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## Tai Wah's **Cool Hino**

***This is a profile piece on a company which has made significant investment in its fleet and, while it may be a small fleet (of eight trucks), the investment in those trucks is much more than just the vehicles themselves.***

OK, the trucks are Hino 300 wide body 616 models, dual rear wheel 4x2s, with four litre, direct injection, common rail, turbo intercooled, diesel engines.

The numbers to note: the engine has a 110kW power output at 2700rpm, 397Nm of torque at 1800rpm and has a 4500kg or 5500kg GVM rolling on a 3430mm wheelbase.

Cargo has driven this model and in a nutshell, we liked it. We liked the emission levels boasted by the little fella - US04 or Euro IV compliant – and we liked its safety features, which include ABS brakes with electronic brakeforce distribution and dual airbags.

But this isn't important because in this case, it's not what we thought - or think - which counts.

This time round, we went to chat to Tai Wah Ltd in Otahuhu, because it is the company which moved from one truck supplier to Hino after doing its homework.

The story could end there, but there's a bit more to it; after all, anyone can change suppliers and this is hardly something to get excited about, unless you're the supplier the company changed to of course.

But let's take a look at Tai Wah Ltd first of all. A specialist frozen food supplier, Tai Wah Ltd has been trading for 15 years and it is a family-owned and operated business which deals with a diverse range of clients, but is especially well respected by the company's Asian customers.

The drivers for the Tai Wah eight-truck fleet operate on a split shift basis with an operational changeover right after a shared lunch break, when they all meet up together and change the keys.

We thought this was a very cool idea (forgive the pun) but it demonstrates a particularly healthy (socially speaking) working environment and one which goes a long way to fostering company loyalty on the part of the employee.

Most drivers have been with the company between 6 and 7 years, which proves our point.

Overall, the trucks themselves do around 30,000kms a year in





trucks – is that it? Not quite. You see the Hino trucks came to Tai Wah as cab chassis units needing chiller boxes added to them.

Since Tai Wah had shifted its supplier for the trucks, Chi thought it was a good time to shift suppliers for the chiller box too and sought out MaxiTRANS.

MaxiTRANS is better known for its seriously-sized chiller boxes to go on tractor trailer trucks rather than baby truckettes like the Hino, but given the amount of interest in smaller delivery vehicles lately – inspired by the lack of emission compliant used imports, the big boys of the business have turned their focus to smaller body trucks.

Tai Wah's requirements for a chiller box body are probably somewhere on file in MaxiTRANS history as being the specifications for the smallest MaxiTRANS body ever built, but what a magnificent job the company has done!

Look carefully at the body and you'll soon see the big body expertise being condensed into something much smaller.

The Tai Wah Hino must look like a travelling Christmas tree when all its running lights are on! And the rear step wouldn't look out of place on a trailer attached to a Hino 700.

Something of a showboat for MaxiTRANS, the Tai Wah Hino body is beautifully finished with attention to detail extending to the workmanship on the Hino's ladder-shaped channel section side rails – and you can't even see them unless you look under the truck itself.

Pride of place as far as Chi is concerned though, is the door access. Typical barn doors at the back are well thought out and finished but it is the side door which Chi is most pleased with.

It's not a swing out door, but a slider on the left hand side, something Chi specified for a number of reasons: one, it allows close to kerb opening, without a swinging door connecting with a shop overhang.

Two, and in a similar vein, the sliding door means you won't knock people over as you load or unload or – worst case – an unsecured door swinging open.

Three, the sliding door never comes into contact with the side of the chiller box, denting or damaging it.

The MaxiTRANS box is cooled by a Thermoking refrigeration unit which is well suited to the chiller box and again, more frequently seen on larger trucks. It also merits a very satisfied comment from Chi.

So why is Cargo so taken with this story? For starters, Tai Wah is obviously a company which takes pride in its work and demonstrates it by carefully selecting its vehicles and maintaining them properly.

The vehicle promotes the company's image properly and professionally, which is something many companies do not seem to realise is important to a consumer, but they notice.

Tai Wah also looks after its employees, cultivating a good working environment and inspiring loyalty from within the team, while at the same time, taking their employee's well being and safety into consideration as witnessed by the specifications found in Hino trucks.



the Auckland metropolitan area with all its start/stop traffic and comparatively short distances.

The oldest of the Hino trucks (bought in 2005) has done 112,000kms and is still on its original clutch! Just one of the many reasons Tai Wah is happy with its choice of vehicle supplier.

But why choose Hino in the first place? Chi - Tai Wah's 'fleet buyer' - explains: "it is like buying a Toyota Corolla or a Mitsubishi Lancer. They are the same car to all intents and purposes and around the same price, but you buy the Toyota because it lasts longer, is built better and has a better resale value."

And has Hino lived up to the expected reputation? According to Chi, the answer is a resounding yes. He is particularly complimentary of the service department which is (happily) closer to Tai Wah's premises, but which has also performed very well on the occasions (regular maintenance only) the Tai Wah trucks have needed to call in.

"I wouldn't mind seeing an extra gear," he says of the manual five-speed Hino, "but the engine power is perfect. There is no need for anything more than the 4-litre engine and all our drivers say the same thing. It's ideal for the city work we do."

So, a happy tale of a successful family business buying Hino