The Temsa TS 45 hits the Road

CH Bus Sales reviews its well-laid rollout and plan for the future

By David Hubbard

Planning and development of the Temsa TS 45, built in Turkey by Temsa Global expressly for the North American market, has progressed at a steady crescendo over the past two years. The rollout continues as CH Bus Sales, Faribault, MN, has hit the road with its demo coaches, giving operators across the country an opportunity to slide behind the wheel for a test drive and close-up look inside and out.

In June the company hosted an outing and vehicle demonstration in Faribault for a group of operators. Though their time with the coach was brief, several company owners were able to offer BUsiRide their first impressions of the TS 45.

“At this time, we have demo coaches in all of our sales regions,” says CH Bus Sales Executive Vice President of Sales and Service Diane Geiger. “We also are beginning to leave coaches with interested operators. Though Temsa is a reputable brand worldwide, a lot of operators want to get the coach into their own shops with their mechanics, put it on the lift and give it a good going over. This is their first time to see this new model and they want to draw their own conclusions.”

The 45-foot, 56-passenger coach up for review features Temsa’s hallmark stainless steel integral monocoque construction. The powertrain is a 425 HP ISX Cummins engine and B500 Generation 5 hallmark stainless steel integral monocoque construction.

The CH Bus Sales and Temsa teams raised a toast and launched the TS 45 at ABA Marketplace in January. The CH Bus Sales reported back that the TS 45 is also available with CH Bus Sales says this change has been made.

Other important safety features include the side windows, tempered and laminated for safety that will not blow out in an accident. CH Bus Sales is the only distributor to offer these windows as standard.

Dale Streif, owner and president of Vandalia Bus Lines, Caseyville, IL, was on hand to drive the TS 45 for the first time, carrying on a family tradition within his company of being the first operator to purchase new model coaches. His father, Leon Streif, bought the first Van Hool coach that arrived in this country. Vandalia’s name is on the first TS 45 sold, which will be delivered to Streif later this month.

“It just makes sense for us to be at the front of the line for the Temsa TS 45,” Streif says. “We know everyone at CH Bus Sales and we’ve been very pleased with the quality and performance of our TS 35 and TS 30 coaches over the last three years.”

Streif says when he first drove the coach, though only for a short distance, he knew he had made a good decision.

“The design and quality is impressive and the handling is outstanding,” he says. “If this coach compares with our live TS 35s over the next several years there won’t be any issues.”

In his stint in the driver’s seat, Craig Osborne, safety manager and driver for Northfield Lines, Northfield, MN, found the cab of this 45 to be very operator friendly, which he says is of utmost importance to him as a driver trainer.

He noted how a driver new to the coach can identify the switches by both symbol and lettering, lettering for definition, symbols for quick recognition.

“This makes it much easier for drivers learning the bus and watching the road at the same time,” he says. “This should prove very helpful when it comes to training.”

Osborne says when he drove the coach he felt a connection with the road that perhaps only an experienced coach driver could understand.

“In traffic, I immediately felt very comfortable behind the wheel — and safe,” he says. “It’s hard to explain unless you are a driver, but I didn’t feel as if I was floating down the highway. I was connected with the pavement and the coach was very responsive. The stability is unbelievable.”

Asked if there is anything about the TS 45 he might change, Osborne pointed to the review mirrors.

“The side mirrors are more the European style that extend down from the top of the coach,” he says. “I like the style, but on this coach, Temsa has compacted and narrowed them some. For me personally, I found myself groping for a better view. We send our coaches into larger cities — New York, Chicago, Boston, New Orleans — where drivers do a lot of tight maneuvering through tight turning situations in heavy traffic. I would like it if the mirrors were just a little bigger.”

CH Bus Sales reported back that the TS 45 is also available with upright mirrors for those customers who prefer uprights.

Rick Armes, a maintenance technician for CH Bus Sales, was actually the first to take the TS 45 out on the long haul. Following ABA Marketplace and UMA Motorcoach EXPO, he made a 3,000-mile swing through the western states that included a stop in Phoenix, where BUsiRide heard his early impressions of the newest Temsa model.

In this case, Temsa TS 45 VIN No. 3.

“All around, I have found the TS 45 very quiet riding and exceptionally easy to drive,” he says. “Before I set out on this trip, people told me the mountains in California would be the biggest test of the coach. They say it would be a miracle if I could climb at any more than 45 mph. But this coach has power. Understanding, of course, that I wasn’t carrying a full passenger load, I ran the grades at around 70 mph.”

Coming down the mountains, Armes says he was able to cruise between 65 and 70 mph with the engine brake set at level one.

“Driving through Rhyolite, CA, along 140 I encountered a major dust storm,” he says. “I saw quite a few vehicles getting tossed around, but with this coach a little shorter at 11-foot 6-inches, the handling was very stable in the high winds.”

Speaking to features on the coach, Armes commented on the spaciousness and accessibility of the driver’s seat and cockpit.

“I am a bigger guy and this is the roomiest I have experienced in any coach,” he says. “The slightly curved dash makes the switches very accessible. Temsa was able to find space and still get everything within reach.”

Another feature that caught Armes’ attention was the backup sensors in addition to the backup camera.

“If the driver is not watching the camera, he receives a very loud audible warning to check the camera,” Armes says. “It is not always necessary to keep an eye on the camera. The same alert goes for the TS 45 at ABA Marketplace in January.

Behind the wheel of the TS 45 for the first time, Streif says he liked the look of the front of the coach.

“The dashboard is well organized, the gauges and switches easy to read with no more than needed,” he says. “The fact that the driver sits...
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CH Bus Sales maintenance tech Rick Armes put the TS 45 VIN 3 to the test on a 3,000-mile swing through the western states.

a little higher in the cockpit is an advantage. The extra height improves visibility and puts him closer to eye level with the passengers rather than sitting down low in the front.”

Streif says the TS 45 will mark the company's first experience with a steer tag axle.

"With the near steer tag, the coach is easier to maneuver," he says. “But we’ll have to see how the drivers adjust to it, as the back swings out a little quicker. I really like the backup sensors as standard. Coaches are becoming more like automobiles with all the OEM safety features.”

Streif also commented on the fact that the windows are all one size. Besides the sleek look, he says the uniformity alleviates the worry of ordering and stocking several different sizes of glass.

Foley reports that orders placed throughout the launch and rollout have totaled nearly 50 vehicles, with customer deliveries starting in August.

“As everyone knows, building a motorcoach distribution organization takes time, and we can’t get everything in place overnight," he says. “But anyone who has watched us closely over the last couple of years can see we have a strategic plan to methodically build a support system and we have stuck to it. With our newest model in full production, we are in a position to offer very good technical and service support, as well as for parts and warranty.”

With very experienced management and staff working out of CH Bus Sales’ Orlando location to address all aftermarket, parts and warranty service, Foley laid out his company’s plan for growth in service and support.

“We have three regional service technicians working out of service vehicles, led by Marvin Borntrager, directory of Warranty and Technical Services, and we will be adding more in the near future,” Foley says. “We have a product specialist and trainer, Elmer Holz, and we also work with a great number of service providers.”

In addition to the Orlando Service Center, this year CH Bus Sales opened another service center in the Dallas-Ft. Worth, TX, area, and over the next two years will establish service locations in California and the Northeast to serve operators who do not operate their own maintenance facilities.

Foley says the company's initial coach sales were to operators who purchase new equipment and typically operate their own shops for their own maintenance and repair.

“As long as we provide technical and parts support, and maintain a 24/7 call center, most of our customers prefer to work on their coaches in their own shops,” Foley says. “But for those who don’t, we work with a number of service providers that are located in or near the larger metro areas.”

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