

JCB 3DX is a game changer for KDT Construction

Kobus du Toit had never bought a Backhoe Loader for his construction business as he had always been worried how he could keep it busy. Now that he owns one, he keeps thinking he should have bought two such machines.



Kobus du Toit, owner of KDT Construction (left), with Bell Sales Representative, Anthony Enslin.

But allow us to take you back to where all this started. Kobus, along with his older brother André, had worked in construction, building houses for the speculative market in Cape Town. "I have a qualification in human resource management and worked for a while in a large banking group's foreign exchange division, but I needed something more and found this in construction, thanks to my brother André," he said when we met at the site of an exclusive housing development southwest of East London.

"André had later bought land here at Winterstrand, where we are now, and we came here to build one show house but then I stayed, working first for another contractor." The one show house that Kobus helped to build has led him to build around

130 more, at first working for a contractor before stepping out on his own in 2017 with his own construction company, KDT Construction.

"We're busy with 14 houses at once and I employ 120 people, which makes it a challenging and busy site," Kobus adds with the smile of someone who is in a good place. "We're proud of the fact that we offer a complete construction service from foundations to handing over the keys to happy homeowners."

The Winterstrand site is a picturesque one, sloping down towards the Indian Ocean offering spectacular ocean views, but one which presents challenges with landscaping. With so much on the go in terms of construction, one would imagine

some mechanisation would be key, for example, to speed up the digging of trenches for foundations and water and power related services.

"I have always hired yellow machines like backhoe loaders and even excavators and kept thinking that I could never afford such a machine, let alone keep it busy," Kobus says. "This was until recently when our hiring costs ran to around R60 000 per month and I sat down and took a long hard look at figures and utilisations."

It was in December 2021 that Kobus visited the JCB website and filled in an online enquiry to which Anthony Enslin, Bell Equipment's Sales Representative in the East London area, responded immediately. "I chose JCB because we had often hired in a JCB Sitemaster Backhoe Loader and having experienced the machine's power, versatility and reliability, it seemed a natural and easy decision to make," Kobus says. "Knowing too that JCB is sold in South Africa by Bell Equipment, with its big service footprint, made the decision even easier. And at such a competitive price I had no hesitation when ordering the JCB 3DX Backhoe Loader with a clamshell bucket and forks."

"As with any upmarket secure housing estate, you will appreciate that the finished product calls for landscaped gardens and this one is no different," Kobus adds. "Our JCB Backhoe Loader moves many, many cubic metres of topsoil for this purpose and the large clamshell bucket has proved to be very handy for some precise placement of soil in awkward places such as behind retaining walls on the slopes of the estate."

Kobus explains that when using the forks on the JCB 3DX Backhoe Loader, the operator can open the clamshell bucket to get a clear view as to whether

the forks are level when loading a pallet with bricks or cement bags. This, to his mind, is an important safety feature of the machine.

KDT Construction's JCB 3DX Backhoe Loader was bought with a standard 12-month warranty and unlimited hours. According to Kobus, his operator has a competency certificate for this type of machine and is well-versed in pre-start checks and preventative maintenance. "We saw the value of buying from a reputable dealer recently when we had a slight problem with some of the hydraulic hoses, which were replaced almost immediately. Bell Mechanic, Andries Olivier, followed up the next day with preventative measures to not have this problem repeating," Kobus said. "That type of prompt and positive response just underlines my choice of JCB and Bell Equipment as the right decision."

Judging by figures Kobus quotes, the JCB 3DX's utilisation is high as it's used for around seven hours a day, six days a week. Despite this, the machine's fuel consumption is not setting off alarm bells. "For the value we get out of the machine, the fuel consumption, not that we don't record it, is not a huge factor," Kobus says. "We probably fill up every third day or so which would put the fuel consumption at around seven litres per hour."

"As opposed to a hired machine, this one is available to us all the time and I don't know how we survived without it. Trucks will arrive bringing essential building material such as bricks, cement or tiles, all heavy stuff and the JCB is there, getting it unloaded and stacked and the process just runs so smoothly. That is why I keep thinking how much smoother a second JCB 3DX Backhoe Loader will make our workflow."

