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*Source: Official NZTA Registration Data - 2009



Issue 10



Already half way through 2010 and the year has definitely started positively!

This issue of DriveLine - our 10th - is another mega issue bringing you more articles on a variety of our truck and van customers, all with interesting stories to tell. From the NZ Army and their new technologically advanced Actros trucks, we visit the Papakura Coastguard and look into the tourism industry with Time Unlimited campervans and Luxury Airport Shuttles.

Our brands, Mercedes-Benz and Freightliner, remain at the forefront of the commercial vehicle industry with increasing loyalty from all our customers.

We wish you all the best for a profitable second half to this year and look forward to an equally buoyant start to 2011.

Ian Walker
 General Manager - Commercial Vehicles
 Mercedes-Benz New Zealand Limited

DriveLine Contributor

One of New Zealand's most experienced motoring, motorsport and road transport journalists, Jon Addison was Chief Reporter of the Auckland Star and editor of The 8 O'Clock sports paper before becoming founding editor of the industry leading magazine New Zealand Trucking, a role he held for 15 years. He now specialises in light commercials and has twice driven Mercedes-Benz Vito vans in the Energywise economy rally, winning the class driver ranking on both occasions.

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Sprinter An Automatic Choice For Campervans

When it comes to selection of the base vehicle for a campervan, whether a panel van or coach-built, it could be said that the Mercedes-Benz Sprinter is an automatic choice – simply because of its transmission.

“It’s the only vehicle in its class with a true automatic transmission – the others have automated manuals,” explains United Campervans Director Nicole Edgerton. “And when you’ve been driving a proper automatic you don’t want to be in a vehicle that feels like it’s coming to a stop in the middle of an intersection.”

With a fleet of 600, United Campervans is the second-largest in the motorhome rental industry in New Zealand and the only major one still owned and operated by the family that founded it.

“Most of our customers are Europeans and, increasingly, Australians and we pitch ourselves at the top end of the market with newer vehicles,” Nicole says.

In fact United’s Premier class fleet vehicles

are guaranteed to be less than three years old and this year the company is commissioning a total of 150 new Mercedes-Benz Sprinters to ensure the guarantee is met. Some 80 are Sprinter cab-and-chassis, which will be fitted with four and six-berth coach-built bodies. The remainder are Sprinter panel vans, 50 standard length versions fitted out as two-berth units and 20 longer vans set up as two-plus-one berth campers.

All of the Sprinters are powered by the Mercedes-Benz high-tech 2148cc four cylinder diesel engine with ratings of 109hp (80kW) at 3800rpm and 280Nm at 1600-2500rpm driving, of course, through the company’s five-speed fully automatic transmission.

The Sprinters come standard with an array of safety features, including an intelligent ESP stability program, ABS, EBD and BAS on the all-disc braking system, and an immensely strong cabin structure, and United Campervans specifies a passenger airbag in addition to the standard driver’s one.

The company operated Fuso, Fiat and Toyota vehicles but began purchasing Mercedes-Benz Sprinters in 2008 and has now ordered more than 200 in total. Nicole says the Toyotas are too small to accommodate showers and toilets and their associated holding tanks and she is working towards having these facilities in every vehicle in the fleet. United is a member of the Freedom Camping Forum and caters for tourists for whom being able to camp beside a beach or river is a major part of the appeal in renting a campervan. Stickers in the vans and information at the depots advise customers about the rules of freedom camping.

According to Nicole, European customers take it for granted that the vans they hire will meet the latest environmental and safety standards, and as the vehicles are in the workshop for a thorough check after every hire period extended service intervals are not as important in campervan rentals as they are to other operators.

“Last year when we started building on cab-and-chassis the (Japanese) Yen was high and the

Sprinters were cheaper than the Fusos we had been running,” she adds. “Apart from that it was the true automatics that influenced our decision.”

Supreme Motorhome Manufacturing in Henderson, West Auckland, constructs the coach-built bodies and fits out the vans to a particularly high standard with features such as curved cabinetry, LCD televisions and DVD players, beds up to king-size, toilets and showers, pressurised hot and cold water systems and microwave ovens.

The campervans are hired from depots in Auckland and Christchurch, both sited conveniently close to the international airports.

Typically the vans cover 30-40,000km a year. Nicole says that among the top-end campervan rental companies offering new vehicles, United sets itself apart from the rest by the standard of service it offers customers and the quality of its vehicles. “We take pride in a high customer satisfaction level,” she says.

In 2003 United became the first motorhome company to receive the Qualmark standard and just a year later became the first rental operation in the world to achieve a Green Globe Benchmarked Certification standard. Three years later the company took this to Silver Certification level.

Nicole explains that for the Green Globe certification the company’s overall impact on the environment is accurately measured, then steps are taken to reduce it.

United also offsets the environmental impact of its 600-strong fleet with a commitment to plant 30,000 native trees as part of the Motuora Island Reforestation Project in Auckland’s Hauraki Gulf. The measure equates to six trees planted for every campervan hire.

But, she says, the company doesn’t heavily promote its environmental activities to its customers. “It’s more something we do for our own satisfaction as a family,” she explains.



Cutting-edge Technology For New Army Actros Tractors

Special military features, future-proofing for what might be a 20-year service life and an emphasis on driver training have resulted in four new Mercedes-Benz Actros tractor units, just put in to service by the Army, being among the most technologically advanced trucks in the country.

The first 8x4 units in the Army, the new Actros tractors have been configured to haul adjustable-width quad-axle low-loader semi-

trailers, primarily for the transportation of LAVs (Light Armoured Vehicles) says Major Gary Shanley, Project Officer, Combat Service Support Vehicles.

The low-loaders were built with twist lock beams at 20 foot to carry the Army's recently introduced 20-tonne Swing Thru container handlers or 20 foot containers. The containers are now used by the Army to deliver anything from general stores to combat supplies that

include spare parts, bulk water and fuel, rations and ammunition.

Commissioning of the four new transporters is the first stage in replacement over the coming decade of the Army's fleet of 70 highway trucks, mostly Mercedes-Benz 2228, and over 400 Unimogs that were introduced into service between 1982 and 1986.

"Experience with the new Actros unit will help inform the New Zealand Defence

Force's planning for the future fleet," says Major Shanley.

Purchase of the Mercedes-Benz and trailing gear was the result of detailed evaluation of the Army's requirements followed by a competitive round of tendering.

"There were some close options to the Actros, but the through-life support, the excellent relationship we already have with Mercedes-Benz and a guarantee of spare parts supply made the difference," he explains.

In a departure from current practice the new trucks and trailers will be serviced within the Daimler Trucks dealer network instead of the Army's own workshops, which will continue to maintain the older equipment. Before the Actros units are deployed overseas, Army mechanics will train in Mercedes-Benz workshops, while

Major Shanley says sophisticated on-board electronics will make fault diagnosis in the field more accurate.

The Actros tractor units have large sleeper cabs allowing plenty of room for equipment storage and are fitted for but not with combat communications equipment. They are powered by the Mercedes-Benz V6 diesel rated at 480hp and 1675ft/lb and comply with the Euro Five emissions standard. It's the first major order of Euro Five trucks for Mercedes-Benz in New Zealand and introduces the handling of Adblue into the Army systems.

Major Shanley says the Army applied the Government's vision to lower vehicle emission levels by adopting the tough emissions standard years before it becomes compulsory. This demonstrates an environmental awareness and

future-proofs the trucks in expectation of a long operational life.

He adds that 12-speed PowerShift automatic transmissions were also specified because "they are the way of the future" and because when overseas an inexperienced driver might end up behind the wheel.

Although the Actros units are high-tech, there are two anomalies. The Army couldn't fit a driver side airbag because they are not compatible with a specially strengthened front part of the chassis, part of the military specification that allows the truck to be towed or winched readily. While the tractors are running on disc brakes, the low-loader semi-trailers are on drum brakes. Major Shanley explains: "Some of their work will be off main roads on formed tracks with the possibility of tussock getting caught in the calipers, if fitted to the trailers, and it could catch fire when they get back up to road speed and normal operating temperatures."

The other uniquely military equipment that Mercedes-Benz was able to supply in a rare crossover between its military and civil divisions is combat lighting. At the flick of a switch on the dash the rig can convert to convoy blackout lighting, where a tiny light illuminates a white cross on a green panel at the rear and downward-facing lights show just enough of the road ahead to enable the driver to see the ground. Even the dash and cab lights are extinguished.

The semi-trailers, built by M.F. King Ltd in Seaview, run on BPW axles, the rear pair self-steering, and 15-inch rims to keep the lower deck as low as possible. Each trailer axle group and tractor drive axles are fitted with on-board scales drawing data directly off the airbag suspension, while Tidd Ross Todd (TRT) of Hamilton engineered and fitted, amongst other items, a system of strain gauges and linkages to monitor front axle loads. With a pneumatically-locked sliding fifth wheel the driver can alter its position or shift his load to optimise front axle loadings.

"If the combination is over 44 tonnes gross but legal on all axles we can get an overweight permit and pay the supplementary RUC," explains Major Shanley. "The purpose of fitting the on board scales is to protect and educate the drivers."

Remaining road legal is also the objective with the hydraulically widening low-loaders. They are 2.5 metres wide when closed up and can





Mercedes-Benz



operate without restriction, but this would put half the width of the LAV tyres over each side. So when carrying the LAV, the trailers can be widened to 3.1 metres and operate within the Category 1 over-dimension rules.

Equipped with their own engine-driven hydraulic systems and winches, the low-loaders are designed to transport LAVs disabled in combat or broken down.

One of the factory options on the Army Actros tractor units is active proximity control, which uses radar to judge the distance to any vehicle ahead and applies the brakes if the following

distance decreases to less than the distance set by the driver.

The Army also added in-cab safety cameras, which can monitor the driver's eye movements to detect fatigue, and also look ahead of the truck to record any sudden changes, particularly those that occur before and during an accident. Information from the cameras and other data collection equipment, including Navman navigation and engine management data tracking units, will be used during the Army's comprehensive driver training.

Major Shanley says that although based on

standard Mercedes-Benz Actros trucks, the Army's units operate quite differently.

"Defence truck assets often have low duty cycles," he explains. "The focus is on preparedness and readiness rather than on commercial returns."

But one aspect is exactly the same - the effect new trucks in the fleet have on driver morale.

"The drivers are looking forward to receiving them," he says. "It reinforces their belief that the Government is supporting what they are being asked to do by giving them the tools to do their often hazardous job."



“ There were some close options to the Actros, but the through-life support, the excellent relationship we already have with Mercedes-Benz and a guarantee of spare parts supply made the difference... ”

Major Gary Shanley

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Tough Trucks For Tough Country

Almost a century and a half ago followers of the Maori King movement travelled south of the Waikato because the countryside there was too tough for Government troops to find them, and today's truck operators will tell you that not much has changed.

"It doesn't matter where we go, it's all uphill," says Bryan "Woody" Wood, co-owner with Darryl Gulbransen of Southern King Country rural carriers Ongarue Transport Ltd. "It's uphill to National Park and it's uphill to Taupo - and they're big hills."

Although there are some dairy farms in the area most of the terrain is too tough to milk cows on so Ongarue Transport's customers are primarily sheep and beef farmers, which means carting fertiliser to high farm air strips and bringing livestock out of the hills.

It takes tough gear to handle tough country and when Bryan Wood puts a new rig into Ongarue's

18-strong fleet he has to feel confident it's up to the job. At first glance the specification of the fleet's latest Freightliner Argosy stock truck may appear somewhat old-fashioned, with a Cummins six cylinder diesel engine backed up with a manual 18-speed Roadranger gearbox and big Meritor RT 46-160 diffs on AirLiner 46K suspension.

But it's a proven combination. Take the manual shift gearbox, chosen ahead of the SmartShift version, let alone one of the two-pedal transmissions that are becoming industry standard.

"We know from experience that the manual Roadranger will last the distance," explains Bryan Wood. "But just as importantly in our conditions you know you can skip three or four gears in it when you strike a particularly sharp corner on a hill."

As for the big Cummins, a Signature with 620hp

and 2050ft/lb ratings, he laughs: "The drivers were always harping on about power - so we got them some."

In fact one of the motives for buying high-horsepower premium trucks is that it helps with driver retention, which is something Bryan Wood knows plenty about. He started as a driver with Ongarue Transport on 1 April 1973, the day it opened for business.

Ironically the driver of the newest Freightliner in the fleet is a relative newcomer. Craig Cooper joined up for six months five years ago and is still with the firm.

His eight-wheeler is identical to two other Argosy stock trucks in Ongarue colours, while a fourth, which carts fertiliser, differs only in having a 520hp rating on its Cummins engine. All have 90-inch sleeper versions of the Argosy light aluminum cab, which exceeds the European ECE R29 crash-worthiness standard.



Craig Cooper - Ongarue Transport Driver

Ongarue Transport started with a pair of Bedfords, an International and an eight-wheeler Commer, powered by an 8V53 Detroit Diesel engine and pulling a trailer. "That was a really big rig in those days," remembers Bryan. "She had three-deck wooden crates with pens out above the cab."

"That truck could cart as many as 650 lambs, but in those days lambs for the works had carcass weights of only 12kg whereas these days they will be 16kg to 20kg."

"Everything has got bigger," he adds. "The cattle have got bigger, too, as the result of better breeding."

Ongarue stock trucks work throughout the

North Island and even the bulk trucks will run across to Napier with wool and bring fertiliser back to the King Country. When the firm started the stock trucks were usually parked up on Thursday nights and took off again on Sunday mornings, but these days it's a seven-day a week operation.

The company started at the little settlement 25km north of Taumarunui that it's named for, but moved to Manunui, at the intersection of State Highways 4 and 41, five years later.

Since taking over the company 11 years ago, Darryl has managed the office and dispatch side and Bryan has looked after the workshop

while getting back behind the wheel whenever the workload requires it.

Tough trucks and truckers may have conquered the King Country, but it remains distant from major servicing facilities, so Woody carries out crate and trailer repairs, including aluminium welding, and does the oil changes, greasing and brake servicing on the trucks.

It may appear to be an old-fashioned approach to the business but, just like the Freightliner Argosy trucks, it's one that has proven to be successful over the long term under some of the most demanding operating conditions in the country.

“The drivers were always harping on about power – so we got them some.”



New Mercedes-Benz Tourer Means Bus Brilliance

A technologically leading-edge mid-sized bus, the Tourer, has been officially launched on the New Zealand market by Mercedes-Benz.

Based on an Extra-long Sprinter van, the Tourer brings luxury car standards of safety, drivability and passenger comfort compared with the truck-based vehicles that until now have dominated the sector, says Brian Carr, Mercedes-Benz Light Commercial Vehicles Sales Manager.

“For tour operators who want to complement their own quality brand and achieve low operating costs at a very competitive purchase price against the Fuso Rosa, the Tourer is a serious option,” he adds.

The Tourer arrives in New Zealand either fitted with 19 passenger seats plus the driver’s seat, or as a trimmed and lined shell, complete with windows, ready for a local seating fit-out to meet specific customer requirements. Importantly, the Tourer also completes the Mercedes-Benz passenger service vehicle range, making it by far the most comprehensive in New Zealand.

“We start with the Vito Mixto with five seats, the Crew Bus with nine, the Mini-Bus with up to 11 and then go to the Sprinter range with 12-15

seats,” Brian explains. “Now we have the Tourer with up to 20 seats, then the full-sized bus and coach range with from 30 to 50 seats.”

Even with its standard seating the Tourer offers additional seating versatility. For example a seat between the driver’s and front passenger’s seat can enable it to seat 20, or the rear-most row can be deleted to enable the bus to accommodate the driver and 15 or 16 passengers plus additional luggage.

“The Tourer is also suitable as a school bus as it exceeds the latest safety and emissions requirements in the new contracts, and with bench seats and standing room can carry approximately 30 students,” Brian says.

Standard features of the Tourer include an electric sliding door with a step that automatically deploys when the door is opened and retracts when it is closed. The door can be operated from the dashboard, from the door itself or remotely from the driver’s key.

The Tourer arrives fully ducted for heating and cooling in the front, with a separate roof-mounted air-conditioner for cooling in the passenger

compartment. Optional additional heating and air-conditioning equipment can extend to separate temperature and air flow controls at every passenger seat.

Powering the Tourer is a choice of the Mercedes-Benz OM 646 DELA four cylinder common rail diesel engine with ratings of 110kW (150hp) and 330Nm or the powerful OM 642 DELA common rail V6 diesel rated at 135kW (184hp) and 400Nm. Both engines meet the Euro 4 emissions standard.

Standard transmission is the refined Mercedes-Benz five-speed full automatic, while a six-speed manual gearbox is optional.

The Tourer’s industry-leading adaptive ESP stability control system, which compensates automatically for changes to the vehicle’s centre of gravity as the number of passengers on board increases or decreases, also incorporates traction control. But for arduous conditions the Mercedes-Benz 4ETS all-wheel-drive, which includes high and low ratios and electronically controls torque delivery to each wheel to optimise traction, is also available.

Although the national network of Mercedes-Benz dealers prides itself on after-sales service, the before-sales service available from Daimler Trucks also leads the industry, says Brian Carr. The company’s experience in modern technologies is unmatched.

“We can provide technical support for vehicle modifiers in every area from additional lighting to connectivity with external devices,” says Brian. “There’s the potential to fit systems that enable passengers to connect their own iPods to listen to their

own music, power their laptops or recharge their camera batteries.

“It’s now even possible for a passenger to take a photograph of a scene or fellow passenger and email it home or post it on their Facebook page while traveling in the bus to the next destination,” he adds.

Despite its level of technological support and its comfortable accommodation for up to 20 passengers, the Tourer is externally surprisingly compact. On a wheelbase of 4325mm it measures 7345mm in overall length and is just 2700mm high. Drivers will also welcome its nimble 15.6 metre turning circle.

Passengers will be impressed by the European standard of ride comfort provided by the Tourer bus, but operators are more likely to appreciate its low total cost of ownership.

“The purchase price is highly competitive, but up to 40,000km service intervals, fuel-efficient diesel engines and high residual values ensure the total cost of ownership is unbeatable,” says Brian. “As the old saying goes, quality doesn’t cost, it pays.”



Customer Trucks



Tuakau Tipper

Family owned and operated South Auckland carrier Terence Howard & Sons has put a new Mercedes-Benz Actros drop-sided tipper to work on farm cartage duties. The new 3254L/48 MP2 joins an immaculate 320hp V10 model Mercedes-Benz that despite approaching its thirtieth birthday is still working hard. The new 8x4 Actros, which is powered by a 540hp V8 Euro 3 engine driving through a 16-speed hydraulic shift gearbox, is driven by the younger son, Stuart Howard. It has a sleeper cab with a low roof for sneaking under trees along farm tracks. Sales consultant: Kevin Curran, Trucks & Trailers Ltd, Auckland.



Amberley Axor

With fertiliser spreading a seasonal job this new Mercedes-Benz Axor based in Amberley, North Canterbury, has been fitted with a swap body system so it can also work as a tipper. The versatile 6x4 truck is operated by GVT Landline Ltd, driven by Mark Tomlins and operates throughout the North Canterbury area. When the fertiliser-spreading bin is removed from the truck an alloy bulk tipping body takes its place, enabling the six-wheeler to cart fertiliser or any other bulk commodity. The Axor 2640K/36 is powered by the Mercedes-Benz OM457LA engine, which produces 401hp. It drives through a 16-speed G210 gearbox. Sales consultant: Gerald Stanley, Prestige Commercial Vehicles, Chch



Versatile Actros

Versatility is the key to success so Darfield-based Frews Transport Ltd has set up its newest Mercedes-Benz Actros to handle a variety of work. The 3246L/48 Actros eight-wheeler's lift-out-sides tipper body, can be swapped for a flat deck body and crate for livestock cartage. Either way, the big Benz pulls a four-axle trailer, working mostly around Central Canterbury as a tipper, but ranging throughout the South Island on livestock work. Powering the truck is the Mercedes-Benz OM501LA engine, rated at 460hp, driving through a 12-speed PowerShift gearbox with a Voith retarder. Sales consultant: Gerald Stanley, Prestige Commercial Vehicles, Chch



Actros Logger

The Central North Island pine forests are home to this new twin-steer Mercedes-Benz Actros logging truck. Owned by Danny Siddells and driven by his son Daniel, the truck covers all the forestry areas between Taupo, Tauranga and Rotorua. Operating under the DJ & CJ Siddells colours, he pulls a four-axle trailer with four sets of bolsters to accommodate a range of log lengths. The Actros 3254L/48 has an extended 5400mm wheelbase and is powered by a 16-litre V8 rated at 540hp. Its G280 16-speed PowerShift gearbox is fitted with a Voith retarder, which augments the engine's AEB active engine brake. Sales consultant: Kevin Curran, Trucks & Trailers Ltd, Auckland.

Customer Trucks



Mercedes-Benz Monster

It may look like a standard Mercedes-Benz Actros at a glance, but this 2654L/33 tractor unit boasts a gross combination weight rating of 90 tonne - 20 tonne more than standard. Running big hub reduction diffs with 300mm crownwheels, the Actros is set up for heavy machinery haulage pulling a low-loader with three rows of eight wheels and with adjustable width. The heavy duty rig works carting road building equipment for Rotorua based Seger Roothing owned by Derek Maisey. His Actros has a 540hp Mercedes-Benz V8 diesel engine under its cab and is controlled through a 16-speed G280 transmission with a Voith retarder. Sales consultant: Kevin Curran, Trucks & Trailers Ltd, Auckland.



This Axor Pumps!

Driver Jarrod Nesbit can definitely say his new Mercedes-Benz Axor really pumps - concrete, in fact. Much of the 6x4 Axor's life is destined to be spent on building sites placing concrete with its on-board Putzmeister 28M concrete pump. Based in Palmerston North, the Kevin Bartlett Concrete Services truck works throughout the lower North Island. Power for the 2633 Axor and its pump comes from a Mercedes-Benz 7.2 litre OM926LA engine rated at 330hp and 1300Nm. The six-cylinder engine drives the truck through a nine-speed synchromesh gearbox.



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Coastguard Unimog Is A Life Saver

An elderly Mercedes-Benz Unimog all-wheel-drive truck plays a vital role in the search and rescue work of Papakura Coastguard, but every job it sets out on has the potential to be its last.

“The fact is, when it comes down to it we will sacrifice equipment to save a life,” explains Papakura Coastguard President Cedric Charlton.

Those aren’t idle words, either – the Unimog has already come close to making the ultimate sacrifice. It happened when an emergency arose during a particularly low tide on Auckland’s notorious Manukau Harbour. “We need around a metre of water to launch our Naiad and we had to back the Unimog in so far its deck was under water,” Cedric says. “I told the guys to keep it going. We had to get out on the water whatever the cost as lives were at stake.

“Fortunately the Unimog is pretty awesome and she just climbed right back out of the water without a problem,”

The ex-Army Mercedes-Benz was purchased by the South Auckland based Coastguard unit to tow a huge 9.2 metre Naiad rigid hull

inflatable search and rescue boat that was, when launched in 2008, the biggest combined resource in the country.

Anyone who thinks that’s a particularly heavy-duty combination for search and rescue work on a city harbour doesn’t know the Manukau. For a start, it’s still the scene of New Zealand’s worst maritime disaster, the sinking of the corvette HMS Orpheus on 7 February 1863 with the loss of 189 of its crew of 259.

With shifting sand bars, mud banks, narrow channels, dangerous tidal rips, heavy swells and breakers across the bar, the Manukau Harbour presents severe

challenges. At low spring tide there’s 145 square kilometers of exposed seabed where harvesters, many of them inexperienced new immigrants, search for seafood. When the tide comes in there’s 340 square kilometers of surface water to monitor.

And that’s just part of the area covered by Papakura Coastguard. With the Manukau, Waiuku, Ragland and Kaipara Coastguard units they form the Coastguard Northern Region

Tasman Alliance Group with responsibility for the West Coast from Raglan to Kaipara and 12 miles out to sea. Included are four frightening West Coast bars.

Papakura Coastguard, which has 30 search and rescue unpaid professionals on call, also has a 4.8 metre Naiad RIB, but it’s too small to handle the Manukau bar. The bigger boat, powered by a pair of 250hp two-stroke outboards that will each consume 100 litres of fuel an hour at wide-open throttle, was designed to handle the harbour and coastal conditions without pounding its crew.

Despite the size and five-plus tonne weight of the new boat, Papakura Coastguard still wanted to be able to tow it on the road. When the unit was established in 1968 it

used to quite frequently be called across to the opposite side of Auckland, launching at Kawakawa Bay for operations in the Firth of Thames.

“We were the only Coastguard to tow on the road and we wanted to keep that ability,” says Cedric. “It means we’re also available to Civil Defence and the boat can be used as a communications or command centre on land as well as on the water.

“Basically it’s an ambulance shaped as a boat,” he adds. “We have fire pumps, first aid equipment, defibrillators and oxygen on board and we’re all trained to at least Class II medic standard.”

The boat rides on a dual-axle galvanised Mudgway trailer with a pintle hook coupling. Papakura is also part of the rescue fast response for Auckland International Airport in the event of an aircraft emergency. The Naiad is usually launched at Bottletop Bay, but depending on conditions may launch at

Weymouth for quicker access to the airport. The value of this was reflected in the Airport’s contribution of half the cost of the Unimog tow truck. Initially Papakura Coastguard borrowed a truck from TR Group to tow the Naiad, but after careful investigation the Unimog became the “obvious choice within the budget constraints.”

After a lot of searching Cedric Charlton’s team located an ex-Army U1300L Unimog in Invercargill. One of the first sold by the Army, it had been used by an agricultural contractor and despite nearly a quarter of a century required relatively little work other than painting in Coastguard colours.

“With the boat on behind it’s the largest road-legal regularly towed combination in the country,” says Cedric. “We’ve towed it as far as Wellington for training exercises and the Unimog has proved well up to the task, although more power than its 168hp would be nice on highway hills.”



A Close Eye On This Century Class

An especially close eye is being kept on a new Century Class bulk tip truck working out of Auckland because it's the first eight-wheeler and the first unit on disc brakes in its fleet – but it's also the first Freightliner in an operation dominated by Mack trucks.

The new Freightliner has gone to work in the 23-strong North Island fleet of Bulk Distribution Ltd, which is part of the huge Invercargill-based H W Richardson Group Ltd.

Founder of the group, the late Bill Richardson, was a Mack enthusiast and the bulldogs have dominated the group's trucking operations.

"Apart from the new Freightliner and one Hino all of our trucks are Macks," says Bulk Distribution North Island manager Kallum Adams. "When the Freightliner became available we were very happy with the overall package so we swooped on it."

Now the new eight-wheeler is pulling a four-axle tipping trailer out of the Bulk Distribution depot in Penrose and everyone there is waiting to see how it performs over the next five years and the million kilometers that are in store for it.

Initial impressions have all been positive. Says Kallum: "We've had heaps of comments and they've all been good – it's a bloody nice looking unit."

The Century Class was located in Christchurch and sent to Invercargill to be painted in the colours of Richardson Group sister company Allied Concrete before Kallum drove it back to Auckland, loaded and pulling a fully loaded trailer.

"It's very comfortable," he says. "It's got more room than most bonneted trucks, especially for a bigger driver."

Regular driver of the rig in Auckland, Jason George, also rates the Century Class highly for comfort, power and all-round vision from his seat.

The new truck and trailer clocks up between 700km and 800km a day, mostly carting aggregate from a Holcim (New Zealand) Ltd quarry at Bombay to the Allied Concrete ready mixed concrete plants in Auckland. It backloads recycled concrete and washings for re-crushing and screening at Bombay.

"We also work in with a number of other bulk carriers and more or less cover the whole North Island," adds Kallum.

The Century Class eight-wheeler is the first in the Bulk Distribution North Island fleet with disc brakes all round, and Kallum and his team are watching closely to determine how well they perform in the dust-laden environment.

It's the second 8x4 bulk tipper in the fleet and at around just a tonne heavier than the six-wheelers its tare weight has proven to be on a par.

Powering the Freightliner is the latest EGR Detroit Diesel engine with ratings of 525hp and 1850ft/lb. It drives through a Fuller RTLO209 18AS3 AutoShift 18-speed gearbox and big Meritor RT46/160 diffs.

Kallum was impressed with the AutoShift on his initial acquaintance with it coming back from Invercargill. "I loved it," he says. "It makes it a real lazy man's truck."

The only occasions he found it necessary to shift manually were when forced to stop and re-start on a hill. "Otherwise it tended to change up too quickly and stalled," he explains.



“...it’s a bloody nice looking unit.”

Jason George
Allied Concrete Driver



But pulling out of Dunedin he left the AutoShift to its own devices and it dropped down to eleventh gear and the Detroit Diesel hauled the fully-loaded truck on its way north without any sign of strain.

The Freightliner is fitted with a Transport & General bathtub alloy tipping body and pulls a Transfleet four-axle trailer. The rig is set up for full compliance with the new 53 tonne gross weight limit.

Both truck and trailer are fitted with roll-over tarps and are covered up for every trip. With an average of seven trips a day that means the driver appreciates the ease of getting in and out of the Freightliner cab.

The normal day's work for Jason starts at 4am to get three hours in before the worst traffic hits Auckland's Southern Motorway. The Allied Concrete plant was established in Penrose to reduce motorway travel by being sited close to major inner-city developments.

The North Island Bulk Distribution fleet works from depots at Whangarei, Tauranga, New Plymouth, Levin and Wellington as well as Auckland at Silverdale and Penrose. Six of the fleet are bulk cement trucks hauling from Holcim facilities, Golden Bay Cement in Auckland city and Portland.

Although there are other Freightliners in the Richardson Group Transports, 14 Argosy units mainly in the rural operations, the new Bulk Distribution Century Class is the first in Allied colours and Kallum says one of the reasons for purchasing it was to measure it against the Macks.

"It's too early to say how it compares on things like fuel consumption, but we're all watching it very closely," he adds.



Intimate And “X-Clusive” Tours

When tourists explore Auckland with Néill and Ceillhe Sperath they're made to feel like they are being shown around by family friends rather than 'being on a tour'. A Mercedes-Benz Viano X-Clusive plays a key role in the highly personalized and interactive experience. Along with showcasing Auckland's unique sightseeing spots, TIME Unlimited Tours' clients might go fishing or exploring in kayaks, take wilderness walks in the Waitakere Ranges, try the world-first visitor experience of kite fishing, become integrated into Maori culture or make personally guided trips to places like the Bay of Islands, Rotorua, Taupo, Coromandel Peninsular or Waitomo Caves. TIME Unlimited Tours have also just been pronounced overall winner in the public vote section of the global Indigenous Tourism and Biodiversity Website Award 2010 in conjunction with the United Nations. The North Shore couple recently headed to Berlin to receive this great accolade for their company during an award ceremony as part of a major international tourism trade fair. "It's simple really - we love New Zealand

and the experiences we've had here and we want to share them with both domestic and international tourists" explains Néill. Established in April 2005, the company's slogan is "for the time of your life". The acronym TIME also stands for 'To Integrate Maori Experiences', given Ceillhe is a direct descendant of the famous Ngapuhi paramount chief Patuone. Néill describes himself as "a New Zealander by choice." Of Irish and German descent, he came to the country as a tourist before immigrating. Both Neill and Ceillhe have extensive business backgrounds. They realised early on that to make true gains in tourism meant you had to understand your product offering and seek out innovative ways to market that to your target audience. You also have to work on building strong relationships and foster great networks at all levels of the sector. It is also vital to pay attention to what clients really want, which means being 'visitor centric' in how they do business. In essence they want to make it easy for people to engage and be hosted during their time in Auckland and NZ.

An authentic Maori experience and appreciation of New Zealand's pristine environment underpin the success of TIME Unlimited Tours. This along with treating all clients as VIPs, as well as being great hosts and ambassadors to make the tours relevant, personalised and authentic for each client. The business is founded on three pillars of Maori culture - manaakitanga (hospitality), whakawhanaungatanga (relationships) and kaitiakitanga (guardianship). When growth of the business led to the purchase of a second vehicle to augment the operation's Toyota Highlander the eventual choice of the Viano X-Clusive clearly reflected the couple's values. For example, Néill and Ceillhe initially considered a 12-seat Mercedes-Benz Sprinter but decided that the limit posed by the six-passenger Viano was more in keeping with their philosophy of small, personalised groups to gain a truly interactive experience and allowing clients to discover the real NZ. "We did look at the whole market and talked to various suppliers, but we kept coming



Ceillhe & Néill Sperath



back to the Viano," Néill says. "It makes a positive first impression with our clients and that's also important to many of our industry and hotel partners who have standards of service delivery in line with ours'. The features like the automatic sliding doors and leather seats are pretty impressive - the Viano makes our clients feel they are being spoiled." With self-levelling air rear suspension as part of an all-independent system the Mercedes-Benz also delivers on ride comfort, which is particularly important on longer trips to places like the Bay of Islands or Rotorua. Néill adds that the Mercedes-Benz brand stands for excellence "and we want to align ourselves with excellence in everything we do."

TIME Unlimited Tours also investigated the environmental attitude of Mercedes-Benz as a

company and the environmental performance of the Viano before finalising their purchase. "People are becoming more environmentally aware and this is very much part of our tours. Our clients also book with us specifically because of our environmental credentials," he explains. "We know our environmental stance does help and like all other purchasing decisions we make it has to be a sustainable option for the long term benefits it can provide" TIME Unlimited Tours is Qualmark endorsed and has recently received the highly prestigious Qualmark Enviro Gold award, putting it among the top 200 of New Zealand's 16,000 tourism businesses for environmental friendliness! With its powerful 3.0-litre V6 diesel engine exceeding the Euro Four emissions standard the Viano meets the company's environmental as well as performance and economy expectations. The 204hp diesel engine drives through a five-speed automatic transmission with Tipfunction manual override.



To maintain its position as one of New Zealand's leading producers of frozen foods Talley's Group Ltd demands the highest quality from the seed to the supermarket and a new Freightliner Columbia tractor unit is taking an important role in achieving that objective.

The new rig, which is also important to Freightliner as it marks the return of the short-bonnet Columbia model after an absence from the New Zealand market, has been put to work at a major Talley's processing plant in Ashburton.

Ashburton-based Logistics Manager Aaron Chudleigh operates seven Freightliners and a Hino pulling a variety of semi-trailers carting frozen vegetables to export ports, to local markets and among Talley's facilities and leased cool stores.

It's a complex operation as consumers demand the vegetables throughout the year, but they are grown and harvested only once a year.

"We do hit some big peaks at the end of the harvests and we use cool stores as far away as Christchurch to accommodate them," says Aaron. One of the district's largest employers, the Ashburton plant processes potatoes, peas and corn in bulk.

Just about all of the vegetables going into the Ashburton plant are grown in mid-Canterbury, with Talley's agronomists working closely with the farmers to ensure top quality, while fast transport between farms and freezers ensures the "just picked" taste on which the company prides itself.

Until around three years ago contractors were used to meet the cartage requirements of the Ashburton plant, but Talley's decided to establish their own fleet for transporting product to customers and the port at Lyttelton. "It increased our flexibility because we always have gear when we need it and it has definitely reduced our costs," he says. The Freightliners were selected primarily for their low tare weight because just about all of the 60 containers a week carted to the port are heavy. Explains Aaron: "About 90% of the export containers are 40-footers and 75-80% of those are over 30 tonne, so low tare weight is vital.

"However I was also looking for good fuel economy, and the drivers like the Freightliners, too," he adds. "That helps with driver retention, which is very important to me."

The new truck is the first twin-steer tractor unit in the Talley's fleet and the first Columbia with the latest EGR MBE4000 engine. The ADR80/02 compliant engine delivers 450hp and 1650ft/lb of torque and drives through an 18-speed RTLO16918 gearbox and Meritor RT40-145 diffs. Despite the additional EGR (exhaust gas recirculation) equipment and larger radiator demanded by the emissions reducing system the Talley's twin-steer Columbia weighs in at just 8160kg including its turntable and guards.

The new tractor unit will pull a new Steelbro quad-axle skeletal semi-trailer, with the eight-axle rig configured to take advantage of the new weights and dimensions limits.

Initially Aaron used swing-lifters for container transport but recently bought a 36-tonne top-lifting Omega container handler to load and unload from the lighter skeletal.

Along with four skeletal he operates a pair of quad-axle Fruehauf curtainsider semis and two Fairfax reefers, one on four axles and the other on three. The temperature-controlled semis are used to haul product to local customers and to transport vegetables between cool stores and the Ashburton plant.

The Talley's Group has grown from a family business started in Motueka in 1936 by Ivan Peter Talijancich and now operates mussel farms, a fishing fleet and a dairy division specialising in icecream production as well as the frozen vegetables operation.

For Freightliner the commissioning of the new Columbia in Talley's colours marks the return of the popular short-bonneted model to the New Zealand market. Previously available with C13 Caterpillar ACERT engines, the Columbia was unobtainable while being re-engineered for the EGR MBE4000 following Caterpillar's withdrawal from the heavy truck engine business.



Sprinters Mean Cost-Effective Luxury

If an airport shuttle customer is offered the choice between an eight-year-old Japanese minibus with almost no safety features and a safe, modern Mercedes-Benz Sprinter at the same price the outcome is pretty obvious.

Ian Holroyd and George Oliver, joint Managing Directors of Tauranga-based Luxury Airport Shuttles, are banking their company's future on this premise.

"We aim to be at the top end of the market," explains Ian. "We can't charge any more so we have to offer a better service and a safe, modern vehicle is part of that."

"Our brand is luxury and the Mercedes-Benz is the only luxury minibus available," Ian adds. "But the fact is that the whole of life costs are not dissimilar to those of the Japanese vehicles."

The two Tauranga businessmen purchased Luxury Airport Shuttles, along with two other local shuttle operations, in August 2009 and immediately set about upgrading the 20-vehicle fleet with new Mercedes-Benz minibuses and introducing a new colour scheme that includes turquoise uniforms for the drivers.

They intend to continue fleet replacements at the rate of around one new minibus every three months and they also expect to grow the business, which at present operates primarily to Tauranga, Auckland, Hamilton and Rotorua airports.



The operation was founded By Rob and Gail Brosnan with a single 12-seater Sprinter 312 in 2002 and most of the vehicles purchased during the business's initial growth phase are still at work and long overdue for replacement. Two Mercedes-Benz Sprinters have already passed 1.5 million kilometers and there are three Vitos with around a million kilometers on

their odometers and all still on their original engines.

"Maintenance of the fleet had fallen behind under the previous owner and we have invested considerable dollars in getting the vehicles back into good condition since taking over, doing jobs like replacing the suspension bushes in the Vitos so that they ride like new again," says Ian.

He and George are firm believers in the value of regular maintenance and fleet planning and their policy with the new Sprinters will be to move them out of the main fleet and in to local shuttle work after about four years, when they will have covered between 600,000km and 700,000km. After about five years they believe operating economics begin to favour purchase of a new vehicle over repair of an old one.

In keeping with the operation's luxury branding they have moved up-market with the first two Mercedes-Benz Sprinters purchased since taking over the business.

Both are medium wheelbase, high roof minibuses with 3.0 litre V6 diesel engines, full automatic transmissions, electrically-operated sliding doors, tinted glass, silver paint, alloy wheels, roof-mounted rear air-conditioning, cruise control and full factory seats, which Ian says are of higher quality than locally-fitted ones.

He says future purchases will be "mostly Mercedes-Benz" but are likely to vary in

configuration as the fleet's around-the-clock, door-to-door service ranges from single person VIP transfers to tour groups from visiting cruise ships and school parties.

"We'll probably look at Vianos for the VIP transfers and perhaps 17-20 seater Sprinters for the larger groups," Ian explains. "We like the high roof versions because passengers can walk up and down them more easily, but especially with the air-conditioning units on top, there are limitations on where they can go, particularly down people's driveways. However, the bigger vehicle does offer more options."

Luxury Airport Shuttles explicitly markets the benefits of its vehicles, saying: "We operate a fleet of quality European minibuses and cars offering our passengers a safe and comfortable trip."

This in turn creates a high expectation from the customer that goes

beyond merely arriving at the airport on time. The Sprinters play their part in meeting this expectation with their quiet ride, extra legroom and safety belts on every seat, Ian says.

And the company enhances this with a professional, attentive workforce, route optimisation and frequency of service resulting from the size of the fleet.

"Some days we have 15 vehicles going to Auckland alone, which means one departing almost every hour," says Ian.

All the vehicles are equipped with GPS tracking systems and mobile phones so customers can instantly be updated on their shuttle's arrival time.

"And having the Mercedes-Benz minibuses certainly helps us with driver retention," Ian adds. "The quality of the vehicle, the safety and the ease of use all make the whole thing easier."



Mercedes-Benz Runs In The Family

When a new fertiliser spreader truck rolled into the Reporoa depot of N T Wealleans Ltd recently no one would have been surprised that it sported a Mercedes-Benz star on the front – the large family firm has been buying the brand for three generations.

Company founder Tom Wealleans started buying Mercedes-Benz with the legendary 1113 bonneted model back in the 1960s. His son Gavin and his grandson Shane, who is now General Manager, have maintained what's become a tradition through the SK series to the 21st century Ategos.

“We do carefully analyze what's on the market before making a decision,” Shane points out. “But the Mercedes-Benz trucks have the technology that has proved to be capable of handling our working conditions.

“We look at an eight-to-ten-year lifespan for the trucks and the Mercedes-Benz trucks provide us with that longevity. It comes down to

the ruggedness and reliability of the equipment,” he adds.

Latest in the Wealleans colours is an industry benchmark Atego 1529AK 4x4 with the fleet's first Euro Four Mercedes-Benz six cylinder OM906LA engine, which is rated at 290hp and 1120Nm.

The drivetrain is a G131 nine-speed synchromesh gearbox running through a dual-range transfer box to a 6100kg AL3 front drive axle and 11,000kg H4 rear drive axle.

The Atego is fitted with wide tractor-type tyres, which improve its floatation for better traction and reduced pasture damage. Shane says that with its diff and cross locks the Mercedes-Benz has excellent traction.

Wealleans has its own engineering division at Hinuera, in the south-eastern Waikato, so there is three generations of experience behind the spreading body fitted to the new Atego.



“It has our latest wide chain twin spinner system, which enables it to spread high-density organic matter, such as chicken and calf shed litter, as well as the traditional fertilisers and lime,” Shane explains. “By adjusting the back door opening and the speed of the chain we can vary application rates from 50kg to 5000kg a hectare.”

Like all of the Wealleans spreaders, the new Atego is fitted with a TracMap GPS guidance system to ensure accurate spreading at maximum pass widths.

It's a far cry from the firm's beginnings in 1946 when Tom Wealleans started spreading fertiliser from the back of an ex-Army 4x4 Chevrolet.

Since then the operation he started has grown to become the largest family groundspreading company in the Southern Hemisphere. Based at Hinuera, it covers the Waikato, Bay of Plenty and Coromandel with depots throughout the regions.

Wealleans also has a bulk cartage division and

a petroleum cartage operation. Its bulk truck and trailer units cart fertiliser, grain, rack rock, animal feeds and chicken litter throughout the North Island from bases at Matamata and Mt Maunganui.

The company started delivering fuel to farms and contractors in the Matamata area in 1967 and in 1995 formed Wealleans Petroleum Distributors Ltd as a dedicated Mobil Wholesale distributor.

The Reporoa depot where the newest Atego is based was established only recently to service the Central Plateau farms, where dairy conversions have been increasing. Previously Wealleans sent trucks in from other depots.

“Customer numbers have been growing as the farmers have come to appreciate the benefits of a localised base and the new Atego is an addition to the four trucks we had been operating there,” says Shane.

Although the new truck pulls a Wealleans-built automat trailer out to the farms, among the benefits of a local base is that less time is

spent on the highway. “We make our money in the paddock,” Shane points out.

While the Mercedes-Benz reliability, longevity and traction under demanding operating conditions are the primary reasons for selecting Atego spreaders, Shane Wealleans adds that another important factor is that the drivers like them.

With driver retention always an issue Wealleans has a policy of training them thoroughly, then paying them well. “We take young people through a sort of apprenticeship,” Shane explains. “They start off doing a year in the workshop, then work their way up through the licence classes.”

The result is professional drivers with a low accident rate and a low turnover.

Now in the hands of its third generation, N T Wealleans Ltd has the experience to take the long-term view in both driver training and truck selection and that's certainly a philosophy that the firm's farmer customers can relate to.

New Actros Stars In Southern Fleet

When Brent Scully was a boy his father Hugh advised him not to join the family's rural cartage company because trucking was too hard a business, but today he operates one of the smartest small fleets in Southland.

The flagship of the seven-truck fleet is a real head-turner – a new Mercedes-Benz Actros eight-wheeler stock unit with the latest Elite aerodynamic crates on both it and its four-axle trailer – but the rest of the Scullys Transport Ltd rigs are also all late model, efficient and neatly presented.

"It's still a tough business to be in, especially competing against the big fleets with all their buying power," Brent says. "But we front up with modern gear that offers our customers a reliable service."



For the past four years all the trucks in the fleet have been fitted with GPS locators, with wireless feeds back to the depot so customers can be easily kept up to date about where their loads are.

At first Brent accepted his father's advice and after school took up a career as a meat inspector for the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Hugh Scully had been operating trucks since starting a cream run in 1939, and established Scullys Transport in 1946. The firm's first new truck was a 1948 Reo Speedwagon, parts of which survive in the Bill Richardson truck museum in Invercargill.

Shortly after his father died in November 1979 Brent left the freezing works to come home to Centre Bush and take over the family firm, which was then running a pair of J6 Bedfords, a petrol engine one that had been purchased new and one with a diesel engine "that was not a success."

While the current fleet is a far cry from those two old bonneted Bedfords the work remains entirely based around agriculture, including livestock cartage, fertiliser spreading, bulk cartage of rock, fertiliser and coal, a bobby calf pickup service and transport of hay and wool.

The spreaders are also Mercedes-Benz – a pair of 1833 Axor 4x4s both new in 2009 and both pulling automat trailers. Brent's first Mercedes-Benz was also a spreader, an 1828 bought new in 2001 and replaced by the first of his Axors in February 2009.

The other four trucks in the Scullys colours are Nissan Diesels, and the new Actros replaced another Nissan.

Brent says three main factors influenced his decision to step up to the Mercedes-Benz. The main one was to attract a top driver into his fleet. Although the days of extreme driver shortages are over, it's still difficult to find and retain top drivers and the opportunity to get behind the wheel of the new Actros lured Scotsman Gordon Horsburgh to join the Centre Bush outfit.

"The second factor was that the premium truck presents the image I want for the company," says Brent. "And the third is that I'd like to think the Mercedes will be a ten-year truck."

Even though the Scullys stock trucks rarely stray out of Southland and Otago, apart from the odd venture into Canterbury, the Actros is likely to hit a million kilometers in ten years of work.

The Scullys Actros is a 3248L/48 8x4 with the Euro Four 12 litre V6 OM501LA diesel engine under its cab. This is rated at 476hp and 1696ft/lb and drives through a new G330-12 12-speed PowerShift transmission.

Brent admits to a little apprehension about how well the two-pedal automatic gearbox would perform on livestock work, particularly when backing uphill and around a curve into a loading race. "But Gordon is pretty happy with it," Brent says. "I'm not getting any grizzles and he likes things to be right."

The Mercedes-Benz pulls a Domett four-axle trailer that was already in the fleet and both were fitted with the futuristic new Rinnon Products Elite crates. Although primarily built in aluminium, they have carbon-fibre side panels and front and side wind deflectors to enhance aerodynamic efficiency by a claimed 7-14%.

"We've got nothing to directly compare them

against, but the Actros is achieving 1.96 litres/km whereas we were lucky to get 1.7 litres/km from the 450hp Nissan on similar work," says Brent. "How much of that is the truck and how much the crates we don't know, but it's probably a combination of the two."

Although Brent Scully went into the road transport industry against his father's advice

he's committed completely to it and for the past three seasons has served as President of the Otago-Southland Groundspread Fertiliser Association. His father may have been right about it being a hard industry, but Scullys Transport demonstrates that with the right attitude and the right gear it's possible to succeed in it.



Whatever you are moving... move it in a Mixto



One of the most versatile models in the Mercedes-Benz van line-up has been a huge success in Europe, particularly in the United Kingdom, and is now available on the New Zealand market.

The Vito Mixto is designed to be a typically hard working Mercedes-Benz van during the week and comfortable family transport – with more luggage space than usual – during the weekend. However its versatility also suits it for many other applications, such as a working vehicle that at times has to accommodate a crew of five adults or for adventure tourism where the tour party is small but a lot of sporting equipment has to be carried. It will also enable a family of five to load a complete set of camping equipment inside the van and still be able to tow a trailer of up to 2000kg.

And because it is a member of the Vito family the Mixto is available with two wheelbase lengths, three overall body lengths, two roof heights, four

engine ratings, a choice of five-speed automatic or six-speed manual transmissions and a huge range of factory options.

The main component of the Mixto package is a pair of seats, one for two occupants and a single seat, immediately behind the cab. These three seats can be flipped forward behind the front seats, when they occupy only around 400mm of load floor space. They can also be removed completely, a task that can be handled by one person.

“Of course it’s possible to get seats fitted to a Vito van by a local supplier, but they’re not the same as the factory seats, which all come as standard with three-point inertia reel seatbelts,” says Brian Carr, National Sales Manager for Mercedes-Benz Light Commercial Vehicles.

The new Mixto package also includes windows in the sliding doors each side of the vehicle and full interior lining in fitted plastic mouldings similar to those used in the up-market Viano people mover.

The Mixto has heating and cooling ducts to the rear compartment, along with separate speakers for the radio and CD player.

“People who haven’t experienced a modern van like the Vito don’t always appreciate how much like a passenger car they are to drive,” says Brian. “The steering, ride and handling are in the same league and there are all the same safety systems, such as adaptive stability control.”



While the Vito is the only working van in New Zealand to meet the ANCAP Five Star safety rating when fitted with curtain airbags, the Mixto version offers additional passenger safety as sliding doors both sides enable children to always exit at the safest point.

With the rear seats in place the Mixto is still capable of handling real van duties with load compartment lengths up to 1853mm and volumes from 2.63-3.95 cubic metres. With the rear seats removed load volumes range up to 6.49 cubic metres. Payload ratings are from 805kg to 935kg.

A 2.15-litre four cylinder and a 3.0-litre V6 diesel engine are available for the Mixto, offering ratings from 70kW (95hp) to a potent 150kW (204hp).

Dealer & Service Network



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