

DAF named International Truck of the Year 2018

Babcock's commitment to delivering to the highest standards was again highlighted recently when, amidst stiff competition, DAF Trucks was awarded the prestigious International Truck of the Year 2018 accolade for its new XF and CF series. Named as making the greatest contribution to road transport efficiency, the DAF XF and CF trucks set new standards of driveline effectiveness and overall performance. Babcock is the sole distributor of DAF Trucks in southern Africa and has successfully grown the brand in the country over the past eight years.

The annual International Truck of the Year award is presented to an individual vehicle or model range introduced into the market in the previous 12 months, with the winner chosen by an independent jury of leading road-transport journalists from 23 European countries. The award is considered the most prestigious honour in the European truck industry and is judged on several criteria including technological innovation, driver comfort, road safety, drivability, fuel economy, environmental 'footprint' and total cost of ownership.

Innovations in DAF Trucks' new XF and CF series such as completely new powertrains with highly efficient transmissions and rear axles, compact after-treatment systems, and sophisticated software and aerodynamic optimisations resulted in reduced CO₂ emissions and a fuel consumption improvement of an outstanding 7%, impelling the jury to declare the new DAF XF and CF trucks as leading the way in transport efficiency.

The new XF and CF innovative drivelines deliver improved drivability, greater fuel efficiency and seamless gear changing characteristics. Energy efficiency features include improved combustion, reduction of internal engine friction losses, engine down-speeding, intelligent auxiliaries, driveline component integration, different gear shifting strategies, enhanced predictive features and weight reduction in selected components.

Maikel Neijenhuis, DAF Area Manager for Africa and the Middle East, says that efficiency in performance has always been a central pillar of DAF's philosophy. "Transport efficiency has been in DAF's DNA since the company began building trucks in 1949 and historically we have always been leaders in fuel economy," says Neijenhuis.

"DAF develops trucks suited for any application and this is one of the company's particular strengths," adds Neijenhuis. He explains that although DAF Trucks are distributed throughout 48 countries all over the world in addition to its European sales locations, each market has its own considerations, with trucks specifically designed to suit each country's conditions.

Further to this is DAF's international focus on aftersales and dealer networks that strongly aligns with Babcock's commitment to building lasting relationships with its customers based on trust.

Mark Gavin, Sales Director for Babcock's Transport Solutions, says that since Babcock became the exclusive supplier and distributor of DAF Trucks in southern Africa eight years ago, the brand has become a force to be reckoned with, particularly with regard to fuel efficiency. The outstanding fuel

consumption of the DAF XF 105.460 earned the truck a first place in the Tridem flatdeck category at Truck Test 2017, a local event.

He adds that the international recognition and support received from DAF has played a pivotal role in assisting the local sales teams to secure customers and increase visibility of the DAF Trucks fleet on South African roads. As the brand gains popularity in the country, Babcock is able to forge strong and lasting relationships with customers, reinforced by its tailor-made aftersales service and support programmes, a strong dealership network, flexible repair and maintenance contracts, and competitive pricing.

This total transport solution offered by Babcock maximises earnings per kilometre while helping customers choose the right vehicle, finance it, maintain it in perfect condition, and keep it running at all times.

“The International Truck of the Year award seeks out the best of the best and includes many European brands extremely popular in South Africa,” says Gavin. “DAF’s achievement amongst such a prestigious group clearly demonstrates that DAF Trucks really is a brand and product not to be taken lightly. We are extremely proud to represent the International Truck of the Year 2018 and look forward to more ever-improving results with DAF products in South Africa.”

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On behalf of: BABCOCK

Editorial contact: Loll Thomson (011) 467 2133

Mail to: lol@sepe.co.za

Client contact: Mark Gavin

Mail to: Mark.Gavin@babcock.co.za

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Website Link: