



### **New generation Freightliner Argosy creates a grand entrance**

The Freightliner division of Mercedes-Benz South Africa Commercial Vehicles introduced their new generation Argosy to customers today. The arrival of the new truck in South Africa has been eagerly anticipated by the road freight industry, and was launched amid great pomp and splendour amongst the dunes of Swakopmund in Namibia.

Freightliner has been a leading force in long haul trucking in South Africa since 1996, and has consistently been a top seller in the over 400hp 6x4 truck tractor market in recent years. A sneak preview of the new generation model caused quite a stir at the Johannesburg International Motor Show in October last year.

Freightliner, the successful American brand in the Mercedes Benz South Africa (MBSA) commercial vehicles stable, has had success in the segment due to its low un-laden mass, spacious sleeper cabs and proven heavy-duty drive train.

Known for its apt motto, "Run Smart", the Freightliner offers customers performance excellence by maximising the payload while also lowering overall cost per kilometre due to exceptional fuel economy, ease of maintenance and long term reliability.

MBSA vice president for Commercial Vehicles, Kobus van Zyl, told guests at the launch: "Our vehicles are not only cutting edge in terms of technology, comfort, safety and fuel efficiency, but we are also leaders in sustainable mobility solutions – giving you and your business the ability to "Go Green".

## **New generation Argosy supports good driving performance**

Freightliner product manager, Duncan Prince says: “The Freightliner brand has offered many firsts to South African fleet owners. We were the first OEM in South Africa to offer standard ABS on heavy trucks back in the 1990’s and the first to offer automated conventional transmission as standard execution in 2002. We have consistently provided customers with new technology appropriate for the South African environment.”

“We are constantly looking at innovative ways to make our exceptional products even better,” he adds. “One of the most significant changes in the new generation Argosy is the inclusion of the Eaton Fuller Ultrashift plus transmission.”

The new transmission will be available in 13 or 18 speed configuration. Initially only the Cummins-powered models will be equipped with this technology, with the Detroit Diesel engine powered models coming on line by the fourth quarter of 2012.

Prince explains: “Benefits of Ultrashift plus includes a two-pedal instead of a three-pedal setup. This means that the truck driver will not be required to control the clutch on pull away.”

A gradient sensor allows the truck to determine whether it is on a gradient or on a flat surface, and automatically defaults to an appropriate starting gear to pull away, so that the truck can get up to speed with as few gearshifts as possible, but not at the expense of clutch life.

“This effect is that the truck now almost has eyes, allowing it to see the road” says Prince. “It computes gradient, accelerator position and available engine power and then selects the most appropriate gear for the prevailing conditions. The new transmission shift logic is much smarter than anything we’ve had up until now and makes better decisions as to what is the optimal gear shift option.”

The end result for the truck owner is lower wear and tear as well as more efficient fuel consumption, even with an only partially skilled driver at the wheel. Faster gear shifts also conserve momentum, which in turn conserves fuel.

Dynamic braking is also improved by the new transmission. “When the truck is running against the engine brake, the Ultrashift plus transmission raises the engine shift downshift rpm by about 20rpm over the existing transmission, offering 15 – 20% more usable braking capability,” Prince explains.

The improvement in vehicle performance and fuel consumption from the new transmission will be most noticeable on arduous routes such as the N2 through the Transkei, or the N3 between Harrismith and Durban, when compared to previous generation transmissions.

The New Generation Argosy has an ergonomic new cab and grille, offering more comfortable, high-back seats and better insulation to offer drivers a quieter ride, and more protection against temperature extremes on the long road.

A new high-tech grille increases the airflow to the engine compartment. Mr Prince explains: “The new grille has been installed in preparation for the new engines that we will be debuting in South Africa as soon as low sulphur fuel becomes available on a national basis. The new engines will require greater airflow to operate efficiently.”

Electric windows, previously only available on premium models, are a standard feature.

All Detroit Diesel Series 60 models of the new generation Argosy will come with a 5-year, 800 000 kilometre warranty at no additional cost. “The extended warranty as standard execution is a clear commitment by Detroit Diesel to their product in South Africa,” Prince says.

**Customised solutions keep the Freightliner on the road**

Freightliner is also one of the few trucks offering its own in-house finance, insurance and maintenance contracts. This one-stop-shop mentality does not end there, however. Customised driver training offered by MBSA's team of experts gives clients yet another dimension to increase their chances of success, allowing them to get the best out of their trucks no matter the circumstances they encounter.