

# Magirus Trucks – doing it with Deutz

By Peter Lynch



An Ansett Jupiter and "Cargo Clipper" c 1956. The bogie trailer was built largely of aluminium and Firestone air suspension was used on some units.

Magirus Deutz was a German truck manufacturer whose products made a big impression in Australia during the 1960s. The Magirus Deutz trucks had a number of unusual features; the major one being the use of air-cooled diesel engines.

The name comes from a combination of Magirus, a fire engine builder from Ulm in Western Germany and KHD (Deutz) diesel engine manufacturers from Cologne. Deutz acquired Magirus in 1938 and their new stylized M badge was based on the spires of Ulm Munster Cathedral, which still has the tallest church steeple in the world at 161.53 metres.

Under the new ownership first Deutz air-cooled diesel engines were introduced to the Magirus Range and by 1943 started to overtake Magirus own engines in popularity. The

Ulm factory was extensively damaged during air-raids in 1945 but production re-started in 1946 with the new S3500 (3.5 ton) model. By 1951 five, six and a half and eight ton models were in production, the largest being powered by a 10.6L, 8 cylinder 175BHP air-cooled Deutz engine.

The Magirus Deutz trucks first arrived in Australia in 1952 with three models; S3500 (4x2) A 3500 (4x4) and S6500 (4x2) on offer. The S6500 (Jupiter) was well suited to prime mover operation with 170hp from a 10.6 litre V8 air cooled diesel, a six speed constant mesh ZF box, hub reduction rear axle, 11.00 x 20 tyres, full air brakes, tachograph and exhaust brake. Gross vehicle weight was 13 tons and GCM 36, well above the 24 tons then allowed for a four axle semi trailer combination. Sales were modest however until 1955 when Ansair, the body building division

Ansett Flexible clipper, many of which were fitted with Deutz V6 engines This one was photographed by Andrew McIntosh at our 2006 Display Day



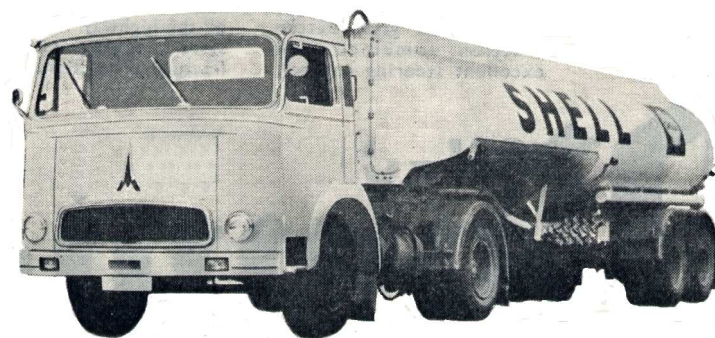


Jupiter models received a more modern square front cab from 1963

of Ansett industries and Ruslit Motors in Sydney became dealers.

Ansett was keen to dominate the road express freight market and used the Magirus Deutz Jupiter prime movers to haul parcel vans between Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth. In this era most interstate highways were second rate bitumen, passing through every town while the trip to Perth involved over 900 km of corrugations, bull dust and mud, depending on the time of year.

The Jupiter was one of the most powerful trucks of the 1950s and was worked hard in the Ansett fleet. A V6 version of the Deutz engine was widely used in the Flexible clippers built by Ansair at this time. The 125 hp six (F6L614) was also fitted to a bonneted truck chassis known as the Saturn and in 1957 a cab over version of this was released (Saturn FC or FS with sleeper cab). The Saturn was a lighter built model, using 9.00 tyres, air over hydraulic brakes and 5 speed gearbox but still offered a GCM of 28 tons.



Saturn FS model prime mover used by Shell for fuel deliveries.

The demanding Ansett schedules, temperature variations and high mileages took their toll on the first series of Deutz engines, with cylinder head cracking occurring. Local engineers developed a process where the alloy head could be machined out and a new steel combustion chamber fitted. A larger and upgraded V8 engine (the FL8 714) produced 203 hp from 12.6 litres and included temperature control for the engine-cooling fan. This was fitted to the bonneted Jupiter, which received a new squared off cab in 1961 and a splitter on the gearbox, making it a 12 speed. The smaller V6 unit in the Saturn models (the FL6 714) climbed to 150 hp. The cab over was also available in a V8

version, with the 12-speed box and this became known as the Pluto.



Helios Electrical's 4x4 Jupiter Prime Mover

Magirus Deutz had a full range of off road chassis however few were sold in Australia. Two 4x4 Jupiter prime movers were purchased by Helios Electrical of Chatswood NSW to carry electrical cable for the Snowy Mountains project. The air cooled engine was ideal for the sub zero temperatures encountered in this region.

By 1964 Ansett purchased Kenworth trucks for its line-haul operations and had switched to GM two stroke diesels in long distance coaches. Their Magirus Deutz dealership

Typical air cooled Deutz V6 engine. Individual finned cast iron cylinders and alloy cylinder heads were bolted to a cast iron crankcase. A big cooling fan blew air into a shroud covering the top of the vee where it passed between the cylinder barrels and out near the exhaust manifolds.



Pluto V8 tilt cab model from 1968. The split windscreen was an Australian modification



A Jupiter driver stops to pay his respects at some lonely graves in outback Queensland. Gross weight of this outfit with two loaded trailers would be over 60 tons. Wilf Heywood photo

was transferred to a new company LK Diesels of Flemington whilst interstate sales were handled by Ruslit Motors (Sydney), Duce Truck sales (Brisbane), Skipper Machinery (Perth) and Peter's Diesel sales of Adelaide

The Pluto model received a more modern looking tilt cab in 1965 and the V8 engine was up rated to 235hp. Pluto and Jupiter could now be supplied in 6x4 configuration but the bogie drive versions used air over hydraulic brakes, which were seen as a backward step by Australian operators.



Magirus Deutz Jupiter fire engine with Magirus turntable ladder

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JUNE, 1963

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TRUCK and BUS TRANSPORTATION ★ 19

Sales slowed after the loss of the Ansett business and Magirus Deutz found it difficult to compete with keen pricing by other truck manufacturers. A large contract to supply trucks to Russia resulted in supply shortages to other export markets and the last Australian truck sales took place in 1974.

Magirus and Deutz were taken over by the IVECO group during the 1980s and are still in business today in separate fields. Magirus have returned to building fire engines on other manufacturers chassis whilst Deutz has become one of the world's largest producers of diesel engines.

Their well-regarded air and water-cooled diesels are used in earthmoving, stationery engine and transport applications. Some Jupiter and Pluto models remain in service in Australia and will hopefully survive in the hands of trucking enthusiasts.

### Credits

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