FRIES? WEDGES? HASH BROWNS?

IF YOU EAT ANY OF THOSE (AND LET'S FACE IT – WHO DOESN'T?) THEN CHANCES ARE YOU'VE BEEN ON THE RECEIVING END OF THE FIORELLI PACKING COMPANY, BASED IN HALLAM, VICTORIA.

With more than 40 years experience, Fiorelli grow, harvest, store, handle, process, distribute, market, and export potato produce. In fact they handle some 20-30% of Australia's total potato production.

That many potatoes means a lot of trucks. The Fiorelli fleet encompasses bulk trailers, tautliners, straight deck and drop deck trailers, refrigerated units and a brand new Actros 2646 bought from Whitehorse Trucks.

Dressed in company red and finished off with some fabulous pin-striping she looks better than beer and chips on a Friday night.

GROWING CARGO

TRANSPORTING ALL KINDS OF INDOOR AND OUTDOOR PLANTS HAS BECOME A THRIVING BUSINESS FOR STEVE AND HELEN BOOTH, THE HUSBAND AND WIFE TEAM BEHIND CASSABOO PTY LTD.

Based on their property at Wandin East, near Lilydale in Victoria, they transport live plants to and from Queensland, Adelaide and Sydney.

Their success is reflected in the recent growth of their fleet to five trucks, with this brand new Freightliner Argosy Evolution joining one they purchased six months ago.

The new Argosy is set to do some 300,000 kms a year, running from the HQ at Wandin East, down into Melbourne and up into Queensland.

It'll run as a 26-metre B-double with 36-pallet trailers, and those trailers are purpose-built with mezzanine floors to allow for three layers of cargo.

Both of Cassaboo's Argosys came from Colin DeGee at Whitehorse Trucks in Dandenong.

"This is a lovely truck," Colin said.

"It's got the 110" high roof sleeper and all the options including radio, TV, UHF, CB, air conditioning throughout, a telephone and about a million lights on the outside.

"Steve always wants his trucks to be the best looking things on the road so we spend a lot of time getting them just right."

MAXWELL ADDS A MERC

AFTER THINKING ABOUT IT FOR SOME TIME, THE MAXWELL TRANSPORT GROUP HAS TURNED TO MERCEDES-BENZ TO BOOST ITS FAST-GROWING FLEET OF PRIME MOVERS.

Based in Dandenong, the Group has expanded exponentially since Bill Maxwell started things off with one small prime mover back in 2000, with his company now providing transport, warehousing and property services to many of Australia's largest companies.

Jason Barnes, the General Manager of Transport Operations, recently received the company's new Actros 2655, lifting the fleet to 30 prime movers which haul single trailers, B-doubles, cranes, tautliners, refrigerator units and more.

"We bought the Actros for B-double work. At the moment it's carrying panels for construction work around metro Melbourne pulling a single, and it's going well," Jason said.

"Bill has always admired the Mercedes product but we'd never bought one so when Phil Mackay from Whitehorse knocked on the door I was happy to talk. Phil was extremely pro-active and managed to put a deal together that was exactly what we were looking for.

"The truck's going well and the driver cannot fault the truck. We are certainly looking at more of the Mercedes product for other applications in our fleet."

Toowoomba councillor Anne Glasheen and driver Patrick Maguire with the new Actros 2644.

ACTROS ARRIVES IN A HURRY

WHEN TOOWOOMBA REGIONAL COUNCIL RECENTLY DECIDED TO REPLACE THEIR AGEING MACK VALUELINER, THE DRIVERS WERE CLEAR – THEY WOULD PREFER ANOTHER BONNETED, MANUAL TRUCK WITH SIX-ROD SUSPENSION.

But Ross McManus, the council's coordinator of fleet support, wanted to steer them in a different direction.

"We had a good look at the options and decided that we wanted a cab-over prime mover for visibility and safety, and we also opted to go for the SCR method of emissions control rather than EGR," he said.

"So, we asked the lads whether they would take a look at a 440 hp European cab-over automatic with airbag suspension and they agreed."

Better still, they loved it. The Mercedes-Benz Actros 2644 impressed with its superior safety and comfort, its power and performance.

That wasn't the end of things. Being a council purchase, three quotes had to be sought and measured before the 'Benz could be purchased.

"The Actros came out well in front in terms of overall value and was actually the cheapest of the three options," Ross said.

The Actros will be something of a utility vehicle for the council; it will spend the majority of its time as a tipper doing quarry work, so it's been delivered with the right tyres for that purpose.

But what's perhaps the most surprising thing about the arrival of the new Actros?

"The whole process took just four weeks, from when we first looked at the truck to when it was delivered to us," Ross said.

"That's got to be some sort of record for local government!"