

Blurock Quarries grows Bell fleet with Finlay units

Buying mobile crushing equipment has proved to be a double bonus for a leading KwaZulu-Natal quarry owner as the equipment ensures production continues during expected electricity outages, and has in addition earned its owner an income on the plant hire market.

Blurock Quarries in Estcourt was established in the 1940s. Jeremy Hunter-Smith is the fourth generation Chief Executive Officer after his father, Robin, and uncle, Rodney, retired from the daily management in March 2014. The company's focus remains the same, supplying aggregates for roads, ready-mix concrete and block making industries, all within a 100km radius from the company's quarry in Estcourt.

"We have had a long and happy association with Bell Equipment which stretches back to the 1980s when my uncle, Rodney, first bought Bell 1206 Rigid Tractors and 9-cubic metre dump trailers, of which two of the original three are still running," Jeremy Hunter-Smith says. "We have since then bought many Bell Articulated Dump Trucks, Wheeled Loaders and Excavators. When Bell Equipment became the official distributors for Finlay crushing and screening equipment, we knew to look no further when it came to replacing our own mobile crushing and screening plant."

Blurock Quarries took delivery of a new Finlay C1540RS Cone Crusher in 2014 as a replacement for older equipment. "We enjoy the post-screen feature on the Finlay C1540RS Cone Crusher as this allows us to grade our material that isn't quite the correct size. We bought this particular model because of that feature

which gives more options in terms of specific material production and split," Jeremy says. "We now run a full sequence of Finlay equipment as we have a Finlay J1175 Jaw Crusher feeding into the Finlay C1540RS Cone Crusher, which in turn feeds a Finlay 694 Triple Deck Screen."

Interestingly, the Finlay J1175 Jaw Crusher is fed by a Bell HX310E Excavator at the start of the sequence and at the other end a Bell L2106E Wheeled Loader loads the crushed material onto trucks or moves it to a nearby stockpile.

"We decided to replace older mobile plant with what we believe is state-of-the-art equipment from Finlay, with the primary thought that load-shedding would negatively affect our static plant and that by having this more modern plant, we could keep producing aggregate when the power was off," Jeremy explains. "The equipment has certainly worked for us in that way but has also enabled us to supplement the static plant's production in times of high demand. It has given us an additional income when we rented out the Finlay 694 Triple Deck Screen to clients in places as far away as Marble Hall in Limpopo and the Finlay J1175 Jaw Crusher to a site crushing product used in the ceramic tile industry on the KZN South Coast."

Having the luxury of two Finlay 694 Triple Deck Screens allows Blurock to have one machine as a back up in times of high demand, or as a plant hire machine, which provides a solid source of income. The Finlay 694 Triple Deck Screen has proved invaluable when screening washed road-stone.

The Blurock Quarries production teams have been impressed with the production rates of the Finlay crushing and screening combination. Material such as G5 or G7 is easily pushed out at a rate of 150 tonnes an hour while when road and concrete stone is produced, with the tighter closed side settings (CSS), production may drop to around 100 tonnes an hour.

Given the versatility of the machines individually, or working in sequence, fuel consumption does get considered as part of the overhead costs, but according to Jeremy has not set alarm bells ringing. "Of the three machines the Cone Crusher is possibly the heaviest user at 41 litres an hour but considering what it does for us we're happy. The Jaw Crusher uses around 25 litres an hour and the 694 Triple Deck Screen comes right down to a miserly 11,8 litres as an average consumption."

Gary Botha (left) Blurock Quarry Manager talks to Jeremy Hunter-Smith, CEO of Blurock Quarries.

Blurock Quarries' trust in equipment from Bell Equipment is certainly evident when one casts your eyes around the pit. Amongst the bright red of the Finlay machines, the distinctive yellow excavators in 50-ton, 39-ton, 31-ton and older 30-ton models stand out and the jewel in the crown is a Bell B30E Articulated Dump Truck hauling big loads of dolerite rock to the static plant's run-of-mine tip.

"Our Bell B30E ADT had a few teething problems but what has kept us loyal to Bell Equipment over a period spanning almost four decades is the company's attitude and manner in sorting out such challenges – that makes such a big difference," Jeremy says.