

# ON YOUR OWN

Volume 17 Number 4

HELPING EQUIPMENT OWNERS OPERATE PROFITABLY

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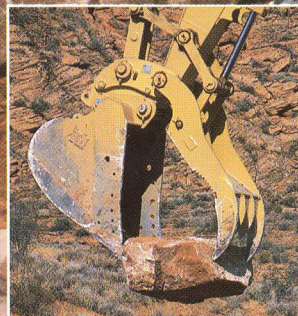
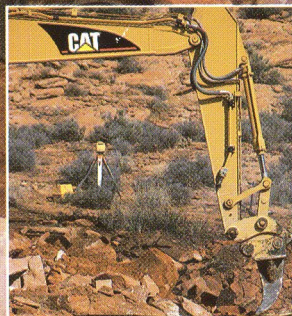
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**Wheeler**  
MACHINERY CO.

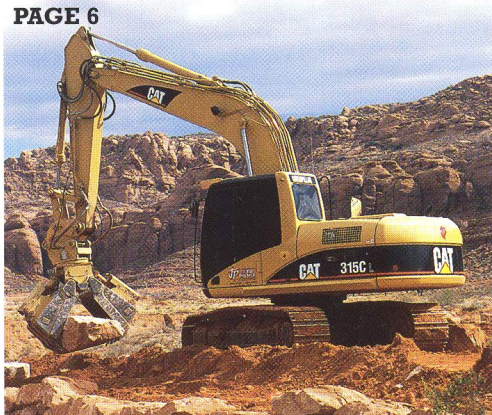




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*On Your Own* magazine offers information on equipment selection, application, operation and maintenance as well as news and tips on other subjects of interest to excavation contractors. If you have any ideas or questions, please send them to *On Your Own*, 21420 W. Greenfield Ave., New Berlin, WI 53146, or fax to (262) 650-9261.

Every effort has been made to assure specifications in this magazine are accurate. For latest machine specifications, consult with us, your Cat dealer. This magazine is published quarterly on behalf of Caterpillar and your Cat dealer by Northbrook Publishing, a division of Randall Publishing, Inc. Phone (262) 650-9260.

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Judd Palmer keeps a tight schedule. His customers depend on JP Excavating Inc., to get the job done right and on time. Palmer's crew of 12, with its fleet of Caterpillar excavators and backhoe loaders, is on the go from sunrise to sunset year-round working commercial and residential sites around St. George, Utah.

"Our schedule on any given day revolves on 15-minute intervals," Palmer explains as he maneuvers his pickup through morning rush-hour traffic to another job. "If we're down at all, it throws our schedule off for the rest of the week."

Maintaining that performance requires an efficient system of operation. It begins in Palmer's mobile office — the pickup cab — where his cell phone rings non-stop. During stops at job sites, he flips open his laptop, which is equipped with

a cell phone Internet connection and displays a spreadsheet listing the status of each job.

"We work with about 30 regular clients who give us their job schedules up to three weeks in advance," Palmer nods toward the computer. "We've built up a lot of trust, and they know to expect us when we say we'll be there."

### Dedicated Cat Work Tools

Organization and a systems approach is Palmer's credo. Each machine has a dedicated operator — and a dedicated set of Cat Work Tools (see sidebar). The Cat fleet consists of two 320C L Hydraulic Track Excavators, a 315C L Hydraulic Excavator, a versatile 304.5CR Mini Hydraulic Excavator, 420D and 416C Backhoe Loaders and a 938G Wheel Loader. Each cab is equipped to the operator's demands and includes AM/FM

stereo radio, air conditioning and fully tinted cab windows to keep out the hot Utah sun.

In keeping with the systems approach, each unit is transported on a dedicated 2-ton flatbed trailer that is equipped with every Cat Work Tool the machine uses — various rock buckets, grapples, rippers, hammers and compactors.

"At any jobsite, our operators are set up within five minutes," says Palmer. "With the hydraulic quick couplers [including the Cat exclusive Pin Grabber Plus on the excavators] we can switch back and forth from tool to tool in seconds for the duration of the job."

And, while each man has his own dedicated equipment system, each operator is also equipped with a personal handheld laser system. To ensure that the system operates smoothly, Palmer has invested in training each of his crew mem-

*JP Excavating, Inc. specializes in rock wall construction. Here a Cat 320C L equipped with grapple precisely places red sandstone rock at a new residential site.*





bers. Not only do they know what a quality job entails, but they have the quality Cat equipment to accomplish the task.

### **Pulverizing Red Rock**

This is Red Rock Country and it takes rugged Cat Work Tools to pulverize, break up, dig and move enormous boulders. Much of JP Excavating's work is the installation of retaining walls constructed from the area's natural red and white sandstone.

Creating the proper-sized rock for a wall requires hammering and ripping with the 320C L Excavators, as well as occasional blasting. The two excavators often work in tandem. One hammers and rips, then switches to a 48-inch-wide, heavy-duty rock bucket to move the rocky dirt. The other excavator, using a 42-inch-wide bucket with clamp, moves large boulders into place.

Operator James Jessup calls the hydraulic quick coupler "just awesome compared to any other I've ever used. The great thing about the Pin Grabber Plus is how tight it secures a work tool. It never loosens up and really holds the bucket, which makes all the difference when I'm doing precision grading with the bucket."

### **Stacking Rock**

At a residential site, Operator Neef Steed is using a hydraulic rotating clamshell grapple on his 315C L Excavator to gingerly stack rock into place on a decorative retaining wall. Rock wall work is Steed's specialty, and he spends nine to 10 hours a day in the cab of the 315C L stacking rocks.

"We're pretty picky about how our walls look," says Steed. "It's all in how you turn them and

lay them in. With this grapple I can whip them around to any position I want and then use it to lightly tap them into place."

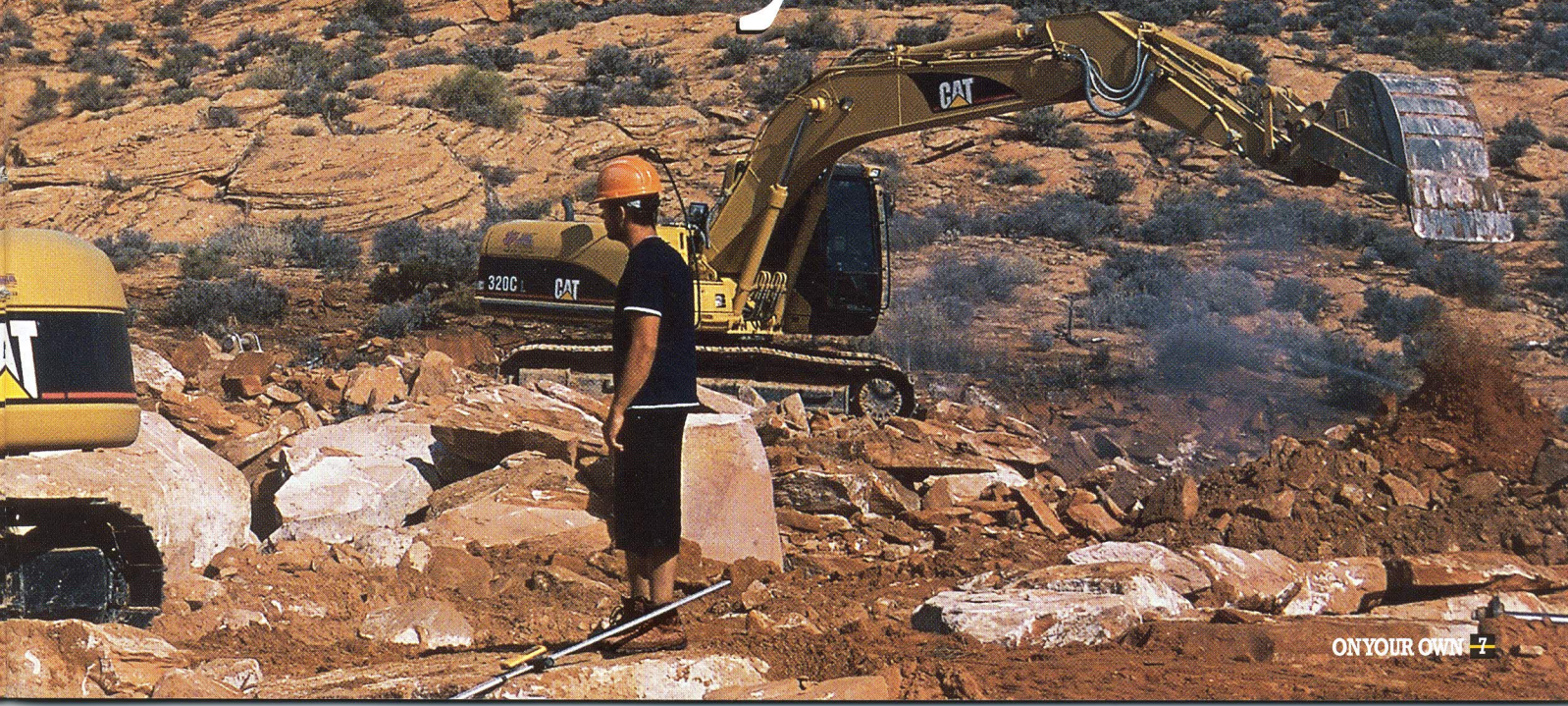
After 2,100 hours with the 315C L, Steed is duly impressed with the machine's smooth hydraulics. "There are no dead spots, no matter what your rpm or load is. That gives me precision control I need for shaping and placing rocks."

The machine's hydraulic cross-sensing system improves Steed's productivity with faster implement speeds and—even more importantly for his wall work—quicker, stronger pivot turns. Based on his joystick movement, an automatic boom and swing priority function selects the best work and power mode.

And, as with all of JP Excavating's latest excavators, five hydraulic

*Caterpillar fleet with wide array of Cat Work Tools improves Palmer Excavating Inc.'s., operations*

# licated Systems





pump flows on the 315C L can be preset on the monitor, eliminating the need to adjust the flow every time a tool is changed. The settings automatically provide Steed with the correct amount of flow for each work tool.

### Valuable Dealer Support

Because Palmer's fleet is scheduled out so tightly, service and support from his local Caterpillar dealer is extremely important. "If we have a problem we can have a Cat Field Service Technician onsite within an hour," he says. "Whether it's a simple fix or requires a loaner machine, the Cat dealership here in St. George has a full fleet to back me up."

That dealer support even extends to transportation when Palmer's job takes him out of state to nearby Arizona or Nevada. "Their drivers are all set up for getting machinery through the Port of Entry. They'll load our machine on a flatbed and move it through so our crews don't have to spend time dealing with it."

Palmer, who sees no business advantage of having a full shop and a crew mechanic, relies on his local dealer for regular service intervals. Using the S•O•S<sup>SM</sup> fluids analysis gives him a life cycle record for each machine. "My dealer service program assures a higher resale."

The value of a systems approach lies in Palmer's 30 regular clients continuing to hire JP Excavating for projects year-round. "My clients keep coming back to us because we're there when we say we'll be there and they know we have virtually no downtime." ■



### DID YOU KNOW?

#### A TOOL FOR EVERY TASK

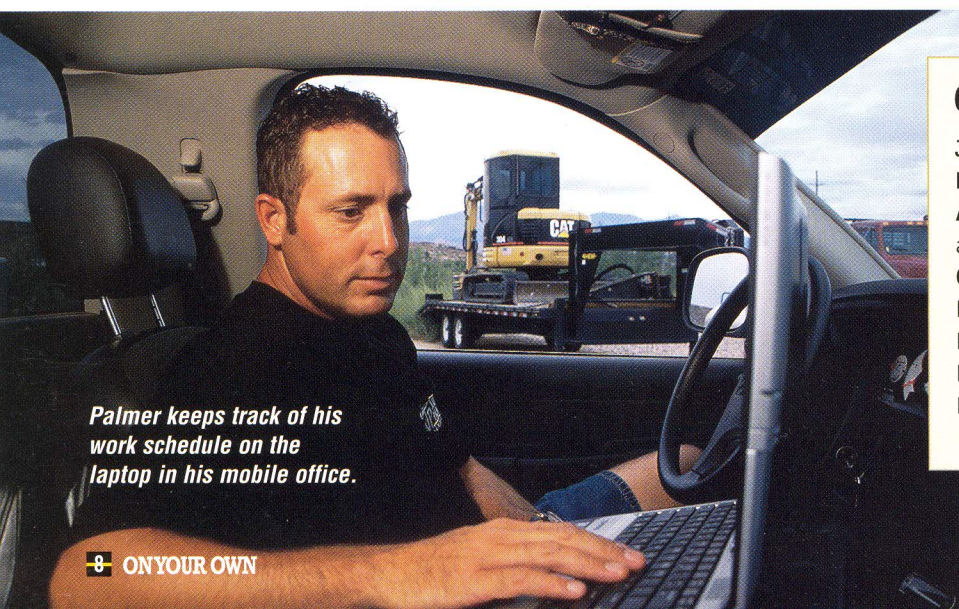
Whether you need an array of buckets, blades, grapples, forks, compactors, plows, rakes or rippers, Caterpillar makes a work tool suited to your application and your machine. There are access platforms for your telehandler, a trencher for your skid steer loader, asphalt cutters for your backhoe loader, wheel loader and integrated toolcarrier, and an auger for you skid steer loader or mini hydraulic excavator.

Caterpillar offers a wide variety of tools designed, engineered, tested and manufactured to work with Cat machines. They add versatility to your machine, which means less down time and higher productivity. Cat Work Tools are another way to maximize the return on your equipment investment.

Cat Work Tools are available at your Cat dealership and your local Cat Rental Store for short-term needs. Stop in today and see what Cat Work Tools can do for you.



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*Palmer keeps track of his work schedule on the laptop in his mobile office.*

### COMPANY PROFILE

**JP Excavating Inc.,** St. George, Utah

**Principals:** Judd and Michon Palmer

**Applications:** General Excavation and Engineering

**Cat Equipment Fleet:** two 320C L Hydraulic Track Excavators, 315C L Excavator, 304.5CR Mini Hydraulic Excavator, 420D and 416C Backhoe Loaders, 938G Wheel Loader