

MSR Plant & Equipment stick with Bell to buy their first Finlay Screen

When Sonja Steyn decided to sell the majority of her earthmoving plant to a mining client, she was left with one type of yellow machine, a mechanical workhorse that she describes as being the most beautiful machine in the world.

And who is Sonja Steyn, you may ask? This vivacious businesswoman was born and grew up in Boksburg, on Gauteng's East Rand, and has lived in the east of Pretoria for the past 14 years. After school she worked for a while in companies involved with import and export but the lure of being self-employed was very strong.

"In 1998 a business partner and I started a plant hire business with six side-tipper trucks working in the coal industry near Ogies, in Mpumalanga," she says. "We also acquired three wheeled loaders to load these trucks and more contracts followed our initial success."

Sonja and her business partner parted ways in 2000 and Sonja established her business, MSR Plant and Equipment. "To service a large contract with Sasol, NCC and Roshcon I needed loading equipment and I bought pre-owned Bell L2208C and L2306C Wheeled Loaders, a 30-ton Excavator, 10-ton compactor, a Bell B20C Articulated Dump Truck and a Dozer through Bell Equipment," she continues. "I soon added a Bell 770CH Grader as well as two new Bell B20D ADTs."

Asked why she chose the equipment she says: "I had previously owned a Bell B20C which had been one of those 'never-say-die' machines and through this I have developed a huge soft spot in my heart for Bell ADTs. They really are the most beautiful machines on the market."

Sonja, assisted by her son, Ryno Jacobs, and plant manager, Paul Venter, concentrated primarily on the coal mining industry, which she describes as a business model they're comfortable with. Her staff numbers 25 people and includes two mechanics as well as administrative personnel, support staff and machine operators.

MSR Plant & Equipment's fleet grew to 54 machines when a client in the coal industry bought all her equipment bar her Bell ADTs. She has subsequently added three Bell B30E ADTs to her fleet, which are hired out to Sudor Myne on dry rates. "We've only had compliments regarding our Bell B30E ADTs and with that I assume clients are more than satisfied with sustained uptime positively influencing production cycles and great fuel burn," she says.

During the first half of 2016 an opportunity presented itself for MSR Plant & Equipment to enter the field of indirect gold mining. A contractor on a gold tailings deposit on the East Rand needed a screen to separate waste material from an old mine dump for reprocessing. Sonja and her team jumped at the opportunity and hired in a Finlay 683 Incline Screen.

"This was our first experience using a screen and despite an initial steep learning curve as to what screening equipment and features we actually needed, we were impressed with the 200 tonnes of material we could produce in the daylight shifts we worked," Sonja says. "I decided though that it would be best to buy our own machine with the specific features we'd need on this three-year contract we had been awarded."

Aided by Bell Sales Representative, Carel Venter, from the Bell Equipment Customer Service Centre in Middelburg, MSR Plant & Equipment placed an order for a Finlay 683 Double Deck Incline Screen. Specifications for the machine were sourced from Bell Equipment's Tyron Ravenscroft who manages a dual role in the company as Regional Sales Manager: Central Region and Finlay Product Manager.

"We looked at the bulk of the material that was to be screened and found that much of it was wet and sticky, also including some organic material," he says. "We therefore chose an upper deck of square mesh to take the impact of larger material and a lower deck with a double strand of 'piano wire' that would prevent blockages and subsequently increase production."

These features in the Finlay 683 Double Deck Incline Screen has seen the equipment live up to its design capacity and more as it regularly processes 1 000 tonnes or recycled material per day.

"Having this type of backing through knowledgeable people in an original equipment manufacturer (OEM) such as Bell Equipment speaks volumes for that company's commitment to its clients," Sonja says with a smile. "When I started in this business, I did not even know what a hydraulic pipe looked like but with patient people like Carel Venter around to guide me, I have learnt so much and that breeds one's loyalty to rather keep it simple and stay with one OEM."

"My next goal is to own Finlay Jaw and Cone Crushers and those will no doubt need more Finlay Screens downstream," she says.



Sonja Steyn, owner of MSR Plant & Equipment (left) with Carel Venter, Bell Equipment Sales Representative at Bell Middelburg.

