

## Focus on Powerstar

# Taking on the African challenge

John Floyd learnt more about Powerstar on its stand at the Joburg Truck and Bus Show

**P**OWERSTAR, the Chinese manufacturer of heavy duty trucks, has been in SA for some years, but recent developments have seen the growth of the company into an autonomous body with local production facilities.

Powerstar has a production facility in SA where vehicles are assembled on a semi knocked down (SKD) basis. Based in Pietermaritzburg, the plant employs a team of engineers and technical personnel that work side by side with representatives of Beiben, Weichai and Fastgear to ensure that all technical problems and future developments pertaining to local requirements are expedited as quickly as possible.

Quality is a high priority at the Pietermaritzburg facility and the company has made big strides to attain the prestigious ISO 9001 accreditation and is expecting to conclude the SABS audit very soon.

Norinco Motors and Beiben are the original equipment manufacturer (OEM) of Powerstar and are based in Inner Mongolia. The plant has an annual production of more than 60 000 heavy commercial vehicles as well as transmissions and 180 000 truck and bus axles.

The company claims to have one of the most advanced parts production facilities in the world. The Bautou assembly line has been designed to ensure maximum efficiency and quality control.

Their research and development strives continually to ensure that Powerstar



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products remain at the fore in the trucking world. Continual co-operation with the Powerstar plant in SA results in a product that is designed truly to take on the tough challenges of Africa.

The ruggedness and reliability of Powerstar products is also due to the long-standing relationship with engine supplier Weichai. The philosophy behind the engines has always been one of simple and reliable products. The company is one of the world's largest suppliers of diesel engines and with a footprint in 30 countries and more than two million units in use it has a proud heritage.

Employing more than 800 engineers in the company's



The Powerstar VX, left and the Powerstar V3, above. Right is the latest generation Weichai WP12.480 engine.

research and development department, a new breed of engine has arrived that will meet the stringent Euro 5 standards.

The WD15/W618 series engines were introduced from Austria Steyr, and development has continued, resulting in the 2010 launch of the W12 and W13 series.

The introduction of two new models at the Johannesburg

International Motor Show heralds a new era for Powerstar in SA. The company's display inside Hall 5 features the facelifted VX range that will be released with the 2628 model to be followed by the popular 8X4, 6X6 and the 4X4 series.

The new VX range has undergone changes and now features improved design for the cab both in safety and comfort

with air-conditioning fitted as standard. As with all Powerstar products the VX range will be powered by the Weichai engine, a compact and powerful unit that provides high torque levels with proved reliability.

The VX range has a strong track record in Africa and has played a major role in the construction and mining industries, two of the toughest

environments for any truck. The VX tipper trucks are renowned as one of the world's best in their class.

The Powerstar display also debuts the V3, the company's first venture into the long-haul heavy-duty market.

The V3 features a streamlined, ergonomically efficient, cab that is high on safety and driver comfort. At present the V3 is undergoing evaluation in SA to ensure that the vehicle satisfies all the requirements of local clients and conditions before its expected release in February 2012.

George Jin, CEO of Powerstar, has said that the simplicity of the product range should never be underestimated.

The company's whole philosophy is one of simple design and simplicity of maintenance, which means less downtime and therefore a far more economically viable operation, which in present economic conditions could be the key to a successful business.

Customer support is a vital area in the trucking world and is certainly an important facet of Powerstar in SA.

The parts warehouse is fully stocked to ensure that genuine

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spare parts can be supplied in the shortest possible time.

Parts are held at the Pietermaritzburg plant and are dispatched to the 25-strong dealer network within 24 hours and within 72 hours for cross-border orders.

More dealerships will be appointed on the basis of customer requirements and logistics, particularly for those who operate in more remote areas. Expansion will also take place in the SADC region to ensure that both new and pre-owned vehicles and those already in operation can be supported satisfactorily.

Powerstar says it certainly has an eye to the future and will continue to introduce new product into southern Africa, as well as maintaining continued support for current operators to prove that they provide trucks that are built to last.



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