

Janco 'digs' his dad's new JCB Excavator

Operating the JCB JS140 Excavator really is child's play because even a twelve-year old can do it safely, just ask Janco Labuschagne.

This is not 'marketing speak' dreamt up by a bunch of advertising gurus but the real thing as the pre-teen recently showed us on his parent's farm, Winterhoek, near Steelpoort in Limpopo.

The Labuschagne family, comprising of the husband-and-wife team of Leon and Lizinda together with their children Janco and fifteen-year-old Anjoné, have owned this remote 500ha farm since November 2020. Leon runs his own business from Middelburg in Mpumalanga, building and maintaining overhead cranes.

"The farm is in fairly unforgiving but beautiful terrain and the previous owners had built a few houses and outbuildings, which we plan to renovate as time goes by," Leon Labuschagne says. "In the

16 months that we've owned the property we've started off slowly. I have brought in some indigenous game like nyala and springbok. We have a lone leopard that roams the rocky outcrops as well."

There is a perennial stream that flows through the property, which is reached by a bridge where caution rather than speed is needed. Fixing this access road is one of the areas that Leon wants to tackle first, and he had considered doing this with an older backhoe loader he had bought on the used market.

"I'm a hands-on guy and this used machine was simply not up to the task as it kept breaking down. When I spoke to neighbours and friends about



From left to right: Bell Sales Representative, Carel Venter, with Leon and Janco Labuschagne and Bell Steelpoort's CSC Supervisor, Wayne Bowers.



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Janco Labuschagne

what earthmoving equipment would be best to improve and maintain the farm's infrastructure – a dozer or an excavator – the unanimous advice was to get an excavator," Leon explains. "As it happens, I maintain the overhead cranes at Bell Equipment's Middelburg Customer Service Centre (CSC) where I spoke to knowledgeable Sales Representative, Carel Venter."

According to Carel, Leon first enquired about a smaller 7,5 ton excavator but then changed his mind when he realised that a heavier machine would be needed to dig out rocks along the access road and dredge the stream. "It was then that I seriously considered the JCB JS140 Excavator, but these seem to be popular machines at Bell Equipment. The South African distributor was out of stock, which led me to almost buying a JCB JS205 model, which is the 20-ton machine," explains Leon.

However, Carel managed to track down a JCB JS140 Excavator that had become available, and with Leon's own financing the deal was struck. Unbeknown to Leon at that point, he was to face another obstacle which manifested itself as soon as the new bright yellow JCB JS140 Excavator was delivered to the farm in January 2022.

"As soon as he set eyes on the new JCB Excavator, my son Janco badgered me into letting him operate it," Leon says good-naturedly. "There was

no stopping the young man, so as a responsible parent I first showed him where the seatbelt fastened and then told him about everything that can go wrong when operating an excavator while also instructing him on the controls."

Janco set about operating the JCB JS140 Excavator after his dad, Leon, had manoeuvred it next to the fast-flowing stream on the property. Janco's task was to dredge the stream of silt and loose rocks and he did this with confidence, showing the dexterity of youth with obvious good hand-eye coordination.

"This machine is so easy to operate because the cab has good visibility and the controls, even for me, are smooth and responsive," he enthuses after the demonstration of his newfound skills. "We set the accelerator at level four of a possible eight and it gets the job done. My dad told me this is because the hydraulic oil flows so well to operate the boom and the bucket."

The Labuschagne's JCB JS140 Excavator was bought with a standard 12-month warranty with unlimited hours and the machine will be serviced by mechanics from Bell Equipment's Steelpoort CSC. Wayne Bowers, the Steelpoort CSC Supervisor, was on hand to watch Janco at work and he undertook to personally supervise the maintenance of Janco's JCB JS140 Excavator.



Janco Labuschagne in the cab of the JCB JS140 Excavator.