

## TOYOTA FORECASTS ONGOING DOWNWARD TREND FOR SALES IN SA



Andrew Kirby, the President and CEO of TSAM.



Ettienne le Roux, Chief Economist at Rand Merchant Bank (RMB).



Dr Thabi Leoka, an independent economist who also sits on President Cyril Ramaphosa's Economic Advisory Panel.



Leon Theron, the newly-appointed Senior Vice President of Sales and Marketing at TSAM.

BY ROGER HOUGHTON

Toyota SA Motors (TSAM) is forecasting an ongoing downward trend in retail vehicle sales in South Africa in 2020, in line with most industry commentators.

Speaking at Toyota's third State of the Motor Industry presentation at the end of January, Andrew Kirby, the President and CEO of TSAM, said sales will continue to fall for the seventh successive year and are expected to end the year with a total of 515 000 units sold – a decrease of almost 4% on the 2019 total of 536 626 and a far cry from the 714 316 units retailed in 2006.

According to Kirby the 2020 total is expected to be made up of 339 900 passenger cars, 150 585 LCVs, 7 880 medium trucks and 16 635 heavy commercials.

The Toyota senior executive provided a number of interesting statistics from sales in 2019:

- Sales to government continued to fall, going down to only 15 000 units last year compared to 25 000 in 2015;
- The C-segment, dominated by Corolla and Corolla Quest, was down 25% and now made up only 5% of total passenger car sales;

- The premium car market fell 13%, but Toyota's premium brand, Lexus, saw its sales improve by 19%, with many of these cars being petrol-electric Hybrid models;
- Sales of SUVs increased by 13%, as did sales of minibus taxis;
- 45% of passenger cars were sold with automatic transmissions, while this form of transmission was not fitted to 24% of one-ton bakkies;
- Toyota took 40.9% of the 2019 light commercial vehicle market which was the highest annual share in its history;
- The production-to-delivery time for the Hiace minibus was cut to 11 days;
- Only 407 battery-electric vehicles were sold in SA in 2019.

*"We need to focus on cleaning this house first." – Dr Thabi Leoka*

Commenting on the local vehicle market, Ettienne le Roux, Chief Economist at Rand Merchant Bank (RMB), commented: "Over the past two or three years, consumer confidence has been low, and spending has been quite conservative. This will, of course, affect local vehicle sales because buying

a car is considered to be discretionary spending. Finances are really tight and the pressure consumers are feeling is quite significant."

According to Dr Thabi Leoka, an independent economist who also sits on President Cyril Ramaphosa's Economic Advisory Panel, the current South African socio-political landscape is also not conducive to attracting investment. Referring to South Africa's socio-political problems, she said: "The house internally is dirty, and you are going out to the world to invite investors to come and eat in this house of chaos. We need to focus on cleaning this house first."

Despite the negative economic sentiment expected to impact consumer spending in 2020, TSAM remains cautiously optimistic about achieving a competitive market share at the end of the year. According to Leon Theron, the newly-appointed Senior Vice President of Sales and Marketing at TSAM, the company strategy involves galvanising Toyota's countrywide network of 264 dealers, extending the ranges of Lexus and Toyota hybrid offerings as well as implementing a robust marketing approach around the Corolla nameplate, with the upcoming premium new, 11<sup>th</sup> generation model now being imported and the new, locally-developed six-model Corolla Quest range. ■

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There is a fun way to boost your sales success

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How the industry has changed over the past two decades

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Is there still a place for traditional motor shows?

## Editor and Advertising Manager

Liana Reiners  
[liana@autolive.co.za](mailto:liana@autolive.co.za)  
 083 407 4600

## Contributors

Roger Houghton  
[houghtonr@mwebbiz.co.za](mailto:houghtonr@mwebbiz.co.za)  
 082 371 9097

Stuart Johnston  
[stujohn@netactive.co.za](mailto:stujohn@netactive.co.za)  
 083 450 9255

Brendon Staniforth  
[brendon@maroelamedia.co.za](mailto:brendon@maroelamedia.co.za)  
 084 776 3668

## Advertising Sales

Liana Reiners  
[liana@autolive.co.za](mailto:liana@autolive.co.za)  
 083 407 4600

## Address

237 Rigel Avenue  
 Waterkloof Ridge  
 Pretoria  
 PO Box 914 005  
 Wingate Park  
 0153  
 012 460 4448

## Website

[www.autolive.co.za](http://www.autolive.co.za)

## Facebook

[www.facebook.com/pages/AutoLive](https://www.facebook.com/pages/AutoLive)

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## Production

Marketing Support Services  
 Danie Dreyer  
[danie@marketingss.co.za](mailto:danie@marketingss.co.za)  
 +27 (0)12 346 2168

## Layout

Marketing Support Services  
 Bonita Tuson

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# Slow Start to New Vehicle Sales in 2020

Total vehicle sales in January fell by 8.1% to 39 475 units from 42 956 in the corresponding month last year. However, the picture is skewed by the fact that BMW did not report its domestic retail or export sales for the month, due to the company implementing a new sales reporting model. (BMW reported 897 retail sales in South Africa in December and 1 346 units exported that month).

“Taking BMW’s average sales during 2019 into account a more representative January sales picture may be in the region of 5.2% down,” said Lebogang Gaoaketse, WesBank’s Head of Marketing and Communication.

Already local motor industry analysts and economists have to deal with a lack of detailed sales figures from Mercedes-Benz, Porsche, Bentley, and Lamborghini, as well as up-and-coming Chinese maker Haval/GWM.

Industry watchers and economists, have it even worse in the United States, where there is a growing swing to quarterly reporting instead of monthly. First it was Tesla and then General Motors balking at the tradition of monthly reporting of sales statistics. Then two other US companies, Ford and Fiat Chrysler followed suit and now Audi, BMW, Nissan, Porsche, Volkswagen, and Toyota have said they are only reporting sales quarterly too.

Returning to the January sales figures in SA we see that 81.2% of sales went through the dealer channel, a hefty 13.5% went to rental, 3.1% to industry corporate fleets and 2.2% to government.

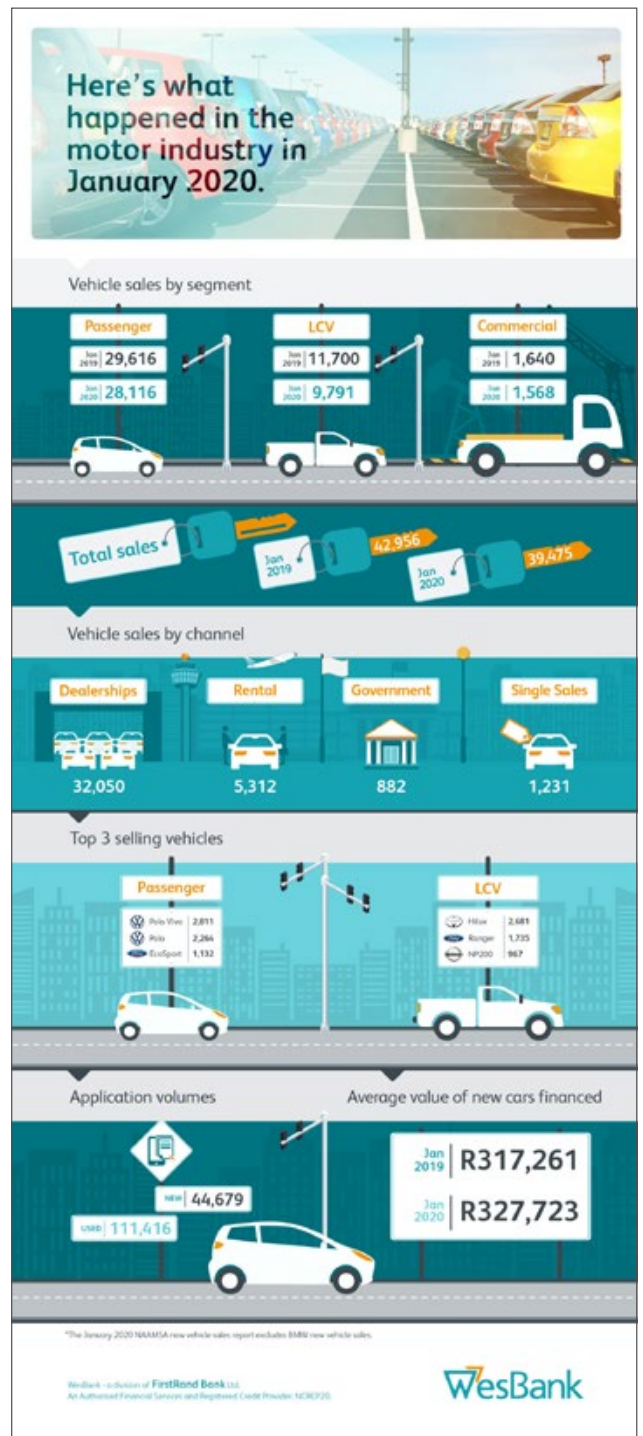
Passenger car month-on-month sales fell 5.1% to 28 116 units despite rental taking a substantial 17.6% share. However, light commercial vehicle sales tumbled 16.3% from 11 700 units in January 2019 to only 9 791 units last month. Sales of medium and heavy trucks were also in the negative, with mediums declining 8% and heavies dropping 2.6%.

There are a number of interesting aspects in the January sales figures. As usual it was Toyota and Volkswagen that took the bulk of sales, with a combined share of 41%. However, what was of interest was how close

the Volkswagen Group got to the market leader, with only 290 units between them. This must be the smallest gap between the two companies in a very long time.

Suzuki had another stellar month in January and is now a regular in the top 10 in the monthly sales list. Sales

*continued on next page* ➤



## MONTHLY SALES STATISTICS

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

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## Editor's Note

This was Budget Speech week and ordinary South Africans from all walks of life, as well as the business world, were holding their breaths in anticipation to hear what Finance Minister Tito Mboweni's master plan for economic recovery and growth would be.



From the perspective of the automotive and related industries specifically, it was a mixture of good and bad news.

Although the announcement that there will be no increase in Value Added Tax was welcomed by all, the increase in the General Fuel and Road Accident Fund levies was received with much less enthusiasm.

The Minister announced a combined 25 cents increase to the two main fuel levies: 16 cents will be added to the General Fuel Levy bringing it to R3.63 on every litre of fuel, and nine cents will be added to the Road Accident Fund levy bringing it to R2.07 on every litre of fuel. This means citizens will pay R5.70 towards these two taxes alone, or around 35 to 40 per cent on every litre of fuel.

There's no getting around the fact that revenue must be collected towards the fiscus, but the increases to the fuel levies will hurt the poor the hardest, and will make transport costs that much more expensive.

Another area of concern is the reduction in spending on transport, particularly public transport which will decrease by R13.2 billion over the next three years.

Access to public transport is access to a job, education, healthcare, and other critical services. To reduce spending on public transport – which is already inefficient and unreliable – will make it even harder for many to improve their lives.

The increase to the fuel levies will invariably be reflected in increases to public transport and taxi fares. In addition, the fact that the Road Accident Fund levy is again increasing – and will now benefit by more than R2 on every litre of petrol – is out of kilter with the message of curbing government expenditure, which the Minister highlighted in his speech.

The increases come into effect in April. Any levy adjustments are implemented annually and do not influence or account for fluctuations to the price of fuel, which is adjusted monthly.

According to the AA, the combination of reduced spending on public transport, and increases to the fuel levies, is sending a mixed signal on government efforts to create jobs, and improve access to healthcare and education. Transport is a critical component of our economy and should enjoy priority in fiscal allocations; these steps seem to indicate government is of a different view," the organisation commented.

Be that as it may, the show must go on, so to speak. Here at *AutoLive* we remain committed to bringing you all the news and views pertaining to the industry we work in and – as always – we won't charge you a cent!

*Liana Reiniers,*

Editor

[liana@autolive.co.za](mailto:liana@autolive.co.za)

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of 1 632 units was a new monthly record and 61.4% up on the figure for the same month last year. Dealer sales were 58.7% higher month-on-month. The previous monthly sales record was set in October last year.

Haval is another brand that continues to shine, reporting 1 358 sales in January to put it only a few units behind Kia and Mercedes-Benz and 10<sup>th</sup> on the top-sellers list.

### Exports

Exports of built up vehicles from South Africa also took a dive in January with only 11 373 units shipped, which was 37.7% lower than the 18 250 units exported in January 2019.

However, NAAMSA anticipates that the upward momentum experienced in 2019 will continue in 2020, following consecutive record export years, while industry production levels will continue to benefit from strong vehicle export sales. (Last year there were record exports at 387 125 units shipped, while production also set a record at 631 983 units).

Volkswagen, with 7 959 units shipped, was the export leader in January, with Toyota (2 143 units) a distant second. Ford reported a surprisingly low figure of only 563 units in January after shipping 3 138 units the previous month. Mercedes-Benz, usually the largest exporter, did not report any shipments in January.

A bright spot in terms of exports was the announcement by Volkswagen South Africa that it reached a milestone at the end of last month when it produced its 200 000<sup>th</sup> unit of the current Volkswagen Polo for the export market. This achievement brought the total number of vehicles exported from the Uitenhage plant to 1 098 960 units

### NAAMSA Comments

Sustained weak demand for domestic new vehicles continued in January 2020 on the back of depressed consumer and business confidence, weak economic growth, record-high unemployment, and Eskom's ongoing electricity supply crisis.

The new vehicle market is expected to face further consolidation until South



Lebogang Gaoaketse, WesBank's Head of Marketing and Communication.

Africa breaks out of its low growth trap and the economy is put on a higher growth path. However, the likelihood of more regular load shedding in the foreseeable future means that prospects for a recovery in the coming months are dim. Some positive news during the month, however, was the Reserve Bank's cut in the repo rate by 25 basis points to 6.25%, which will come as a relief to consumers.

*"We are in for an interesting ride with industry forecasts in the red for the new car market in 2020." – Mark Dommisse*

### Wesbank's View

"The government's budget is likely to have a knock-on effect through February sales and we should only expect a clearer picture at the end of the first quarter to fully understand what the picture of 2020 vehicle sales is going to look like," commented WesBank's Gaoaketse.

### Nada Has its Say

"We are in for an interesting ride with industry forecasts in the red for the new car market in 2020," said Mark Dommisse, chairperson of the National Automobile Dealers' Association (NADA), which has 1 326 members, which amounts to 85% of all new vehicle franchise dealerships in South Africa. "Over the past five years, the South African franchised motor dealer environment has been under enormous pressure. The decline in sales volumes and the size of the vehicle parc has had a direct impact on employment and dealer profitability." ■

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## Wesbank Predicts Another Tough Year

According to WesBank South Africa's new vehicle sales are set to decline 3.5% in 2020. WesBank CEO Chris de Kock delivered the bank's view of the market and its annual sales forecast at the 2020 Cars.co.za Consumer Awards in Midrand, Gauteng, earlier this month.

Given the economic and political challenges facing the country, it is likely that both business and consumer confidence will remain subdued. However, the strong growth of vehicle exports continues to underpin the key role that the South African motor industry plays in the South African economy and, despite the challenges, is in a relatively healthy state.

"This is expected to be another challenging year for the motor industry, driven by low demand from both the retail and corporate market," said De Kock. "A 3.5% decline would mean a reduction of 18 626 sales across all categories, however, we can still look forward to continued growth in exports, earning valuable foreign income for SA."

Predicting market trends has become very difficult with extreme market volatility as seen in 2019. De Kock indicated that last year ended slightly stronger than anticipated and was impacted by the aggressive incentive structures put

forward by the brands in order to move vehicles that had been ordered.

Breaking down WesBank's forecast, De Kock said the decline would come from passenger cars and light commercial vehicles. "As always, the new passenger vehicle category will contribute the largest decline, with an expected 345 000 units to be sold this year (-2.9%). However, light commercial vehicles will fall by the highest percentage

given its exposure to the sluggish business side of the economy. We anticipate sales of 146 000 units, translating to a decline of 4.7%. The medium and heavy commercial segments will similarly not be spared, with reductions of 2.51% (8 500 units) and 4.31% (18 500 units) respectively."

Affordability remains the number one factor influencing new car buying decisions in South African households. Rand fluctuations, volatile fuel prices, the inevitable rise of electricity and other utility costs, a possible increase in VAT and rampant unemployment figures continue to haunt us. In the short term this will drive the trend of consumers buying down, and continue to create demand for used cars. In light of buyers' sensitivity to expenses, people are also holding on to their vehicles for longer. WesBank's average deal now runs for 45 months, up from the traditional three-year buying cycle. "This will continue to put pressure on new vehicle sales during 2020," said De Kock.

"South Africa is not alone in this predicament; the sale of vehicles globally fell sharply in 2019 after a modest fall in 2018, and are expected to fall again in 2020. This follows almost a decade of growth since the financial crisis, reflecting the pressure on the global economy," concluded De Kock. ■



WesBank CEO Chris de Kock delivered the bank's view of the market and its annual sales forecast at the 2020 Cars.co.za Consumer Awards.



### Factors affecting South Africa's economic outlook



Low Growth



Eskom



Business & Consumer Confidence



Customer Indebtedness



Political Factionalism Impacting Policy Making



Prolonged Negative Growth In Employment



Ongoing Pressure From Rating Agencies

## Both Gloom and Hope for the Industry

BY ROGER HOUGHTON

Toyota SA Motors' third annual State of the Motor Industry (SOMI) presentation, held at the Kyalami Conference Centre at the end of January, provided both gloom and hope for the future with addresses by Andrew Kirby, President and CEO of TSAM, Ettienne le Roux, Chief Economist at Rand Merchant Bank, and Dr Thabi Leoka, an independent economist who sits on President Cyril Ramaphosa's Economic Advisory Panel.

The gloom was to be expected as the local motor industry wrestles with a sluggish economy and falling market, while also being part of the global environment where the motor industry is under serious disruption in terms of economic, technological, and legislative challenges.

Let's look at Kirby's good news message: Toyota, which is celebrating its 40<sup>th</sup> consecutive year as South Africa's leading vehicle seller, continues to demonstrate its confidence in the future of this market. The latest announcement is that the company will invest more than R4-billion within the next two years. These investments involve doubling the size of the parts distribution centre on the East Rand, and various manufacturing investments at the plant in Prospecton, near Durban.

The biggest single investment, of R2.4-billion, will go into bringing a new model into local production in October 2021. This will mean that four models will continue to be built locally, being the Hilux, Fortuner, Hiace and Corolla Quest, with the new model replacing the Corolla, which will now be an imported model arriving here next month.

The new model, due in 2021, will mark the first time that a Toyota with Hybrid Synergy Drive will be made on the African continent.

Other manufacturing investments include improving production facilities for the Hiace Ses'fikile minibus at a cost of R450-million and increasing volume of this model from 14 000 to 18 000 units a year at a cost of R91-million. Another R20-million is being spent on a knocked-down (KD) packing facility for exporting Hilux in component form to Kenya for assembly in that country.

TSAM will also invest R365-million in enlarging its Atlas parts warehouse from 40 000m<sup>2</sup> to 80 000m<sup>2</sup>. This will make it the largest automotive parts warehouse in the Southern Hemisphere and is due for completion next year. A further R928-million is being invested in the locally developed, extended-life Quest and other upgrades at the manufacturing facility.

These latest projects will bring TSAM's investment in the SA economy to more than R12-billion



over the past 10 years, in terms of manufacturing, equipment updates and dealer operations.

Further good news is that these investments will also result in more job opportunities, with the creation of approximately 1 500 new jobs at Toyota and a further 1 000 jobs in the supply chain.

TSAM is also making big investment in solar power to generate electricity at the plant, with the target of generating 16 mw (22%) of its needs by 2025. A project is also underway to make the Hiace production plant carbon negative by March 2020.

However, it was very sad to hear, after all this good news, that the Toyota workers had undertaken an illegal strike in Prospecton more than a week previously due to a dispute about a performance bonus. This not only impacted on production at the plant, but also at its multitude of suppliers countrywide. Fortunately, the disruption has been resolved but it was a very disappointing reflection on a country desperately seeking new investment and more jobs. ■

### Toyota Introduces Olympic And Paralympic Ambassador

Toyota SA Motors (TSAM) also used the SOMI platform to introduce its Olympic and Paralympic Ambassador Pieter Badenhorst, who is a long term Toyota SA employee and a gold medallist at the 1992 Paralympics in Barcelona as well as having participated in the Paralympics in Atlanta in 1996 and in 2000 in Sydney.

"As a mobility partner of the International Olympic Committee and the International Paralympic Committee, Toyota aims to contribute to creating a peaceful society without discrimination through sport and a commitment to creating a sustainable society through mobility," said Badenhorst.

In line with creating a peaceful society, TSAM is also proud to announce a new activity around mobility – especially for previously disadvantaged children living with lower limb amputations. Leading up to the Easter holidays, TSAM will launch #DriveBetter – a campaign which aims to encourage all Toyota and Lexus drivers who use the Toyota Connect feature to get good scores. TSAM has pledged to donate R1 000.00 with every 100 points achieved through good driving via the Toyota Connect feature. All proceeds will go to Jumping Kids, a non-profit organisation that provides access to lower limb prosthetic solutions to children. ■



## Exports Into Africa Tumbled in January

Exports of built-up vehicles from South Africa into other African countries tumbled by more than 40% in January compared to the same month a year ago. Only 1 102 units were shipped into Africa last month compared to 1 826 a year previously which was, in turn, an increase of 29% over the 2018 figure.

This huge regional fall was in line with the

drop of 37.7% in total vehicle exports from SA in January, where the decrease was from 18 250 in January 2019 to only 11 373 a year later.

A big surprise was the fall of Toyota from its regular spot as top exporter into Africa, being displaced by Nissan (357 units shipped) and Isuzu (295), compared to Toyota's total of 283 units, which was a big fall from the 879

units exported into the continent in January 2019. Volkswagen and Ford shipped only 53 and 11 units respectively.

Only four countries bought more than 100 units in January 2020 – Zimbabwe (199), Mozambique (183), Kenya (180) and Libya (100 Nissans) – compared to eight countries a year previously. ■

## Innovative New Export Programme for Isuzu

Isuzu Motors South Africa in Port Elizabeth has started supplying knocked down (KD) Isuzu D-MAX pick-up kits for assembly purposes to its Isuzu manufacturing facility in Kenya. This represents the first intra-continental regional trade exchange of its kind for Isuzu on the continent and is aligned to the strategy for its South African vehicle assembly plant to serve as a hub for growing its overall volumes in Sub-Saharan Africa.

*The Kenyan operation previously focussed only on truck and bus assembly operations while fully importing light commercial vehicles from South Africa.*

Isuzu Motors Limited, majority shareholder of Isuzu East Africa, regards the opportunities in Africa, based on infrastructural investment, to be significant. The East African operation previously focussed only on truck and bus assembly operations while fully importing light commercial vehicles from South Africa.

Isuzu is a leading brand in the East African markets, with a commanding 44.5% share of the Kenyan new vehicle market in 2019.

Isuzu Motors South Africa CEO and Managing Director Michael Sacke said Isuzu's market strength in East Africa can be contributed to the vehicles' overall performance, reliability and customer satisfaction.

"We have put this project together in record time and anticipate that it will result in a win-win for both South Africa and Kenya. Some of the vehicle kits have already arrived in Kenya and the Kenyan team received comprehensive training in Port Elizabeth late last year in preparation for actual operations," said Sacke.

While volumes have been projected at 1 300 vehicles per year to Kenya through this KD programme, it is expected that this will further increase in the medium- to long-term.

"The Kenya KD project is an important step in achieving our growth strategy which is geared at strengthening our presence in key Sub-Saharan Africa markets through a combination of tactical



Lionel Terblanche, Isuzu Motors South Africa, knocked-down coordinator.

SKD initiatives as well as various initiatives to strengthen our dealer distribution network," emphasised Sacke.

Rita Kavashe, Managing Director of Isuzu East Africa, welcomed the decision to import KD kits. She said the KD programme gives the Kenyan operation more flexibility and an opportunity to remain competitive. "Our import tariffs are lower on the KD kits, we create employment and we positively influence employee and customer morale by assembling the Isuzu D-MAX locally." ■



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## Snippets

### Geely Wants to Merge with Volvo Cars

The current tough environment for the global motor industry, driven by several disruptors, is making mergers very appealing. The latest companies looking to merge are China's Geely Automobile and Volvo Cars of Sweden. Geely bought Volvo from Ford in 2010, but currently operates the two companies independently.

Now Li Shufu, chairman of Geely Holdings, is proposing a combination of the two companies to form a strong global group and accelerate financial and technological efficiencies. Li is building a strong stable of automotive brands in Geely, Volvo, Lynk & Co (another Chinese brand), and Polestar, Volvo's electric car arm. Geely's new energy brand, Geometry will also be included.

Geely, which has been the top-selling Chinese automotive brand for the past three years, already has a 9.7% share in Daimler, 49.9% in Malaysian Proton and a majority stake in Lotus, the British sports car brand.

A merger of Geely and Volvo with these other automotive interest will create a company worth about US\$30 billion, which would put it on a par with Ford. ■

### Car Makers Turn to Helping Fight Coronavirus

Chinese vehicle manufacturers BYD, GAC and SAIC's joint venture with General Motors, have switched to making face masks and disinfectants to help motorists and the public ward off the ongoing Coronavirus outbreak in China.

BYD plants in the south of China are expected to be churning out 5 million face masks and 50 000 bottles of disinfectant a day by the end of the month. GAC is assigning one of its component-making subsidiaries to produce the masks. SAIC-GM-Wuling is also converting one of its plants to make face masks. ■

### Ghosn hires Hollywood Agent

Carlos Ghosn, the former founder and head of the Renault-Nissan-Mitsubishi Alliance, who is now seen as a fugitive from justice in Lebanon after fleeing house arrest in Japan, is already involved in plans to make a film of his life story.

Michael Ovitz, a former president of Walt Disney and the founder of Creative Artists Agency, will oversee any dramatisations of the former Nissan boss's life. Ovitz, who has worked for many years with A-listers such as Steven Spielberg and Meryl Streep, has never had a client with Ghosn's background.

Hollywood movie producers eager to dramatize the life of Ghosn are likely to get a simple response: "Call my agent!" ■

### General Motors in Retreat

General Motors, which was the world leader among vehicle manufacturers for 77 years until 2007, is continuing with its programme to retreat from many world markets. The latest is that it is selling its plant in Thailand to GWM/Haval, of China, after earlier agreeing to sell its manufacturing operation in India to the same company. It is also closing operations in Australia and New Zealand and will "retire" the Australian Holden nameplate in 2021. It has already left South Africa and the African continent as well as Europe. ■

### Nissan Slides Down the Ranking List in Japan

Nissan's current financial woes are having a dire effect on its standing in Japan, where it has been among the top three manufacturers with Toyota and Honda, but has now slipped to fifth in asset value, behind Toyota, Honda, Suzuki and Subaru. Its troubles, which saw it in a loss situation in the last quarter of 2019, started with the arrest of Carlos Ghosn, who formed the alliance between Renault, Nissan and Mitsubishi, and is now a fugitive from justice in Lebanon after fleeing house arrest in Japan. The latest losses are the worst in a decade for the company. ■

### Nissan LEAF Rocks Babies to Sleep

Nissan has come to the rescue of frazzled parents across Europe with a guilt-free solution for those who rely on the magical effects of driving to gently lull their children to sleep.

The Nissan LEAF Dream Drive is the world's first zero-emission lullaby, dreamt up by Nissan engineers in collaboration with Sound Designer and Sleep Coach, Tom Middleton. This sleep album for babies mimics the peaceful sound frequencies of a humming combustion engine – trusted to put children to sleep, at no CO<sub>2</sub> emission cost.

New research has found that parents across Europe are frustratingly sleep-deprived. The majority of parents (65%), with a child aged two and under, are surviving on less than five hours of sleep a night, with 60% admitting they resort to driving their children to sleep and over half (57%) doing it at least once a week.

When looking at why parents put their faith in this method, Nissan discovered that 70% of



parents put their trust in the power of the vehicle's movement, when in fact it is the soothing sound frequencies of an internal combustion engine (ICE) that is the biggest contributor to a child falling asleep in the car.

Frequent dream driving in a combustion engine leads to an increase in carbon footprint; with parents emitting up to 70 000g of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions every year. However, 70% of European parents agree an EV would reduce their guilt around dream driving and want to become better environmental role models for their children.

Parents can connect their smartphone to their Nissan LEAF through Android Auto and Apple CarPlay, to enjoy the lullaby available on platforms like Apple Music, Spotify, SoundCloud, YouTube and Deezer. ■

### High-profile Visitors to BMW Plant



President Cyril Ramaphosa and German Chancellor Angela Merkel met the engineers of the future at BMW Group Plant Rosslyn in Tshwane earlier this month. Chancellor Merkel was in the country on a state visit focussed on education programmes, and took the opportunity to meet beneficiaries of BMW's multiple education and training programmes at Plant Rosslyn.

During the visit to the plant, their Excellencies were able to visit the Bodyshop, which was in recent years expanded as part of a R6.1bn investment into the plant. They also visited the BMW Group Training Academy, where they met with trainees who are learning skills critical to the motor industry. ■

## Snippets

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### Free K53 Help Guides for all South Africans

AutoTrader, South Africa's largest motoring marketplace, has invested in making the K53 learner's book available free of charge to all South Africans via Help Guides.

Leveraging the reach of one of the most visited sites in the country, AutoTrader's goal is to champion wider access to the K53 manual as a crucial step to greater mobility and financial freedom to many.

AutoTrader's free K53 manual is available to download and boasts a separate learner's manual, car driver's manual and a motorcycle manual. "To date, the guides have been downloaded over 15 000 times," said George Mienie, AutoTrader CEO. Not only is the book free to obtain, it is supported by parking and driver tip videos too.

Sentiments gathered from AutoTrader's social media channels and online platform reveal that a driver's license is seen as the key to upward mobility with regards to earning capacity. Interestingly, actually owning a car is seen as secondary. And it is not only in the four-wheeled arena that license access could make a difference.

At the inaugural Motorcycle Industry Stakeholder Summit held in May 2019, AutoTrader presented research findings that pointed to a mostly untapped sector of smaller-engined motorbikes, where the opportunity to solve commuter problems and provide a new source of income is vast.



### Peugeot Returns To The Bakkie Market

Peugeot South Africa has confirmed that it will re-enter the one-ton bakkie market in 2021 with the Landtrek, which is a joint venture with their partner Changan Auto, of China. It is part of Peugeot's relaunch and growth plan for SA and a full range of single- and double cabs will be offered, with the choice of petrol or diesel power. It will be built first in China and later in South America as well. It is reported to have already completed more than 2-million kilometres of testing, to make it live up to a claim of being "unstoppable". ■



The Landtrek is Peugeot South Africa's re-entry into the one-ton bakkie market in 2021.



The interior of the Landtrek.

"Currently the motorbike market is considered for leisure use or status purchases. But bikes between 150 cc and 500 cc are generally more affordable. This opens up new commuting and even earning options," said Mienie. "The first step to accessing that mobility is passing the K53 examination."

The free AutoTrader K53 book can be downloaded at <https://k53.autotrader.co.za/>. ■

### Groupe PSA Makes Leadership Changes in SA

Groupe PSA recently announced the appointment of Leslie Ramsoomar as Managing Director of PCSA, effective February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020.

In this new role, Ramsoomar will support business development of Groupe PSA's brands in South Africa. He is a key recruitment to achieve the group's ambition of 5% market share by 2024.

Ramsoomar brings over 20 years of retail and OEM automotive industry experience, in both South Africa and international operations,



Xavier Gobille and Leslie Ramsoomar.

with different key positions and increasing responsibilities in Sales, Marketing and Business Management.

Xavier Gobille, the outgoing MD of PCSA will be moving to other Groupe PSA business development areas in South Africa. Over the past two years, Gobille oversaw the restructuring of both sales and after sales at PCSA, signing new and strategic dealer partnerships and re-introducing the Citroën brand to the market. ■

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# The Road to a Successful Sale

Research has proven that the uptake and retention of training information among staff is questionable. Ongoing training is the only solution and therefore vital to the longevity and success of any business. However, traditional methods of training are becoming ineffective in this fast-paced, technologically evolving modern world we live in.

In addition, it has become increasingly difficult to effectively, constantly and instantly communicate changing information to staff.

This begs the question: how can you get your training to be instantly updated and be available to all your staff at any time, while allowing you to monitor how it is being used and by whom? The solution is simple: you need online training with mobile accessibility.

1Huddle, a mobile-based training platform, has revolutionised training by replacing traditional classrooms and manuals with gamification, applying the elements of game playing and points scoring in up-skilling and training staff.

## Three Reasons Why Gamification Increases Engagement and Grabs the People's Attention

In the world of business, most business owners aim to accomplish at least one of the following: get their team motivated and productive, and increase their wellbeing. Gamification, as anyone could have guessed, is an effective way to tick all the boxes, but it's a relatively fresh concept that some may not have heard of yet. So what is it and how can it help you improve the workplace climate?

### Gamification in a Nutshell

By infusing game-like characteristics into what would otherwise be a dull or boring activity, it's possible to achieve a positive effect on people's willingness to engage in it. Participants can be further motivated by incorporating some form of leader boards, distributing badges for achievements, unlocking rewards, and such.

Since it helps to relieve stress and takes the mundane out of the necessary, many businesses have taken notice and have begun implementing it.



Now that the basics are out of the way, let's examine the three main reasons why gamification is so effective:

1. It gives participants a sense of achievement and progress;
2. Identifying the top performers becomes a breeze;
3. It acts as a new form of credibility system.

Road to a Sale is a process that paves the way in a systematic and most effective way in preparing employees and the dealership in closing deals and most importantly creating value in the customers mind by adopting a personalized touch and feel experience by following the process of Lead sourcing and prospecting, Meet and Greet, Qualifying the Customer, Selecting and Presenting, Test Drive and Demonstrating, Valuation, the Final Close & OTP sign, Finance Application and finally the Delivery and Follow up

Research has proven that games positively impact learning and retention.

1Huddle provides full customer support and provides training on management and monitoring of the system. The latter promotes a better understanding of which training areas require more focus. To this end, material can be changed or updated as required, ensuring that the most

current and up-to-date information is communicated to employees immediately.

Feedback from clients confirms that 1Huddle RTS promotes learning through repetition and it is interesting to note that due to the minimal data required to run the App, many

employees are logging in and playing after hours. In essence it is achieving the impossible; providing a better and more effective platform of training that sees employees essentially training themselves, while keeping them engaged and ensuring that information is retained.

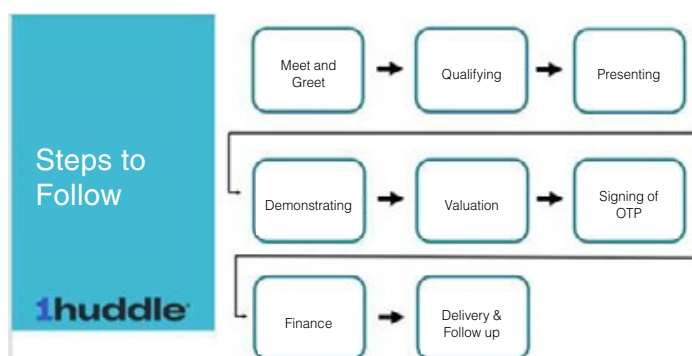
### Conclusion

Gamification is gaining traction both in the corporate world as well as in popular entertainment. As it turns out, playing games (or rather having the feeling of doing so) can be great for upping one's productivity, engagement, and fostering a positive mind-set.

Visit [www.1huddle.co.za](http://www.1huddle.co.za) to find out how your business can benefit from implementing RTS and see your sales figures soar to new heights. Alternatively, contact 1Huddle sales manager, Bionica Fourie at (011) 398 9100 or send an e-mail to [bionica@1huddle.co.za](mailto:bionica@1huddle.co.za).

### Highlights of 1Huddle Road to a Sale

- Total of nine complete RTS games;
- Five questions under each game per day;
- Questions randomise daily;
- Quick on-boarding process;
- Can be played on your mobile phone, iPad / tablet or desktop;
- Can be played anytime, anywhere;
- Full monthly reporting;
- Daily online support;
- Monthly employee list updates for new employees to onboard and deactivate employees who have left;
- Faster training and greater knowledge retention;
- Easy up-skilling of sales teams;
- No downtime during working hours as it only takes two minutes to play a single game;
- Identifies skill gaps within sales teams and improves their skills. ■



## It's Volkswagen's Time to Shine

It won't be easy to wipe the smiles off the faces of Volkswagen Group South Africa (VWSA) employees at the moment. Not only did the company end 2019 on a high note, it also began the new year in top gear, proving that it is ready to face any challenges the future may hold head-on.

In many respects 2019 was a bumper year for VWSA.

### Production Records Shattered

For starters, there was reason to celebrate in October when the Uitenhage plant improved on its record for the highest production volume in a single month, with 16 453 vehicles coming off the production line. The previous record, set in October 2009 was 15 131 units.

Building on this achievement, the plant ended 2019 with an all-time record for production. A total of 161 954 vehicles were manufactured during the year, the highest volume the plant has achieved since it began manufacturing VW vehicles back in 1951.

Of these vehicles, 108 422 were manufactured for export and 53 532 were produced for the local market. The production volume consisted of 131 365 Polos and 30 589 Polo Vivos.

Thomas Schaefer, Volkswagen Group South Africa Chairman and Managing Director was, understandably, proud. "The production volume we achieved in 2019 is an important milestone for VWSA," he said. "This achievement is testament to the efficiency, commitment and excellence of our employees. I am grateful to every contribution they made in 2019 to reach this impressive number, and I look forward to more successes in the year ahead."



Mike Glendinning, Director: Sales and Marketing, VWSA.

And more success is exactly what came VWSA's way.

Early in the new year VWSA reached a new milestone when it produced its 200 000<sup>th</sup> unit of the current Polo for the export market. The Uitenhage plant has been manufacturing the current generation of the Polo since September 2017 and exports to all right-hand drive markets and supplements production for certain left-hand drive markets as well.

### Sales Success

VWSA's impressive 2019 production statistics were backed up with equally impressive sales performances. Full-year 2019 sales saw Volkswagen

Group South Africa (VWSA) dominating the local passenger car market with 89 353 vehicles sold.

"2019 was an incredible year for VWSA. We ended the year with a 23.4% passenger market share (up 0.6% from 2018), meaning that close to a quarter of all cars sold in the SA market in 2019 are from the Volkswagen Group (VW and Audi)," boasted Mike Glendinning, Director: Sales and Marketing, VWSA. The Volkswagen Passenger brand ended the year with a record market share of 20.4% (0.6% improvement from 2018), the highest since 1996.

The Polo Vivo was the best-selling passenger car in South Africa in 2019, with 29 619 vehicles sold. The locally-manufactured model topped the A0 segment with a share of 24.5%.

### Awards Galore

The euphoria of VWSA's strong sales performance had not even worn off yet when there was more reason to celebrate in a big way.

The Cars.co.za Consumer Awards have become a highlight on the automotive calendar since the inaugural event in 2016 and are widely regarded as South Africa's most definitive automotive awards.

Volkswagen was the biggest winner at the fifth annual event, not only walking off with the silverware as the Brand of the Year, but also winning in six other categories. This means that the Volkswagen brand has had the most category wins (16) in the history of the Cars.co.za Consumer Awards. VW is also the only brand to have won at least one Consumer Awards category every year since the competition began.

"At Volkswagen we pride ourselves on outstanding products and excellent customer service and winning the Brand of the Year award is recognition of the great work being done by Volkswagen employees as well as the dealer network," said Glendinning.

Volkswagen's first win of the night was the Compact Hatchback category which went to the Polo. The second award for Volkswagen went to the Polo GTI. The Golf GTI won the Premium Hatchback category, while the T-Cross was the winner in the Compact Family Car category. The Arteon came out on top in the Business Class category and the Amarok won the hotly contested Leisure Double Cab category.

"We are so proud of the Volkswagen wins at this year's awards. For the locally-manufactured Polo and Polo GTI to defend and win their categories respectively, is great recognition for the Uitenhage plant. I am also very proud of the



VW's manufacturing plant in Uitenhage had a bumper year in 2019.



More than 200 000 Polo's have been produced in Uitenhage for export to other markets. The Polo Vivo was the best-selling passenger car in South Africa in 2019.

◀ continued from previous page

T-Cross which continues to be a key player in the A0 SUV segment and this win is a further statement of the great package this compact SUV offers. A great performance also by our premium brands, the Arteon and much-loved Golf GTI. With the bakkie market being intensely competitive in South Africa, it is a terrific feat that the Amarok defended its title in this category for the third time,” Glendinning commented.

### Expanding Into the Rest of Africa

Not content with its successes in South Africa only, VW has expanded the number of its dealerships across Southern Africa with the opening of a new dealership in Namibia. Situated in Ongwediva, in the north of the country, it is a fully fledged Volkswagen dealership with a state of the art showroom, workshop and parts department.

The dealership, which employs 13 people, aims to grow Volkswagen's market share in northern Namibia by servicing customers located in this region who would otherwise have had to travel approximately 500 kilometres in order to service their vehicles.

The opening of this dealership brings the number of Volkswagen dealers in Namibia to five, in addition to the one in Botswana and 103 across South Africa.

With 1 362 vehicles sold in 2019, the VW dealers in Namibia achieved a market share of 29.9%, one of the highest in the Volkswagen Group worldwide. The dealers also achieved a 50% market share in the A0 Hatch (Polo), A0 Sedan (Polo Sedan) and A Hatch (Golf) segments.

### What's Next?

VWSA certainly doesn't plan on resting on its laurels and the company has its sights firmly set on the future. To this end, VW has taken the first step in its journey towards electric mobility in SA through the launch of the e-Golf pilot project.

The e-Golf pilot project will see six fully electric vehicles being tested by motoring and lifestyle media, selected dealers and VW employees in an effort to gain consumer insights into the varying experiences of driving and living with an electric vehicle in SA.

Through the involvement of selected dealers in Gauteng and Western Cape, the e-Golf pilot project seeks to drive customer awareness and education regarding electric vehicles. The e-Golfs will be used as shuttles and courtesy cars.

“At Volkswagen, we want to democratise electric mobility and that is why the e-Golf pilot project is a key initiative for the brand. With the help of our dealers, we want to get as many South Africans as possible to drive and experience an electric vehicle as this is the future of our brand,” explained Glendinning.

The e-Golf pilot project is the first step of a three-phase approach which will pave the way for Volkswagen to include electric vehicles in its future local product portfolio. The second phase



The e-Golf pilot project seeks to drive customer awareness and education regarding electric vehicles.

will be expanded to include a fleet of fully electric Volkswagen ID.3 vehicles from 2021.

The third and last phase of the electric mobility project will see the first fully electric VW vehicles available for sale to customers in South Africa from 2022.

Hold on to your hats South Africa. Volkswagen is on a roll. ■



Volkswagen was the biggest winner at the Cars.co.za Consumer Awards, not only walking off with the silverware as the Brand of the Year, but also winning in six other categories.

## Mahle and CASME Strengthen Relationship

The partnership between automotive component manufacturer Mahle South Africa and the Centre for the Advancement of Science and Mathematics Education (CASME) has seen their joint Science2Go project directly supporting over 17 000 learners and over 250 teachers at 130 schools.

Mahle South Africa is one of the largest automotive parts manufacturers, driving the future of engineering stars. The company realises this goal through its innovatory approach and partnerships with the likes of the NGO, CASME.

According to Henre Benson, a director of CASME, 90% of public schools lack a functional science laboratory, a necessary requirement to expose learners to hands-on experience in science, engineering and technology.

Recognising the difficulties faced by science teachers as well as the opportunity to reach more learners, Mahle South Africa began exploring, with CASME, ways in which to move the resource centre concept closer to schools. And so the Mahle South Africa Science2Go Mobile Resource Centre initiative was born.

CASME also focuses on professional development and support for teachers through training and provision of resources for science

and mathematics teaching in under-resourced and previously disadvantaged communities. It operates throughout the schooling sector from Foundation Phase to Grade 12 throughout South Africa and implements a range of interventions in support of the Department of Basic Education.

“During the pilot phase we were able to demonstrate a cost-effective response to the need for practical science learning experiences where laboratories are not a reality in many schools. Our evaluation of the pilot phase showed a 43% increase in Physical Science enrolment in the participating high schools,” explained Benson.

Mahle South Africa is a member of the National Association for Automotive Component and Allied Manufacturers (NAACAM) and CASME a beneficiary of NAACAM’s three golf days this year.

According to Renai Moothilal, NAACAM Executive Director, South Africa’s economic



prosperity depends on the availability of sufficient highly educated and trained people in science, mathematics and technology.

“Increasing such availability, particularly with people from disadvantaged backgrounds, will go a long way to addressing structural growth and inequality, especially as we move into a technology intensive working future. CASME is one of the organisations successfully addressing this need and we are proud to be associated with them,” he concluded. ■

## Mazda Supports Lion Relocation

The Mazda Foundation Southern Africa recently became involved in the rescue of lions from captivity in the Ukraine in association with the Lawrence Anthony Earth Organisation–Ukraine (LAEO Ukraine) and Warriors of Wildlife. In December 2019, the Mazda Foundation donated funds so that five lion cubs could be relocated from Ukraine to a wildlife sanctuary in South Africa.

South African born wildlife activist Lionel de Lange had approached Jacaranda’s “Good Morning Angels” to look for support in covering the transport of the five cubs from the Ukraine to South Africa. The Mazda Foundation Southern Africa stepped in to help. In addition to the funds donated for the air transport, the Foundation provided five BT-50 bakkies for the ground transport of the lions from OR Tambo International Airport, to Ubuntu sanctuary in Limpopo.

Said Craig Roberts, Managing Director of Mazda Southern Africa and Chairman of the Mazda Foundation Southern Africa: “It is an

incredible project to be involved in to bring these lions back to their natural habitat in South Africa. Mazda Southern Africa is a significant company in South Africa and has a responsibility to give something back to the country. The Mazda Foundation Southern Africa agreed to support this project to save these magnificent African animals from the canned hunting industry and give them a safe home.”



Earlier this month another four lions, rescued from terrible living conditions and some almost certain death, arrived in South Africa. In the same manner as previously, the Mazda Foundation assisted with funds for the air transport, and provided BT-50 bakkies for the ground transport. After a long trip that started three days earlier in Ukraine, these four lions arrived safely at the Love Lions Alive sanctuary in the evening of Wednesday, 5<sup>th</sup> February.

“To see the lions take their first steps on South African soil – there are no words to explain it. Thank you to the Mazda Foundation Southern Africa for their support to fly these lions to freedom and into their new home where they will live the rest of their lives,” commented De Lange

The Mazda Foundation Southern Africa, founded in 2017, is the principle vehicle by which Mazda Southern Africa and its Dealer network can thank and give back to the country through assistance in education and broader community support. ■

# Lightstone Regroups to Provide Even Better Service

BY ROGER HOUGHTON

Lightstone, which has a number of components, including Lightstone Auto and Lightstone Property, and is 85% owned by the Halls Group, has been restructured over the past several years and is now one unified brand, with streamlined processes and systems as well as a revised logo.

“The restructuring and integration processes have been a long road we have had to travel, particularly over the last four years, but we are now ready to provide our customers with even better service,” said Pieter Wessels, the Managing Director of Lightstone Auto. He was speaking at a Lightstone Auto roadshow in Centurion recently.

This was one in a series of events which took the Lightstone Auto team around the country to update its customers on the latest developments and also to reveal some very interesting statistics on the local automotive industry over the last two decades.

The present Lightstone started as Stonecastle, which was established in 2005. It first joined forces with Carstats in 2010 and then amalgamated with Port Elizabeth-based RGT Smart, which had 30



Pieter Wessels, Managing Director of Lightstone Auto.



Jaco van Staden, Head of Sales at Lightstone Auto.

years in the world of automotive statistics. This was followed by the integration of the various business units into the organisation of Halls Technologies in 2015.

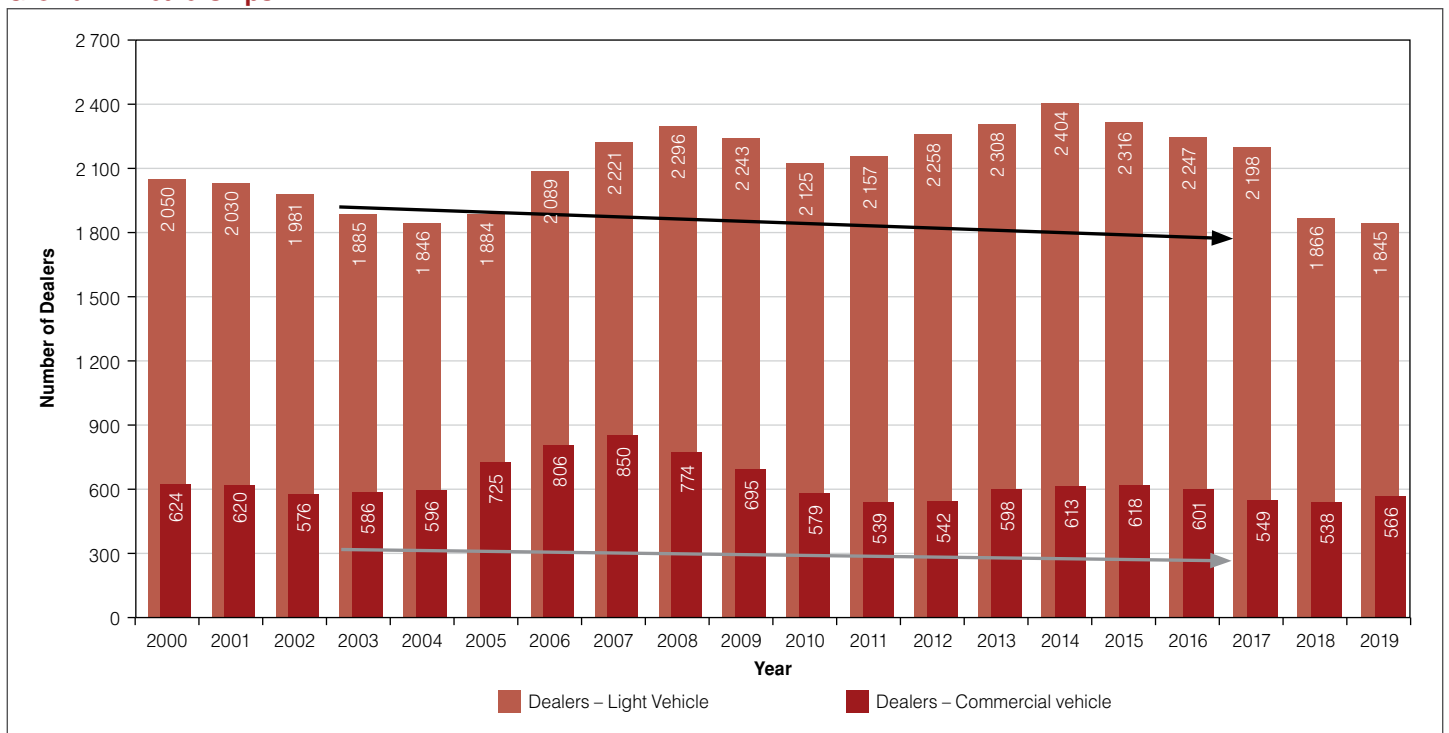
Halls itself was established as a farming company in 1890 – 130 years ago – and has subsequently diversified into several other industries including technologies.

Jaco van Staden, who has had many years’ experience in the industry, dating back to RGT in Port Elizabeth, has just been appointed Head of Sales for Lightstone Auto.

He gave an insightful presentation on the wide variety of products and services now

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## Growth in Dealerships



Source: Lightstone 2020.

◀ continued from previous page

offered under the Lightstone Auto banner, ranging from Industry Insights (AutoStats new vehicle sales statistics and AutoParc vehicle population), to Web GO (Everything you need to know about any vehicle), Live (Verifying vehicles and drivers) and Equity Mining (Helping drive

sales using vehicle leads and customer insight).

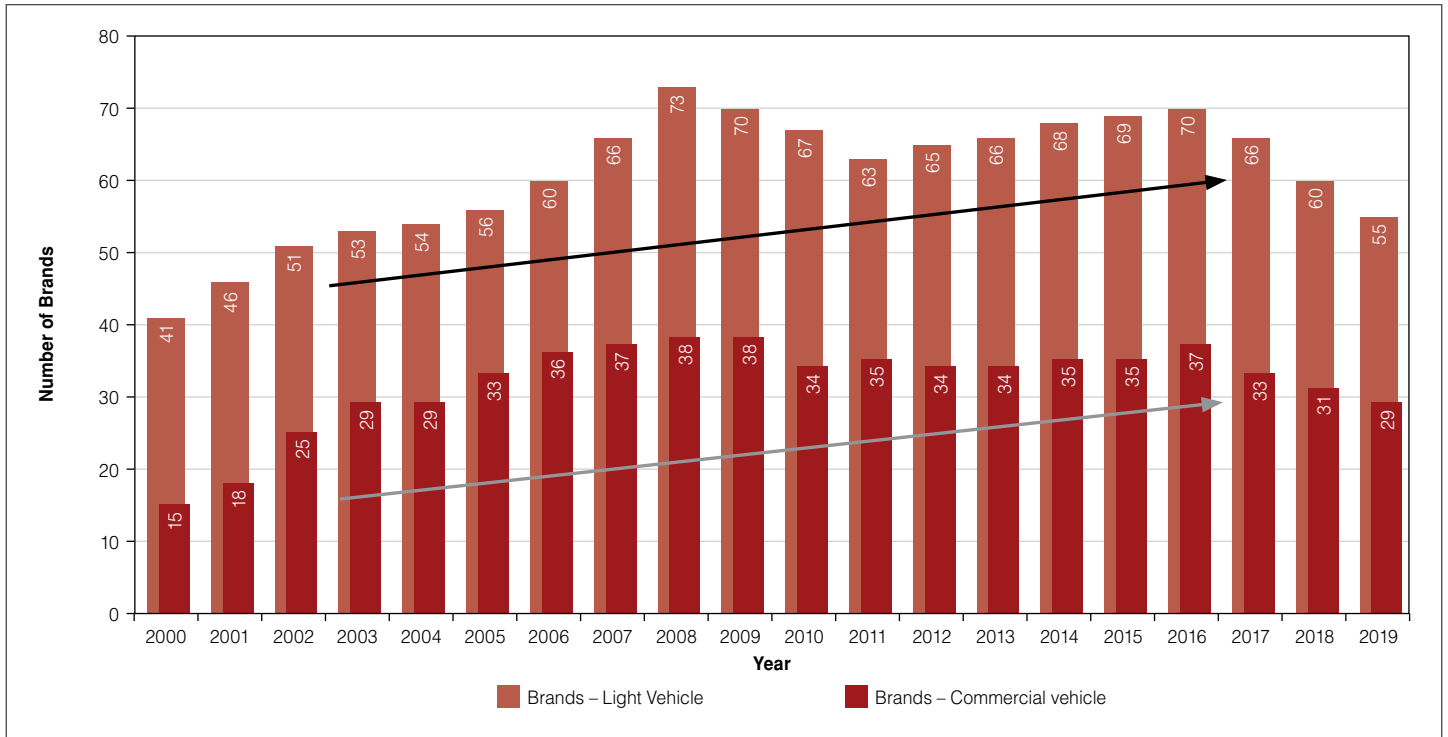
Van Staden mentioned that the Lightstone teams were now looking at opportunities and potential in the realm of automotive parts and technical service.

Lightstone, whose slogan is “We simplify the complex”, has certainly packaged an amazing range of products and services with something for

everybody involved with virtually any aspect of the motor industry.

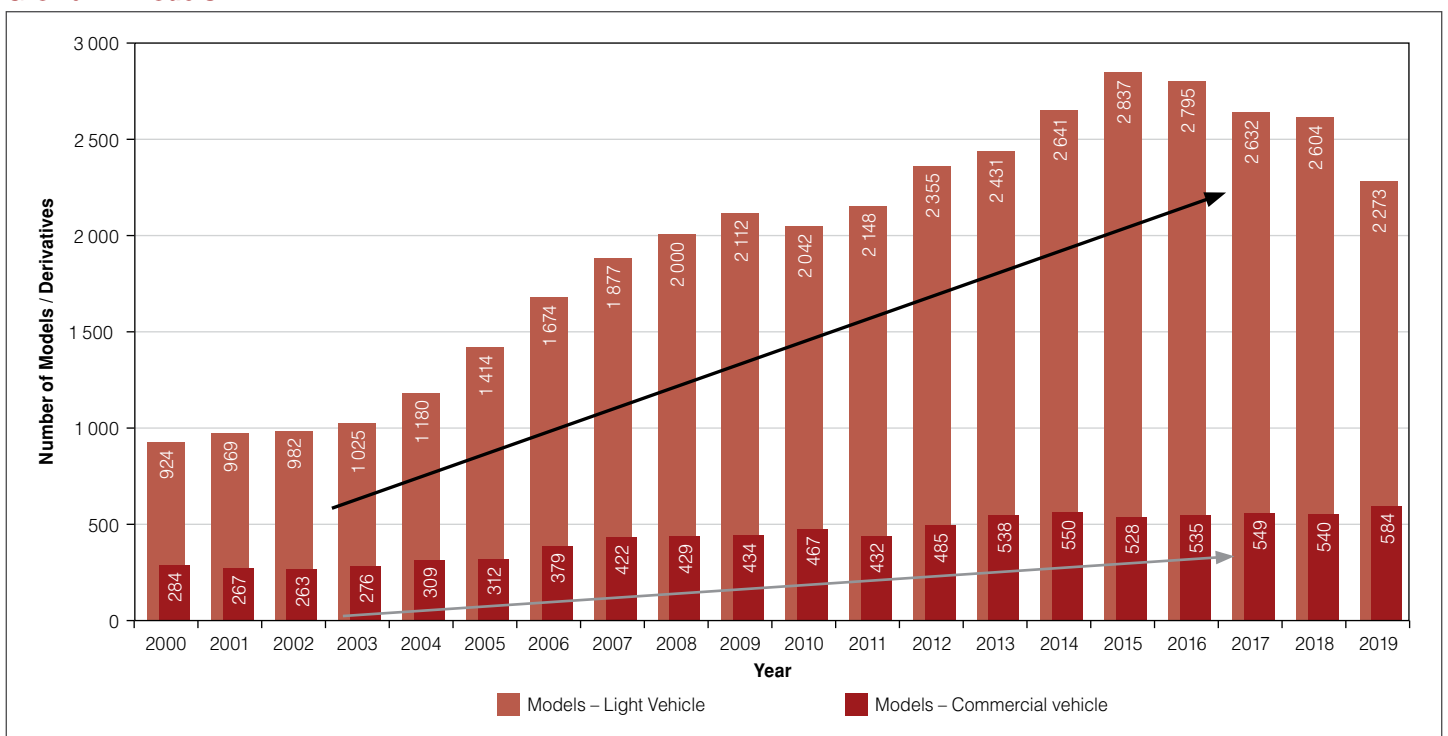
The statistics shared at the Lightstone auto roadshow included information on the number of brands on the local market, the number of models and derivatives, as well as the number of dealers and certainly makes for very interesting reading. ■

## Growth in Brands



Source: Lightstone 2020.

## Growth in Models



Source: Lightstone 2020.



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# Toyota Hits the Value-For-Money Jackpot with New Corolla Quest

BY ROGER HOUGHTON

Toyota SA Motors, which is this year celebrating 40 years of consecutive market leadership, has hit the jackpot again with another winner in the C-segment (compact sedans) in the form of the latest Corolla Quest. This was clear after an impressive presentation which highlighted the innovative local input, including a stringent development programme, and the subsequent test drive in Gauteng.

The Corolla Quest, like its forerunner of the same name, is an extended life continuation model which benefits from ongoing economies of scale and increased localisation. The value-for-money aspect is even better than before with the latest iteration.

A three-pronged approach was taken to cost-cutting without sacrificing the Toyota attributes of Quality, Durability and Reliability (QDR). Firstly, the production process was made more efficient, components were commonised where possible and sourcing was re-looked while the specifications were tweaked to cater for different customer needs and budgets.

*The latest Quest now has better performance with an 1 800cc engine as standard across the six model range.*

Toyota has a long history of building successful extended life models. Over the years these have included Hiluxes, Corollas, Cressida's, and the most popular long timer in the Toyota range, the much-loved Tazz.

The previous generation Quest, based on the 10th generation Corolla, sold 63 966 units and together with the 11th generation Corolla which was on sale at the same time, these two sold 136 880 units, making them South Africa's favourite sedans – a mantle worn by Corolla for many years in the past. (Last year the 11th generation Corolla and the Quest garnered 71% of the local C-segment and 6% of the total passenger car market).

The latest Quest, which is much more modern in appearance, both inside and out, now has better performance too, with an 1 800cc engine as standard across the six model range, with prices going from R249 000 for the standard model

to R317 700 for the Exclusive derivative with CVT transmission.

Standard safety specification includes vehicle stability control, hill assist, ABS, EBD, Isofix child seat mounts, LED running lights and rear fog lights. All models feature remote door locking, electric windows, air conditioning, steering wheel-mounted switches, follow-me-home headlamps, radio/CD with USB, Aux, and a minimum of four speakers.

The Prestige models have an upgraded touch-screen audio system with six speakers, reversing camera, cruise control, combination of fabric and leather seat covering and 16-inch alloy wheels. The Exclusive grade adds climate control, push-button start with keyless entry, leather seats, rain-sensing wipers, and LED headlamps.

Altogether an impressive local development which will continue to attract buyers looking for a good-looking, value-for-money sedan. ■



## Renault's Triber, a Low-Cost Mini SUV That Takes Seven People



BY STUART JOHNSTON

At the South African launch of the new Renault Triber in mid-February, the Managing Director of Renault India, Mr Venkatram Mamillapalle, suggested that the new Triber would establish a whole new niche in the South African market.

The Indian-built Triber is a surprise package in lots of ways. If anyone was expecting a sort of extended Kwid, this notion was soon put to bed with the realisation that the Triber is built on a completely different platform to the small Renault hatch that has been confounding experts with its sales performances.

### Low Price

Nevertheless the price is very much Kwid-like (given that it is a larger vehicle). The new Triber is priced between R164 900 and R189 900. That's right in Datsun Go+ seven-seater territory. But the difference is that the Go+ looks like an extended hatch, or a van with windows, while the Triber looks pretty funky!

While some of the Kwid's sales successes have been attributed to the fact that it looks somewhat like a mini-SUV, there is no doubt that the Triber is indeed aiming for that perception. It has a high ground clearance, and its chunky looks are somewhat reminiscent of the much more substantial (and more-expensive) Duster.

The interior is no-nonsense smart, and the fittings are cheap but look as if they may have a fair level of durability. The doors, for instance, close with a reassuring thunk that indicates this body shell may have reasonable levels of rigidity.

On our launch drive in the KZN midlands, we realised a few things about the Triber. Firstly, it is a true five-seater that can very much double as a seven-seater on occasion. We installed a 1,85 metre tall colleague in the third row of seats and he could sit reasonably comfortably.

With the third row of seats folded flat, there is some 600 litres of luggage space available. So this makes the Triber extremely useable as a five-seater family car.

### The Engine?

Hmmm, here is where reality intrudes on this particular fairy tale. The engine is a 1,0-litre triple-cylinder, non-turbo unit. It produces 52 kW and 94 Nm of torque, and frankly it is not really up to powering the Triber along in a fashion that's going to be pleasant in hilly sections of the Highveld. It's okay on the level, when you can ease up to a 120 km/h cruising speed. But show it a hill and you are back to third gear, and in some cases second gear, as we found in the hills outside Pietermaritzburg!

The Triber weighs in at just under 1 000 kg, and this means its power-to-weight ratio suffers accordingly, compared to when such engines are installed in cars that are some 200 kg lighter. With plenty of people on board it is going to battle.

The other really irritating aspect of the engine is the way its vibrations can be felt through the whole car. Start it up and it feels as if the engine is communicating to you noisily through the steering wheel and accelerator pedal, by means of a discernible vibration.

When you pull off, the engine shudders on mountings that feel to be of solid metal with zero rubber damping. This also impacts negatively on the smoothness of gear changes. It seems as if Renault India didn't deem it necessary to add NVH refinement to its list of model requirements for the Triber.

As for handling, it is reasonable in terms of straight-line stability. It does have some body roll, but you would expect this in a little vehicle with a raised ride height. Ride quality is not too bad on normal roads, and in fact the Triber handles bigger bumps and ruts well, a trait that we've found to exist on many Indian-built vehicles.

Another plus for the Triber is that the top Prestige model gets side airbags; the other two models have dual airbags, and all Tribers have ABS braking. So yes, with this specification, good looks and low pricing, many younger people with expanding families are going to be looking at the Triber. We just wonder how that very modest performance is going to impact on sales, long term.

It comes with a five-year/150 000 km mechanical warranty and a two-year/30 000 km service plan. And, no, as the Triber isn't aimed at first-time buyers, there is no free insurance for 12 months. ■


 We Drive

# Isuzu Sets the Cat Amongst the Pigeons



BY BRENDON STANIFORTH

Us South Africans are obsessed with bakkies. Most of us with the biggest, loudest and most powerful of them all ... but there is a different dimension to a double cab ... the entry level lifestyle double cab. Sure, if you have the money – go ahead and buy the top of the range model, but there are hidden gems in the bottom of the range that can do just about anything their more expensive counterparts can, albeit just a little slower.

Isuzu had left the gates open to an enormous market by not having an automatic transmission on their venerable 250, their most reliable model by a country mile, or a few hundred thousand country miles on some.

Isuzu has done some development on a five-speed auto gearbox that matches our Euro II

compliant 250 engine. The engine offers 100 kW and 320 Nm. That may not sound astounding, but this is the one bakkie where the finished product equals more than the sum of its parts. The power is more than good enough for a family double cab. The gearbox does a fantastic job of keeping the engine in the powerband too.

*They loaded two tons on the back and towed a seven-ton trailer around for a few weeks to measure gearbox and diff temperatures, with not a single failure.*

The interior is sturdy and awash with harder plastics, but one must remember that this bakkie is derived from a workhorse. It's not supposed to look like a stiletto, more like a CAT boot.

Ride quality is true to form, bakkie all the way. Yes – it is hard, but it is meant to be. It is a workhorse after all. For a plusher ride, load some cargo and off you go. We traversed large sections of gravel with tyres at 2 bar, and the D-Max behaved brilliantly. Yes – a 4x4 would be better yet, but for a 4x2 the road holding on gravel is great.

According to Isuzu representatives they did some extensive testing at Gerotek with the 250's new gearbox. They loaded two tons on the back and towed a seven-ton trailer around for a few weeks to measure gearbox and diff temperatures, with not a single failure. That's fantastic.

It's quite easy to summarise the D-Max 250 auto. It is a trusty old steed that is reasonably priced and fantastically reliable. Best of all – it just became easier to live with every day. I don't see a single downfall here. ■

## Hyundai's Bold New Performance Statement – The i30 N

BY STUART JOHNSTON

There was a moment when the whole performance package of the Hyundai i30 N came together for me. I was being driven on an extremely hot lap around a race track in the Western Cape by Tasmin Pepper, former SA Polo Cup champion and currently one of the top 20 women drivers in the world competing in W Series, a global single-seater championship.

Tasmin learned her craft in karting from the age of four and together with all her front-wheel-drive racing, experiencing her driving style is the essence of smoothness and maximising mid-corner momentum.

*No wheel spin, no understeer, this was a chassis composed enough to extract the maximum from the tyres, an engine with a power delivery.*

Yet here was Tasmin exploring the absolute outer levels of grip in the i30 N and on exit the car was starting to hop. This would normally indicate a wayward chassis-suspension set-up, a driver too hasty on the throttle, but it was none of those. The mild hopping motion was caused by those front tyres digging into the tarmac and extracting every grain of grip from the surface and translating that into an extremely impressive exit speed, blasting down the next straight faster than ever before.

No wheel spin, no understeer, this was a chassis composed enough to extract the maximum from the tyres, an engine with a power delivery that was strong enough to thrill and yet manageable enough to ensure that a top line driver could happily live at the outer edges of grip and forward motion.

*The driver of a Hyundai i30 N has five suspension modes to play with ... and it was interesting that this gave a range between rock-hard-race-track firm to comfort.*

I came to appreciate this refinement on the road later that day. Our route through the Western Cape took in many of the classic mountain passes and you always felt you could trust the Hyundai hot hatch to remain composed and yet lively enough to deliver maximum fun.

The driver of a Hyundai i30 N has five suspension modes to play with (controlled by a button on the left steering wheel spoke) and it was interesting that this gave a range between rock-hard-race-track firm to comfort (which we never really used on the road, it has to be said). On the bumpier passes the “normal” mode or Sport mode was best, making rapid progress much smoother.

I enjoyed the engine of the Hyundai i30 N. I feel that in current performance terms it is specified just a little bit conservatively, but its strong low to mid-range torque makes it extremely useable. It is rated at 202 kW at 6 000 r/min with

353 Nm of torque. It will rev to just shy 7 000 r/min, which is fine for a turbocharged petrol four-cylinder motor. But for that extra in-cabin audio excitement, a rev limit of 7 500 r/min would have added just that final cherry on top of a fine performance package.

I really appreciated the fine build quality of the car, the sports seats which are not too intrusive for getting in and out of the car, and the fact that the interior has just the right amount of track-racer type touches, nothing superfluous.

As for the appearance, it is one classy hot hatch, perhaps just a tad conservative for the hard-core boy racer, but it ticks all the boxes in terms of a front splitter, rear aerofoil, big 19-inch wheels with 235/35 rubber, and subtle striping and badging indicating that this N model is indeed special.

It's priced at R679 900, and that includes a seven-year/200 000 km warranty and a five-year/70 000 km service plan. That's actually an amazing statement of faith in the way this performance hatch has been engineered.

*This car is Hyundai's first real hot hatch and it's a class act.*

Hyundai has dipped a toe or two into the performance arena over the past few decades, but this car is its first real hot hatch and it's a class act. As a halo model for all that the Hyundai brand stands for – honesty, intelligence and now topped off by a little walk (and maybe a little hop) on the wild side – it is just about perfect. ■



## Mixed Start for Commercial Vehicle Sales in 2020

The South African commercial vehicle market got off to a mixed start in 2020, recording a 4.4% year-on-year decline in overall sales in January.

According to the latest combined results released by the National Association of Automobile Manufacturers of South Africa (NAAMSA), Associated Motor Holdings (AMH) and Amalgamated Automobile Distributors (AAD), 1 568 new trucks and buses were sold during January.

When compared to the first month of 2019, sales were down 8.0% in the medium commercial vehicle (MCV) segment, to end January 2020 with 503 new trucks sold. Using the same comparison, heavy commercial vehicle (HCV) sales declined by 14.5% to 277 units. The extra heavy commercial vehicle (EHCV) segment experienced an upturn in sales, increasing by 6.2% to 758 units. Bus sales continued to struggle, with a significant 45.5% decline to 30 units sold during January.



“We have certainly seen an interesting start to the local commercial vehicle market in January 2020,” said Filip Van den Heede, managing director of UD Trucks Southern Africa. “The sharp declines in both MCV and HCV sales are an indication that the fundamentals are under pressure, likely an indicator that the country’s economy is not yet seeing a recovery to growth.

We hope that the EHCV trend in January can stabilise and gradually counter the other segments.”

Van den Heede concluded by saying that the growth in the EHCV market can be attributed to some recovery in the movement of commodities, which drove new vehicle sales. ■

## Isuzu Plant Gears Up for Production of Next-Generation D-MAX

Upgrades and modifications to the Isuzu Motors South Africa (IMSaf) production plant in Port Elizabeth are currently underway, gearing up for the production of the seventh generation Isuzu D-MAX bakkie.

Late last year Isuzu Motors Limited of Japan confirmed that the company would be investing R1.2 billion in the next generation bakkie programme in South Africa.

According to Dominic Rimmer, IMSaf Senior Vice President Technical Operations, new programmes of this nature and magnitude have complex requirements, which require the localisation of a diverse set of components and systems, the local sourcing of supplier and in-house tooling and equipment and manufacturing facility modifications. “Our project launch team is working at an accelerated pace, and we anticipate that we will be ready to roll the first units off the production line during the second half of 2021,” he said.

Rimmer added that extensive testing and development will be carried out. “Our bakkies are

locally engineered to meet the requirements of local and Sub-Saharan Africa markets, thus ensuring that our products maintain high quality standards, while retaining their reputation for reliability, capability and durability,” he explained.

*The new Isuzu D-MAX will be the seventh generation bakkie to come off the South African production line.*

The new Isuzu D-MAX will be the seventh generation bakkie to come off the South African production line. The all new bakkie will benefit from bold styling as well as powertrain changes and significant improvements in overall refinement to cater for the diverse customer needs in this important segment.

South Africa will initially serve as the main market for the next generation bakkies, but with growing volumes expected to be

generated from the company’s Sub-Saharan Africa growth strategy. ■



Dominic Rimmer, IMSaf Senior Vice President Technical Operations.

## SA's First Working Water Recycling Truck

Hino Isando and Werner Pumps & Equipment (Pty) Ltd have produced South Africa's first working water recycling truck. Built on a Hino 700 cab and chassis, the water recycling unit is the ideal solution for cleaning sewer and storm water lines and is the latest addition to the extensive Werner Pumps product range.

"Our customers can now jet drains, suck up the rubbish and then reuse the water without having to leave their working sites," explained Sebastian Werner, managing director of Werner Pumps. Prior to this development, the company's customers would have to jet drains, suck up the rubbish and then leave the working site to dump the load before refilling the tank and returning.

Apart from saving time and fuel, the Werner Pumps water recycling truck eliminates the wastage of 168 000 litres of water, per machine, in every eight-hour working shift. Available in various forms and sizes, the unit also has wet and dry suction capabilities.

The hydraulically operated water recycling truck is built on a Hino 700 2838 6x4 chassis/cab which Werner Pumps acquired from Hino Isando, a Supergroup dealership that specialises in sales, service, and parts supply for the complete range of Hino commercial vehicles.

This particular vehicle is privately owned and is rented out to various customers, including to the Emfuleni municipality. It was also used in the Vaal River clean-up, where two of the company's combination units are currently being employed by Erwat.

While the high pressure and vacuum pumps are imported from Switzerland, everything else, including the tank and cylinders, are built in Springs, Johannesburg by Werner Pumps.

The vehicle has been specially designed for rugged African conditions, with several components toughened for improved durability. The PTO was done by Hino-approved Truck Equipment (Pty) Ltd, while on this particular vehicle, the



chassis was lengthened by Ticaserve to accommodate the tank. For jobs requiring smaller tanks, chassis lengthening is not necessary.

"We try to produce as much as possible ourselves so that we can support our customers better and resolve any issues that may occur quickly," Werner explained. "We are also the only company in this industry with an ISO9001 rating in South Africa and have been checked by Toyota Japan, who sent engineers over here to inspect what we do earlier this year."

*The Werner Pumps water recycling truck eliminates the wastage of 168 000 litres of water, per machine, in every eight-hour working shift.*

In the interest of user-friendly operation and safe handling, the water recycler can be operated via wireless remote control. Electronic real-time location monitoring is provided, which means the vehicle can be viewed on mobile devices at all

times. The unit's total number of operating hours are also recorded.

Vehicle services are carried out at 350-hour intervals since the truck spends most of its time idling. Hino Isando performs these services.

The first water recycling unit took the company around six months to design and manufacture, although Werner expects the lead time to reduce as the process is developed and refined.

The company chose Hino because of the countrywide service and parts backup support that is provided. Another important factor is the in-house finance offered by Hino Financial Services (HFS) to Werner Pumps' customers. HFS ensures customers can obtain vehicle finance quicker and at lower interest rates than third-party financial providers.

According to Werner the company will look at providing operator training in the near future and is working towards an ISO welding specification as well as ISO14001 (environmental) certification for the equipment. The company is also actively looking at export opportunities for its water recycling truck, with interest already being shown in India, Mauritius, and Kenya. ■

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# The Global Argument About the Value of Motor Shows Continues

The National Automobile Dealers' Association (NADA) in the United States is making a strong case for the continuation of motor shows as many vehicle manufacturers decide these displays are no longer worth supporting and, instead, develop other promotional activities in their place.

The following advertisement was placed in a recent edition of Automotive News by NADA and it makes very interesting reading:

**Motor shows – Worth the price of admission ... for every OEM:** When it comes to driving brand consideration and excitement among consumers, the impact of motor shows cannot be understated. Today's shows provide a unique, experiential way to introduce your brand to new consumers, or connect with loyal customers. Year after year, the numbers tell the story: Motor shows are worth the price of admission for every OEM.

*Seven out of 10 attendees plan to buy a new vehicle within 12 months.*

**Impact on brand and product awareness:** More than 10-million consumers attend motor shows in the US annually. Seven out of 10 attendees plan to buy a new vehicle within 12 months. These people are also twice as likely to plan a new-vehicle purchase within a year of visiting a show versus the general population.

**Influence on purchase choice:** 54% made a purchase decision based on what they saw at a

motor show, while 39% added one or more brands to their "consideration list" and 18% bought a brand they were not considering before the show.

**Benefits of OEM presence:** Lincoln – present at 90% of U.S. motor shows in 2019 – reaped benefits from their competitors' absence and experienced a 26% gain in being added to consumers' shopping lists as a result of their show presence.

**The cost of not showing up:** 25%-60% surrender of brand awareness gains through decreased brand opinion and hence a lower likelihood to buy, as well as loss of brand exposure and a loss of being added to a "consideration list."

**Motor shows matter to dealers:** Over 75% of dealers feel motor show absence has a negative impact on customers' brand awareness, while over 66% of dealers feel absence from a motor show has a negative impact on customer traffic and on retail sales. In addition, 8/10 dealers rate the importance of local motor shows as a direct driver for increasing customer traffic into dealerships.

## Counterpoint – How Bad Has It Got?

An article by Jamie Butters in Automotive News about the subject of motor show struggles and some offbeat ideas that are working makes for interesting reading.

He starts off by saying that one of the big shocks in global motor shows is that the famed Frankfurt Motor Show, once the largest show of its kind in the world, leaving Frankfurt after almost 70 years points to the disappointing shows of the past few years. This show has taken

place biennially, in Frankfurt, alternating with Automechanika since 1971.

However, the fact that three major German cities – Berlin, Hamburg, and Munich – are bidding to stage the next show in 2021 demonstrates that there are many business people who believe there is still a place for a motor show. Berlin is the city Tesla has chosen for its European factory and is the home of a major consumer electronics show, while Hamburg is developing its reputation as a "smart city."

*"I hope someone can figure out a formula that brings the whole automotive world together again."  
– Jamie Butters*

Butters wrote that: "With automakers finding less benefit from spectacular new model reveals at traditional shows the trend towards automotive events giving the public a fun way to spend a day – while telling them about new cars and future transportation modes while they are enjoying themselves.

"It seemed to work in Tokyo where Akio Toyoda, the President of Toyota, put together an array of entertainment options the proved very popular."

Butters concluded his article by saying: "So, while Germany considers moving its show to another location and moves its place on the calendar (from the beginning of the year to the middle), I hope someone can figure out a formula that brings the whole automotive world together again." ■



## Events

### Date for 2020 Knysna Motor Show Announced

Taking advantage of the Worker’s Day long weekend, this year’s Knysna Motor Show will be held on Sunday, 3 May 2020 at the Knysna High School Sports Grounds on Waterfront Drive. For the fourth year running, Sanlam Private Wealth will be the headline sponsor.

*The event has moved from the last weekend in April to take advantage of the Worker’s Day public holiday that falls on the Friday.*

“We moved the event from the last weekend in April to take advantage of the Worker’s Day public holiday that falls on the Friday,” said Peter Pretorius, chief organiser of the event, which is being presented for the ninth successive year by the Garden Route Motor Club.

Past shows have seen displays of 400 vehicles of the highest quality featuring veteran, vintage

and classic cars, as well as a selection of ultra-rare modern supercars and an increasing number of vintage and classic motorcycles. This year, there will be a similar number of vehicles, all of top-drawer quality.

A host of specialist car clubs will also be represented at the Knysna Motor Show. The organisers have again invited a selection of rare modern supercars, as these appeal particularly to young people. They will include models very rarely seen by the public.

There is also a strong interest in vintage, classic and racing motorcycles in the area, and the motorcycle section has been growing in numbers and importance in recent shows. The organisers are expecting a particularly interesting variety of special motorcycles this year.

The Garden Route Motor Club is again limiting the number of vehicles to 400, to retain the exceptionally high standard of machinery that has now become this show’s hallmark.

The Garden Route Motor Club has in the past raised more than R600 000 for charity through the Knysna Motor Show. This year’s beneficiaries will include Hospice, Animal Welfare, FAMSA, E-pap (a feeding scheme for needy children) and a number of smaller charities.

*The Garden Route Motor Club is again limiting the number of vehicles to 400, to retain the exceptionally high standard of machinery.*

Admission prices for spectators are R60 for adults and R20 for children aged 12 – 18 years. Children under R12 enter free of charge. Food and drink stalls will be plentiful, and best-of-show awards will be announced from noon onwards.

For more information, contact Peter Pretorius at [peterp@afrihost.co.za](mailto:peterp@afrihost.co.za) or on 082 321 4724. Alternatively, visit [www.grmc.co.za](http://www.grmc.co.za). ■

