

# Bell ADT fleet ticks all the boxes for AAA Mining

**Centuries ago, when the mighty Orange and Vaal rivers met at their confluence where the present day town of Douglas now stands, they brought with them thousands of diamonds.**

And with the diamond-bearing gravels spread along the banks of these rivers, so come the challenge to man and machine to extract value from the soil and rehabilitate it as well.

But alluvial diamond mining is not for the fainthearted, as Attie van Wyk will tell you. Attie is a second-generation alluvial diamond miner who learnt the trade from his father, Boytjie. "My father, Boytjie, has been mining diamonds for 40 years and it's a privilege for me to still have him by my side, giving me advice," he says when we met at their Duikersvlei operations on the banks of the Orange River, southwest of Douglas.

Their company, AAA Mining, also has mining operations further west near Prieska. Working 55 to 60 hours a week, the company employs typical opencast mining methods of stockpiling topsoil, removing overburden and then mining the gravels with excavator and articulated dump trucks. Rehabilitation in terms of their Environmental Management Plan (EMP) is strictly adhered to and is applied continuously. Working after dark is kept to a minimum due to safety concerns.

"We have, for as long as I can remember, run Bell Articulated Dump Trucks (ADTs) in our fleet with the majority of them being bought on the used market," Attie says. We still currently run five Bell B40Cs, a Bell B25B and a Bell B25C ADT in our fleet and they have been fantastic workhorses that just keep going."

Recently, in a drive for increased production, AAA Mining bought two new Bell B40D ADTs. "We've been using our older Bell ADTs to move overburden and return material to the pit for rehabilitation but felt that the proven reliability and payload of the Bell B40D ADT, what we consider a benchmark hauler in this industry, would best be suited to haul our gravels to the plant," Attie explains. "Working with our local Bell Equipment Sales Representative, Eric van der Merwe, we were very happy to learn that there were Bell B40D ADTs in stock and we bought them immediately."

The two Bell B40D ADTs were bought with extended warranties to 6 000 hours on their wet drivetrains which will see their maintenance being carried out by trained mechanics from Bell Equipment's Customer Service Centre in Kimberley. The company has its own mechanics as well as using contractors for mechanical maintenance of its fleet.

"We obviously watch our cost per tonnes produced and we're very pleased with the tonnages that these two Bell B40D ADTs have given. In the first six months since we've bought them, they have each clocked in excess of 2 000 hours at very frugal fuel consumptions of between 15 and 22 litres an hour, depending on the type of material they're hauling," Attie adds. "Both my dad and I have stood in awe when we see how quickly these Bell B40Ds move between the mining face and the run-of-mine tip with full heaped loads of gravel."



*The father and son team of Attie and Boytjie van Wyk with Bell Equipment Sales Representative, Eric van der Merwe.*

"As in any mining business, reliable technical support from one's original equipment supplier is paramount and here I must commend Bell Equipment for the service and parts availability we've enjoyed," Attie smiles. "An example of this can be found with the three Bell HD2045 Excavators we still run daily, despite them boasting 28 000, 20 000 and 12 000 hours of solid production respectively."

"Based on our past and present experience with Bell Equipment, we can safely say that in our immediate planning for renewal and expansion of our fleet, Bell B40D and the new Bell B30E ADTs feature prominently."

