

Hino partners Marcé Fire Fighting Technology

Hino South Africa has embarked on a partnership with Marcé Fire Fighting Technology, a specialist vehicle-conversion company located near Pretoria. This joint venture has already resulted in the delivery of several fire engines based on Hino truck chassis cabs.

"This co-operation has enabled Hino to offer a comprehensive range of fire-fighting vehicles and we are particularly impressed with the relationship we enjoy with the management of Marcé and the excellent quality they build into the innovative fire engines they produce," said Hino SA's senior sales manager, Ignatius "IJ" Greeff.

Three fire engines, built by Marcé Fire Fighting Technology on Hino 500-Series 1322 four-wheel-drive chassis were delivered to Free State provincial authorities recently for use in the Dihlabeng municipal area, which includes Bethlehem, Clarens, Fouriesburg, Paul Roux and Rosendal.

This latest order on Marcé follows a previous one for five units for the Eastern Cape regional authority. They were built on 4x2 Hino chassis.

A stringent series of tests

The development of the Marcé-built Hino fire engines has included them being subjected to a stringent series of tests at the Gerotek technical centre, west of Pretoria and included a slalom at 80km/h as well as driving on the ride and handling circuit, both with the water tank full and half full. The maximum tilt angle was measured at 28 degrees on the tilt platform.

"We are delighted at the positive results of these tests, which were conducted by Gerotek personnel," added Greeff.

Marcé Fire Fighting Technology, which was formed in 1998 and operates from premises in Centurion, near Pretoria, started as an importer of fire-fighting vehicles and equipment, but in 2001 the company management realised that there was great potential in local manufacture providing high quality standards were met.

This is what they have done, using local designs with additional input coming from regular visits to relevant global exhibitions for the emergency services.

"My wife, Danielle, has been the driving force in this business, which is named after her favourite brand of champagne from a small vineyard in the Loire Valle in France," said commercial director Jan Steyn.

The company moved into its current design, engineering and manufacturing base last year to cater for the rapidly growing demands for its vehicles. This building also houses the head office. There is very tight control on quality as virtually all the

components, including the composite sections for making double-cab body extensions, are made on site, using the latest technology and modern equipment. This includes a large painting booth that delivers a very high quality level of finish.

The company employs 150 people on the Centurion site, with 120 related directly. There are branches in Polokwane, Stellenbosch, Namibia, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Botswana and various agents in Africa, so its reach is growing rapidly.

"We face strong competition from both local and international companies, but believe we now measure up to the world's best in terms of quality and innovation, because we are very aware that we cannot afford to take any short cuts because we are in a life and death business," concluded Steyn.

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