

Bell, Finlay and Kobelco machines are Bethlehem Sand & Klip's dream team

When Strauss Landman, owner of Bethlehem Sand & Klip was faced with two potentially big problems of how to efficiently load dolerite stone out of his quarry while keeping a close watch over an ever-increasing fuel bill, he had to act quickly.

Bethlehem Sand & Klip has been in existence since 1998 when Strauss bought out a small sand mining operation near his hometown of Bethlehem in the eastern Free State. Hailing from farming stock, Strauss had started his working life transporting agricultural produce and building sand, which led him to diversify into supplying building materials and stone aggregates.

"We now run our own quarry to the north of Bethlehem where we extract dolerite stone, crush and screen it to size, and also operate a ready-mix concrete plant in addition to two sand mines," Strauss tells us. "We supply building material and ready-mix concrete to large parts of the eastern Free State and Qwa-Qwa and, to a lesser extent, areas in Northern KwaZulu-Natal and Mpumalanga."

Since the founding of his business, Strauss has relied on Bell Equipment for his loading and haulage equipment and still owns Bell Articulated Dump Trucks (ADTs) and Wheel Loaders that have stood him in good stead for many years. "When Bell Equipment became the distributors of Finlay crushing and screening equipment, we saw potential in the plant hire market and soon had Finlay J-1160 Jaw Crushers, Finlay C-1540 Cone Crushers, and Finlay 694+ Screens working in tandem on plant hire applications," Strauss adds. "We have over time reduced that fleet and the plant hire application as often the equipment would work too far away for us to properly manage and maintain it, and damages would occur."

Bethlehem Sand & Klip however retained two Finlay 694+ Screens that it uses for screening river and plaster sand, a Finlay 683 Screen on a long-term coal



processing contract in the Witbank area, and a full train of a Finlay J-1160 Jaw Crusher, C-1540 Cone Crusher and 694+ Screen at its quarry site outside Bethlehem. Here this crushing and screening train, which produces some 130 tons of aggregate an hour, is loaded using a Kobelco SK210LC-10 Excavator bought in 2019.

"These Finlay machines have really proven their worth for us and given us a solid return on our investment," Strauss explains. "We've been very pleased with the performance of the Kobelco SK210LC-10 Excavator, which is why, when faced with the prospect of having to extract the blasted dolerite rock at our quarry and maintain a steady flow of production to our crushing and screening train, we once again turned to Bell

Equipment and the company's Sales Representative, Chris Botha, whose advice we've come to trust.

"Chris assessed our needs and suggested we buy a 38-ton Kobelco SK380XDL-10 Excavator for a two-fold application, with the main one being loading the blasted dolerite rock in the quarry and secondly, to create a stockpile at our sand mining operation from where the mined sand is fed into a Finlay 694+ Screen for processing into river and plaster sand."

Strauss is adamant that while they concede their new Kobelco SK380XDL-10 Excavator is still new, having passed a mere 500 hours by April 2023, they've been impressed by its work rate and above all its fuel consumption.

"With both the applications of the Kobelco SK380XDL-10 Excavator, it's our own diesel that's going into the tank as part of our overhead and we've been pleasantly surprised by how little diesel a machine of this size, boasting a bucket size of 2,1 cubic-metres, uses," he says. "When creating a stockpile of sand, it literally does the work at the rate of two 20-ton Excavators using an average of 20 to 22 litres of fuel an hour.

"A dolerite quarry is no place for a 20-ton Excavator, no matter how tough it may be and this Kobelco SK380XDL-10 machine purrs away loading ton upon ton of blasted rock into our Bell B25D, B30D, and B30E ADTs for the short haul to the crushing and screening train."

With the price of fuel increasing sharply in the last two years, pushing up the overheads of any business, mining operation, or farm that uses especially diesel, the arrival of Bethlehem Sand & Klip's Kobelco SK380XDL-10 Excavator could not have come at a better time.

"We can honestly say this Kobelco SK380XDL-10 Excavator works at double the rate of a 20-ton Excavator while using fuel at about the same rate and that we have to put down to the machine's great design and a variety of options like reducing the break-out force, which further reduces the fuel consumption," Strauss says. "We've bought the machine with a standard warranty as we've come to rely on Bell Equipment's legendary high service levels that we believe will set the machine up for a long and productive life."



From left: Owner of Bethlehem Sand & Klip, Strauss Landman, with Jake.