

cranes & access



December/January 2023 Vol.25 issue 8

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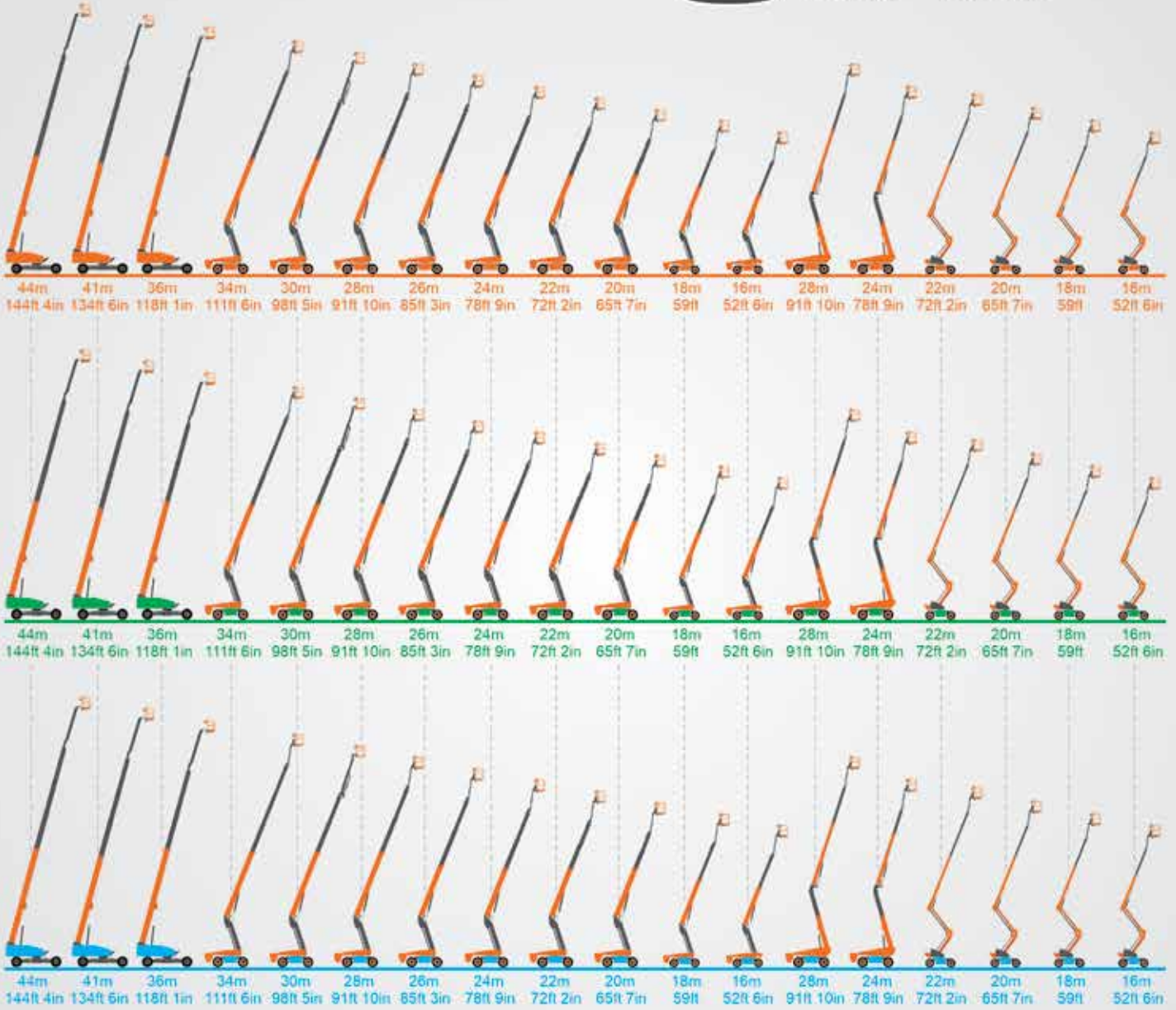
**TRUCK
MOUNTED
CRANES**

**LOOK BACK
AT 2023**

**ANNUAL RENTAL
RATE SURVEY
MAST BOOMS**



Heavy Loading
250kg - 454kg
551lb - 1000lb



Working Height

Modular Boom Series

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Standard Container Transport For The Full Range



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One of the major downsides of running specialist, low volume equipment is that it can be very expensive to operate, maintain and repair. The truck mounted crane benefits from a standard commercial chassis or running gear which can be a major benefit. We take a look at the various sectors of this changing market.

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Crane, access and telehandler rental companies are facing a shortage of labour, rising equipment and running costs and long lead times for new machines. How have the rates fared during this time? Find out in this year's comprehensive Rental Rate Guide survey.

MAST BOOMS 41

If you are looking for a machine with a working height of up to about 12 metres, an outreach of a few metres, the ability to slew and with compact dimensions, there is really only one choice. We take a look at the increasingly popular mast boom.

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2023 has been a trying year mainly dominated by meteorological and geopolitical events. However there has also been massive interest in Space and the Moon, Artificial Intelligence as well as the developing unrest in the Middle East. We review both the industry and world highlights in another very eventful year!

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ON THE COVER

A Liebherr L1-24 self erecting tower crane has been helping remove the organ pipes during the renovation of the world's largest Catholic church organ St Stephan's, Passau, Germany. The organ has 17,974 pipes, the largest is more than 11 metres long and weighs 306kg.



IN THE NEXT ISSUE Scheduled for publication in early March, the next issue of Cranes & Access will include features on Heavy & Alternative lifting, Rough Terrain cranes, Boom lifts, Battery developments and a review of the ARA show in New Orleans, USA. If you have any contributions or suggestions to make or are interested in advertising in this issue, please contact our editorial or sales teams.



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COMMENT

A HAPPY NEW YEAR?

It only seems like yesterday that we were enjoying Christmas and New Year celebrations, yet here we are almost at the end of January and well into 2024.

This issue includes our annual UK and Ireland Rental Rate Guide survey, which gives a snapshot of the crane, access and telehandler rental industry at the end of 2023. Many thanks again to all those companies that participated, not only on supplying rates and information, but also for the comments - they were, as ever, very enlightening. The figures show a trend, while the comments are personal and from the heart, in the same way as a review on TrustPilot or Tripadvisor can give so much more insight than just an average 4/5 score.

Related to the comments - but on a global rather than UK scale - is the current poll on www.vertikal.net which asks the question: 'How do you feel about your company's and the lifting industry's prospects for 2024?' At the moment 46% of respondents are positive, 35% neutral and 18% negative. Not the greatest 'review' score and probably not one that would make you want to stay in a certain hotel or visit a particular restaurant.

The rental industry is a barometer of the economy, if you want a head's up on what's on the economic horizon, take a look at the telehandler, crane and access rental markets because this type of equipment arrives on site after the earthworks and therefore flags potential changes in activity. The Rental Guide comments can be really telling, and all too often do not match the current data.

Fortunately, all respondents appear busy with enough work, however all are seriously worried about rising capital investment costs as well as increasing labour rates and overheads etc... Rental rates may have increased over recent months, but they are still way too low.

"There are still too many companies not getting the right return on their investment. If things slow down, a lot of them will experience financial difficulties," was how one respondent put it.

The major issue with the UK's specialist rental

industry is that it tends to lack the confidence to charge enough for a service that can be high risk, while involving a huge capital outlay. It is all too easy to drop the rate to win a job but so hard to increase it later on.

Over the past year many rental companies across the lifting sector have successfully discussed rate increases with key customers. However, all too often weaker competitors see this as an opportunity to undercut the increase. A cooling of the market would see a further loss of confidence with reduced pricing purely to gain utilisation.

Another issue is the growth of 'rehire brokers' playing off one rental company against another. However, it is the seismic shift towards Chinese manufacturers with possibly lower residual values that is causing some rental companies to become nervous and re-evaluate rental rates. High residual values have allowed companies offering low rates to still come out on top at the back end of the ownership cycle. We have been here before - people used to compare JLG and Genie with Haulotte and other emerging brands - but that has all changed, while the same was said about the first Japanese truck cranes to arrive on these shores.

As one respondent put it: "Dingli, LGMG, Sinoboom and Zoomlion etc have added more than 10,000 units into the UK & Ireland over the past couple of years. This has created a ticking timebomb as residual values are significantly lower - at least for the moment. Back end cash will be minimal unless the used market changes its mind on this equipment." This factor is now moving into the crane market with the arrival of Sany and XCMG where residual values are even more critical.

All in all, the Rental Rate Guide survey is - like the website poll - cautiously positive. However, 2024 is looking set to be a very interesting year!

Mark Darwin

Comment and feedback is most welcome via post, email, fax or phone stating if we may publish them or not: editor@vertikal.net