

Uitkyk Diggers grows its Bell relationship with JCB Roller

When JD Kriel first brought his newly acquired plant hire business, Uitkyk Diggers, to the Caledon area in the Southern Cape's Overberg region, he found breaking into the local market very tough. That is until he volunteered his equipment and personnel to help fight a devastating fire on a nearby mountain and soon the surrounding community realised that here was a man of substance with a compassionate side, prepared to help others without a second thought.

Johannes David Kriel, who prefers being called JD, hails from fruit farming stock in the Greyton area. He too first worked in fruit farming operations but always nurtured thoughts of being self-employed in plant hire. "A big opportunity came my way in 2005 when a local farmer loaned me the capital to start out on my own with used earthmoving equipment and I could generate income initially from a small sand and stone mine while also offering plant hire to the local farming community," JD tells us. "As there was no sustainable sand mine in the Overberg region, we quickly expanded that side of the business to supply customers as far afield as Hermanus, Riviersonderend, Villiersdorp, and Bot Rivier."

The focus of JD's plant hire business, Uitkyk Diggers, is on supplying the correct equipment for bulk earthworks and land preparation to the local farming community. Having bought out an older company along with its equipment, Uitkyk Diggers' equipment is used to build dams, maintain roads, irrigation canals and storm water drains, and to remove rocks from land that is prepared for planting a variety of crops.

"We first met André Jordaan, Bell Equipment's Sales Representative, in 2008 when he worked for the previous distributors of JCB equipment," JD says. "André called on us regularly and was patient and persistent until the day in 2019 that we asked him to demonstrate a JCB JS205 Excavator that we thought we could use to remove some gum trees on a farm."

JD recalls that when the two-week demonstration period had lapsed and the JCB JS205 Excavator had performed the task admirably, André made him an offer that was almost impossible to refuse, and Uitkyk Diggers became the proud owner of a JCB JS205 Excavator.

Since then, Uitkyk Diggers has established a firm business relationship with Bell Equipment. JD bought a used Bell B25D Articulated Dump Truck (ADT) and on the strength of that vehicle's solid performance, a new Bell B18E ADT was added to the fleet. The Bell B18E ADT has now done over 7 000 hours and JD has added another used Bell B18D ADT.

"Dealing with a reliable company such as Bell Equipment involves so much more than competitive

pricing alone as we face uncertain times in our business which means we double up on efforts to get the maximum life out of our machines," JD says. "Technical support and good parts availability are crucial as is the relationship you have with the first port of call into a company, which is the sales representative."

"Here I think Bell Equipment is in a unique position because I, or any member of my staff, can call André Jordaan at any hour of the day. With his background in technical matters, he has in the past given us sound advice on what to try when a machine breaks down or a warning light comes on and this has often saved us valuable time and money. This all stems from the relationship André has built with us over time and his visual impact, meaning he stops by without expecting business, which is something we as customers value highly."

In 2020, Uitkyk Diggers bought a JCB 3CX Global Backhoe Loader for its versatility in smaller projects and later that year two more JCB JS205 Excavators were added. These Excavators have seen some interesting action especially when they are used to open the mouths of local rivers to the sea, a task that is done periodically for the Overberg District Municipality.

"When we started getting increasing requests to compact roads and the walls of farm dams, we bought a JCB 116D Single Drum Roller from Bell Equipment in March 2021 and we were pleased to see that the company is now the South African distributor of such a great brand like JCB," JD continues. "While fuel consumption is an important input cost, our farming clients all have access to diesel. And even with Bell and JCB equipment's frugal fuel burn, it is not as big an item as sustained uptime, which is what we get from our Bell and JCB equipment."

"Our mantra for our business is to not pinch the client's time but to just get the job done properly, on time, every time. Having the correct equipment that delivers maximum uptime, is what produces happy clients – a winning formula for us," JD says.



Bell Sales Representative, André Jordaan (left), with JD Kriel, owner of Uitkyk Diggers.