



JCB and Bell agriculture dealership secured for Kokstad and Underberg

Marc Tolmay, by his own admission, is a great fan of learning new things. Marc is the owner of Dorning Motors, the newly appointed dealer for Bell Equipment Forestry & Agriculture and JCB Agriculture in the Kokstad and Underberg areas of KwaZulu-Natal and says he first learnt important business-related insights from his accountant.

But chatting to Marc we realise he learnt about integrity much earlier at the knee of his late father, Wally.

"My parents, Wally and Janet, arrived in this area from Zimbabwe in 1981 and my dad first sold used cars for a well-known Japanese brand," Marc says. "He then moved to a dealership that sold new cars and tractors, and such was his sales prowess that he was soon appointed dealer principal before becoming a partner in the company."

Sadly, a serious car accident in 1998 left Wally unable to work for a year and by the time he returned,

the franchise holder no longer sold agricultural tractors and Wally chose to dissolve the partnership.

"My dad, however, refused to liquidate the business, which would have left a lot of people without jobs. It would have also had a negative effect on his own creditworthiness and reputation," Marc explains. "To absorb the business debt my dad sold houses, and this was a lesson about integrity in business and in life that was impossible to ignore."

In 1999, Wally became the dealer for Landini tractors in the area and retained the name of the original

owners of the previous dealership, Dorning Motors, which was an established name by that time.

Marc had been schooled at Michaelhouse and after completing a degree in Computer Science and Information Systems at Rhodes University with an Honours degree through UNISA, he joined Wally in the business and, like his father before him, cut his teeth selling used cars.

"We subsequently obtained the Hyundai franchise, and I ran that side of the business, which was a steep learning curve," Marc adds. "My dad passed away in 2014 and



Dorning Motors Sales Manager, Keith Chapman, with the owner of Dorning Motors, Marc Tolmay, and the company's Workshop Manager, Johan Klopper.

I ran the whole business for two years before buying it out of the estate in 2016."

Marc has learnt to surround himself with a decent support base. His Workshop Manager, Johan Klopper, joined the business as an apprentice in 2000 and, according to Marc, has no equal in the area with his knowledge of agricultural tractors, especially the Landini brand.

"I also rely heavily on the father-and-son team of Punch and Keith Chapman," Marc continues. "Although they were originally our opposition, we're a close-knit community and we were especially pleased when the Chapmans, with their vast knowledge of planting and haymaking, joined us in 2015 with Keith our Sales Manager and Punch the Manager of our Underberg branch."

Working from its main dealership in Kokstad and the newly built branch at Underberg, Dorning Motors serves the local farming community with equipment and service for dairy, beef cattle and sheep farming and crops such as maize, soya, sunflowers, vegetables, and potatoes.

The Kokstad workshop has five mechanics with four apprentices in training and at Underberg three mechanics and two apprentices cover onsite and outlying servicing and repairs with comprehensive parts divisions in both locations.

"Around five years ago we started looking for a suitable brand of earthmoving equipment, especially backhoe loaders and telehandlers, as we believe there is a need for such equipment for a myriad of uses on any farm," Marc says. "During a visit to NAMPO in 2022, we were especially focused on finding such equipment and took note of the variety that Bell Equipment, as the newly appointed distributors of JCB equipment, had on offer."

"We were naturally very pleased when Charles Inggs, Bell Equipment's Dealer Development Manager: Forestry & Agriculture, approached us to become a dealer for this powerful brand, with the associated wide variety of machine models, as we believe this will add real benefits to our wide customer base and added

income for us while securing employment for our own people."

Dorning Motors was appointed as a dealer for Bell Equipment's Forestry & Agriculture and JCB Agriculture in September 2023 and almost immediately information began to flow about the new products on offer.

"Coming from an information systems background, I for one can tell you that I have never experienced such free-flow and great accessibility of information as we're enjoying from Bell Equipment and JCB on their machines, the parts and service aspects," Marc enthuses. "This bodes well for us in sales but especially for our parts and technical teams as any information is but a click away on a computer or tablet."

Marc and his team have not rested on their laurels and delivered their first JCB 3DX Pro Backhoe Loader to a farmer near Kokstad in mid-November 2023 and they believe that as word amongst the farmers spreads, the local countryside will soon be dotted with more and more yellow machines.

