



BIG BOYS, BIG TOYS

Forty-four-year-old NASCAR driver Greg Biffle is the first to admit that playing with toys is still a priority in his life, despite juggling a busy racing schedule, time with his wife and daughter, a foundation for animals and a family business. But Biffle's not in the sandbox anymore. His "toys" have evolved from Tonka to pieces of heavy-duty construction and aggregate equipment – and the bigger, the better. Biffle grew up loving anything with a motor and wheels. But it wasn't until he started purchasing property in the southeastern United States that he thought about running the equipment himself – and his affinity for iron quickly grew. What started with a dozer soon developed into a considerable spread of crushing and screening equipment, which he used to landscape his 1,000-acre ranch in the mountains of North Carolina, as well as his home on Lake Norman.

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that I am, I thought, 'I'll just go take a trip up there to look at the mine.'" "The surface mine, located in Speedwell, Va., was just more than five acres, with about 60 percent of the rock mined. Already armed with several pieces of mining equipment, Biffle thought to himself, "I already have the equipment; I won't even have to buy anything. This will be fun." "And that's how naïve I was."

A NEW BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY

After Biffle purchased the permit and the land, he soon realized there was a market for the handsome natural stone that came from mountains of North Carolina and Virginia. He contacted his brother Jeff, who formerly worked in the structural steel industry in Washington, and hired him as Vice President of Operations and to run Triple B Stone. Biffle and his brother tried to use the equipment he already owned, but they quickly discovered that they could only dry screen the material in optimum conditions. "The material would have to be virgin material and super dry, and even then we were having trouble blinding the screens," he said. Knowing that they would have to invest in better equipment, Biffle and his brother met with KPI-JCI and Astec Mobile Screens Regional Sales Manager Leon Luadzers during CONEXPO-CON/AGG in 2010, where they were introduced to the Astec Industries family of companies. "We were after quality equipment, and we knew that KPI-JCI and Astec Mobile Screens was a leader in the business," Biffle said. "I'm also proud to drive American-made cars and support American-made products. But more than anything, I just really appreciate a highly-refined and engineered, quality piece of work. And of course, having factory support made a huge difference." Because Biffle was unable to get the material clean enough for landscaping, Luadzers suggested the KPI-JCI and Astec Mobile Screens twin blademill and RS1822PH portable triple-deck screen as a way to prep the material. "One of the problems Greg encountered early on was the need to re-wash the material twice, which added a lot of processing cost and time," Luadzers said. "There is a rule of thumb in aggregate processing that says you add at least \$.50 per ton each time you re-handle raw material." "We agreed that the best solution would be the KPI-JCI and Astec Mobile Screens 36"x19' twin blademill, which would pre-condition the minus





1-3/4" gravel and sand before sending the material to a new, larger wash screen. The blademill would break up soluble mud and clays through its combination of double-pitch spirals and paddles, which agitate the gravel and sand. This function was critical in producing an end product free of mud and clay balls." The twin blademill was followed by a KPI-JCI and Astec Mobile Screens RS1822PH portable plant, which consists of a 6'x16' triple-deck horizontal vibrating screen with spray pipes on all three decks. This plant produces four washed products, including 1 3/4" x 3/4", 3/4" x 1/2", pea gravel and sand. A KPI-JCI and Astec Mobile Screens 36" twin sand prep sand screw is mounted below the screen to clean and dewater the sand. "Once we did that, once we conceded that it was the only way we'd be able to do this operation, that's when our success came," Biffle said.

A LIFELONG LEARNER

Biffle admits it's been a long journey full of trial and error to get Triple B Stone to the point where it is today. Now, the company has 20 acres permitted to mine, and hopes to sell 30,000-50,000 tons of material in 2013. Biffle points to his early start working for his parents' steel business in Washington as a pre-teen as the main reason behind his entrepreneurial spirit. "I wasn't handed anything," Biffle said. "Shoot, as a kid, I worked for my parents and saved my money so I could buy my first motorcycle. I really took to that mindset- that hard work and dedication would get you what you wanted." While he laughingly acknowledges that it may have been easier to simply mine his own river rock and quit the business, anyone who follows NASCAR knows that Greg Biffle is anything but a quitter. "Nobody wants to lose. Nobody wants to be defeated," he said. "Once I had my mind set to it, I decided I was going to make this process work. I wasn't going to throw in the towel. And that probably hurt me a little bit, how stubborn I am, but today, it's helped me create new ventures." That same determinedness that wins Biffle races also helped him flourish in an industry he knew little about. With his brother Jeff managing the day-to-day operations, Biffle feels confident that they've mastered the process and are set up to be successful. "The operation is running like a Swiss watch," he said. "We are very busy producing material and our sales are strong right now. Things are running really, really smoothly." But even though he's not physically on location day to day

– after all, he’s got races to win – don’t think Biffle is ever far away from Triple B Stone. He visits the site at least once a month, and when he’s on the road, he’s found a way to stay in tune with the daily operations. “I put cameras up at the mine so I can see on my laptop or my phone whether the machines are running or not,” he confesses. “And really, it’s only for my pleasure. I take a lot of pride in it. We worked really hard on it, and I like to be able to see it. I may not be able to be there every day, but this way, I get to experience a little part of it.”

