

Alcoa Wheel Products Europe **NEWSLETTER**

March 2006

Alcoa Dura-Bright® wheels – a revolution in wheel maintenance!

Alcoa Wheel Products Europe announces that from now on Alcoa Dura-Bright® wheels are also available in Europe. These wheels are a huge success in the USA and Alcoa is confident they will also be in Europe.

Alcoa has introduced its Dura-Bright® process after many years of development. The idea was to make the Alcoa forged aluminium wheels even more attractive to customers, by making them easier to maintain. There will always be those who take pride in polishing their Alcoa wheels until they shine like new. For those customers, Alcoa continues to offer the mirror polished wheels. However, not everyone has the manpower to do this. For them Alcoa invented the Dura-Bright® wheels. **NO MORE POLISHING, JUST CLEAN WITH SOAP AND WATER.**



Dura-Bright® wheels easily shed dirt, brake dust and grease. Wash the grime off – with no scrubbing, no abrasive compounds or materials, no special chemicals – and watch them shine. Wipe them dry to avoid water spots, and they look great, even after hundreds of washes and thousands of miles.



Alcoa Dura-Bright® wheels are available from all European trailer OEMs and the Alcoa distributors. In addition, Alcoa expects Dura-Bright® wheels to be an option at the truck dealers in the course of this year.

The Dura-Bright® treatment is only available on mirror polished wheels, in dimensions 22.5 x 8.25, 22.5 x 9.00, 22.5 x 11.75 inset 0 mm, 22.5 x 11.75 inset 120 mm and 22.5 x 11.75 inset 135 mm, all with 26 mm bolt hole diameter and 32 mm bolt hole diameter.

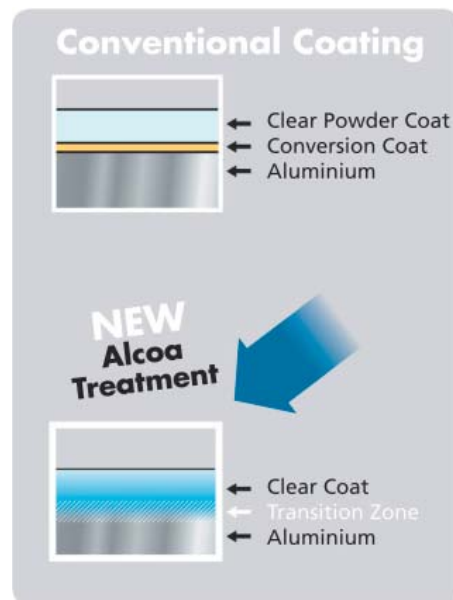
Dura-Bright® wheels are easily recognizable by their black Alcoa Dura-Bright® sticker.

The technology

On ordinary aluminium wheels, a coating is typically a layer of baked powder that sits on top of the wheel surface. But, with Alcoa Dura-Bright® wheels, the patented treatment actually penetrates the aluminium, forming a protective barrier that becomes an integral part of the wheel. It completely eliminates the cracking, peeling and filiform corrosion common in coated wheels.

If you require more information on Dura-Bright® wheels, send an e-mail to linda.verhoeven@alcoa.com and ask for the new brochure.

Before introducing Dura-Bright® wheels on a big scale in Europe, Alcoa obviously had the wheels tested at several fleets and coach operators. Two of these were Joh. Reedijk BV in Greup, Netherlands and Autocars Heidebloem in Lanaken, Belgium. Their testimonies can be found on the next pages.



Joh. Reedijk BV satisfied with Alcoa Dura-Bright® wheels

Joh. Reedijk BV is an international tanker fleet, based in Greup, in the south of the Netherlands. They have 43 tankers and 47 drivers, primarily transporting chemical products to West European destinations.



The three brothers Johan, Henk and Adri Reedijk, who manage the company together, are proud of their fleet of well kept vehicles. “Every single vehicle of ours is our business card and should be kept in tiptop condition. Therefore we clean the vehicles every week.”

When journalist Harry Schipper visits Joh. Reedijk on a cold Saturday in January to interview Adri and Henk Reedijk and take pictures of their vehicles for a feature in the Dutch magazine TruckersLife, unfortunately not all 43 tankers shine in the sunlight, which is due to the freezing weather conditions, making it difficult to clean the vehicles and the wheels. The exception are the tankers on the new Alcoa Dura-Bright® wheels. Henk Reedijk demonstrates personally how easy it is to clean these wheels. With half a bucket of warm water and a mild detergent, he cleans the wheels with only two moves and the result is immediately visible. The wheels shine like new! “Quite a difference with the mirror polished wheels of the other vehicles, even though the drivers do their utmost to keep them clean!”

The fact that the new Alcoa Dura-Bright® wheels clean so easily and rapidly, was one of the reasons why Joh. Reedijk specified these wheels. “It all depends on how well a driver maintains his vehicle. There are drivers who take proud in driving a well kept truck and tanker, but there are also those who do not want to spend too much effort and time in cleaning the wheels. For these drivers, we will order Dura-Bright® wheels from now on. The obvious choice is Alcoa, as they are the only manufacturer producing these wheels. Alcoa wheels are also lighter than steel wheels. Due to this weight reduction, we can safe up to 300 kg on a truck/tanker combination and take extra payload. Aluminium wheels also dissipate heat better than steel, which results in less tyre wear and increased life duration of brakes, especially in the summer. For myself, and in particular for my back, it also makes a difference when I need to change the wheels. The Alcoa wheels are lighter and thus easier to handle. It is quite a difference with the old steel wheels!”

Adri Reedijk also states that their drivers really appreciate the new Alcoa Dura-Bright® wheels. “Alcoa allowed us to test the wheels during a certain time, but we immediately decided to buy them.” The return on investment is not that important for Joh. Reedijk. “Of course it plays a role, but more important for us is the lower rolling resistance of the Alcoa wheels, resulting in lower fuel consumption.” At this point in time, Adri Reedijk cannot give exact figures about the fuel savings, as they have only tested the wheels for two months. “We keep track of it on a weekly basis and expect to be able to measure the effects in the next quarter.”



Dura-Bright® test case at coach operator HEIDEBLOEM

Autocars Heidebloem are based in Lanaken / Belgium and has a fleet of 86 buses, of which 25 are coaches. The last couple of years, all new coaches were ordered on Alcoa mirror polished wheels, but since they tested the new Alcoa Dura-Bright® wheels, they decided to specify these on all of their new coaches.



"I had heard about Dura-Bright® wheels and 2 years ago I asked about the possibilities to order these wheels for my touring coaches." says Mr. Jurgen Gobyn, General Manager of Heidebloem. "At that time we could not get any Dura-Bright® wheels, as the total production was reserved for the US market. I am pleased that in 2005 Heidebloem was selected as a test case for Dura-Bright® wheels in Europe. And after a period of 6 months, I can confirm what I already suspected: the wheels remain in excellent condition; they continue to shine and the fact that they are so easy to clean, saves a lot of working hours for my drivers. The difference in price versus the mirror polished wheels is paid back within a year. For me it is clear: from now on I will specify Dura-Bright® wheels for all my new touring coaches.



But let's ask for the driver's opinion. Peter Ritzen says:

"In July 2005, the steel wheels on my touring coach, type EOS 200L, were replaced by Alcoa Dura-Bright® wheels. Alcoa asked me to keep a logbook of when the wheels were washed and which products were used. I spent the whole period from August to October 2005 in Italy, driving around American tourists. During these three months, I did not return to the company in Lanaken and I only cleaned the wheels with lukewarm water, without soap or detergent. In December I drove to Austria, where the wheels were exposed to severe snow conditions. After this trip, the wheels were cleaned with warm water. Until today, the Dura-Bright® wheels are in excellent shape and do not show any wear or difference in colour. I especially value these wheels because they combine the shiny appearance of aluminium wheels and yet low maintenance efforts. These wheels are an added value for my touring coach, giving it a classy look, which is appreciated by our customers. I can recommend Alcoa Dura-Bright® wheels to every touring coach driver!"

Alcoa announces 70 million Euro modernization project in Hungary



At the end of 2005, the Alcoa US headquarters announced a 70 million Euro investment in a major modernization project at Alcoa-Köfém Ltd., its operations in Hungary.

The modernization includes the expansion of the flat-rolled mill products capability and related infrastructure, the launch of a new manufacturing operation for airfoil castings, and the addition of Dura-Bright® forged aluminium wheels production in Hungary. The modernization project will create nearly 200 new jobs at Alcoa-Köfém. Alcoa expect the project to be completed by the end of 2007.

“This decision strengthens Alcoa’s presence in Europe and its long-term strategic investment in Hungary”, said Bela Forgo, Country Manager Hungary and General Manager Alcoa-Köfém. “This modernization project renews the product mix at Alcoa-Köfém toward higher value added products”.

The core of the investment is the modernization of Alcoa-Köfém’s Flat Rolled Products manufacturing unit, which involves expansion of its brazing sheet capability to offer a full range of gauges. Brazing sheet is used primarily in the automotive and heat exchanger markets. Köfém currently produces sheet, coil and some brazing sheet.

The new airfoil manufacturing operation in Köfém will support Alcoa Howmet’s growing jet aircraft and industrial gas turbines business in Europe.

In addition, Alcoa-Köfém, which has been producing forged aluminium wheels since 1997, will begin production of Dura-Bright® aluminium wheels in Hungary.

Alcoa’s history in Hungary

In 1993 Alcoa acquired a majority stake in Hungary’s state-owned aluminium company. In 1996, Alcoa acquired full ownership of the formerly state owned Székesfehérvár Light Metal Works, renamed Alcoa-Köfém Ltd.

Alcoa is the fifth largest company in Hungary, and the second largest US investor in the country. It is the 12th largest employer in Hungary, employing 5.500 people.



Shows

We will be present at following events during the coming months:

The Commercial Vehicle Show, Birmingham, U.K. - April 25-27

Transpotec Logitec, Milan, Italy - April 27-30

East of England Truckfest, Peterborough, U.K. - April 30 - May 1

Logistics Transport, Helsinki, Finland - May 17-20

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