

VAN HOOL ASTRONEF LAUNCH and full focus on ENVIRONMENT and SAFETY at Busworld 2009. ATLON announcement.

VAN HOOL sticks to its reputation of flexible manufacturing. VAN HOOL already has the most extensive range of touring cars. Now, the new ASTRONEF and ATLON join the club. Furthermore, VAN HOOL keeps also updating their range of touring car, focusing on user friendliness, environment and safety.

Environmental awareness is also at the centre of the new developments in buses for public transportation. VAN HOOL has gained a lot of experience and spearheads the sector of hybrid diesel-electric buses and hybrid fuel cell buses.

The ASTRONEF

The most remarkable feature of this new model is the ascending theatre floor, giving the passengers a totally different feel because they no longer have to look at the back of the seat in front. The new type is 3,73 m high, 2.55 m wide and is supplied in 2 lengths: the T916 Astronef is 13,20 m long and the T917 Astronef 14,04 m. In the 4-star version, this is good for respectively 50 and 54 comfortable seats. The ASTRONEF combines a large luggage compartment with a highly luxurious interior. The ASTRONEF is most definitely a new asset in the world of touring car travel.

The ATLON

The luxury 'dual-earner'

A combination of the looks and the comfort of a coach for holiday tours and the fairly low saloon floor of a real dual earner. Easy accessibility for regular services during weekdays and ample underfloor luggage space for weekend coach tours, but still with an overall vehicle height restricted to 3.37 m and available in two different lengths.

The T919 ALTANO

Another recent extension of the range is the T919 ALTANO. Apart from the already well-known 13m and 14m ALTANO-versions, VAN HOOL now also offers a 15m version. The ALTANO is the highdecker with underfloor cockpit, a sector without any doubt led by VAN HOOL. This type combines an outstanding passenger capacity with huge luggage space and lets the driver have his own work space separated from the rest of the bus.

T9 range permanently modernized

A lot of modifications have been applied to the different types of the T9 range. VAN HOOL continues to improve its products, focusing on user-friendliness, environment and safety.

For instance, all vehicles are provided with a double row of LED spots in the ceiling: more light, better visibility, safer. All step nosings have blue/red fibre strips. Concealed LEDs are illuminating the centre sunken aisle and the steps. Here again, safety is the aim. In the same line of thought, back-up cameras are now available in infrared version.

The guide also gets extra attention: by modifying the chassis, the guide has more space in the single-deck versions.

To improve on user-friendliness on double-decker buses, the access door to the luggage compartment was widened from 70 cm to 80 cm.

Double-deckers still going strong

The VAN HOOL double-deckers keep scoring, on the home market as well as abroad. When companies go looking for larger capacity vehicles, they find what they need at VAN HOOL. Since the American version of the Astromega was launched, already more than 140 units have been shipped to the US and a few dozen more have been ordered. Stagecoach from Great-Britain has also recently opted for VAN HOOL double-deckers. Every day, 26 Astromega vehicles ensure a shuttle service between London and Oxford on a 24 hour basis. Again, care for the environment is an important consideration here, as EEV engines have been applied and fuel consumption per passenger is extremely low. All vehicles have been equipped with Wi-Fi, GPS and CCTV . On top of that, the buses are also accessible to wheelchairs. Stagecoach bought 4 similar double-deckers for their Scotland based long-distance Megabus lines.

Accessibility

In many countries, wheelchair accessibility on line services is a legal requirement. This incited VAN HOOL to look for solutions with regard to easy access, without elevating systems. All double-deckers for line services in the US and in GB have been made accessible this way and this without the need of removable seat platform in the lower deck. TD versions of the Altano have a somewhat extended front overhang, creating a lower saloon at the front without increasing the overall height of the tall vehicle. It offers seating for up to 5 mobility impaired passengers who no longer have to climb staircases to the main saloon floor over the huge luggage hold. This deck can also accommodate a wheelchair traveller who does not need to be hoisted in the air to board the coach. It's available in two different the 13.56m TD 920 and the 14.40m TD927 as displayed.

A random pick from the touring car range on display

T911 Alicron: 10,50 m long, 3,47 m high. A club coach with leather seats, a rear lounge seating 6 passengers, closed luggage racks, smoked glazed roof hatches, etc.

T915 Alicron: 12,20 m long, 3,47 m high. A touring car for maximum passenger capacity.

T915 Acron: 12,20 m long, 3,60 m high. Luxurious touring car with glazed roof hatches and front camera.

T917 Acron: 14,04 m long, 3,60 m high. Luxurious seats, glazed roof hatches, front camera, etc.

T916 Astron: 13,20 m long, 3,73 m high. Highly luxurious version with front camera, glazed roof hatches, camera at centre stairs and pavement light spots over the side windows at the right, driver's door, lap top connection, 220V inverter, central vacuum cleaner, and DVB-T.

T916 Astronef: 13,20 m long, 3,73 m high. The newcomer with theatre seats in a luxurious version.

T918 Altano: 14,04 m long, 3,73 m high. Full-option highdecker with underfloor cockpit and fire suppression installation in the engine compartment.

TD921 Altano: 13,56 m long, 3,73 m high. Note the special cornering lights, DVB-T, wheelchair facility downstairs, swivelling cameras, etc.

TD927 Astromega: 14,10 m long, 4 m high. Double-decker with well-equipped kitchenette, ski-box etc.

Several more vehicles are displayed outside for evaluation and test driving.

Public transportation invests in environment-friendly alternative drives.

35 + 44 hybrid buses for the Vlaamse Vervoermaatschappij.

As from March 10, De Lijn have put their first articulated hybrid diesel bus into service in Ghent. On March 20, the standard hybrid bus was introduced in Louvain and from April 27 onward, the midibus version will also be put into service in Bruges. After evaluating these three prototypes, VAN HOOL will start manufacturing the remaining buses as from July 2010. De Lijn decided on a first investment of 15 million euro in 35 hybrid buses: 5 city buses, 5 ordinary buses and 25 articulated buses. 20 buses will ride in Ghent, 10 in Louvain and 5 in Bruges. In June, De Lijn ordered another 44 hybrid buses (12 m) for service in Louvain, Antwerp and Hasselt. All the hybrid buses have to be delivered by the end of 2010.

4 + 20 hybrid buses for Connexion (The Netherlands)

Hybrid buses are also operating in The Netherlands. On behalf of the Provincie Zuid-Holland, Connexion ordered 4 standard hybrid buses (A300 type). The vehicles have been delivered and put into service on September 4, 2009. The concept of these vehicles is similar to that of the buses ordered by De Lijn. Connexion ordered another 20 hybrid diesel-electric buses of the same type for further expansion of its environment-friendly network.

Hybrid fuel cell buss put into service once again by the Vlaamse Vervoermaatschappij.

The main characteristic of the fuel cell bus is that it does not produce any emission of toxic gases. The energy is supplied by a fuel cell that, through a process of inverted electrolysis, transforms hydrogen into electric energy under the influence of oxygen in the air. The emission is **pure vapour**.

As is the case for hybrid diesel-electric buses, the energy released at each brake activation movement is retrieved and stored in batteries for later use. To this end, the electric motors are automatically switched over and act as a generator.

This results in even less fuel consumption and more efficiency (than a diesel engine or a strictly hydrogen drive).



As there are no mechanically moving parts in the fuel cell itself, any noise typical of petrol or diesel engines is absent. This explains why the bus is noticeably quieter than the modern diesel variant.

VAN HOOL have developed this fully fledged hydrogen bus without compromise with regard to the modern diesel variant.

The main operational aim is the passenger capacity. In spite of the weight proper to a hybrid vehicle, this bus has a capacity of 94 to 104 passengers, depending on the seat configuration and the standard of comfort for standees.

Hybrid diesel buses as well as fuel cell buses have all the characteristics of a modern low-floor bus: low entrance at all doors, wide doors, full-length low floor, accessible to the disabled, large panoramic windows, electrical climate control.

Première of new generation of fuel cell buses for the United States at Kortrijk.

After the well-received introduction of the first fuel cell buses by VAN HOOL in California and Connecticut, a new order for 16 hybrid fuel cell buses has been placed. The first vehicle of the new series has a spot on the VAN HOOL stand at Busworld.

Public transportation buses on the VAN HOOL stand

The following city and line buses are on display:

- A309 midibus for the VVM
- 12 m hybrid bus
- The newest generation of fuel cell buses for the US
- The A330 city bus for the MIVB

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