



## Grand Award Coach for Setra



### *Neck and neck race between four coaches*

The Grand Award Coach Busworld 2009 turned out to be a riveting neck and neck race. By a very small margin, the Grand Award Coach goes out to the Setra 416 GT-HD. The Grand Award Bus also goes to a product from the Evobus stable: the Mercedes-Benz Citaro Low Entry. In the midi coach category, amongst other things the jury succumbed to the abundant on-board facilities for the tour guide in the Otokar Vectio 250T. The Environment Award goes to the hybrid fuel cell A330 FC coach built by Van Hool. The Innovation Award goes to the VDL Group for the wide raft of innovations on board the Citea bus intended for Dubai and the Jonckheere SB400 coach. The prizes were handed out to the winners at a reception held at Busworld's headquarters in Rumbeke Castle.

By Hans Kuipers



To those in the know it is no secret that the Setra and Mercedes-Benz coaches are built using shared components to a large degree. However, this does not stop Setra from maintaining an image that is all its own, and creating an atmosphere surrounding its coaches that is closer in nature to family kinship rather than a business relation between supplier and buyer. Setra's buyers mostly tend to experience their purchase and the organisation that surrounds it in a way that is different to buyers of most other brands. A feeling which applies not only to the buyers of new Setra coaches, but also extends to include pre-owned Setras.

As a brand however, Setra has more to offer than just a special bond between manufacturer and buyers. Traditionally, Setra coaches are particularly high-grade coaches that come with an excellent finish and an elegant and timeless styling.

One area where Setras tend to be miles ahead of the competition is in the field of passive safety. By incorporating an extensively tried and tested safety construction into the carcass structure, both the driver and the tour guide enjoy excellent protection against a frontal collision. This safety structure acts as a kind of protective cage for them, which transfers the forces of the collision onto the structure of the coach without seriously endangering the driver or the tour guide. For the passengers, this



construction does not pose any kind of danger either. The forces are largely transferred to the baggage hold and the passenger compartment is barely affected. The jury felt this safety construction was good enough reason to nominate the Setra 416 GT-HD for the Grand Award for Coaches 2009.

## ***Grand Award Bus goes to Citaro***

The Mercedes-Benz Citaro is well on the way to becoming of the most long-standing concepts in public transport. Originally launched in 1997, the Citaro's design has since been fully perfected, with the vehicle going on to acquire a solid position on the market as a public transport bus offering excellent value for money.

The production milestone of 20,000 buses built with a conventional powertrain was rounded earlier this year. Since then however, the Citaro has also been getting ready to become one of the trailblazers of the hybrid powertrain.

The Citaro's flexibility has to be the strongest suit of this model, the jury believes. To the jury's mind, the wide range of quality features and properties combine to give the Citaro a positive image on all fronts.

As just one feature, this bus offers excellent passive safety the jury opines. Both the driver and the passengers are duly protected. In addition, a great deal of attention is made to go out to the eco-friendly aspects of this bus. Obviously, the quality of the emission fumes has something to do with this, as well as the maintenance intervals.

To drivers, the Citaro has to be the coach that offers the best workspace, especially as it comes with more comfort-enhancing elements (either standard or available as options) than most other city buses. For passengers too, the Citaro is a safe bus, for example by virtue of the high-contrast use of colours in the interior which serves to make all key elements properly visible.

The distinctions with the competition are not that great in every respect that the Citaro won this selection as this edition's Grand Bus Award by a large margin. But the Mercedes-Benz Citaro is just a touch better than the competition in virtually every respect.





## ***Grand Award Environment goes to Van Hool***

Presenting the Van Hool A330 FC hybrid bus with a fuel cell as the big surprise of this European Coach & Bus Week 2009 is not even an understatement anymore. In actual fact, the bus is a development that transcends every power of imagination. To the jury, there was something magical about seeing how a bus constructor that ranks among the smaller-scale manufacturers in a global sense, is capable of developing and building a bus that is so utterly revolutionary and managing to sell this bus outside of Europe to boot, i.e. in the US which is the second home market for this bus builder from Koningshooikt.

Over the months ahead, Van Hool is set to ship out sixteen A330 buses to the US. In doing so, Van Hool is taking the lead over the big bus manufacturers. Van Hool managed to achieve this result in double quick time by choosing the right partners: UTC as the fuel cell supplier and Siemens as the subcontractor for what is as good as the entire electrical installation.

This bus is not an end-point to Van Hool. The implementation of a wide number of new technologies is intended to make this concept more affordable as the lofty initial purchase price is widely considered to be the principal stumbling block to effect greater sales. However, it is especially in the United States that Van Hool has managed to find the right launching customers who are prepared to support the company and give Van Hool the trust and confidence it needs with this new model.

For these customers, the principal aspect of this technology is that it enables them to offer the community, which they serve as public transport service providers, a truly zero-emission system. After all, this is the essential feature of this particular Van Hool hybrid bus with fuel cell technology. To the jury, this was also the principal deciding factor to nominate this bus for the Grand Environmental Award.





## ***Grand Award Innovation goes to VDL***

These are troubled times for the VDL Bus & Coach Group. By the same token however, these are also times of opportunity to come up with innovative ideas and fresh new approaches to do well in market segments and territories that are perhaps not quite matter-of-course. Something which VDL proved during the European Coach & Bus Week with its Citea CLF-120 for Dubai.

The jury was smitten with the amount of new technologies VDL has incorporated in this model, ranging from infrared cameras and powerful climate control systems including air curtains above the doors right up to a CCTV circuit which constantly records the movements of the passengers inside the bus and of any persons in the immediate proximity of the bus that can subsequently be transmitted in real-time to the transporter's central control room. In addition, the bus is equipped with an automatic fire extinguishing system that covers the engine and the pre-heater.

Moreover, the jury points out that part of this new technology, with specific reference to the infrared cameras, also plays a part in the protection of coaches such as the Jonckheere JSD-122. In the model as shown during European Coach & Bus Week, this VDL model also held a few more unique solutions, such as emergency lighting running on batteries by the doors and an alco-lock for the driver. In addition, VDL is able to equip the Jonckheere with what are more commonly available safety technology features such as lane assist, front collision warning and Global Feet Tracking. A fire extinguishing system inside the engine compartment and smoke sensors in the baggage hold amongst other locations, serve to minimise the likeliness of calamities, as these are primed to switch off the electrical circuit after opening the doors first.



## ***Grand Award Midi-coach goes to Otokar***

As a bus builder, Otokar is fairly unknown brand in Western Europe. In its home country of Turkey however, Otokar is one of the biggest manufacturers of mini and midi coaches, one that in the short term aspires to move onto full-size 12-metre length coaches and city buses.

Moreover, Otokar is a manufacturer that has an excellent infrastructure in place in the area of research, including its own test laboratory, where the entire life cycle of any given bus can be simulated in a time span of just a few months. Which helps to explain why in Turkey, Otokar enjoys a



very solid reputation as a builder of robust and reliable buses, that are perfectly equal to the task of driving under what are often unforgiving circumstances on Turkish roads.

From a technical angle, Otokar also ranks as a purveyor of top products as it uses high-quality Western European components, that fully comply with the requirements of European transporters in terms of emission levels, life cycle, fuel consumption, maintenance intervals, availability, etc. Aspects which left a particularly favourable impression on the members of the jury when they were introduced to the Otokar Vectio 250T.

This positive impression was boosted even further by the way in which this midi coach is equipped and especially by the workstation for the tour guide. In this category of coaches, a workstation for the tour guide is by no means to be taken for granted. Something which Otokar has successfully pulled off by creating space for a laptop and by putting in a range of electronic docking facilities. In doing so, Otokar is in effect creating a new category of midi coaches that can be used for high-quality trips with small parties.

In terms of driving characteristics too, the Otokar made its mark on the jury, be it that it does not rank among the absolute top in this particular segment. Though this was by no means such so as to have a negative impact on the jury's overall impression.





## **Awards**

**BUSWORLD Kortrijk Grand Award Coach**  
Setra S 416 GT-HD

**BUSWORLD Kortrijk Grand Award Bus**  
Mercedes-Benz Citaro Low Entry

**BUSWORLD Kortrijk Grand Award Midi Coach**  
Otokar Vectio 250T

**BUSWORLD Kortrijk Environment Award**  
Van Hool hybride brandstofcelbus A330FC

**BUSWORLD Kortrijk Innovation Award**  
VDL Bus SB4000  
Citea CLF 120

