilitate the option of incorporating EV batteries into their “second life” as grid storage support. The setup would essentially close the loop in clean green energy towards zero emission mobility.

The EV systems laboratory provides a platform to facilitate EV compatibility with products from a variety of global suppliers to accelerate the development and deployment of electric vehicle technologies into vehicle system level for energy consumption and performance.

The purpose of the battery testing centre is to provide support for the manufacturing of cells and batteries by facilitating the characterisation of new product ranges while providing certification of existing products.

“There is a global revolution in technology and electric vehicles are at the forefront of many of these innovations,” explains Parmar. “There are a substantial number of associated innovations which are being developed to accompany electric vehicles, ranging from cell phone Apps to assist with recharging to physical recharging stations, to developing techniques which would allow one to put battery power back into a grid from the vehicle.

“These are very exciting times, not only for the South African industry but also for the uYilo Programme,” he concludes.
Editor’s Note

Spring is in the air and with it comes the promise of new life, rejuvenation and a brighter future. Let’s hope this will apply to the motor industry too because, let’s face it, things aren’t exactly moonlight and roses at the moment!

Vehicle sales continue to slide and will probably slump even further. CBU exports into Africa are also down. Then there’s concern about sub-standard tyres making their way onto our market. And let’s not forget our Eskom woes!

But there is good news too. The onslaught of new model launches continues and there’s plenty to look forward to. This includes an updated Ford Ranger and a brand-new Hilux, to name but a few. Motorsport lovers will also be happy to hear that the rejuvenation of Kyalami is well underway and should be finished by the first quarter of 2016.

In other news, it’s all systems go for the annual WesBank/SAGMJ Car of the Year competition, with a number of rule changes coming into effect. The jury has been announced and the next step will be choosing the finalists. It’s safe to say that the winner won’t be a Porsche as the German manufacturer hasn’t introduced any new models during the eligibility period.

So while everything might not be going our way, there’s certainly more than enough to keep us busy, interested and entertained. And this is what makes our industry such a dynamic one and why AutoLive will always endeavour to keep you informed.

Happy reading!

Liana Reiners, Editor liana@autolive.co.za

Battle of the bakkies takes centre stage

BY ROGER HOUGHTON

The battle for supremacy in the high-profile one-ton pick-up market in South Africa took centre stage in the July sales figure stakes as both the Toyota Hilux and Ford Ranger had incentives running to boost sales.

Hilux staged a big fight back to move into its customary leadership position again after trailing Ranger for several months, with Ranger having benefitted from several large fleet deals, including a big one from Telkom where Bidvest is now responsible for managing the fleet.

Not only did Hilux outsell Ranger by almost 1 000 units in July (3 546 vs. 2 618) but on a year-to-date basis, after seven months of 2015, Hilux took over the lead by 176 units (20 498 vs. 20 322). Ranger kept ahead in double cab sales in July, but Hilux was the leader in both the single-cab and extra-cab segments.

This market will become increasingly hot over the next eight or so months as Ford introduces a major facelift to Ranger later this year and Toyota launches its all-new Hilux range in the first quarter of 2016.

The current make-up of the SA vehicle market also means that the model range which is the leader in the highly competitive one-ton bakkie market is also the top-selling range in the overall market, due to the much segmented composition of the passenger car market. (The Volkswagen Polo Vivo is the most popular car range after the first seven months of 2015 with 16 850 units sold compared to 18 320 a year ago).

Total vehicle sales in South Africa continued the downward slide in July, with the 54 112 units sold being 6.1% below the figure for July 2014; 82.4% of the sales were through the dealer retail channels, with a hefty 11.9% of the sales going to the rental industry which is beginning to fleet up for the summer holiday period, while 3.4% of the vehicles went into corporate fleets and 3.1% represented sales to government departments.

Passenger cars accounted for the largest drop in sales, sliding 8.8%, while LCVs were marginally better than a year ago. Medium truck volumes fell 1.6% and heavy and extra-heavy trucks and buses decreased by 6.3%.

Total year-to-date sales in SA at the end of July totalled 356 755 units, which was 2.5% below the figure at the same time last year. However, exports of built-up vehicles continued to show an upward trend, with the 28 291 units shipped in July being an impressive 24.4% higher than the figure for July 2014. Exports remained on target to improve in annual terms by about 20% to a projected record number of about 330 000 for the year.

Toyota’s Hilux was the market leader in both the single- and extra-cab segments.

MONTHLY SALES STATISTICS

The growing amount of advertising in AutoLive has made it necessary to relocate the four pages of detailed monthly vehicle sales analysis to the website www.autolive.co.za.

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• Improving the listing accuracy and search function
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or 011 784 3413 during our business hours (9:00am-5:00pm, Mon-Fri)
Suzuki – much bigger than you think

BY ROGER HOUGHTON

Many South African car buyers still labour under the perception that Suzuki is all about motorcycles. Changing this mindset is a major challenge for the company’s managing director, Yukio Sato, and his team, based at Linbro Park in Gauteng.

Suzuki, in fact, manufactured over 3-million cars compared to 2-million motorcycles globally last year. This makes it a bigger car maker in terms of units sold than companies such as Daimler, BMW and Mazda. It is also the third biggest seller of cars in Japan after Toyota and Honda, being particularly strong in the 660 cc minicar market which accounts for about 40% of the cars sold in that country annually.

The jewel in the Suzuki crown is actually its joint venture operation with Maruti in India which goes back to 1982. Maruti Suzuki is the dominant player in the Indian market with sales of 1.2-million cars last year and a share of more than 45%.

Another challenge that Sato and his predecessor, Kazuyuki Yamashita, have faced was establishing Suzuki Auto SA as a standalone brand in South Africa in 2008 – just at the time of the global economic meltdown – because General Motors (and previously Delta Motor Corporation) had handled the Suzuki car franchise locally from 1986 to 2004. (General Motors had tied up internationally with Suzuki in 1981, taking a 5% share in the Japanese company hence the local arrangement).

Sato is a Suzuki veteran, having joined the company 30 years ago. His career has involved sales, marketing and product planning and he has had wide experience dealing with export markets. The five years before he came to SA in 2013 were spent in Pakistan where Suzuki has a plant producing 130 000 cars a year.

Yukio Sato lives in Sandton while his wife, Noriko as well as their son and daughter live in Japan. His hobbies are fishing and golf and he enjoys the many golf courses in SA, playing every weekend if possible. This will make him the envy of many people in Japan as few people in that country can play as often as there are many players and not too many golf courses.

Suzuki Auto has increased its passenger car range substantially over the past couple of years and now offers 10 models, with the all-new Vitara coming to shake up the B-segment SUV/crossover marked when it arrives in November.

Of interest is a fact pointed out by Charl Grobler, the sales and product planning manager at Suzuki Auto SA, that the Vitara actually started the global swing to so-called soft roaders as it preceded the Toyota RAV4 which is generally credited with creating this important new market segment. The latest Vitara has been so well received in Europe that there is now a back order for this model so the team at Linbro Park are excited about its arrival here.

“The strategy of offering a much more comprehensive model range is aimed at increasing our local sales volume, but now we have been hit by the slowing economy, a slump in vehicle sales and the weak rand. These factors have all impacted negatively on the local passenger car market.

“Suzuki’s sales for the first seven months of this year were standing at 3 696 units which was a 3% increase over the 3 599 units sold in the same period last year, compared to a fall of 3.6% in the overall passenger car market, so we are showing some growth” explained Sato.

Suzuki will also be returning to the local LCV market in the next few months when it launches the latest version of the Carry, a cab-over pick-up with a maximum load capacity of 1 000 kg. This is a “no frills” vehicles which is very popular in India.

Suzuki Auto has taken a different approach to Honda, its Japanese rival in SA, by keeping its car, motorcycle and marine dealers separate, with 40 car dealers, 47 handling motorcycles and 29 marine dealers where Suzuki has a 40% share of the four-stroke outboard engine market. Grobler says 50 car dealers will probably be needed to ensuring optimum representation in urban and rural areas of SA.

All the dealers are independent while Suzuki Auto SA is a wholly owned subsidiary of Suzuki Japan, which recently received an important boost when New York hedge fund Third Point acquired a stake in the company. It now seems as though the five-year dispute to split from Volkswagen which bought 19.9% of the Japanese company several years ago will be resolved soon. This news lifted the Suzuki share price to a record level on the Tokyo stock exchange earlier this month.

At present the focus of Suzuki is Southern Africa with dealerships in Namibia, Zimbabwe, Botswana and Swaziland and no plans to go further north in the near future.

Suzuki may still be a comparatively small player in South Africa but MD Sato and his team are determined to move up the ranks in terms of annual sales in SA as the company has been able to grow its sales in many other world markets with a range of quality vehicles backed by top level after-sales support.
Tomboy takes Ranger Odyssey crown

Pretoria resident Liane van Dyk was crowned as the 2015 Ranger Odyssey winner following 12 days of evaluation and competition while travelling 2 000 km through the remote Damaraland and Kaokoland regions of Namibia. The 23-year-old computer programmer and part-time DJ beat 19 other contestants to the title, including 13 from South Africa, two each from Nigeria and Ivory Coast, and one each from Angola and Mozambique.

Van Dyk, who describes herself as an adventure junkie that's built for the outdoors and off-road, began her life-changing Ranger Odyssey adventure with Boot Camp in the small Karoo town of Prince Albert during June, where she emerged as one of the Top 20 contestants selected from the initial group of 40 chosen from the thousands of online entries received for this year’s event.

“I was fortunate to see him again a couple of months ago when we attended a get-together of motorsport personalities at the museum of enthusiast Steve Koterba in Benoni. He had just returned from his first trip to India for treatment for a brain tumour and was in high spirits. We had a good chat and I will always remember him as enthusiastic to the end and a wonderful person to talk to on a variety of subjects, including cricket!”

Nigel Idris, who passed away recently after a long battle with cancer, is best known for his exploits on the cricket field, but he was also passionate about motor racing and brought Karaoke to South Africa too. (I went to one of his early Karaoke evenings at the Clay Oven in Bryanston, which was great fun and a novelty at the time).

I was one of the people closely involved with Clive’s entry into motor racing as a celebrity driver together with another cricketer, fast bowler Garth le Roux. They drove Mazda 323 EGi’s in Group N racing in the 1980s when I was working for Sigma Motor Corporation. Initially it was to be a project sponsored by the Swiftsure yacht building company in Cape Town, but the sponsorship never materialised.

However, the motor racing bug had certainly bitten and Clive continued for a number of years including racing in the Porsche 944 Turbo Cup and racing a Mazda RX7 in the production car championship.

He also took part in the Total Economy Run but crashed his Mazda on a gravel road near Richmond in KZN – fortunately without injury – despite a day of instruction on gravel road driving from multiple rally champion Jan Hettema.

He stopped racing for some time and then, in 2012, Peter du Toit invited him to drive one of his cars in the Passion for Speed meeting at Zwartkops at the beginning of 2013. He jumped at the opportunity and raced a GSM Dart in the Legends Series. He even bought a Cobra to participate in the Legends Series for Sports and GT Cars and I saw him race it at Kyalami last year.

I saw him at the practice for this year’s Passion for Speed event at Zwartkops and he told me he was recovering from another bout of chemotherapy and was not yet strong enough to race the Cobra but would again drive Peter’s Dart, which he did to good effect, coming second in his class in the SA Tourist Trophy race.

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Clive Rice racing at Zwartkops in Peter du Toit’s GSM Dart.

Obituaries

BY ROGER HOUGHTON

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Nigel Idris, who passed away from cancer at the end of last month in St. Francis Bay, is a person who certainly made his mark in the local motor industry, particularly in after-sales.

Nigel was born in Nairobi, Kenya, in 1946. After school he went to England and trained as a military officer. He later moved to South Africa and began his climb up the local motor industry ladder in the parts department of Ford. He then moved to Toyota where he was first regional parts manager and subsequently national parts manager. From here he joined Malbak Motor Holdings as parts manager, later to become a director. He was also a director of Malcomess and Protea Chemicals.

For family reasons and the education of his children Nigel and his wife, Gill, returned to England where Nigel ran Kwik Fit in South-East England for the Albert Wessels’ family business. Once the children had finished their schooling the family returned to SA where Nigel rejoined Malbak, which had become Unitrans Motors, on the after-sales side. He remained with Unitrans until his retirement to St. Francis Bay.

I was fortunate to get to know Nigel when he attended off-road races and rallies. A keen golfer and wonderful company around a braise fire or dining table, Nigel leaves his wife, Gill, son Justin, daughter Natasha and granddaughter Taylor.

Winners of the 2015 Spirit of Africa Trophy announced

Alwyn Jordaan and Melanie Barnard are the 2015 Spirit of Africa Trophy champions. The pair, who finished in the third position last year, successfully mastered five days of demanding 4x4 driving challenges at the Kwalata Game Reserve in Botswana. The top 20 teams that participated in the 2015 finals emerged from nearly 500 teams that competed in the elimination rounds that were held in Zeerust between April and June this year. The finals were a tense affair with teams competing against each other in 30-technical stages which not only demanded precise driving skills but also total

continued on next page
concentration. The top five teams from the Spirit of Africa competition will represent South Africa and compete against five teams from each of the other participating countries – Australia, Botswana and Namibia.

Sanjoy Gupta takes over the helm at Mahindra SA

Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd, one of India’s leading business houses, has confirmed the appointment of Sanjoy Gupta as the new CEO of Mahindra South Africa. Gupta’s appointment comes after the recent announcement that current Mahindra SA CEO, Ashok Thakur, will be heading up Mahindra’s newly established African Business Unit, which will act as the centre of the company’s business expansion into Africa.

Gupta joins the Mahindra SA team from Mahindra & Mahindra in India, where his most recent position was vice president for national spares and service strategy, technical support, sales and service, and customer satisfaction. He has a diploma in mechanical and electrical engineering, as well as a diploma in marketing management, and started his professional career in heavy earthmoving equipment in 1989.

His more than 25 years of experience in the motor industry, gained at both Ford India and Mahindra, includes national dealer channel development, head of national sales for personal vehicles, and head of customer care.

Gupta joins Mahindra SA as the local company celebrates 11 years of operation in SA. During that time, the company has developed into a solid business with compelling future prospects and a strong emphasis on growth.
Car of the Year rule changes and jury announced

The annual WesBank / South African Guild of Motoring Journalists (SAGMJ) Car of the Year competition has seen its fair share of controversy. Especially over the past three years, which saw Porsche score a hat trick with first the Boxster, then the Cayman S and finally the Macan S walking off with the silverware.

The SAGMJ has firmly stood by the three-controversial Porsche wins, emphasising that the Car of the Year should represent nothing short of motorizing excellence and that – all things considered – the three Porsches indeed represented the pinnacle of motorizing in their respective classes. However, for the 2016 competition, there has been an extensive review of the rules.

As in previous years, the winning car must score highly in its class across a variety of categories; should demonstrate that it strives towards representing innovation and ingenuity in marketing and engineering in its class; should represent a brave step forward in motorizing, setting new benchmarks in its market segment; and must evoke automotive passion and excitement to make it a truly outstanding car both in its class and in the whole market.

However, unlike before which saw one single model being rewarded, this year the award will be made to the model range chosen to most closely match this definition by a panel of jury members of the SA Guild of Motoring Journalists after a disciplined evaluation process.

Incidentally, the competition will be open to all vehicles that are primarily used for the transportation of passengers and that are available in South Africa, including multi-purpose vehicles, double cab bakkies, sport-utility vehicles, crossover vehicles and two-wheel and four-wheel drive leisure vehicles regardless of whether they have a transfer gearbox or low range.

The criteria for vehicle eligibility includes that the vehicle range has been named and launched publicly prior to the cut-off date (midnight on 31 August 2015). In addition, it must have been exposed (which includes a reasonable driving opportunity) to at least 75% of the SAGMJ’s jury members by 31 January 2016.

The jury is selected by a voting process that takes place prior to the commencement of the voting process for a shortlist of vehicle ranges to be considered as finalists. Among other requirements, a jury member must have completed a minimum of two years of jury training; must be active in the motoring industry for a minimum of five years and must be an industry-recognised journalist who has participated in the industry by attending manufacturer launch events, and/or by driving test vehicles during the eligibility period.

In early September, all full members of the SAGMJ will have the opportunity to cast their vote to determine which vehicle ranges will be the competition’s semi-finalists. Following this, the jury will cast their vote on the semi-finalists in order to determine the finalists for the 2016 WesBank / SAGMJ Car of the Year competition. The finalist announcement is scheduled for 30 September 2015.

The eligibility period for vehicle ranges that may be considered for the 2016 WesBank / SAGMJ Car of the Year competition closes at midnight on 31 August 2015.

The eligibility period for vehicle ranges that may be considered for the 2016 WesBank / SAGMJ Car of the Year competition closes at midnight on 31 August 2015. Following this, all full members of the SAGMJ will have the opportunity to cast their vote to determine which of these vehicle ranges will be the competition’s semi-finalists. The ranges with the twenty highest scores will be announced to the membership and to the public as the semi-finalist ranges.

In the third week of September 2015, the jury will cast their vote on the semi-finalists in order to determine the finalists for the 2016 WesBank / SAGMJ Car of the Year competition. The finalist announcement is scheduled for 30 September 2015.

The jury will then follow new scoring guidelines when they put the finalists through stringent testing in February 2016, after which the 2016 WesBank / SAGMJ Car of the Year will be announced at a black tie event on 8 March 2016.

The SA Guild of Motoring Journalists has had the custodian of the SA Car of the Year competition since 1986, with WesBank – one of South Africa’s largest vehicle finance institutions – as its headline sponsor since inception. Hollard Insurance and Motul supply support sponsorship.

WesBank / SAGMJ Car of the Year 2016 jury members:

1. Andrew Leopold (SACarFan)
2. Aurelia Mokokazi (Destiny Magazine)
3. Bernard Hellberg Jr (Driven Magazine)
4. Bernard Hellberg Sr (Indwe/Maropela Media)
5. Bobby Chestheem (The Herald’s World of Wheels; MotorMania)
6. Charleen Clarke (Focus on Transport; Women on Wheels)
7. Egmont Sippel (Rapport Motoring)
8. Gerrie Smit (MotorPlus)
9. Gerry Girke (Suburban Bugle/Wild Coast FM 98.6)
10. James Siddall (Freelance)
11. Janine-Lee van der Post (Wheels24)
12. Jason Wooskey (IOL)
13. Justus Visagie (MotorTalk)
14. Lerato Matebsa (Business Day Motor News)
15. Liana Reiniers (AutoLive)
16. Lindani Buthelezi (Isolozewi)
17. Lindsay Vine-Smyth (Ignition)
18. Malcolm Kinsey (MRK Publications)
20. Marnus Hattingh (Beeld/Burger/ Volkstabl)
21. Michele Lupini (AutoWeek/Bakkie & Truck)
22. Ray Leathern (topCar.co.za)
23. Reuben van Niekerk (Future Publishing)
24. Roger McCleery (Radio Today)
25. Rubin van Niekerk (Gay Pages)
26. Stuart Johnston (MoneyWebDRIVE)
27. Wynter Murdoch (Future Publishing)

The following full and probationary members of the SAGMJ have also been selected for the Jury Training Programme in terms of the revised rules of the competition:

1. Adam Ford (Mix FM 93.8/Ignition TV (Buyer’s Guide))
2. Anica Krüger (AutoTrader Garden Route)
3. Carl Kritzinger (Radio Tygerberg 104FM - Wiele; Wiele Blitz)
4. Daniel Callbacho (Neofundi.com)
5. Dirk Gallironitz (UltimateDrive)
6. Francisco Rwamba (themotorist.co.za)
7. Francois Oosthuizen (Ignition)
8. Johann van Tonder (Motor Burger (Tuinroete)/Kouga Express (Oos Kaap Burger)/Vaalweekblad/Laeveler(Ultimate Drive)
9. Lorenzo Bonani (Wheels of the Bay, Channel 260 Bay TV/Messenger News)
10. Sean Nurse (Auto Dealer)
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[www.bosch.co.za](http://www.bosch.co.za)
The 2015 edition of Automechanika Shanghai, Asia's largest trade fair for automotive parts, accessories, equipment and services, will be held from 2 to 5 December at a new location: the National Exhibition and Convention Centre, Puxi, Shanghai.

The larger venue offers 280,000 m² of exhibition space, an increase of 27% over the 2014 event. Naturally this means that more exhibitors can be accommodated and predictions are that this number will climb by 8% per cent to around 5,300.

It is also expected that about 100,000 visitors will attend this year's trade fair.

Established in 2004, Automechanika Shanghai is organised by Messe Frankfurt (Shanghai) Co Ltd, a subsidiary of Messe Frankfurt Exhibition GmbH, one of Europe's oldest and largest trade fair organisers, and the China National Automotive Industry International Corporation (CNAICO).

The latter is an integrated state-owned enterprise specialising in international trade and exhibitions, with diversified operations across industries in China.

Said Jason Cao, Chairman of the Board of Management, Messe Frankfurt (Shanghai) Co Ltd: “Due to the immense continued growth of the show, the new locale will not only bring a broadened opportunity for sourcing products, but also fresh ideas and action plans. This year's show will continue to highlight a dynamic, fast-paced development in the flourishing field of automotive parts, accessories, equipment and services. In addition, buyers will see more distinguishing product zones and categories including electronic, connectivity and environmentally friendly products.”

In addition to an expanded International Exhibitors & Key Brand Hall and added zones, the Premium Buyers Club will once again offer visitors an upgraded VIP buyer experience. This programme offers exclusive services for premium buyers at a senior management level, or those who hold full purchasing authority during the show. Benefits include pre-show updates, usage of facilities in the Premium Buyer's Club Lounge and pre-arranged networking meetings with selected quality suppliers to make sourcing more effective.

Automechanika Shanghai is one of 15 Automechanika fairs held in Africa, Asia, Europe and North, Central and South America.

Private buying and selling made easy and safe

According to the latest TransUnion vehicle pricing index for the first quarter of 2015, used car inflation has increased year-on-year for the fifth consecutive quarter. In addition, used car prices rose year-on-year by 1.67% in the first quarter, the largest year-on-year rate of increase in used vehicle prices since 2013. In short, used cars have become a hot commodity.

This means that selling a car has never been easier, as buyers increasingly opt to buy used in order to cut costs. But a large portion of these transactions will be conducted privately between the owner and the prospective buyer without dealer or broker assistance – which can be risky and time-consuming.

“As a layman buyer, it can be difficult to properly assess a vehicle and both parties may find the process of transferring ownership and obtaining financing difficult. Others simply hate confrontation or negotiation, or do not know their rights,” says Jeff Osborne, Head of Gumtree Automotive. “There could also be hidden surprises. The car might have been involved in an accident without the owner disclosing it or perhaps the car is still being financed. Handing over a vast amount of cash and ending up with a big repair bill a few months later is definitely a worst case scenario, but it can happen.”

Gumtree has recently teamed up with MotoFinn, a third party that ensures hassle-free transactions between buyers and sellers. The company has contracted with Deloitte to administer all payments and together with DEKRA Automotive and TransUnion, helps buyers and sellers get a fair deal by granting them access to credible information as well facilitating the process.

“While we have many trusted dealerships operating on our site that are bound by legislation, about half the sellers using the site are individuals who prefer to handle the transaction on their own. This is a way of ensuring that both the buyer and the seller are protected when transacting privately. The vehicle is thoroughly inspected and checked for the buyer and the buyer's financing and credit worthiness assessed for the seller. It's win-win.”

MotoFinn’s Verified Private Seller model will be available to all Gumtree users at a launch price of R795 per transaction. For more information, visit www.gumtree.co.za/pages/motofinn.
CBU exports into Africa continue to tumble

Exports of completely built up vehicles from South Africa into other African countries continue to tumble as many of the major African economies are hit by the effects of the low oil price and general economic woes while others have ongoing conflicts disrupting business.

Exports in July totalled only 4 453 units, which was 16% below the figure for July 2014 when terrorist attacks and Ebola outbreaks in certain markets affected sales negatively.

Toyota was again the leading exporter for the month with 1 528 units shipped, but this was not too far ahead of Ford on 1 345 units, with Nissan trailing on 871 units. However it must be remembered that Nissan has started low volume production in Nigeria which impacts on its export performance.

The year-to-date export figure of 29 965 units is also disappointing, being almost 34% lower than the figure at the corresponding time last year. Here Toyota is way out in front with 13 298 units shipped, compared to 7 215 units for Nissan, 5 703 units for Ford and 2 167 for GM/Isuzu.

Algeria, which took 7 551 of these exported units, was the biggest market but it was virtually the total preserve of two manufacturers, Toyota (4 276) and Nissan (2 966). Other significant markets for SA-made vehicles were: Nigeria (3 677), Angola (3 152), Kenya (2 656), Mozambique (2 292), Zambia (1 758), Zimbabwe (1 604) and Ghana (1 231).

Ford to build Rangers in Nigeria

Ford Motor Company recently announced that – starting in the fourth quarter of 2015 – it will assemble the popular Ranger pick-up in Nigeria. This will be the first African country outside of South Africa where Ford vehicles are produced.

“Assembling Ford Ranger trucks in Africa’s largest economy is an important milestone in our Middle East and Africa growth plan,” said Jim Benintende, president of Ford Middle East & Africa.

Assembly will begin in Ikeja, about 750 km southwest of Nigeria’s capital city Abuja, where Ford is partnering with Ford dealer group Coscharis Motors Limited on the project. Ford will assemble the vehicles at a semi-knocked down (SKD) level, using body parts and components imported from South Africa for the new Ranger. The new assembly plant will create approximately 180 jobs directly and indirectly, and has the capacity to assemble up to 5 000 units annually. Vehicles assembled at Ikeja are destined for sale in Nigeria only.

We are committed to supporting Nigeria's developing automotive industry and economy together with Coscharis

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OneLogix expands its African presence

According to Engineering News, logistics group OneLogix is reportedly planning to invest around R30-million in two new vehicle distribution ventures in Tanzania and Kenya respectively.

Kenya is a new market for OneLogix and it will operate in a joint venture, in which it has a 30% share. The carrier service will move second-hand and new cars from the Port of Mombasa to Nairobi, some 450 km away.

The carrier service will move second-hand and new cars from the Port of Mombasa to Nairobi
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Luxury cars targeted by thieves

Drivers of luxury cars are at risk of having their vehicles targeted by organised crime syndicates. A new trend in luxury car thefts – involving the targeting of victims through dealerships or social media – has been picked up by the South African Insurance Crime Bureau.

It involves fraudsters pretending to be employees of dealerships – in particular representatives from the service department or customer service. People tend to expect a speedy reaction from companies when they complain in a public forum or on social media. Victims are either identified by their information on record at the dealership, or through comments or complaints they post on social media or other websites. Some of the victims have also been people who have filed complaints directly with dealerships.

The customer is contacted by a syndicate member purporting to be someone from the dealership. They explain that they don’t want any negative publicity and will do whatever necessary not to inconvenience them and offer to fetch the car from the client’s home and take it in for repairs. The syndicate member then makes an arrangement to pick up the car.

Only when the client contacts the dealership to find out what is happening with the car is it discovered that there was misrepresentation involved. By that time the car is gone.

Hugo van Zyl, chief operating officer of the SAICB, said they currently have the details of 29 reported cases all bearing similarities and apparently carried out with the same modus operandi. According to Van Zyl there could easily be more cases. The first incidents date as far back as April last year.

Van Zyl said his organisation has been working closely with the police, who have recently made five arrests directly linked with the syndicate in Gauteng.

For the South African Tyre Manufacturers Conference (SATMC), tyre safety is becoming an increasingly critical issue – to such an extent that it plans to take its complaint over cheap tyre imports to SA’s International Trade Administration Commission.

“Our national speed limit is 120 km/h, but many cars are capable of 250 km/h or more,” said TiAuto Group Marketing Executive Joe du Plooy. “Not reputable tyre manufacturers, not tyre retailers and most certainly not the consumer, who stands to lose the most when poor quality tyres fail under normal operating conditions.”

Among the concerns cited by SATMC is the fact that tyres sold by illegal importers are not suited to South Africa’s road and environmental conditions, which the organisation says has resulted in tyres exploding while vehicles were in motion.

“Big-name tyre manufacturers invest heavily into research and development, which results in better engineered, longer-lasting, better performing and safer tyres. I wouldn’t personally consider a tyre that isn’t backed up by extensive research and proven performance,” added du Plooy.

Equally alarming is the fact that more than half of the second-hand tyres intended for sale in South Africa are unroadworthy and pose a serious safety threat. The main concerns include tyres that contain damage on critical sections, fail to meet minimum non-skid depth requirements and have been illegally repaired in the past.

The SATMC does not want to create barriers to entry for reputable competing manufacturers, but are rather aiming to promote a healthy competitive market based on sound standards and practices. By creating an equal playing field, the SATMC aims to create a bigger demand for tyres designed and manufactured for local conditions, which will stimulate South Africa’s economic growth, prevent job losses and help to create more service provider opportunities to the factories.

Wrong tyre speed ratings can be fatal

Tyres with the wrong speed rating can affect the safety of the vehicle to which they are fitted. This is the word from Bridgestone which said that using a tyre at a higher speed that it is rated for could cause it to fail.

“Our national speed limit is 120 km/h, but many cars are capable of 250 km/h or more,” said Bridgestone’s General Manager for Field Engineering and Technical Services, Hiroshi Nakanishi. “Although we strongly discourage people from driving at unsafe or illegal speeds, we have no control over the way vehicles are used. For this reason, tyres must be able to cope with the car’s top speed.”

He commented that motorists were sometimes tempted to fit tyres with a lower speed rating to save money, but that this was false economy. “Fitting tyres with the wrong speed rating not only compromises safety, but may invalidate your insurance policy.”

He advised motorists to consult their vehicle’s owner’s manual to determine the required speed rating. “A car with a maximum speed of 190 km/h would require a T-rated tyre. Fitting a tyre with a Q rating (160 km/h) to such a car would be a safety hazard, because such a speed could be reached inadvertently, like on a downhill stretch,” he said.

Nakanishi said that a full list of tyre speed symbols was available on the Bridgestone website, www.bridgestone.co.za, to assist drivers in understanding the speed ratings of their tyres.

“Consult a fitment centre if you are unsure about the correct speed rating for your vehicle’s tyres,” he concluded.
JAPANESE MANUFACTURERS OPT FOR TURBOCHARGING ... AT LAST!

Japanese car manufacturers such as Toyota, Honda, Nissan and Suzuki have all been late in adopting turbocharging and downsizing engines for family cars as is the norm at most European car makers as well as Ford internationally.

The reason for the delay is that generally normally aspirated Japanese cars have been economical and powerful enough without the need for turbocharging. Now they are reaching the limits of this technology and are planning a big switch to turbo power in the next five years.

Toyota has a 2-litre turbo in its new Lexus NX crossover and this engine will be used in other products in the Toyota Group, while Honda is set to follow the turbo trend in the near future. Suzuki will preview its Baleno Turbo at next month’s Frankfurt Motor Show.

Nissan is expected to embrace turbocharging at a slower rate than its rivals despite its alliance partner, Renault, being a leader in turbocharging technology with links to Formula 1 racing.

Great Wall Motors has issued a private placement plan to raise R34 billion for the research and development, testing and production of new energy vehicles and parts. The plan will see GWM issue 387.0076 million A-shares at R88.19 per share in order to obtain the funds.

Based on existing best-selling models, GWM will develop and build a serial vehicle platform, expand its operations into the new energy vehicle business, and produce core parts such as intelligent transmissions, new energy vehicle motors, motor controllers and battery systems.

The Chinese manufacturer will also focus its new energy vehicle R & D on the development of state-of-the-art features like IOV, Active Infrared Night Viewing, Adaptive Cruise Control, Automatic Parking, Intelligent Identification and Intelligent Entertainment.

From left to right: Roland Bosse, Merchandise & Inventory Optimisation Executive, AutoZone; Wayne Grews, CEO, Autozone; Ian Law, Group Sales and Marketing Director, G.U.D. Holdings (Pty) Ltd and Red Shuttleworth, CEO, G.U.D. Holdings (Pty) Ltd.

BRIDGESTONE RAKES IN AWARDS

Bridgestone South Africa has scooped two major awards within weeks of one-another, topping the charts in brand loyalty among both the general public and the trucking industry.

In the first accolade, Bridgestone came out tops in a brand survey by Ask Afrika, an independent research company. A survey of 15 960 consumers measured which brands were bought most often, and which brands were bought exclusively. Bridgestone emerged as the leader in the tyre brand category.

And in a second major award, Bridgestone won the ‘Best Truck Tyre Brand” category in the TruckX Industry Survey. As with its Ask Afrika award, the TruckX winners were decided by a survey, in this case of a large cross section of managers, executives and fleet owners in the transport and logistics industry.

“We are extremely proud of our achievements in the TruckX and Ask Afrika surveys,” said Bridgestone General Manager of Marketing, Tony Burns. “What really matters is that these awards were decided by consumer feedback. They
confirm Bridgestone’s product leadership among both commercial and consumer customers,” he concluded.

**8-MILLION TOYOTA HYBRIDS SOLD**

Toyota has now sold over 8 million hybrid vehicles worldwide, with just 10 months between this and the last million-unit milestone.

Toyota Chairman Takeshi Uchiyamada likes to tell the story of how his team couldn’t get the first Prius prototype to move for 49 days. “We had no idea what was wrong, so we worked late every night trying to figure it out. We finally got it to move around Christmas time, but it only went 500 meters!” he says.

That was back in 1995, when hybrid cars were unproven, experimental machines with a very unclear future. Fast-forward twenty years and the recent sales success globally proves this engine type has staying power.

It might be hard to get a sense of what the number 8 million might mean for the environment and for hybrid owners. For a bit of context, Toyota calculates that as of July 31, its hybrid vehicles have resulted in approximately 58 million fewer tons of CO2 emissions than would have been emitted by gasoline-powered vehicles of similar size and driving performance. Toyota also estimates that its hybrid vehicles have saved approximately 22 million kilolitres of gasoline compared to the amount used by gasoline-powered vehicles of similar sizes.

Since the launch of the Prius in 1997, Toyota has been gradually adding hybrid models throughout its range, from the compact Yaris Hybrid to the luxurious RX Hybrid. As of this month, Toyota sells 30 hybrid passenger car models and one plug-in hybrid model in more than 90 markets.

In South Africa, Toyota recently delivered a fleet of 30 Auris and Yaris hybrid vehicles to The City of Johannesburg for its “Gone Green” campaign. This campaign is in support of the goal of creating a green city.

**SHELBY COMING TO SA**

Shelby American, the company known for turning Ford Mustangs into high-powered street racers, will put its performance cars on the streets of China, England, South Africa and elsewhere. But not necessarily with as much power.

The Las Vegas sports car manufacturer has begun signing up overseas partners to sell Shelby vehicles crafted in Las Vegas and to produce their own, using Shelby specs and Shelby-trained technicians.

Over the past few months, the company has reached an agreement with Ford Lio Ho, a Chinese auto production company and retailer that is 70 per cent owned by Ford Motor Company, to become a Shelby retailer and certified vehicle-modification shop there. Shelby also has inked similar arrangements with operators in Canada, Australia, the U.K.

In addition, each new overseas Shelby shop will be required to open a retail store to sell Shelby American’s line of apparel and racing products.

Cummings acknowledged, however, that many overseas buyers face restrictions on the engine power normally associated with Shelby cars in America. In many cases, the overseas models will be equipped with Ford’s smaller and more fuel-efficient turbocharged EcoBoost engines.

**EUROPEAN NEW-CAR SALES CLIMBED IN JULY**

While the South African vehicle market continued its downward slide, European new-car registrations rose 9.1 per cent in July as recession-hit countries such as Portugal and Ireland, along with the major markets of Germany, the UK, France and Italy, performed strongly.

Registrations increased to 1.18 million vehicles from 1.08 million a year earlier, according to data from market analysts JATO Dynamics. Seven-month sales were up 8.6 per cent to 8.59 million vehicles, marking 23 consecutive months of growth.

All major brands reported sales increases last month. Volkswagen brand maintained its lead of the European car market, with a 7.7 per cent increase in sales. Ford took second position with a 7 per cent rise in volume, ahead of Opel/Vauxhall (3.3 per cent) and Renault (4.9 per cent).

Europe’s top five markets all reported robust demand in July, with sales in Germany jumping 7.4 per cent, while registrations in the UK increased 3.2 per cent and the French market was up 2.3 per cent. Spain’s registrations rose 24 per cent while in Italy, sales increased by 15 per cent.
Renault's Duster kicks up a storm

Someone at Renault is doing something right – not only overseas, but here in South Africa too. While the local passenger car market is having a tough time of it of late as new vehicle sales continue on a downward slide, the French manufacturer seems to be bucking the trend.

In fact, Renault sales figures continue to climb steadily and are expected to be up by 5% for 2015. Models such as the Sandero, Captur and the Duster have played and will continue to play a significant part in this positive growth. Well over 1 000 Captur models have been sold since local introduction in May, with over 8 000 Duster sales since it was launched less than two years ago.

Indicative of just how significant the Duster SUV is in Renault's local arsenal, is the fact that it was nominated as a finalist in the 2015 WesBank South African Guild of Motoring Journalists Car of the Year competition.

Now the 4-model Duster line-up has undergone a significant revamp and upgrade, both inside and out. In addition, production of the 2015 model has been moved from Chennai, India to Pitesti in Romania, the same plant responsible for the highly successful and popular Sandero.

A key production facility for the Renault brand, the Pitesti plant – which also supplies the UK market – has a reputation for solid build quality and efficiency. What’s more, with a number of Duster parts already sourced in Romania, reduced lead time was also a deciding factor. “Moving production to Pitesti provides us with the opportunity to refresh Duster within a sharper turnaround time. That’s good for the brand and good for our customers here in SA,” commented Jeffrey Allison, product manager at Renault South Africa.

As before, the upgraded Renault Duster comes with a choice of two powerplants. The first is a 1.6-litre, 75 kW normally aspirated petrol engine doing duty in Expression and Dynamique 4×2 models. The second is a 1.5-litre, 80 kW turbodiesel unit for Dynamique 4×2 and 4×4 derivatives.

Of particular interest to local motorists will be the fact that the Duster – especially the 1.5 dCi Dynamique – scores high when it comes to fuel efficiency. This particular model uses 4.8 litres/100 km in the combined cycle, compared to the 5.5 litres of its predecessor.

In terms of exterior upgrades and enhancements, the 2015 Duster benefits from a redesigned radiator grille, less chrome and new headlights. At the same time new roof bars, body-coloured side mirrors, new alloy wheels and rear parking distance control sensors enhance the overall package on all models.

The cabin now boasts patterned fabric on inner seat segments and door panels, with optional leather trim for Dynamique derivatives. Dynamique models also benefit from 7-inch MediaNav touchscreen on-board navigation, while cruise control is now standard across the entire range.

With prices ranging from R215 900 to R269 900 and a standard with a 5-year/150 000km mechanical warranty, a 3-year/45 000km service plan (with service intervals at 15 000km intervals) and a 6-year anti-corrosion warranty, there’s no doubt that the Duster will continue to lure prospective buyers into Renault dealerships. ■
I won’t argue that the Ford Tourneo Connect is a bit of an ugly duckling. Not as ugly as those first Fiat Multipla’s but by no means as sleek and attractive as its Fusion stablemate. And truth be told, I wasn’t expecting much when I had it on test recently. Was I in for a surprise!

My entire family fell head over heels in love with the Tourneo Connect – everyone from my teenage son, to my hyper-critical father, to my un-impressible husband and my mother (who thinks that all cars are wonderful).

I was bowled over too because this would be the perfect car for the Reiners family!

For starters, it’s really enjoyable to drive thanks to a very comfortable driving position and despite the rather long nose visibility from the driver’s seat is quite good. The instrument panel is well laid out and all controls, knobs and the like are within easy reach. Of course it also has everything that opens and shuts in terms of standard kit.

Boasting seating for 5 occupants, the Tourneo Connect is all about practicality. And boy, is it practical!

There’s no shortage of leg- and head room both front and rear and it’s worth mentioning that there are plenty of nooks and crannies to stow things in. This includes a clever hidden box above the instrument cluster with a 12V socket suitable for mobile phones or music players, a large lockable glovebox, practical front door bins capable of holding 1.5-litre bottles, spacious centre consoles with cupholders, a full-width overhead shelf in the front compartment, and aircraft-style overhead lockers above the rear seats and luggage area.

Speaking of the luggage area …. the five-seat Tourneo Connect – which also features dual sliding rear doors – offers clever 60/40 split rear seats that can be folded flat and tumbled forward, or removed completely to provide 2 410 litres of luggage space behind the front seats.

And let’s not forget the dual sliding doors which make getting in and out of the rear seats a breeze.

These attributes are combined with outstanding fuel economy and low emissions from highly efficient powertrains, along with advanced safety technologies typically associated with more upmarket vehicles.

The Tourneo Connect is available in a choice of three specification levels and two wheelbase configurations. The Ambiente and Trend use the short-wheelbase (SWB) five-seater platform, while the Titanium derivatives are based on the long-wheelbase (LWB) Grand Tourneo Connect layout in either standard five-seat configuration or optional seven-seat form.

A total of four models are offered, the one I drove being the 1.0 EcoBoost Trend. It is powered by the International Engine of the Year title for the last three years running, producing 74 kW of power and an impressive 170 Nm of torque. Paired with a six-speed manual transmission it consumes a claimed 5.6 litres/100 km in the combined cycle.

I really wish I could have taken the Connect on a roadtrip so I could fully appreciate all it has to offer as a people carrier. Unfortunately I had to be content with the school run and the odd trip to Joburg for business. But whether I was karting kids around or sitting in traffic on the N1, I thoroughly enjoyed my encounter with this Ford. If you’re in the market for a versatile, practical and very capable family vehicle, it’s definitely worth considering.
Land Rover ambassador and Africa's most travelled explorer, Kingsley Holgate, has departed on a unique expedition to find the Heart of Africa. The journey kicked off from the Lesedi Cultural Village, in Gauteng and will end up at the geographic centre of the continent three months later, approximately 3 206 km from where it started.

The destination is a very specific spot, at coordinates 17.05291°E, 2.07035°N. This is the exact location that has been determined to be the Heart of Africa by a team of scientists at University of Cape Town's Department of Environmental and Geographic Science, using a method known as 'centre of gravity' to determine Africa’s geographic centre. Their work was also verified by results from the International Geographical Union. This same process has been used to determine the geographic centres of the United States of America and Australia.

The many stops along the journey will see the convoy of Land Rovers visit villages in Botswana, Zambia, crossing the Zambezi River into Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and finally ending up in the Republic of Congo. Along the way, they will be spreading a message of goodwill and also delivering humanitarian aid. The latter will be in the form of LifeStraws – a drinking straw that purifies water passing through it, making it safe for human consumption – as well as mosquito nets and reading glasses from the Rite to Sight project.

At the same time, the Kingsley Holgate Foundation will raise awareness and educate communities, using its children’s wildlife art programme, on the importance of living among animals.

Using a specially prepared Land Rover Defender 130 for their journey across some of the world’s most difficult terrain, Kingsley and his team will also face numerous serious challenges. Poachers, bandits and hunters may be encountered along the route. Dangerous animals are a definite. And the unseen dangers of Africa’s many insects and diseases also bring great risk.

The end of this great trek into Africa will be punctuated with a Holgate tradition. Kingsley will carry a symbolic Zulu calabash, filled with water taken from the Cradle of Humankind, and empty its contents onto the spot that marks the beating heart of the continent where humanity took its first steps.

During July’s Mandela Month FUSO Trucks Southern Africa sponsored a FUSO Canter LIFT to add to the Shoprite Mobile Soup Kitchen fleet. At the event, more than 700 cups of fortified Royco soup and 1 400 slices of Albany bread were handed out to underprivileged pupils at the Morula View Primary School, in Mabopane, Pretoria.

The customised and fully-equipped Canter LIFT was handed over as part of a three-year sponsorship from FUSO Trucks Southern Africa and will be operational in Secunda and its surrounding communities.

The Shoprite mobile soup kitchen programme was initiated in 2007 with a mere two trucks and has grown ever since. To date it has served over 23 million cups of soup to people across our country in need of a nutritious meal.

“By sponsoring a FUSO Canter LIFT to such a worthy cause, we are bolstering efforts to eradicate hunger in South Africa. We are handing over one of our most rugged medium-duty commercial vehicles and we are confident it will make light work of every single delivery,” said Naeem Hassim, Head of FUSO Trucks Southern Africa.

“Land Rover’s supreme adventurer hits the trail again

Fuso Canter becomes a mobile soup kitchen

Who says road safety can’t be fun?

In South Africa, soccer and vuvuzelas goes hand-in-hand. But apart from offering fun and enjoyment at soccer games, Castrol and Ogilvy Cape Town have come up with a clever way of making the humble vuvuzela a multi-purpose tool that can also ensure that drivers arrive home safely.

The breathalyser test is the most commonly used method for alcohol testing, but can be extremely invasive. Castrol combined the breathalyser that everybody hates and the vuvuzela that everybody loves to create the Castrol Vuvu-Lyza. This innovative invention is giving drivers who love soccer a safer experience after a night out. After the game, drivers simply blow their Vuvu-Lyza – green means go and red means that they are above the legal drinking limit and should not drive.

“We are very proud of this safety initiative inspired by something so synonymous with our local football culture. We are sure the Vuvu-Lyza will be a hit once it becomes available to public”, said Pooja Desai, Passenger Car Oils Manager of Castrol South Africa.

To further push the campaign message, a case study was produced and shared on YouTube. See the video here: https://youtu.be/pj7PRwZHLsA.
GMSA empowers its female employees

As Women’s Month draws to a close, General Motors South Africa (GMSA) reflected on the activities of the company’s Women’s Council, a year after launching the initiative.

“The role of the Women’s Council, which is a global GM initiative, is to empower female employees through training, mentoring, career information and advice as well as industry and product knowledge,” explained Denise van Huyssteen, GM Africa Communication Manager and chairperson of the Women’s Council at GMSA.

Over the past year several women in the organisation have participated in technical training for non-technical people, off-road driver training, safe driver training, work-life balance seminars, psychological and financial wellbeing programmes and simulated manufacturing courses.

According to Van Huyssteen, the key to the Women’s Council’s success can be attributed to the support from top leadership and the fact that programmes are open to both men and women.

“We are promoting a work environment focused on diversity and inclusivity by embracing South Africa’s unique cultures as a growth opportunity and providing education to strengthen GMSA women’s business acumen with forums and tools,” said Van Huyssteen.

Plans are now afoot to take the council to the next level by developing and operating an effective platform to empower women working at GMSA to be more aligned with the business and to identify ways to better reach female customers.

Motor manufacturing has traditionally attracted more male employees due to the technical nature of the jobs. However, in an era where women follow the same careers as men this picture is slowly changing. With an increased focus on career development and progression for females, GMSA has made good strides in placing women in strategic positions. During the past year alone, 80% of management appointments were female.

“In addition,” Van Huyssteen concluded, “14 female employees are currently being mentored by senior company leaders.”

Mobile library project expanded

Bridgestone South Africa’s sponsorship of a schools mobile project has helped school learners in the North West increase their access to books. This was announced at a recent launch of an additional seven mobile libraries for the North-West Province, increasing the total from just two vehicles, to nine in the next year. Bridgestone is committed to supplying all Mobile Library Vehicles with tyres as required.

“The typical mobile library is a converted bus which offers a selection from over 550 000 children’s books available to the project,” explained Bridgestone Internal Sales Manager, Chantel Baxter. “The mobile libraries travel long distances to bring literacy to learners, and tyres are an ongoing running expense. Bridgestone is pleased to be able to assist in reducing this cost.”

All nine provinces of South Africa now offer a mobile library service to schools without libraries of their own, and more than 50 mobile libraries bring reading and literacy to over 880 schools across the country.

The Mobile Library Project is overseen by the South African Primary Education Support Initiative (SAPESI) and is now in its eleventh year. Apart from the books themselves, the mobile libraries also each carry a generator to ensure that they can functional fully in areas where there is no electricity.

Volkswagen makes a dream come true

As part of the Reach for a Dream initiative, the 17 year-old Lonwabo Sila’s dream of designing a car recently became reality. The youngster recently spent a day at the Volkswagen Motorsport in Uitenhage to learn what being a car designer entails.

Johan Smit, Chief Designer: Volkswagen South Africa Motorsport took Lonwabo through a theory and practical session which included the process of designing a Volkswagen, computer simulations and the different design components of the car.

After a tour of the Volkswagen Motorsport facilities, Lonwabo headed over to the AutoPavilion where he put to practical use what he had learnt from Motorsport’s Chief Designer.

“I had a very interesting day but the best part was actually sitting with Johan Smit and learning about how one actually goes about designing a car,” said the Grade 11 Lady Grey Arts Academy student.

A hobby which started off with innocent drawings of cartoon characters blossomed into a detailed sketchbook with various drawings of cars and now Lonwabo plans to study design after he finishes high school next year with hopes of one day being a professional car designer.

“Lonwabo also had the opportunity to be test-driven in the Engen Audi S4 Production race car when the racing driver, Simon Moss took him for a few speedy laps at the Aldo Scribante Race Track.

“We are very proud as Volkswagen that we have made yet another child’s dream come true and we are equally happy to partner with the Reach for a Dream Foundation in trying to inspire South Africa’s youth,” said Mike Rowe, Head of Volkswagen South Africa Motorsport.

The Reach for a Dream Foundation gives hope to South African children fighting life-threatening diseases through the fulfilment of their dreams.
Bobcat Equipment SA recently took delivery of a fleet of 10 Foton Tunland Off-Road pick-ups to be used by its service teams located in Alrode, Rustenburg and Witbank. These are the first Foton vehicles to be purchased by Bobcat SA, part of the Goscor Group of companies which in turn is part of the Imperial Group.

“The Foton Tunland pick-ups were selected for use by our service teams after we had undertaken practical evaluations of both the double- and single-cab models,” explained the Acting Managing Director of Bobcat SA, Andrew Lai. “The decision was based on our long relationship with the Imperial Group and the Tunland’s value-for-money proposition. The fact that it uses an engine from Cummins, one of the major players in the construction equipment industry with a reputation for reliability and durability, was another plus factor.

The Tunland Off-Road models do not have four-wheel drive but a limited slip differential and high riding body with 220 mm of ground clearance, making them well suited for operating on farms, construction sites and the like.

Keen pricing makes the Foton models among the least expensive premium single cab pick-ups on the local market with the Comfort model, as selected by Bobcat for its fleet, boasting a comprehensive list of standard equipment. Its 2.8-litre four-cylinder Cummins ISF turbodiesel produces 96 kW of power and 280 Nm of torque. It complies with Euro IV emission requirements and fuel consumption is a claimed 8 litres/100 km in the combined driving cycle.

Transmission of power to the rear wheels is through a five-speed manual gearbox.

Not only can the single cab Tunland Off Road carry a payload of 1 130kg in its spacious reinforced load body, but it can also tow a braked trailer weighing up to 2.5-tons.

Foton sales and service is available at 36 dealerships in South Africa, while the Tunland is covered by a three-year/100 000km factory warranty, 3-year anti-corrosion warranty and three year roadside assistance.

Mercedes-Benz Trucks and Air Products sign Promise Charter

Air Products South Africa has signed a Promise Charter with Mercedes-Benz Trucks, paving the way for a long-term, mutually beneficial relationship, which will help to ensure that both parties remain leaders in their respective fields.

As part of the charter signed with Air Products, Mercedes-Benz Trucks promises to provide the most competitive truck in its lifecycle, and challenges itself to deliver 5% fuel savings through FleetBoard. The truck manufacturer has also challenged itself to deliver 100% service parts availability for booked services, to take ownership of Air Products’ concerns and to allocate a technician within 15 minutes, should an issue arise.

As pioneers in the manufacturing, supplying and distribution of industrial and speciality and gas products to the southern African region, Air Products is meticulous when it comes to choosing the partners it collaborates with.

“Since our establishment 46 years ago, we have made it our mission to be the largest supplier in the on-site and pipeline market, as well as being a leader in the bulk, cylinder, speciality gas and chemical supply industries,” commented Seelan Gounden, General Manager: Supply Chain at Air Products.

“One of the ways in which we have managed to do this is by collaborating with like-minded partners, such as Mercedes-Benz Trucks. Being in the business of ensuring the security of supply of industrial gases, we depend on our fleet. These vehicles enhance our reputation for reliability and our capacity to deliver optimum customer service,” Gounden continued.

“The way Mercedes-Benz South Africa and the entire MBCV East Rand team has treated Air Products during discussions has been the major difference. There are a lot of other truck manufacturers who have similar offerings, but it is the people that set them apart from the rest. As a customer, we have never doubted that we were on top of their priority list.

“As we look forward to another 46 years as a market leader in the industrial gas and chemicals industry, we anticipate building on and strengthening our long-term customer relationships and to being ever more responsive to the changing needs of our customers. Mercedes-Benz Trucks will play an integral role in helping us to achieve this,” concluded Gounden.
The return of Iveco’s King of Africa

Iveco’s latest 682 heavy-duty truck range features product improvements and developments specifically designed to suit tough southern African conditions and terrains.

Originally known as the ‘King of Africa’, the original Fiat 682 is legendary for its robustness, reliability and load capacity, which made it one of the best-known trucks in the world. The newcomer is inspired by the best of European design and features several common features of the Iveco European-produced ranges. It will be assembled at the Rosslyn plant in South Africa.

Powering the 682 range are Iveco’s Cursor 9 and Cursor 13 engines. These powerplants are equipped with common-rail fuel-injection systems to generate maximum torque over a wide operative range, starting from as low as 1 000 r/min.

The 682 trucks are offered in 4×2 and 6×4 versions with a choice of driveline and two different types of rear axles – hub reduction and single reduction. The wide choice of rear-axle ratios enables the Iveco 682 to match the market demand for strong traction, high speed, heavy loads and low fuel consumption.

Gearboxes are either 9- or 12-speed mechanical units, depending on the version and torque required.

All DAF trucks now standard with fleet management system

All DAF trucks being sold into the southern African market now come standard with a high-tech Executrax on-board fleet management system (FMS) that incorporates a full-featured GPS fleet location, tracking and vehicle performance management system.

“When you give a driver responsibility over a R3-million vehicle, you want a direct link that not only lets you know its exact whereabouts at all times, but also provides a host of other performance information,” explained Mark Gavin, National Sales Director for DAF’s southern African operations. “Executrax covers all these bases, delivering a seamless flow of real-time information by combining high-definition telemetry with an array of critical fleet management features. It offers real-time visibility on the exact location of every vehicle in the fleet throughout the southern African region.”

Customers have the option to connect the unit to Babcock Transport Solutions’ central management server for a small monthly fee. The system is linked to the truck’s existing computer and diagnostics systems, and communicates wirelessly via a dedicated, secure connection to any Internet-enabled device.

Executrax’s standard features include real-time tracking, while ‘Keep In’ and ‘No Go’ areas can be added. The system can also communicate notifications through the software, or by email and SMS, on deviations from pre-defined routes, and is able to monitor and report on vehicle speed, engine revolutions, fuel usage, engine hours, idle time and driver performance.

“All the features combine to help DAF customers focus on their businesses by facilitating increased productivity, reduced stock loss and a lower operating risk,” concluded Gavin. “Overall fleet security is increased through 24/7 monitoring and a variety of specialised alerts. However, the real strength of our new Executrax solution is the effect it has on the customer’s bottom line through increased productivity, driver responsibility and reduced theft and liability.”

Hyundai Santa Cruz named 2015 Concept Truck of the Year

The Hyundai Santa Cruz has earned the title Concept Truck of the Year at the 14th North American Concept Vehicle of the Year (NACVOTY) Awards at the Concours d’Elegance of America.

The Santa Cruz was chosen as Concept Truck of the Year for its design, style, materials, technology, market visibility and market responsiveness. The award was presented by Mark Phelan, auto critic at the Detroit Free Press and NACVOTY juror.

The NACVOTY awards recognize those vehicles most likely to shape the future of the automobile industry. More than two dozen jurors participated in a selection process that involved a total of 30 vehicles, each introduced to North America during this season’s auto shows in Los Angeles, Detroit, Chicago, Toronto and New York.
Scope of Kyalami rejuvenation grows apace

BY ROGER HOUGHTON

The scope of rejuvenation at the iconic Kyalami Grand Prix Circuit is growing apace under the watchful eye of the redevelopment team, headed up by Porsche SA’s enthusiastic, entrepreneurial CEO, Toby Venter, and his right hand man, affable Andrew Baldwin, the Group Property Manager, who is the person driving the amazing rebirth project on site.

Venter, through his family trust, purchased the property for R205-million in a public auction on July 24 last year and in May this year he announced the way the rejuvenation of this famous facility will be tackled. The initial budget for redeveloping the site was R100-million and all of us with long links to this hallowed 73-hectare property in Midrand were delighted.

However, as time has passed so the scope of the project has been ramped up ... considerably! The project team is taking the view that it will be better and ultimately more cost-effective to extend the scope of the upgrading and rebuilding now, while the major construction is under way, rather than tackling these additional projects piecemeal at a later stage.

This means that the opening of the New Kyalami will now take place in the first quarter of 2016 rather than in the fourth quarter of this year as was envisaged at a function in May where a group of motoring journalists was given the unique opportunity of driving around the Old Kyalami in Porsche Panameras on the day before the ripping up of the old track began.

I was fortunate to be invited to go on a conducted tour of the construction site last week with Andrew Baldwin and Porsche SA’s very efficient and friendly Public Relations Manager, Christo Kruger and it was a real eye-opener. Progress is amazing and everything is being done to the highest quality standards.

Among the changes from the original plan is the demolition of virtually all the hospitality bomas with the only ones remaining being those with a view of the new Cheetah Bend: the Volkswagen (formerly Toyota) boma, the SA Guild of Motoring Journalists’ facility and the multiple unit boma alongside it.

Originally some of the bomas would have remained and been rejuvenated as well as serving as toilet facilities for the public. Now dedicated toilet blocks will be erected.

The large open space with unrestricted views of the circuit will encourage spectators to come to the circuit to braai and view the racing from their own folding chairs as was the case when the circuit was built originally in 1961.

The perimeter road around the property is also being extended, while the circuit itself is virtually complete in terms of the laying of the base material with a coating of bitumen and laying of the special kerbing. The only part of the track still to be completed is where it crosses the underpass near the entrance gate. However, a national shortage of bitumen is slowing the completion of the track itself.

Originally the old pit complex, just after the newly named Barbeque Bend, was to be refurbished, but in the end it was decided to demolish the existing structure and build a new, simple facility for use in regional racing and the like.

However, the major new development is the making of big changes to the main pit building and conference centre. Apart from its function for motor sport this building caters for conferencing, brand activation and exhibition requirements, which will be an important source of revenue for the company. A decision has now been taken to spend R50-million on upgrading and increasing the appeal of these facilities.

The first floor has been stripped from the existing pit building and the new first floor will be wider and longer to increase available space. A viewing deck at the end of the building will provide a spectacular, 270 degree view of the Ingwe Corner and the Gauteng skyline. The new facade, with enclosed staircases, will give the building an integrated appearance to international standards making it a premier venue for conferences, brand activations and exhibitions.

The effect of the increased scope of the project has already resulted in the on-site workforce growing from 150–200 people!

Also in an advanced planning stage is a project to use the area currently occupied by the karting circuit and the small business units on the east of the circuit as the site for a sophisticated, multi-functional driving experience area which will also be important in terms of generating income.

For me it was a wonderful experience to see first-hand the way dreams are being made into reality and we will have a New Kyalami that will be right up in the top rank in terms of international standards.

Personal links

Kyalami means “My Home” in Zulu and this has been very much the case with me since the circuit was built. I was there at the first race meeting in October 1961, attended all the SA and Rand Grands Prix held at the venue as well as most of the major race meetings for many years. I was there when the new-look circuit was opened in 1992 and was involved with operating the Toyota boma for many years too.

I was with Toby Venter on the Porsche Macan media launch the day before the auction when he told me of his plan to be a bidder and then I attended the auction itself with fellow motoring journalist Roger McCleery. I then had the privilege of driving a couple of laps of the old circuit before the latest rebirth started and was given a highly-prized piece of the original (1961) race track by Porsche SA as a memento. Then came the conducted tour of the site last week. My links with Kyalami remain very strong and enduring!
Motorsport

Stelios Sissou is SA’s fastest man over one kilometre, breaking the 1 000 metre barrier with an official speed of 346.3 km/h at ODI Raceway earlier this month, in the process shattering his 2014 record for street-legal cars.

The Gauteng businessman’s Bilstein-backed 1 200 kW Nissan GT-R35 endured a morning of technical niggles at the annual One Kilometre Invitational before it all came together late in the day, Sissou launching his final attack on the tarmac with the sun already heading towards the horizon. An enthusiastic crowd, which flocked to the popular Pretoria dragstrip to see over 100 of the country’s fastest cars in action, erupted into spontaneous applause as the commentator announced the result.

With his own record of 337 km/h and a strong contingent of GT-R35 rivals to beat, the car underwent further refinements compared to last year’s specification, primarily an upgrade to Bilstein’s sophisticated Modular Damper System (MDS) suspension which allows fine-tuning of the shock absorbers. The rate of compression and extension (commonly referred to as bump and rebound) as well as ride height can be adjusted. This enables start-line traction to be optimised, while at the same time ensuring maximum stability at velocities beyond the take-off speed of a jet fighter.

“Dialling in the ideal settings for a given circuit or driving discipline can be the difference between a good result and a great result and we’re really proud to have played a part in Stelios’s victory today,” commented Bilstein’s Ted Garstang.

A jubilant Sissou added: “The morning was really character-building, and something went wrong on every run. With the temperatures rising quickly and a bit of a headwind I was worried whether we’d be able to get past 340 km/h. But my final run was perfect: I went for a very conservative start strategy and didn’t use launch control, but when it did all hook up it was like riding a rocket ship.

“I’ve already decided that we’ll be back next year to defend our crown…and not just to win but break 350 km/h!” concluded Stelios.

Order your 2016 Motorheads Diary now!

If your passions include cars both new and classic, motorsport, rallies, motorcycles and aircraft, the Motorheads Diary will tickle your fancy. It also makes a great gift for the petrolheads in your life.

This A5-size, hard cover publication not only provides a concise annual overview of motoring in South Africa, but it is also a very practical tool. It is designed as both a useable diary, which one would carry in a briefcase and use in the office, while being choc-a-bloc with information and entertainment for the South African motoring enthusiasts. It features historical motoring-related facts, as well as a calendar of motoring events – races, rallies, shows & biking events. Significant international events are also included. Profiles and short articles featuring a cross-section of both well-known and lesser-known car people and clubs provide additional interest.

The page-a-day diary section is more than enough for even the busiest person. And over its decade of existence, the Motorheads Diary has become an interesting and useful library, to be valued as a reference work in time to come.

The information it contains is an ongoing database of anything that drives, rides or flies; it has settled many a late-night or Sunday afternoon dispute. Many companies find it an ideal place to advertise their products and services, which helps make this a useful buyer’s guide as well.

The Motorheads Diary is a must-have for the motoring enthusiast and is sold nationally through Exclusive Books stores, select PNAs and Motorsport South Africa at a price of R160. It is also available at some of the tracks and car shows as well as at various other stores such as Motorbooks and Autobooks. Additional information is available at www.motorheads.co.za. Orders can be placed online or by contacting Heide-Marie von der Au 083 455 7684.
Maserati Quattroporte GTS – Emotion in motion

BY BRENT ELLIS

I am quite an emotional person. I mean, I cry in Pixar movies. And sometimes my emotions are played on by a car. A car that is so special and one which makes so many right noises that it tingles my spine and makes me a bit unstable. Anything with a Maserati badge on the bonnet has the ability to turn me into a slushy mess, and I'm not the only one. You see one in traffic and you just can’t help but go "oooooooh".

The Quattroporte – or 'four doors' – is Maserati's flagship model and, alongside the soon-to-be-launched Ghibli, is spearheading the brand’s profitability. I had the opportunity of spending a day with this latest leviathan and yes, I needed sedation. Firstly, it’s huge. At over 5.2-metres long and 2.1-metres wide, this car competes with long-wheelbase rivals from Britain and Germany, and it probably won’t fit in your garage. The looks belie its bulk, though. Sure, you can see it’s a big vehicle, but those curves and the sculpted fenders help reduce its visual substance rather well. Inside, it’s vast and there is enough space for both front and rear occupants to stretch out and get comfy.

On the design front, the new, sixth-generation Quattroporte is much smarter and more suave than its predecessor. I love the front end the most, with the now-convex grille playing host to the Maserati trident and flanked by those compact, sexy headlights. The latter are intelligent as well as pretty, the active bi-xenon bulbs with automatic high beam assistance following your steering inputs as you drive and adapting to speed and environmental conditions.

The standard 20-inch alloy wheels carry their own, albeit very subtle, Trident cues, and lend and air of sophistication and sportiness to the side profile. Of course, the traditional three gills are on the front fender, from which a tapered crease line runs with increasing impact towards the bulbous rear arch. The rear lights are full-LED and their horizontal rather than vertical execution again emphasises width and might. This V8-powered GTS model features four trapezoidal exhaust outlets – and big ones, too. With good reason.

The sound this machine makes is mesmerising! Starting it up reveals a rather sedate V8 rumble, and in truth you would never complain that this car is unnecessarily loud on the daily commute. Push the Sport button, however, and pneumatic valves open up to let the full Pavarotti roar emanate from those pipes – and it's quite the volume increase.

Complementing that audio assault is a host of induction and turbo noises from the front, which can be heard from inside as well as outside. There is a lot of air being sucked into this car's engine, and the Maserati engineers have done a great job of playing with the left overs – which brings me neatly onto this car's heart. It's a Ferrari-built 3.8-litre twin-turbo V8, which shoves its power to the rear wheels via an 8-speed ZF conventional automatic gearbox. It's the same box you'll find in BMWs and Jaguars, and in the Maserati it works well.

How does 390 kW at 6 800 r/min and a maximum of 710 Nm (overboost) at 2 250 r/min sound? Well, it’s enough to get this two-ton colossus from 0–100 km/h in 4.7 seconds and on to a top speed of 307 km/h.

And don’t for one minute think that the performance is hindered by the weight – this car never feels as heavy, being always at the ready especially in Sport mode and with gear shifts taken care of by the beautifully-weighted, real-metal shift paddles, which are mounted to the steering column rather than the wheel. There’s a button to firm up the Skyhook adaptive damping system as well, which allows for a bit more feedback but doesn’t turn the Quattroporte into a back-breaker.

Of course, being a car of the modern age, you can also tame it down to become a calm daily commuter. In normal driving mode it’s quiet, comfortable and smooth, with ICE (increased comfort and efficiency) mode on hand to numb things down even further.

In my opinion, there is one major bugbear with the Quattroporte – Chrysler. In case you didn’t know this, the American conglomerate and the Fiat Group joined forces a few years ago to become Fiat Chrysler Automobiles. That means that you can buy a Chrysler Grand Voyager in Europe with a Lancia badge on the front, and the Dodge Journey is also known as the Fiat Freemont. It also means that the Quattroporte is full of switches and buttons and tech from the FCA parts bin. That’s not necessarily a bad thing, because those parts work. However, there was something slightly disappointing about the indicator stalk, infotainment system and other bits and pieces you’ll find in a Jeep Grand Cherokee, for example.

Does this really matter, though, in a Maserati? I argue no. Yes, I know, this car faces some stiff competition in the form of the Audi A8 L W12, BMW 760Li, Porsche Panamera Turbo, Jaguar XJ L and the Mercedes-Benz S600L and yes, with a sticker price of R2 477 000 without options, the niggles might be a bit make-or-break. However, emotions are the overriding factor with this car. It’s been designed with passion and nostalgia, with a Ferrari heart and over fifty years of Quattroporte behind it. It doesn’t matter that the starter button is from a Jeep, or that the gear lever is annoying to operate, or that the wind noise from the frameless windows can be irritating. Part of this car’s purpose is to be flawed, and if it wasn’t flawed, I would be suspicious.

Italian cars are never perfect, and that’s what makes them great. You can see the money has been spent on the emotional experience! This is not a car you buy so that your driver can take you to business meetings. This is a car you buy because you love driving, and you want a car that can raise your heartbeat the moment you turn it on.