



# PROUD RIGS IN THE WAIRARAPA

**I**N some respects, the Wairarapa is something of a backwater, separated from the bustle of the main Auckland-Wellington highway by the imposing Tararua.

Its biggest town, Masterton, has a population of only 22,000 and there aren't that many more folk scattered around the rest of the region.

This is rural New Zealand – rich dairying country along the rivers, spectacular drystock runs in the hills, forests where grass ends.

That's what's so great about the Wairarapa – that and its trucks.

They may be stock rigs, fertiliser spreaders, loggers and chipliners, but the rigs of the Wairarapa are so well presented and well cared for they'd stand out in any company.

Masterton truck driver and photographer, Jim Laird, thinks so, anyhow – so he's sent in this selection of photos to prove it.

As he points out, these aren't show machines that never leave the tarseal – they are working rigs that are as often in paddocks or on bush tracks as they are stopped at traffic lights.

So all the more credit to the truckies of the Wairarapa – if they're working in a backwater, their trucks sure don't know it!

**Top left:**  
This is the second Nissan Shogun put on the road by Carterton logging contractor, Tony Pye. It's equipped with logging gear and a four-axle trailer, all built by Evans Engineering in Tokoroa and with a tare of 15.2 tonne can cart a 30 tonne payload. Carting shorts, the rig supplies logs to Davies sawmill in Featherstone and export logs from throughout the Wairarapa, Manawatu and Wellington regions to the capital's wharf.

**Centre left:**  
Although there's a Mack name on the front, this is undoubtedly the most unusual rig in the Wairarapa. A 1985 Saviem from Belgium, it came to New Zealand for evaluation by the Army, was later bought by Transport Wairarapa and converted into a fertiliser spreader. Driven by one of the characters of the area, Doody Hamer of Eketahuna, the truck is now owned by Malneek Contractors of Martinborough, but still uses the original 225hp Renault motor.

**Bottom left:**  
Loading sheep just out of Eketahuna, this Wairarapa Transport rig would be unusual anywhere, but is just one of six DAF trucks in the fleet. Driven by John Darlington of Masterton, it pulls a four-axle trailer built by Total Transport Engineering of Mt Maungamui. With a 13-speed gearbox, the DAF is proving popular with the drivers and, thanks to 47.2 litres/100km (6mpg) economy, also popular with the company.

**Top right:**  
Typical of the new breed of stockliner is this eight-axle rig operated by David Pope Transport of Greytown. The twin-steer Isuzu CXH has 350hp on call and clocked up more than 200,000km in its first year and a half of work. Driven by Craig Pepperill, the Isuzu carts mainly cattle from the Wairarapa and Waikato to the Pacific works in Hastings.

**Right:**  
Biggest trucking outfit in the Wairarapa is Hargreaves Transport and this neat Scania 142M stock unit is representative of the way the company works. Driven by Wayne Ranganui, it has covered more than 600,000km in the fleet colours since new, and has averaged 53.9 litres/100km (5.25mpg). The six-wheeler pulls a four-axle TMC trailer, both fitted with Nationwide crates, and the whole rig is, according to Wayne, "just as smooth as Southern Comfort".

**Right:**  
Among the best-known Wairarapa rigs are the five Mack Ultra Liner chipliners of Masterton-based Renall Haulage. This 400hp unit went on the road early in 1992 and is driven by Paul Hewson and Allister Sail. It does two trips a day carting chips from Featherstone and Masterton to Whirinaki, returning with fertiliser from Awatoto to Ravensdown depots in the southern Hawkes Bay, Manawatu and Wairarapa.

**Bottom right:**  
Masterton trucker Stan Sayer covers the lower North Island and upper South Island on livestock cartage with this superb 1989 400hp twin turbo Mitsubishi rig. The Japanese truck pulls a new 29ft Domett four-axle trailer on 17.5in wheels to give four decks of sheep or two decks of cattle. The crates are Delta units and the whole rig has a tare of just 21 tonne. After more than 300,000 trouble-free kilometres, Stan is impressed with the Mitsi's handling, quietness and reliability.

