

Bell fleet delivers rock solid service for Volmoed Quarry

The Afrikaans term 'Volmoed' can be translated as 'full of courage' and judging where the Volmoed Quarry is, situated high against a hill, courage is indeed needed to drive fully laden articulated dump trucks down a steep ramp to the quarry's primary crusher.

The Volmoed Quarry has been owned by the Van der Berg family since 2009. Situated in the hilly arid Karoo between Oudtshoorn and Mossel Bay, the quarry produces stone aggregate for the civil and road construction industries.

But let's allow Danie van der Berg, the co-owner, to tell us more: "My father, Hans van der Berg, had started Van der Berg Vervoer in 1974 doing general transport from Oudtshoorn and later venturing into sand mining and the supply of general construction material to customers," he says. "I joined my dad in the business in 1985 and my

brother Hugo followed in 1989. Over time we realised that we needed to diversify the business and when Volmoed Quarry came onto the market in 2009 we bought it for that purpose."

According to Danie, the quarry was a very small operation when they took over. Mining equipment consisted of hand-drills with a small excavator loading material into a Bell B20B Articulated Dump Truck that is still in service, albeit with its hour meter missing. The Van der Bergs opened up the quarry exposing more of the Dolomitic gray wacky rock using larger automated drills and replacing the existing primary crusher with larger jaw crushers and screens.

Blasting takes place on average every three months and the aim is to free up at least 60 000 tonnes of material. This material in the pit is loaded using a 36-ton excavator.



“As we enlarged the quarry and produced more material, the demand for more and larger haulage vehicles became necessary. We had experience with machines built and sold by Bell Equipment from our plant hire division and our clay brick manufacturing plant near Oudtshoorn, which we’ve subsequently closed. The Bell Equipment sales representative at the time backed his products to the hilt and the Bell 120 and 220 Forklifts

and Versalifts we had bought then still give us wonderful service today in our cement brick plant, which is next to the quarry,” he says. “Bell B25D Articulated Dump Trucks (ADTs) have really done well for us over the years and the oldest one to have not yet been rebuilt has done 16 000 hours. We have had one rebuilt and that work was done by Bell Equipment’s Jet Park workshop.”



Volmoed Quarry acquired a new Bell B25E ADT early in 2017 and Danie and his production team have been very pleased with its performance. Their aim is to put at least 1 000 tonnes of blasted mine material through the primary crusher each day. The challenge comes in when fully laden Bell ADTs negotiate the steep downhill from the mining pit. The blasted material’s specific gravity can reach 2,2 at times and generally loads not exceeding 17 tonnes are carried. Danie mentions that depending on where the loading takes place the ramp’s gradient varies between 4% and 6% on average but it has been as steep as 10%.

“We rely heavily on the Bell ADT’s retarder and combined with its all-wheel drive traction and intelligent braking, we’ve never experienced a run-away truck. The haul from the pit to the primary crusher is 1km and our Bell B25D and E-series ADTs burn between 9 and 11 litres of diesel an hour, a figure that we’re satisfied with.”

A quarry serves no purpose if the material doesn’t go anywhere. Volmoed Quarry’s concrete aggregate, road stone, material for layer works and slurry dust is hauled far and wide, mostly by its subsidiary, Van der Berg Vervoer, which is managed by Danie’s brother, Hugo. The material is sought-after in a radius of approximately 250km around Oudtshoorn. The company also offers ready-mixed concrete, which has been delivered as far away as Beaufort West, a distance of some 180km.

“We load these trucks and those of customers fetching products using Bell L2106D and E-series Wheeled Loaders respectively,” Danie adds. “The machines also blend material from different stockpiles when specific orders call for it. Loading the normally abrasive material is tough on pins and bushes and to counter the extreme heat, cold and dust that we experience in this part of the world, we’ve installed automatic lubrication systems on our Bell Wheeled Loaders.”

Volmoed Quarry runs three older Bell L1204Cs and L1204D Wheeled Loaders as back-up machines when the larger loaders are down for servicing.

“We’ve come a long way with haulage, loading and material handling equipment from Bell Equipment and enjoy the care and attention we receive from the company’s Customer Service Centre in George. Fiona Johnson is knowledgeable when it comes to telling us about new products and Koos Matthee and Thys Bester see to it that our servicing is done on time with the correct service kits and spare parts. As a rule, we use only Bell lubricants and filters. This quarry has a projected life of another 120 years and we’re confident that Bell Equipment will be around for that time too,” Danie says.



Co-owner of Volmoed Quarry, Danie van der Berg (left) with Kobie Stalmeester, Volmoed Quarry’s Production Manager who has been with him for 20 years, and Bell Equipment Sales Representative, Fiona Johnson.