



# DriveLine



Canterbury Waste Invests in the Future with Actros

Vito wins

International Award





# Hello and Welcome...

..to the very first edition of DriveLine,

the brand new magazine that aims to keep you in touch with news, views and the crew at Daimler Chrysler New Zealand. Replacing PreciousMetals, and now including plenty that will be of interest to our Light Commercial customers as well as the Heavy Transport crowd, DriveLine will be published twice a year and distributed free throughout the industry.

As you'll see, there's a lot going on around the country right now - Sterling and Freightliner trucks and Mercedes-Benz trucks and vans are becoming more and more familiar sights on our roads from Kaitaia to Bluff. And the positive feedback just keeps on pouring in from transport operators, retailers and tradesmen alike. Enjoy the magazine, and please - feel free to contribute pictures and stories for future issues. We'd all like to see and hear what's going on in your neck of the woods!

Ian Walker

General Manager - Commercial Vehicles  
Daimler Chrysler New Zealand Limited

## DriveLine Contributor

**Jon Addison** is one of New Zealand's most experienced motoring, motorsport and road transport journalists, whose first vehicle test was in 1967 - in a Hillman Hunter. He was the founding editor of industry-leading New Zealand Trucking magazine, a role he held for 15 years. Last year, with Sandy Myhre, he drove a Mercedes-Benz Vito 115 CDI van to a class win in the national Energywise economy rally, averaging 6.72 litres/100km (42mpg)

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# Canterbury Waste Invests in the Future

**The commissioning of Canterbury Waste Services' 13 Mercedes-Benz 3246 eight-wheeler highway trucks and their four 8x6 4144 off-highway trucks is a major milestone – for many reasons, other than just being a significant sale for Mercedes-Benz Trucks.**

These vehicles are responsible for the transportation of around 300,000 tonne of waste from Christchurch each year by road to the new Canterbury Regional Landfill site at Kate Valley in North Canterbury. This very contentious operation swims or sinks on the quality of the trucking fleet entrusted to the transportation of the waste, and the Mercedes-Benz trucks were chosen over other brands for a number of reasons. These include a hi-tech specification ABS, ASR, Euro III Emission standard compliance and the ability of Mercedes-Benz Trucks to "offer a total package," as the transport manager for Canterbury Waste Services, Murray Young said.

Aiming for "a best practice," operation, Mr Young said that the CWS fleet, it's staff and practices, are aimed at setting a bench mark for the transport industry.

The Christchurch-Kate Valley return trip is about 150 km and

particular care has been paid to ensuring that this fleet is not only one of the cleanest and best presented on the road – but also the safest with operator selection and training a priority for Canterbury Waste Services. Due to the nature of the load, these trucks operate with a high-centre-of-gravity and need an experienced hand. They have a mixture of rural, city, small town and steep hill driving to contend with, and CWS selected from 300 applicants what they consider to be the pick of the local driving pool – drivers with experience with these types of loads, experience with the truck and trailer configuration and a proven attitude to safety.

Waste is carried in containers of two sizes – 6.4 metre for the truck and 7.4 metre on the trailer. Eventually 100 of these containers will be fabricated for the operation. The trucks are self-loading/discharging, and are fitted with a crane and hook for the purpose.





The containers are taken to Kate Valley and readied for the 8x6 Mercedes-Benz to travel down to the waste-face. These four-axle trucks have three-drive axles and were chosen for this strenuous application due to their off-road capabilities, ruggedness and ease of operation.

All on-road truck movements are tracked using the Navman Global Satellite Positioning System. With truck speed being a critical safety issue, it is monitored every few seconds for every truck on the road, and Murray Young is instantly alerted to any unacceptable speeds. All on-road trucks are speed limited to 90km/hr. Townships on the route are "geo-fenced" so that any speed over 53km/hr in a 50km/hr zone is reported. All off-road running is also measured by the GPS system, providing verification for road user charges reclaims.

The Kate Valley Landfill is predicted to have a life of 30-35 years, and cost an estimated \$20 million to construct, with 1.5 million cubic metres of earth shifted during the project.

Canterbury Waste Services have spent \$10.9 million equipping their fleet which also includes waste material handling equipment at Kate Valley.





Mercedes-Benz

# They're Vantastic!

**The Mercedes-Benz Vito has won the world's major light commercial vehicle award – the International Van Of The Year 2005.**

And the larger Mercedes-Benz Sprinter has picked up a brace of commercial vehicle awards, including the prestigious Motor Home of the Year award for the 11th straight year.

The important Van of the Year award is made by a panel of judges from around Europe, who said that the Vito met the requirements of a successful load carrier, with a cargo capacity of up to 1200kg and loading through the rear as well as one or two side doors.

The Europeans also praised the wide range of Vito variants – three lengths, two roof heights and three ratings for the 2.2 litre common rail diesel engine.

In addition they were impressed with its passenger car standards of ride and handling, as well as its slick styling.

Not new to winning this award, the previous Mercedes-Benz Vito won the Van Of The Year title in 1996.

The Vito also won the three tonne gross weight class in the prestigious 2004/2005 Commercial Vehicle Awards made by German tradesman magazines.

In this same competition the Sprinter, which this year celebrated its tenth birthday, collected the award for the 3.5 tonne class.

Launched in 1995, the Sprinter has gone on to top 1.2 million sales and is the best-selling van in its class in Europe. It is sold in more than 100 countries, including Tonga, where a luxurious version is the favourite transport of the King of Tonga.

Key to the Sprinter's success is its suite of safety features, including ESP stability program, ABS and ABD braking for the all-disc system and ASR traction control.

The Sprinter also took the award in the up to 3.5 tonne category of this year's ETM readers' poll, in which around 10,000 readers of a group of German truck and bus magazines choose the best commercial vehicles of the year.

The Sprinter has won this class every year since the magazine publisher began the readers' poll nine years ago.

Meanwhile the James Cook Sprinter camper has picked up its 11th Mobile Home of the Year award, securing a record 54.8% of the vote in its luxury class category. None of the other 203 mobile homes came close to this percentage.

Mercedes-Benz based campers dominated the competition, taking seven of the top ten placings in the James Cook Sprinter's class, along with awards in other classes.





# Fanfare For 4x4

The value of four-wheel-drive for mid-sized vans in New Zealand conditions

is becoming well established with the commissioning of the country's first

Mercedes-Benz 4x4 Sprinters by the St John Ambulance service.

After testing the first 4x4 Sprinter ambulance in Central Otago last winter, St John put its second into service in Canterbury this year.

More than a quarter of the 430-strong national fleet of ambulances are Sprinters and Director of Ambulance Operations Peter Tranter says they are saving "hundreds of thousands" of dollars worth of fuel over the mostly V8 petrol-engined vehicles they replaced, with no loss of performance.

Last year the service covered more than 12 million kilometres and transported 322,820 patients.

For extreme rescue situations St John relies on rescue helicopters, but the 4x4 ambulances are designed to handle situations in conditions too tough for two-wheel-drive vehicles but not demanding enough to justify helicopters. This is especially the case in ice and snow conditions common during winter in central regions of the South Island.

Mr Tranter adds that the 4x4 Sprinters are also likely to be called on when weather conditions, such as fog or low cloud, keep helicopters on the ground.

Apart from a 100mm increase in ride height, the 4x4 ambulances are almost indistinguishable from the standard vehicles, using the same Fairfax Fibreglass bodies.

They come into the country in cab-and-chassis form, with a 3550mm wheelbase and the familiar Mercedes-Benz 2.7 litre

CDI common rail diesel engine rated at 115kW at 3800rpm and 330Nm at 2400rpm.

Final drive is dropped from the standard 3.727:1 to 4.11:1 to improve "crawling" ability off the road, and a larger 90 litre fuel tank is fitted. Despite the extra drivetrain and a tougher chassis, tare weight is up by just 144kg compared with the standard configuration.

The 4x4 Sprinter is also available as a standard medium or high roof panel van, with internal capacities ranging up to 13.4 cubic metres and payloads up to 2400kg.

Of major appeal to St John was the Sprinter's suite of safety features, including ABS anti-lock braking with discs all-round, ESP stability control, ASR acceleration skid control and EBR engine braking regulation, which prevents wheel lock-up if too low a gear is suddenly engaged.

Like the standard Sprinter, the 4x4 has drive to the rear wheels only in highway mode. Switches on the dash enable the driver to select four-wheel-drive, low ratio gearing and rear drive axle diff lock. The vehicle has to be stopped before low range can be selected.

Some operators will appreciate an unusual feature of the Mercedes-Benz system – low range can be used in two-wheel-drive as well as in four-wheel-drive, which means it's available for very slow-speed maneuvering.





# Trucking Future Is Here

**A high-tech new Internet-based service that allows real time monitoring of the fleet, individual trucks, loads and driver performance is now available in NZ.**

Described as a "telematics-based Internet service", FleetBoard is provided by Stuttgart-based DaimlerChrysler Services FleetBoard GmbH, a stand-alone division, which ensures the technology is available across mixed-brand fleets.

In the past Kiwi truckers have been bombarded with high-tech management solutions, many of which have failed to live up to expectations. Often that was because of an industry-wide lack of familiarity with computer-based technology.

"I think those days are behind us now, and the whole industry is becoming more sophisticated as operators look for tools that will give them a competitive edge," says Dave Ballantyne, National Sales Manager for DaimlerChrysler Commercial Vehicles.

FleetBoard was launched in Europe in 2000 and has since gained widespread acceptance with 800 operators now running it in 15,000 trucks. In April 2004 it was ISO 9001:2000 certified.

"Now that it's clearly established there we decided to put a toe in the water and make it available in New Zealand," says Dave Ballantyne. "With the Actros coming in prepped, getting the hardware and installing it is relatively simple."

Essentially FleetBoard is a tool to manage communication between the customer, dispatcher and driver, which it achieves through the use of the Internet. For example, it enables the dispatcher and driver to communicate by text messaging, although there's the advantage when a Mercedes-Benz truck is used that the text message appears on the truck's instrument cluster.

The system incorporates GPS satellite technology to pinpoint the location of the truck at all times. Back at the depot, the position of every truck in the fleet can be monitored on the screen at any time.

This also enables the use of a satellite navigational system in the cab, eliminating the frequently out-of-date road maps now used. However it also takes the concept a stage further, with the dispatcher able to transmit pick-up and delivery addresses direct to the cab.

On the other side of the coin, the system can enable any customer provided with a password to directly access the status of a load by tracking the truck over the Internet.

However operators who don't want to get quite that close to their customers can follow an intermediate path using FleetBoard. By tracking the truck's location and staying in touch with the driver by text messaging, the progress of the truck can be constantly monitored and the customer forewarned if there is any delay such as traffic hold-ups or loading difficulties.

"By being proactive the transport operator is able to build a better relationship with the customer," says Dave Ballantyne. "This can be particularly valuable in situations where time-critical loads are being delivered under difficult circumstances, such as Auckland's rush-hour traffic."

Additionally, the FleetBoard software, combined with real time knowledge of each truck's location, equips dispatchers to assign multiple orders to individual trucks, and ensure each order is assigned to the best-placed truck.

Although the management efficiencies are obvious, DaimlerChrysler Services Fleetboard says the system can also improve the efficiency of individual trucks by achieving fuel savings of 5 – 15%. The key to these savings is continuous monitoring of engine revs and driver gearshifts, then educating the drivers to get the maximum from their drivetrains.

By using geographical data from the navigation system and load data from the dispatch records, the fleet manager can even take road and load conditions into account when assessing driver performance. Each driver is issued with a credit card-sized identification card, which is held in the system whenever he or she is in charge of the truck.

Among a range of other functions, FleetBoard can support a bar-code scanner for faster acquisition of consignment data.

And in Europe it can connect to the DaimlerChrysler European Data Centre, where information is archived with a high degree of security while remaining accessible to password holders.





# A Truck For The Southern Man

**The individuality that can be achieved by custom-building makes an American-sourced truck ideally suited to the image of the legendary “Southern man” says Oamaru-born, Christchurch-based Trevor McCallum.**



“I tell truck audiences that three things make a Southern man – Speights beer, a Falcon car or ute and a Freightliner truck,” says the truck sales manager of South Star Freightliner. “The only one they argue with is the Falcon, because of that deep-seated Ford-Holden rivalry.”

Describing itself as a “proudly South Island company”, South Star Freightliner is responsible for sales of the brand throughout the South Island, and also handles parts and service for the full range of DaimlerChrysler commercial vehicles.

The company is as individual as the trucks it markets, with a uniquely strong emphasis on engineering services. Jobs as diverse as fitting guards and turntables, chassis alterations, adding chrome grilles and installing home theatre systems inside the cab are handled in-house.

“This is definitely a key part of our business,” says Trevor McCallum. “We haven’t been asked to fit a spa pool in a truck yet, but it wouldn’t surprise me.”

He explains that the custom building process starts at the Freightliner factories, where the options list is “incredible.” Then South Star follows up with its own LBO (Local Build Options) list to ensure that each operator gets exactly the truck he wants.

“It’s a bit like Harley-Davidson motorcycles – no two of them end up exactly the same.”

While many of the locally fitted options are primarily cosmetic, others are functional. For example, an operator who often over-nights in Invercargill specced a diesel-fuelled in-cab heater.

South Star’s emphasis on providing a custom-built truck is certainly paying off. When Trevor McCallum joined the fledgling company at the end of 1999 there were fewer than a dozen Freightliners on South Island roads. Since then, he’s sold 86 of them and is aiming to hit the 100 mark around March or April 2006 – “if not sooner.”

“The ability to customize the trucks is just one factor behind our success,” he explains.

Also important is the back-up we can get from DaimlerChrysler as our customers know there’s a substantial organization behind us. South Star’s team includes Paul Golding, the Service Manager in charge of our own service operation and Kane Doorey, the Parts Manager running our parts department”.

“And the qualities of the Freightliner truck itself are also significant,” he adds. Trevor McCallum lists availability of Cummins, Caterpillar and Mercedes-Benz engines, low tare weights and competitive pricing as important features.

The South Island’s healthy rural-based economy and the strength of the New Zealand dollar against the US greenback have also been factors. He says: “Our biggest sellers recently have been 8x4 tippers with lift-out sides, going to rural operators who place high store on a light, strong truck.”

Trevor McCallum is a self-confessed truck nut, the son of a Waitaki Transport truck driver, an enthusiast since he was “one of those kids who waved at every passing truck.”

He qualified first as a petrol mechanic and then as a diesel mechanic before moving into sales, predominantly with Foden, Kenworth and Ford Louisville before his move to Freightliner. Along the way he also started Mainland Trucks, which specialized in importing used trucks, mostly from the United Kingdom.

The company that became South Star was founded by South Island Mercedes-Benz truck identity Gerald Stanley. The present owners acquired the business in August 1999, a few months before Trevor McCallum joined the operation.

At that stage the company had a staff of just six, with Trevor heading the sales drive. Today it boasts a staff of 26.

After more than 15 years selling heavy trucks, Trevor McCallum remains as enthusiastic about the industry as he was as a boy playing with Matchbox toy trucks.

“Quite a few of the customers I’ve dealt with over the years have become friends – many of their kids play with my kids,” he explains. “It’s still that sort of a business.”





# Mercedes-Benz Awards

Germany's leading environmental award for the road transport industry has been won by DaimlerChrysler for its BlueTec technology, already available on Mercedes-Benz trucks in Europe.



The "Golden Drop of Oil 2005" award, now in its 25th year, is made by the German automobile club Kraftfahrer-Schutz but has state and national government backing. The patron and sponsor of the award is the German Minister for the Economy and Employment, while the Bavarian Health, Environment and Consumer Protection Minister was one of the judges.

Mercedes-Benz trucks featuring the new BlueTec diesel technology have been available since the beginning of the year and comply with the Euro 4 emission requirements that apply from 2006 as well as the Euro 5 emission standard that is not due to come into force until the autumn of 2009.

Compared with the current regulations, this means at least 80% fewer particulate emissions and up to 60% fewer nitrogen oxides in exhaust gases. The new BlueTec system offers a filter efficiency of 80%, based on the amount of particulate matter in the exhaust gases. On top of that, Mercedes-Benz trucks equipped with a BlueTec engine consume between two and

five percent less fuel than their conventional counterparts. For a long-distance haulage truck covering 150,000km annually, for example, this equates to a fuel saving of between 1500 and 2000 litres a year, benefiting both the truck operator and the environment.

Meanwhile, Mercedes-Benz trucks also dominated the ninth readers' poll conducted by German publishing company ETM, which produces a range of truck and bus magazines.

The Atego won the under-7.5 tonne class, the new Axor won the distribution truck category and the Actros won the main tipper category.

Along with Sprinter vans and Setra TopClass coaches, Mercedes-Benz won six of the ten classes in the poll, taking a second and three third places in the others.

Around 10,000 readers took part in the poll, making their selections from a total of 170 vans, trucks, buses and coaches.



# Mercedes-Benz Gets Nod From NZ Post

Some mail and courier items in New Zealand could be arriving by Mercedes-Benz in the future.

That's because New Zealand Post and its DHL courier joint venture, Express Couriers has just granted official supplier status to Mercedes-Benz, which means that the companies contract drivers are able to buy vans from the quality German vehicle maker to use on courier and postal deliveries.

Both the mid-size Mercedes-Benz Vito and large volume Mercedes-Benz Sprinter are covered in the agreement.

The move follows requests from New Zealand Post contract drivers who want to be able to include the Vito or Sprinter in their new van purchase options.

Once considered too expensive for many commercial uses in New Zealand, Mercedes-Benz has come into the picture with the recent introduction of new generation vans that combine high degrees of safety, performance and quality at very competitive prices.

Now, many large fleets and individual contractors are discovering that Mercedes-Benz is a viable alternative to the previously Japanese-dominated offerings, as their European counterparts have already discovered. Both the Vito and Sprinter were recently voted the Courier, Express and Package Vans of the Year 2005 in their respective classes, according to a jury drawn from professional delivery drivers throughout Europe.

To meet the official supplier status, New Zealand Post had to be satisfied that the Mercedes-Benz vans met its requirements for performance, safety, emissions and was available in desired colours.

Jim Quinn, Express Courier CEO, said both the Vito and Sprinter comfortably met the requirements and he was also satisfied with the competitive purchase package that Mercedes-Benz had presented.

The decision has been welcomed by Brian Carr, National Sales Manager for DaimlerChrysler Light Commercial vehicles, who says his office has already fielded enquiries from contract drivers about the Vito and Sprinter.

"The new competitive environment in light commercial vehicles has opened up a lot of opportunities for Mercedes-Benz sales in New Zealand," says Mr Carr.

"We are no longer considered a niche product. We are now a viable option for businesses and contract drivers, as demonstrated by the New Zealand Post and Express Couriers decision."

The Vito van is most likely to be used by couriers for around-town deliveries, boasting car-like comfort for drivers who spend long hours behind the wheel. It is available in three panel van sizes with load capacities ranging from 980kg to 1200kg and is powered by new generation common rail diesel engines described as among the most fuel efficient in their class. Priced from \$36,700 plus GST, the Vito competes head-on with similar priced Japanese vans, but has the added advantage of ABS anti-lock braking, ESP electronic handling stability and ASR anti-skid control in its standard specification package.

Couriers and postal delivery drivers who require larger volume are likely to select the Sprinter, which is available in three wheelbase sizes, up to a maximum of 4025mm with large Euro body sizes to match and in 3500kg or 4495kg gross vehicle weights. There's a choice of four or five cylinder common rail diesel engines, plus the same stability system found on the Vito. Mercedes-Benz realigned Sprinter prices last year to improve its competitiveness and the range now starts at \$39,022 plus GST.

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# It's Excellence All Over

**The first commercial vehicle  
resulting from DaimlerChrysler's  
new Global Excellence optimization  
programme will be a mid-sized  
cabover launched in the United  
States in the middle of next year.**

And while the new truck, jointly developed by the Freightliner LLC North American and Mitsubishi Fuso Japanese truck units of DaimlerChrysler – and entering the market as part of the Sterling range – is unlikely to ever appear on the New Zealand market, its philosophies and benefits certainly will.

"The main thrust of the Global Excellence programme is to take advantage of the economies of scale from being the world's largest commercial vehicle manufacturer with 115,000 employees at 60 locations," says Dave Ballantyne, National Sales Manager for DaimlerChrysler Commercial Vehicles. "The benefits are going to reach New Zealand in areas such as greater commonality of parts".

"We're already seeing the initial impact with the shared platforms between Freightliner and Sterling, resulting in immediate benefits to the customer here," he adds.

The Global Excellence programme consists of four initiatives:

The optimization of the business model, the creation of synergy effects and economies of scale, further growth in the global commercial vehicle markets and the development of future products.

The new Sterling, based on a Mitsubishi Fuso platform, is the first full implementation of the last of these. Andreas Renschler, the DaimlerChrysler Board of Management member in charge of the Commercial Vehicles Division, says the new Sterling demonstrated the company's ability to leverage its global span to bring a new truck to the market with modest investment in development.

He says the main objective of optimizing the business model is lessening the impact of the cyclical nature of the road transport industry, which is subject to particularly strong cycles due to the specific use of the vehicles for business purposes, the life-cycles of vehicle fleets, exchange rate effects, the development of the global economy and emissions legislation.

DaimlerChrysler is already claiming success for the strategy with 2005 first quarter sales worldwide up 43% on the same quarter the previous year to 179,500 vehicles. And 2004 sales were up 42% on the previous year at 712,000, although these included the contribution of the Mitsubishi Fuso business unit for the first time.

Operational excellence is designed to reduce material expenses and fixed costs, using the group's huge global purchasing power.

Future truck generations will not only be equipped with a common heavy-duty engine platform, but also with a common electrical and electronic architecture and standardized axle components, Mr Renschler says.

The other major push this year is further integration of the Mitsubishi Fuso Truck and Bus into the DaimlerChrysler Commercial Vehicle Division as a major component of its Asia strategy.





# Man Of Many Parts

**When Paul Anscombe talks about an increasing maturity and level of professionalism in heavy truck servicing, he does so from a unique perspective.**

A Briton, he came to New Zealand in the mid-1990s to carry out right-hand-drive conversions on Freightliners, then returned to the United Kingdom to become part of the Cummins engines management team. His responsibility was the bus and coach market, and an idea of the different scale of the industry there can be gauged from the fact that his largest three customers alone operated a total of 27,000 vehicles.

In 2003 he was lured back to New Zealand to take on the role of General Manager Parts and Service of Trucks & Trailers Ltd in Manukau City. He found that the country had moved on.

"The whole of New Zealand has matured in terms of customer service and you now have to deal with people more professionally," he explains. "This has happened in every aspect of life, and the truck industry is just one of those aspects."

On the servicing side this is reflected in a high requirement for training, which has become a major cost of doing business.

"We have to keep pace with developments in all the brands we represent – Mercedes-Benz, Freightliner, Sterling, Detroit, Caterpillar, Cummins and so on – and each of our mechanics typically spends 50 hours a year purely on training."

"Every month a new computer based training disk from Daimler Chrysler arrives on my desk with new information, we then schedule the technicians to go through the disks and update the training records" Paul adds.

One aspect of modern heavy truck servicing that hasn't caught on in New Zealand is extended intervals – and Paul is firmly on the side of the local operators who are sticking with the traditional 20,000km oil drains.

"There's no problem going out to 60, 70 or 80,000km drain intervals in Europe, but they're operating under ideal conditions and at lower weights than we do," he explains.

"Besides, while the oil's draining out the mechanic is looking around under the truck and is likely to spot potential problems before they develop into something more serious," he adds.

The Trucks & Trailers workshop continues to class a 20,000km oil change as a service check, which means there's a written check-list. Things like brake lining thicknesses are noted, which Paul says ensures both greater accountability and higher job satisfaction for the professional truck mechanic.

A similar philosophy applies on the spare parts side of the operation where a major thrust is educating customers about the benefits of genuine parts compared with cheaper alternative supplier parts.

"We don't sell or use the cheaper alternative supplier parts any more – we've learned from our mistakes," Paul explains.

"We've been let down in the past by the suppliers of these parts and we've come to the conclusion that they are a false economy."

He says operators will buy a new truck in expectation of long, reliable service with factory-backed warranty and assistance and should apply the same principles when purchasing parts. A cheaper, alternative, oil filter, for example, might save a few dollars up-front, but could endanger the entire engine due to poor filter media.

"If we can't convince the customer about the benefits of the genuine part, we'd rather not make the sale at all than sell the cheaper alternative supplier part on price," Paul adds.





Mercedes-Benz



FREIGHTLINER



STERLING TRUCKS

# Customer Trucks



## Central Attraction

A new addition to one of the country's best-known fleets, Alexandra-based Fulton Hogan Central Ltd, is this new Mercedes-Benz tractor unit.

With every road out of Alexandra involving a hard climb, Fulton Hogan specced the 2654LS/33 with the OM 502 LA engine rated at 540hp and driving through a G240 16-speed gearbox fitted with auto shift.

And to help the rig hold back on those hills, a Voith retarder was included in the specification.

The new Mercedes-Benz pulls a five-axle B-train and carts general freight around all of the South Island south of Christchurch.

Salesman: Barry Sherer - Trucks South Ltd



## Howard's Benz Photo by Ron Price

A new rig with an old name in South Auckland road transport circles on its doors is this Mercedes-Benz Actros 2646/42 six-wheeler put to work by Terrence Howard & Sons Ltd.

Fitted with a Total Transport Engineers dropside tipping deck and pulling a four-axle tipping trailer, the new rig works on timber and general rural cartage.

Based in Tuakau, just south of Pukekohe, the Actros covers the South Auckland and Waikato areas with Patrick Howard at the wheel.

Powering the Mercedes-Benz is the company's MB 501LA engine, rated at 456hp and driving through a Mercedes-Benz G240-16 16-speed gearbox.

Salesman: Ron Price - Trucks & Trailers Ltd (Auckland)



## Bay Sterling

Working out of Hawkes Bay and hauling mostly export containers all over the North Island is this striking new Sterling Lt 9500.

The unique colour scheme of Hastings-based Tomoana Warehousing Ltd ensures that the 6x4 tractor unit is going to be noticed wherever it goes.

Driven by Norm Jackson, the Sterling normally hauls the containers on a Steelbro skeletal semi-trailer.

Under the smart bonnet is a Caterpillar C12 engine, giving the American rig a good combination of power and economy.

Salesman: John O'Sullivan - Trucks & Trailers Ltd (Palmerston North)



## Plain Sailing Photo by Ron Price

Work for this new Freightliner Argosy should all be plain sailing – its fibreglass stock crate is the first to come from the workshops of Austral Yachts.

Although fibreglass crates have been built in the past, the smart colour-coded unit on the back of the new Upper Wairoa Transport Argosy is the first made by the Whangarei firm best known for boat building.

Driven by Brent, the Argosy can be seen hauling stock throughout the North Island from its base at United Carriers in Whangarei.

Under the twin-steer Freightliner's 90-inch sleeper cab is a C15 Caterpillar with a 550hp rating, driving through an 18-speed Fuller Roadranger gearbox.

Salesman: Dave Sills - Trucks & Trailers Ltd (Auckland)



# Customer Trucks



## Bulk Argosy Photo by Ron Price

A classic alloy bathtub-bodied six-wheeler tipper gets an extra touch of style thanks to stylish graphics around the 90-inch sleeper cab of this new Freightliner Argosy.

Operating out of Pukekohe in the colours of Riordan & West Transport Ltd, the new Argosy carts bulk stockfeed and aggregates around South Auckland and the Waikato.

Powered by a 14 litre Detroit Diesel, rated at 575hp and driving through an 18-speed Smartshift Roadranger, the Freightliner is double-shifted by Westy and Deano.

The alloy tipping body is the work of Highway Transport Services and, along with alloy wheels, complements the low tare weight of the Freightliner.

Salesman: Ron Price - Trucks & Trailers Ltd (Auckland)



## Summerland Sterling

The striking green colours of Central Otago-based Summerland Express Freight Ltd are becoming increasingly familiar on Sterling rigs working around the South Island.

This AT9500 tractor unit with its full aero kit is the fourth Sterling to join the fleet, pulling loads all over the country south of Christchurch.

Operating from the company's Cromwell base, the Sterling has a 470hp Detroit Diesel Series 60 engine under its sloping bonnet and an Eaton RTLO 18918B gearbox under the cab floor.

Although pictured with a tri-axle refrigerated semi-trailer on the turntable, it also pulls a five-axle B-train on general freight work.

Salesman: Barry Sherer - Trucks South Ltd



## Feral Cat Photo by Vaughan Rohan

There's little doubting what Dunedin owner-operators Vaughan and Tania Rohan think about the performance of the Caterpillar C15 under the bonnet of their new Freightliner C120 – the name "Feral Cat" on the bug deflector says it all.

They've put the 6x4 tractor unit under a curtain-sided B-train into work in Mainfreight colours, hauling from Dunedin to Christchurch at night and Gore during the day.

Stirring the 18-speed gearbox to keep the big 500hp Cat purring in the most efficient part of its power band is driver Mark Robinson. Always immaculate, even in the dirtiest of southern weather, the Freightliner and B-train rig is notable for the fantastic painting on the rear panel.

Salesman: Trevor McCallum - Southstar Freightliner



## Sterling Measure Photo by Chris Gauci

The bold signwriting on the side curtains of the TMC refrigerated quad-axle semi-trailer says it all – this Sterling is "The Measure of a Hard Day's Work".

Put to work by Matura-based Tulloch Transport Ltd from its Christchurch depot, the Sterling LT9500 carts milk on a daily return trip to Invercargill. The 6x4 tractor unit is double-shifted by drivers Rangi and Darryl, who have a high profile on the southern roads thanks to the spectacular curtains promoting their brand of truck. Powering the Sterling is a C12 Caterpillar diesel engine rated at 430hp and driving through an 18-speed Autoshift Eaton gearbox.

Salesman: Russell Marr – Trucks South Ltd



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# 5 Sprinters... 1 Million km

**When Colin Wordsworth is asked about the most perishable products for transporting, he has the answer ready: it's newspapers.**

"If newspapers are delivered just a couple of hours late it can result in 30% or 40% of sales being lost forever," he explains.

As well as being time-critical, newspapers are surprisingly heavy, so transporting them requires, above all, strong, reliable vehicles.

Colin Wordsworth's company, Wellington-based W F Contracting, has carted newspapers for 19 years and now bulk distributes the Capital's Dominion-Post newspapers as far afield as Auckland.

The company's fleet of five Mercedes-Benz Sprinters clocks up a combined distance of almost a million kilometres a year – half of it at maximum loadings.

Back in 1998 Colin Wordsworth purchased the first Sprinter sold in New Zealand, partly for its ability to legally cart a tonne and a half and partly because it carried an introductory two year unlimited kilometre warranty. That 312D is now semi-retired, but has covered 635,000km without problems.

However another Sprinter in the fleet, a 2002 313CDI, has clocked up 795,000km and continues to run six days a week.

"Like all vehicles the Mercedes-Benz will give you problems from time to time, but the vehicle and service agent lets you know when it's still a minor problem rather than letting you down on the road," says Colin Wordsworth. "In other vehicles you can be going along without a care in the world and then the thing blows up.

"Even though we're running close to a million kilometres a year in the Sprinters, I can't remember the last time we had a problem on the road," he adds.

With the huge distances covered by the W F Contracting Sprinters, their fuel economy and extended service intervals play important roles in keeping operating costs low.

"People say they are pretty dear, but if you look at any Japanese van at a similar weight, they require servicing four

times for every once the Sprinter needs servicing, and we've found that the Mercedes-Benz filters and so on are pretty competitive," says Colin Wordsworth.

With the Sprinter 313 vans he works on regular fuel consumption of around 10km per litre – better than 28mpg.

He adds that the sales and service back-up provided by DaimlerChrysler light commercial dealer Kirk Motors, in Lower Hutt, has been "very, very good."

A bonus the Sprinters offer is their high level of safety, particularly on runs that include the Desert Road at night.

"To my mind you have to be either an idiot driver or very careless to get into an accident in the Mercedes-Benz because they handle so well and their four-wheel disc brakes are so good," says Colin Wordsworth. He adds that their passive safety features, like the driver's airbag, can also protect the drivers if other road users cause crashes.

The Sprinters are loaded from conveyor belt extensions in Wellington from about 10pm each night except Sundays, with the bundled newspapers hand-stacked.

The Auckland deliveries, completed by around 6am, involve a swap with a Turangi-based Sprinter. The van from Wellington continues north in the hands of a Turangi-based driver, with the empty van returning to the Capital.

All drivers in the operation have at least Class II driving licences, partly for the training this ensures and partly to enable them to handle three Hino six-wheeler trucks in the fleet, required to handle the much heavier loads of large weekend newspapers delivered on Saturdays.

After almost two decades of bulk delivering Wellington newspapers and seven years of operating Mercedes-Benz Sprinters over literally millions of kilometres, Colin Wordsworth says the vans have proven their ability to handle the heavy, "perishable" product.







# Taking Stock Long Term

Covering more than 100,000km a year along the main highways is one thing – doing it on back roads, fording rivers and grinding into farm loading races is a whole different story.

Rural cartage, especially fertiliser spreading and hauling livestock, is about as tough as it gets, and that's why Mercedes-Benz trucks dominate the 42-strong Ellesmere Transport fleet, based at Leeston, south of Christchurch.

A reflection of the difficulty of stock work is that company owner Murray Righton chooses Mercedes-Benz partly for the traction provided by their fully locking – power divider and cross-locks – drive axles. That, and the long-term reliability demonstrated by the brand since the first Mercedes-Benz trucks joined the fleet in 1968.

Typical of the service Ellesmere Transport has come to expect is the performance of two Mercedes-Benz 3244 eight-wheelers the company operates on livestock.

Among the last of the tough SK range sold in New Zealand, both are powered by the legendary 440hp V8 engine, running through the Mercedes-Benz G240 gearbox and have pulled four-axle stock trailers throughout their lives.

One, an 8x4 mid-sleeper cab truck (pictured) purchased in 1997 has now clocked up 850,000km trouble-free kilometres. The first half million were in the hands of Murray's son Mark, who has since graduated to the office as stock despatcher. The other, which Murray Righton added to the fleet in 1996, is identical except for its slimmer day cab. It has just crossed the million kilometre mark, almost all of the distance with Keith Miller behind the wheel. Keith is a real identity in rural South Island, having notched up a million kilometres in several Ellesmere Transport rigs.

Murray's policy is to replace the trucks at about this stage of their lives, when they still retain good trade-in value.

Ellesmere Transport chose Mercedes-Benz in 1968 because, in Murray's words: "they were a step ahead of everything else around at the time." The regular replacement policy keeps it ahead while retaining the economic benefits of million kilometre operating lives.



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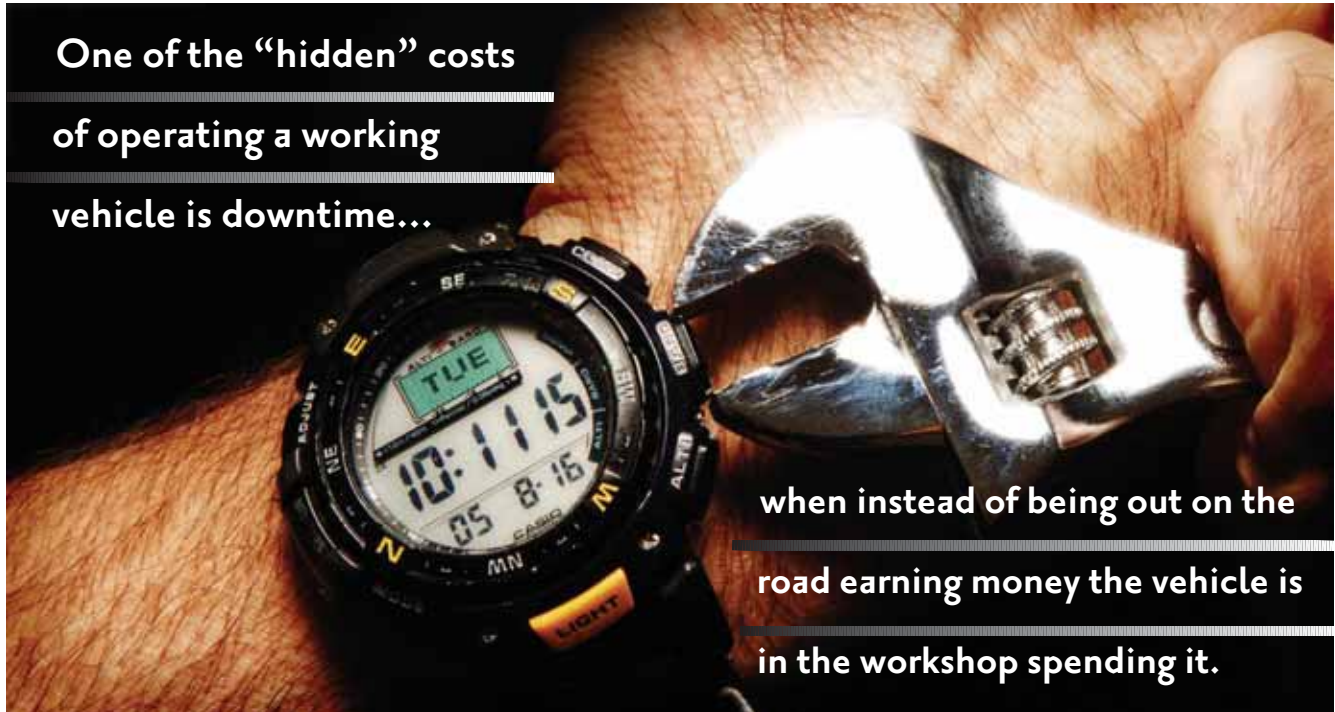
\*Based on a Vito 109C standard spec. See your dealer for details on lease rates and plans.



Mercedes-Benz

# Down On Downtime

One of the "hidden" costs  
of operating a working  
vehicle is downtime...



when instead of being out on the  
road earning money the vehicle is  
in the workshop spending it.

The costs can also be higher than many owners calculate, as frequently there's a choice between paying staff to wait idly until the vehicle is back from the workshop, or hiring a replacement vehicle to keep them working. Then there are the costs of dropping off and picking up the vehicle.

In recent years Mercedes-Benz has devoted considerable time and resources to reducing service downtime on Vito and Sprinter vans. Careful attention to selection of materials, engineering and manufacturing tolerances and design of vital lubrication and cooling systems has enabled it to develop industry-leading service intervals, which save operators hard-earned cash.

"The results can surprise operators looking at the Mercedes-Benz vans for the first time," says Brian Carr, National Sales Manager, Mercedes-Benz Light Commercial Vehicles.

"When we compared them against their main competitors we found that other vans were off the road for up to five times as long and could cost three or four times as much as the Vito or Sprinter," he says.

Brian Carr had rival franchise dealers quote on their respective van brands using standard manufacturers' service scheduling and, although he points out that service costs can vary from dealer to dealer, the results show clear and significant advantages for the two Mercedes-Benz vans.

Both the Vito and Sprinter require oil changes at 22,500km and maintenance servicing at 45,000km.

Best of the major rivals surveyed was the Ford Transit, with 15,000km oil changes and 30,000km filter changes.

"But the Sprinter shows much lower costs when taken over a typical 180,000km operating cycle," he says. "We calculated that the Sprinter would have only eight days downtime and

cost about \$2480 for servicing, while the Ford would be off the road for 12 days and cost approximately \$4750."

The differences are even more marked between the Vito and its major rivals, Mitsubishi's L300 and Toyota's ZL Hiace.

"While the Vito will require only four days' downtime and cost approximately \$1100 for servicing in an average year, the Mitsubishi will cost about \$4500 and be off the road for 20 days," says Brian Carr. "That's because it needs an oil change every 5000km and oil and filters at 10,000km."

The Toyota is somewhat better, with oil changes at 7500km, an oil and maintenance service at 15,000km and additional servicing at 30,000km and 45,000km, but it still falls well short of the standards set by the Vito.

"We calculate that the Toyota Hiace will need 13 days of downtime and cost about \$3130 for servicing," says Brian Carr.

The extended service intervals also result in a small, but important, environmental benefit through reduced disposal of waste oil.

The Mercedes-Benz vans also fare well in comparisons of the safety levels they offer their occupants.

For example, the Vito offers ABS anti-lock braking, ESP stability programme, seatbelt pre-tensioners, a driver's airbag and a full frontal impact safety cell, which complies with European impact regulations, as standard equipment. The L300 offers none of these features as standard, while the Hiace offers only the driver's airbag in its standard specification.

"As premium quality vans the Mercedes-Benz vehicles are sometimes perceived as being more expensive than the opposition, but when the full specification and the whole-of-life operating costs are taken into account a different picture emerges," Brian Carr concludes.



# The Importance Of Image

**When New Zealand's premier manufacturer of solid surface bench tops ordered a fleet of vehicles to distribute its products throughout the country, the most important factor was the image they would present while at work.**

So Christchurch-based Gran-Marbello International Ltd chose Mercedes-Benz Sprinters, backing up a Mercedes-Benz Actros bulk distribution rig.

Explains Gran-Marbello Director of Marketing Paul Yaxley: "We produce a top-line product and we wanted to identify it with other top-line products. We wanted to associate Gran-Marbello with brands which are also seen to be the premier brands in their fields."

The company ordered a total of 30 Sprinters, all 313 model, 4025mm wheelbase, high roof versions, all painted in silver metallic. Gran-Marbello's company colours are silver and black.

The first 20 of the Sprinters were delivered by the middle of this year with the remaining 10 due over the next few months as the national network of distributors expands.

Although established only last year, Gran-Marbello already operates the largest solid surface manufacturing plant in New Zealand. Now working around the clock, it is due for a multi-million dollar expansion once equipment arrives from Italy.

The "International" part of the name is accurate, too. The company is the exclusive distributor of an engineered stone product in Australia, South Africa and the Middle East, as well as New Zealand.

Paul Yaxley says the engineered stone, which is produced on Italian-made machinery, is in the middle of the company's product range. The premium products are natural granite and marble, while a more affordable range is the 100% man-made Staron range, for which Gran-Marbello holds the exclusive agency in New Zealand.

There are currently 21 distributors throughout New Zealand. They work closely with builders, architects and customers on the design and specifications of both domestic and commercial bench tops, which are then made at the Christchurch factory.

From the factory they are secured up to ten at a time, depending on design and size, in specially-made steel

A-frames, to protect them during transport. They are loaded by forklifts into B-train trailers, pulled by the Actros, which carts them to depots as far away as Auckland.

The Actros is a 3254L/48 MP2 model, with a long cab. Its engine carries a 540hp rating and drives through the Mercedes-Benz G240 16-speed gearbox.

The bench tops are then loaded into custom-made racking systems fitted inside the Sprinter vans for delivery and installation by the distributors.

Paul Yaxley says using freight companies to deliver the bench tops was ruled out because of the special equipment and care needed to eliminate breakages and damage during transport. Although the finished bench tops offer "fantastic durability" they can be fragile before they have been securely installed.

"As well as that, we wanted the vehicles to be mobile billboards for us," he adds. "That was one of the objectives in ensuring all of the distributors were operating identical Sprinter vans."

While important, the premium image wasn't the only reason Gran-Marbello opted for the Sprinters.

"We believe that Mercedes-Benz provided a superior warranty and represented a better proposition in terms of reliability and resale value," Paul Yaxley says.

And even though the distributors are stand-alone businessmen, rather than employees falling under Occupational Health and Safety regulations, Gran-Marbello felt a responsibility for their safety on the road and the Sprinters play an important part in ensuring this.

The stand-out metallic silver and black colour scheme ensures the Gran-Marbello Mercedes-Benz Actros and Sprinters won't be missed out on the road – and the premium bench tops inside them will look just as striking.





# Up to 1000km a day? - No Problems!

**Bob Hall admits he's a fussy vehicle owner – fussy enough, in fact, to bother changing the pedal rubbers in his Mercedes-Benz Sprinter van because they looked a little worn at around the 500,000km mark.**

That's right, 500,000km. And Bob has now topped the half million kilometre mark in two Sprinters.

Trading as R.J. Hall Ltd and running under the Refrigeration Couriers colours, his Sprinter covers almost 1000km a day, double-shifted on a run based on the cartage of milk samples from Longburn, near Palmerston North, and Pahiatua to Hawera, they are transferred to a truck, which delivers them to a major Fonterra laboratory in Hamilton.

It's a seven day a week job and time-critical work all the way: a breakdown delaying the van for even two hours would force Bob Hall to call on a back-up vehicle and smaller refrigerated vans are not easy to find.

The samples are collected by milk tanker drivers at farms all over the lower and central North Island and dropped off at the Longburn and Pahiatua plants. They have to reach the Hamilton lab the same day, at the same temperature.

Breakdowns haven't been a problem with the two Sprinters he's owned since he bought one of the first in New Zealand in 1998. He clocked up 633,000km in that 312 and it never let him down, while the 316 that replaced it has been equally reliable.

Reliability is one of the reasons Bob Hall says his next van will also be a Sprinter, but it's not the main reason for which he purchased his first.

"I really wanted a vehicle that would look right working for Fonterra - what is now the biggest company in New Zealand," he explains. "It was the image that was important, and it still is. Even now, people still come up and admire the Sprinter."

He was prepared to pay a premium for the image, but now believes that the total costs over the whole lives of the two Sprinters have proved to be lower than they would have been for cheaper Japanese vans.

"For a start, the Sprinter requires far less servicing and even at the 22,500km interval I'm in at Trucks & Trailers in Palmerston North every five weeks.

"Then there's resale – when I sold my first Sprinter in 2002 I got almost half the price I paid for it in 1998, despite the high mileage," Bob Hall adds.

That van was supposed to go into semi-retirement, but ended up running daily from Taranaki to Wellington and has now topped the million kilometre mark.

The only major job required on the 312 was a set of injectors, at around the half million kilometre point. Because the engine

hadn't been touched at that stage, the injectors were "frozen" into the cylinder head, which had to be removed so they could be drilled out.

"Despite that, Trucks & Trailers kept two mechanics on the job and they worked right through the night to ensure the van was ready for the next day's work," Bob Hall says.

He doesn't keep a close watch on fuel consumption, but believes that the latest 156hp, common rail twin cam diesel in his long wheelbase 316 is more economical than the 120hp engine in the older van, and considerably more economical than smaller Japanese vans he's used during more than a quarter of a century of work with New Zealand Couriers before he took on his present contract with Fonterra.

"Because we run a convertor-type chiller unit, with a couple of big batteries, we run right up to our maximum weight when we cart cheese in addition to the milk samples, and we cover such high mileages, we have to accept we're going to be buying a lot of diesel," Bob Hall says.

The other factor that will eventually see him in his third Sprinter is safety – an important aspect when the van is covering long distances on the highway. Unusually, though, he rates the Sprinter's primary safety as of more significance than features like ABS braking.

"With our chiller in the back we have the Sprinter exactly balanced and with its superb handling you can maintain high average speeds, cruising at 100km/h very safely," he explains. "And it keeps up the speed all the time – down hills, up hills and around the corners."

All of which gets those milk samples delivered on time, reliably and safely.





# Dealer and Service Network

## Trucks Sales Service arts

Trucks & Trailers Ltd (Auck)	MB/S/F	Ph: 09 262 2465
Trucks & Trailers Ltd (P.Nth)	MB/S/F	Ph: 06 356 8589
SouthStar Freightliner (Chch)	F	Ph: 03 359 7913
Trucks South Ltd (Timaru)	MB/S	Ph: 03 687 4133

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Truck City (Auck)	Ph: 09 274 6523
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Jim Young Motors (Napier)	Ph: 06 836 6126
W.R. Phillips (New Plym)	Ph: 06 759 2051
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Wilmac Transport Services (Wgtn)	Ph: 04 237 4433
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Trucks & Trailers Ltd (P.Nth)	Ph: 06 356 8589
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Truck Specialists Nelson	Ph: 03 544 6090
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