

Inyathi Plant Hire takes first Kobelco Excavator in Eastern Cape



When Nelani Kaiser first saw a Kobelco Excavator in its now familiar bright turquoise colour at Bell Equipment's Jet Park premises in Gauteng, she was instantly smitten.

And even though her plant hire company had no immediate need for a new Kobelco Excavator at that point, she knew she'd be taking one back to their yard in East London, which proved to be the first such machine in the Eastern Cape.

Nelani is one half of Inyathi Plant Hire, based in East London, and she was named Entrepreneur of the Year in the Eastern Cape in 2017. Her business partner is Zanile Piyose and together these two dynamic women make a formidable team.

"My father Philip Vermeulen had started Buffalo Excavators in 1992 and by 1996 Zanile and I made him an offer for the business and so Inyathi Plant Hire was born," Nelani recalls. "You would know that Inyathi is the Xhosa word for buffalo."

A loan from an obliging father saw the fledgling partnership acquire a new Bell HD820 Excavator, which had the almost immediate positive effect of a long-standing contract with aggregate producer Lafarge at that company's quarry on the outskirts of East London.

"We chose to buy a Bell HD820 Excavator as my father was a firm believer in the Bell brand," Nelani explains. "To him it was a two-way street as Bell Equipment had always rented property from us and still does."

Soon the word spread that Inyathi Plant Hire was the real deal offering new equipment to a plant hire market long plagued by operators with unreliable equipment. Another long-standing contract followed, this time with Transnet, and Inyathi Plant Hire was tasked with all the state-owned entity's load and haul needs for the Eastern Cape.

"We concentrate our efforts on the Eastern Cape where about 70% of our income is derived but we have had our equipment work further afield such as Port Nolloth and Cape Town," Nelani says. "We at times undertake our own projects such as levelling sports fields and doing minor road repairs."

"Being a plant hire company, reliable earthmoving and material handling equipment is what makes us tick and is what brings us repeat business," she adds. "To us and our clients, reliability is key and that is why on an important contract, such as the Lafarge quarry, we run only new machines supplied by Bell Equipment."

At the aforementioned quarry site, Inyathi Plant Hire has deployed eight Bell Articulated Dump Trucks ranging from B18E to B30E models with a few older D-series models in the mix too. A Bell 315SK Tractor Loader Backhoe and Kobelco SK210LC-8 Excavator along with a brand new Kamaz 65115 10-cubic metre Tipper Truck completes the fleet.

"Turquoise is my favourite colour and I couldn't believe my eyes when on a recent visit to Bell Equipment's offices in Jet Park I saw this most beautiful Kobelco Excavator," Nelani says laughing. "Even though we did not have a particular need for a new excavator at the time, I had to have this machine and subsequently

bought two, the 21-ton machine and a while later, the larger 26-ton SK260LC-8. We plan to replace all our excavators with Kobelco machines and we're currently in the market for a Kobelco SK350LC-8 machine with a hydraulic hammer for a specific application."

Inyathi Plant Hire services road construction companies to whom they hire their Bomag Rollers comprising of BW90, BW211, BW212 and BW216 machines.

According to Nelani, a lesson learnt from her father was to never purchase any machine unless a substantial deposit could secure the deal with the shortest sustainable term of repayment, so ensuring that equipment operated under warranty for as long as possible and in good condition. Machines are replaced before they start costing money.

It was on a subsequent trip to the Bell Equipment factory in Richards Bay that Nelani and Zanile's eyes were opened to new possibilities for their

road haulage fleet. They were impressed by the ruggedness of the design and build on a Kamaz 65115 10-cubic metre Tipper Truck and subsequently bought one for their aggregate deliveries for Lafarge.

"We're very happy with the performance thus far of our Kamaz 65115 Truck and will look to expand our fleet with these machines," Zanile explains. "Our clients require delivery trucks to be less than five years old and, although we operate on dry rates, they are more than happy with the fuel burn on the Kamaz. Having both an odometer and an hour meter on this truck makes for very accurate monitoring of its working life and maintenance." And mentioning maintenance, Inyathi Plant Hire has its own mechanics but the partners are now seriously considering entering into a maintenance agreement with Bell Equipment to fully maintain their Bell fleet.

"Everyone at Bell Equipment in East London has our best interests at heart and this starts with Luc Hannan in sales, Denvor Tesmer who runs the Customer Service Centre and Denton Webber, the Product Support Representative with their team of friendly mechanics and staff in spares," the partners echo.

"As our equipment is generally fully utilised during the week, Bell Equipment often schedules our servicing for weekends so that we minimise our downtime; a fact we really appreciate."

"Knowing that Bell Equipment is close by for technical backup and spares, has given us the confidence to grow our business with reliable equipment but more so, we feel as if we're part of the Bell Equipment family as they understand our business and, importantly, how sustained uptime of our machines keeps us in business."

* Since writing this article Inyathi Plant Hire has taken delivery of a Bell 315SL TLB and two new Kobelco Excavators, one an SK350LC-8 model and the other, a Kobelco SK210LC-8.



Inyathi Plant Hire partners, Nelani Kaiser (left) and Zanile Piyose (right) with their Bell Equipment Sales Representative, Luc Hannan.

