

raceway domination

VDS AUTOBODY'S SUPERBOSS

Johan Mulder and his son Wynand are the owners of Roodepoort-based VDS Autobody. A Spies Hecker Lifetime Warranty body shop located on the West Rand's Upper Main Reef Road, it has been in existence for over 50 years. The Mulders bought the business about six years ago and are now in the process of refurbishing it inside and out at a cost of some R2.5-million.

Already a Spies Hecker body shop when purchased, Wynand says that the service and support he has received over the years from distributor, Toolman, Krugersdrop and the Alberton-based Barloworld Automotive Coatings team are key factors that keep him loyal to the brand. "Help or advice is just a call away," he says.

Accredited by Ford and Mazda as an approved repairer, Wynand says that a primary reason for improving VDS Autobody's facilities is to increase the number of motor manufacturer approvals. The repair area is a hive of activity and while Ford and Mazda units appear to dominate, there are plenty of other makes of vehicles in for repair, all relatively new models. Wynand confirms that most are just out of warranty and their owners have now opted to use their services.

'Tomorrow's technology today' is the VDS slogan which dominates one of the side walls in the repair area. It is an apt description of Superboss, the main reason for the visit to VDS Autobody's premises. Super sleek in silver, Superboss is Wynand's pride and joy. A 2 litre, 16 valve super-lightweight Opel Kadett, she is reckoned to be the fastest front wheel drive vehicle in Africa.

The powerhouse under her bonnet just can't be ignored. For starters, Gladwyn Engineering did the polishing and porting on the top half of the engine. The valves are original while the cams were replaced



Wynand Mulder shows off the gleaming powerhouse under Superboss' hood.

Superboss is rated the fastest front wheel drive vehicle in Africa.



with imported units. Pauter conrods and Wispeco pistons have been substituted and a Turbonetics T66 turbo fitted. The T66 blasts out a powerful 2.7 bar through the piping, huge MRP cooler and inlet manifold before it gets mixed with a specially formulated fuel mix. That's just to ensure that extra dash of vooom when Wynand is drag racing at Tarlton or Wesbank Raceway.

He is chuffed to be the first competitive dragster in the front wheel class to have

achieved a record-breaking 236.6 km/ph in 10.19 seconds in the quarter-mile. "Superboss and I are now aiming for the nines!"

Like the rest of Superboss, her paint work is customised. "I wanted something a little different and after a lot of time spent colour mixing and matching, I produced a silver variant which is sensational," says Wynand. "Thanks to Spies Hecker, the colour is absolutely unique, a one-off."

Peak performance from Spies Hecker body shop

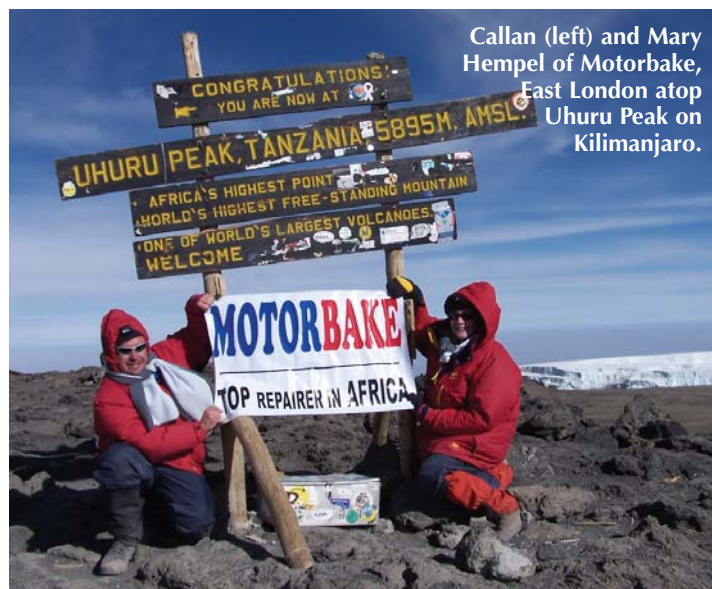
Callan and Mary Hempel of Spies Hecker bodyshop, Motorbake, recently donned their climbing gear and set off to fulfil their lifelong dream of summiting Africa's highest point - Uhuru Peak on Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania.

Both went the distance - every 5 895 metres of the way - and their satisfied smiles on reaching the top spot, best tell the story! According to Callan, the trip took five days, the first four of which he described as a 'pleasant hike'. He says that on the fifth and final day, the going got tougher. "We started the final approach to the summit at midnight and reached the top between seven and eight the next morning."

East London-based Motorbake was established by Callan's father in 1976 and this year, the Hempels are celebrating 30 years in the local refinish market. With sales and service support provided by

Attie Venter and his team at Popular Paints, Callan says the change to Spies Hecker products was made some 18 months ago.

After three decades of serving the refinish market, Motorbake boasts a string of motor approvals from motor manufacturers including VWSA, Audi, Ford/Mazda, General Motors, Toyota, Nissan, Volvo, Land Rover, Citroen and Honda.



Callan (left) and Mary Hempel of Motorbake, East London atop Uhuru Peak on Kilimanjaro.