



CAT 966L

Jabula Plant Hire's new Cat 966L moves stockpiled material to feed a bin above a conveyor belt system at Marikana.

MEDIUM WHEEL LOADER RAISES THE BAR

The new Cat® L Series medium wheel loaders, including the 966L and 950L models, have hit our shores. Southern African Cat dealer, Barloworld Equipment, believes improved performance, fuel economy and operator-related features raise the bar higher on the highly-respected 966H series.

The first 966L units arrived in South Africa in March 2017, following Caterpillar's official launch in 2016. Nico Geldenhuys, Caterpillar Certified Sales Professional – Mining, at Barloworld Equipment Middelburg, delivered the first four units in the country to Jabula Plant Hire in April 2017.

"I am excited about the future of the new Cat 966L," says Geldenhuys. "It has big shoes to fill as successor to the previous model Cat 966H, which has become known as a bulletproof machine in the field. Caterpillar's 966 medium wheel loaders have earned a reputation for maintaining a low cost per tonne over the life of the machine. But I am sure that the 966L will become a legend in its own right. It sells at a good price and offers more than the 966H."

Geldenhuys says the 966L has the versatility to suit all his customers needs, from large mining houses and contract miners to construction contractors. "Our customers will be very happy with several new features, most importantly the 10% plus better fuel consumption, improved visibility from the cab, improved serviceability around the engine and articulation of the loader, the rear view camera that is now standard and the Cat payload monitoring system."

Feedback so far has been very positive, he adds. "Customers love this machine and so do operators. It provides a very comfortable ride and is easy to operate."

Jabula Plant Hire [End subhead]

Jabula Plant Hire owns a large fleet of Cat 966H wheel loaders and the order from

Barloworld Equipment for four 966Ls marked the start of a replacement programme for this fleet.

The new machines are working at Lonmin's Marikana site near Brits in the North West Province, loading side tipper road trucks and trains, stockpiling and feeding the shoots to conveyor systems.

Johan Lotter, Group Mechanical Manager at Jabula Pant Hire, says the investment in the new fleet was made to keep pace with technology that incorporates improved safety measures. "We have always used Cat wheel loaders and find them to be tough and reliable machines," he says.

"We are achieving the same performance as the 966H with the new 966L model, with lower fuel consumption and a more comfortable experience for our operators.



From left: Johan Erasmus, site manager at Jabula Plant Hire; Nico Geldenhuys, Caterpillar Certified Sales Professional at Barloworld Equipment Middelburg; and Johan Lotter, group mechanical manager at Jabula Plant Hire.

“For me the most important technology improvements in the 966L are the rear view camera to provide clear vision and the Caterpillar payload monitoring system,” says Lotter.

Jabula is using smaller buckets than the standard Performance Series buckets offered with the 966L due to the heavy and abrasive material being handled. Geldenhuys points out that various different size buckets can be used to suit different applications, with the Performance Series redesigned to improve material retention and decrease cycle times.

Jabula also has Cat medium wheel loaders on other mine sites, including 966H models on coal mines in Mpumalanga fitted with 6 m³ coal buckets.

Customer support

Barloworld Equipment Middelburg provides after sales service support for Jabula’s Cat fleet and Lotter says reliable parts supply is a big plus in this long-term relationship.

“The product support we offer our customers is of utmost importance,” Geldenhuys explains. “Our customers can’t afford to have machines standing for long. Our specialised field artisans are available 24/7 and we have customer service representatives who go to sites and do machine or fleet inspections that help with preventative maintenance.

“Our product and application specialists, for example, Vusi Mahlangu on wheel loaders, undertake site severity studies to advise customers on the right equipment for their applications and monitor the machines following delivery to ensure that production targets are met.”

The Cat 966L offers various technology options to help owners and operators maintain high productivity effortlessly. “You can monitor your operations and manage tonnes moved through Cat Payload Monitoring, a feature of Cat Connect



The Cat 966L comes with an improved cab with a new indicator and button layout designed to improve operator productivity and safety, new larger convex mirrors to improve visibility to the rear, as well as integrated spot mirrors to provide visibility close to both sides of the machine.

Solutions that is integrated in the new touch screen display and weighs loads in real time to help operators achieve targets,” Geldenhuys explains.

Cat Connect Solutions also provides access to machine operating data such as total fuel consumption, average fuel rate, total idle time and fuel consumed at idle and total operating hours.

Power train

Sivu Potelwa, GCI (Global Construction and Infrastructure) Product Manager at Barloworld Equipment, says the Cat C9.3 ACERT engine in the 966L provides more power, while improving fuel efficiency by up to 15%.

“The 966L powertrain has been improved with the addition of lock-up clutch torque converters as standard equipment. The new torque converters have also been matched with the engine power and hydraulics to improve performance and fuel efficiency. Productive Economy Mode is a standard

offering which is optimised for maximum fuel savings with minimal productivity impact.”

Potelwa also recommends the use of add-on technologies such as the new optional automatic traction-control/differential locks that improve tractive ability in difficult underfoot conditions by measuring differences in axle speeds. The system is activated automatically without requiring operator intervention.

She agrees that operators will love the world-class cab, with a new indicator and button layout designed to improve operator productivity and safety, new larger convex mirrors to improve visibility to the rear, as well as integrated spot mirrors to provide visibility close to both sides of the machine.

“All the added features and benefits that come standard with the machine, together with the design improvements, put the 966L in a class of its own at a price that is still in line with competitive wheel loaders,” concludes Geldenhuys. 🌱