

Makomota brand grows with Bell plant hire fleet

The HX230E Excavator digs trenches for township services in Vanstadensrus, a small village between Wepener and Zastron in the south eastern Free State.



When a chartered accountant turns his hand to civil construction and plant hire, you'd better believe that cost analysis is going to be spot-on through careful scrutiny of what man and machine must do to effectively look after the bottom line.

Jim Besnaar is a Chartered Accountant by profession. Immediately after qualifying, he joined Makomota Financial Management Services and worked purely in

financial affairs, doing traditional auditing and financial accounting for clients who included, local and provincial government structures in the Free State and Northern Cape provinces. This he did from 2005, but by 2007, after taking over as CEO of Makomota Financial Management Services, his natural drive and flair for seeing opportunities in the wider market, saw him take up an equal portion of a new civil contracting venture with two quantity surveyors.

“This arrangement worked well, but by 2012 I bought out my partners and now run Makomota Stone as a sister company of Makomota Investment Holdings (Pty) Ltd,” he explains. “This company focuses on providing civil construction services and plant hire for especially township development in the Free State, Northern Cape and Lesotho.”

Makomota Stone has built up a reputation for bringing in contracts on time and on budget and has successfully completed re-gravelling and tarring of roads in the Northern Cape and on the South Africa-Lesotho border. Other projects such as water reticulation, drainage, paving and construction have also been undertaken successfully.

“Being an accountant and analytical by nature, one big factor has always waved red flags for me,” Jim says. “The cost of hiring in and transporting reliable earthmoving equipment for these projects can quickly add up to around 30% of the cost and naturally eats away at one’s profit.”

It was with this in mind that Jim has established another arm of his construction business called Yard Plant Rentals (Pty) Ltd, which in May 2013 purchased a small fleet of earthmoving equipment. “I’ve enjoyed a good relationship with Sam Malaza, Bell Equipment’s Sales Representative in the Free State and Sam has been instrumental in providing us with all the information and advice we’ve needed for the equipment,” he says. “Our

procurement manager used his own experience of Bell machines to good effect and we had no hesitation in buying a Bell HX230E Excavator, a Bell 315SK 4x4 WorkPro Tractor Loader Backhoe (TLB) and a Bomag BW120 AD-5 Tandem Vibratory Roller.”

Yard’s earthmoving equipment is hired out to the construction subsidiary Makomota Stone or to plant hire clients on dry rates with only operators provided. Jim and his team have been impressed with the work rate of the Bell HX230E Excavator, especially when its slightly narrower trenching bucket is driven with sufficient breakout force to cut through the rocky soils of the Free State and Northern Cape. It is used extensively when deep trenches need to be dug for township services as well as loading material onto Makomota Yard’s 10-cubic metre rigid tipper fleet.

“Our Bell 315SK WorkPro TLB is very versatile and with its forks and clamshell bucket, not forgetting the extended dipper on its rear boom, this machine performs a myriad of tasks on our sites,” Jim adds. “We use it to ferry material, dig and backfill trenches and load and unload pallets with paving bricks and cement.”

We saw firsthand how this machine brought fill material onto a site on Bloemfontein’s famous Naval Hill where once deposited, the material was quickly and effectively compacted using the Bomag BW120 AD-5 Tandem Vibratory Roller.



Makomota’s Bomag Roller at work on a site on the top of Bloemfontein’s Naval Hill.

“Another reason we bought equipment from Bell Equipment is because of their large footprint in the country in terms of technical backup,” Jim continues. “To keep our own overheads in check regarding trained personnel, which is a scarce commodity, we’re now seriously considering signing a full-service agreement with Bell Equipment to handle all our servicing, especially when our machines are out of warranty.”

And judging by the success the Makomota brand seems to be enjoying in central South Africa right now, it comes as no surprise that an order for more Bell machines has been placed, this time for another Bell HX230E Excavator and two Bell 315SK 4x4 TLBs.

This positive action will surely enhance the bottom line and will see a smile on the face of an enterprising Chartered Accountant.



Makomota’s Bell WorkPro TLB on a site on the top of Bloemfontein’s Naval Hill.



Jim Besnaar (left), CEO of Makomota Investment Holdings, with Bell Equipment Sales Representative, Sam Malaza.