

First 13,5m refrigerated aluminium/stainless steel side carrier

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

South African meat transport operators can now benefit from a technical advance made by CI Trailmobile, Pinetown, with the manufacture of their first 13,5 metre refrigerated stainless steel interior/aluminium exterior side carrier.

This unit, thought to be the first of its type in the Republic, was recently handed over to its owners, Pretoria Cold Storage.

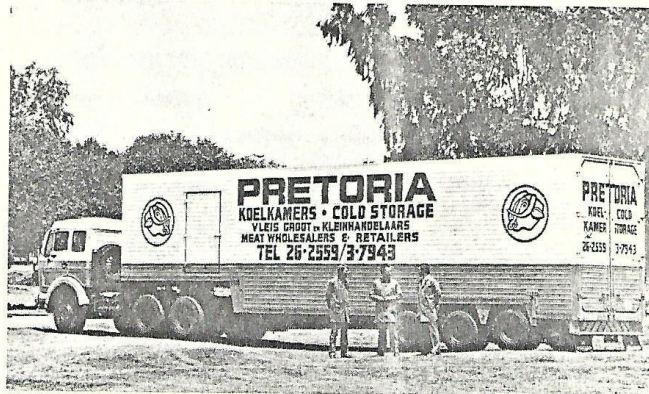
"We regard this as a significant unit, and one that will play an important role in South Africa's transport industry in coming years," said CI Trailmobile's sales manager, Mr Tony Couchman.

"Up to now, most local trailer builders have been reluctant to build a refrigerated trailer such as this, and the result of this reluctance has been that meat transport operators have had very little option but to order glass reinforced plastic (glass-fibre) side carriers."

Mr Couchman explained that abattoirs around the country were becoming steadily more strict and enforcing higher standards for the transport of meat. There was a desire on the part of the authorities to move away from glass-fibre, but until CI Trailmobile built the first stainless steel side carrier, the only other option was aluminium — which tends to react adversely with pork.

"Technically, this 13,5 metre unit is far more advanced than any other trailer in this class. The stainless steel is wholly endorsed by the abattoirs as it enables far higher standards of hygiene to be maintained, compared with glass-fibre," said Mr Couchman.

Glass-fibre is an adequate material for refrigerated trailer interiors when new, but deteriorates with age. As it is slightly porous, it tends to accumulate bacteria and moisture (which ultimately decrease its payload if enough



water seeps through) — and the abattoirs are becoming increasingly vigilant about bacteria.

Also, glass-fibre shatters when a large heavy object such as a carcass falls or crashes onto it. Even when patched, these fractured areas are particularly prone to hosting bacteria.

Stainless steel, however, is very much stronger than fibre-glass, and the CI Trailmobile unit's interior has been designed so that no carcass can fall and puncture the interior. The stainless steel is also far more practical in that it can be more easily and efficiently cleaned.

According to Mr Couchman, one of the hurdles that has deterred trailer builders from constructing stainless steel interiors, has been the difficulty in welding long lengths of steel, adding the polyurethane insulation layer and then the aluminium exterior skin.

"After a lot of research, we have got this type of construction down to a fine art, and it is without doubt, the finest example of a refrigerated side carrier in South Africa."

Other advanced design features include a full, super-low tri-axle running gear with dual wheels. Normally, refrigerated side carriers run on super single wheels, but the CI de-

sign enables the unit to legally carry extra tonnage, and it is in fact capable of transporting loads far in excess of present road traffic regulations.

A conventional tandem axle, walking beam suspension subjects a unit in this class to heavier tyre wear and restricts it to low highway speeds. The tri-axle suspension and dual wheels allow the CI Trailmobile side-carrier to carry as much as 22 tons and make the trailer very stable at all speeds.

One design aspect of the CI Trailmobile side-carrier that Dawie and Pieter Theron, its new owners, particularly like, is the ample interior space.

"We are finding that we can fit up to 10 per cent more carcasses into it than into a comparable unit," maintains Mr Dawie Theron.

He attributes the increase in interior space mostly to the low wheel arches. The tri-axle wheels are smaller in diameter than conventional super single wheels — allowing a lower wheel arch inside the trailer.

"This is definitely the meat car-

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Refrigerated aluminium! stainless steel side carrier

rier of the future, and the only reason that we did not buy one before was that no trailer manufacturer was able or willing to make one."

Mr Theron added that with a unit such as this, the meat transport operator's fear of a costly trip being turned around empty after abattoir officials denying the carrier a clean bill of health, are allayed.