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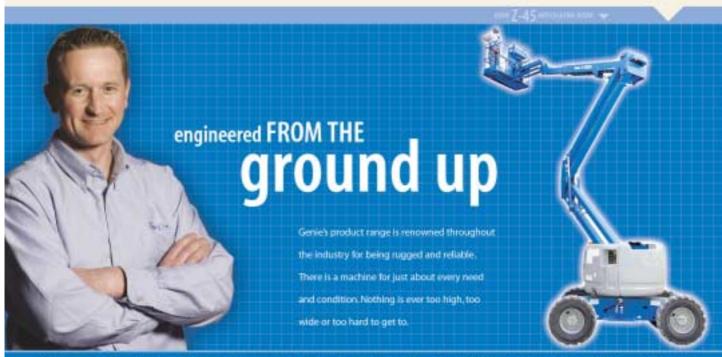
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ower Lighter Smaller Cheaper The new Work at Height Rules have encouraged, or in some

cases, forced, many ladder and staging users to reconsider the equipment they use to carry out routine work at height. This in turn is spurring on the development and use of a wide range of access equipment with lower heights, lighter weights, simpler construction and lower cost.

The products that are beginning to come to the fore range from a wide array of podium steps up through portable push around lifts to self propelled lifts with mast type lift mechanisms, compact dimensions and lower gross vehicle weights.

Micro Masts

The market for the smallest of self propelled lifts first took off in Japan in the late 80's and early 90's. Space has always been at a premium in Japan and it seems that there was a good deal of pent up demand for such compact lifts with platform heights of between 1.5 and four metres.

The TL11 from the mid to late 80's was well ahead of its time



Demand in the early 90's was so strong that a number of rental companies, including Tokyo Rentals, approached UpRight to design such a lift using the same technology as it used in its small scissor lifts. UpRight had tested this market some years before with a product it called the T11, which offered a 3.3 metre platform height. The TL11 was a flop, most likely due to being too far ahead of its time and too expensive.



The TL11 was also unusual in that it had a seat...and a mechanical steering system

Its mechanical tiller bar steering system would also not have helped. One feature it did sport that is yet to be repeated on a volume aerial lift was a fold down operator's seat.

After a couple of prototypes UpRight launched the 3.8 metre platform height TM12 in 1994. The product, which it still produces in relatively high volume, has changed little since then, (it is now 3.6m). Shortly after the TM12 went into production, the aerial lift market in Japan went into a long period of decline. However the concept of a six metre working height self propelled lift, with a 630 kgs gross weight, 1.3 metre overall length and 760mm width, caught the imagination of a number of rental companies around the world.

considered that it was better to carry on buying 20 ft full size scissors (19ft micro scissors had not yet caught on), thus covering both six and eight metre work height applications. However in Europe one company in particular, Kranab of Sweden, not only spotted the potential for the TM12, but owner Johnny Johansson was also prepared to put his money where

his mouth was and purchase enough of them to create a small local market.

Toucan

Junior is a solid

machine

personnel lifts

The concept took off in a major way and today Sweden has the greatest penetration of this type of lift anywhere. The concept has spread but it is only recently that such platforms have started to gain a toe hold in the UK and Ireland.







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The perfect spec

We asked a number of users to forget, for a moment, the realities of what is available and practical and state what they considered to be the ideal self propelled mast lift. The following specifications are a result of that research:

Platform height 15ft/5m (ideally two models, 12ft/4m and 15ft/5m)

Maximum weight 630- 680 kgs

Overall length 1,300 – 1,380 mm

Maximum width 760 mm

Turning radius 0 (or as small as possible)

Given that this is sadly not a perfect world and that current regulations make the above specification a bit of a challenge (The old TL11 met it in full). Most agreed that they would prefer a specification as close to this as possible. If a unit is heavier or longer, then it would help if items such as entry steps and batteries could be removed to meet the above weight and length requirements for transport in small elevators, at least on a 12ft model. Once this type of lift exceeds a gross weight of 1,000kgs and a 1,500mm overall length it becomes far less attractive. It seems that after the 630/680kg elevator the next elevator size up for offices or small hotels tends to have a 1,000 kgs safe capacity, with a dimension of 1.6 metres wall to wall, or wall to door.



Some time after the TM12 was launched, Genie introduced its Runabout range, which is now the top selling product by far. The fact that the Runabout uses an aluminium mast design from the Genie portable AWP range of lifts means that it has not been accepted as a TM12 alternative in some markets, such as Scandinavia. Saying this, it has outsold the UpRight many times over and offers the benefit of a 15ft/4.5m version, the GR15. The complete range of three models runs from the GR12 to the GR20. In the UK, HSS originally championed the Runabout in its fleet and was more recently joined by Nationwide, which has added well over 100 units in the past nine months.

The Runabout GR12 and 15 presses all the right buttons, with a 1.35m overall length, 750mm width and 717kg gross weight for the 12. The 15 is at the top end of the weight limit at 995kgs but it can still ride a one tonne elevator so...

The GR20 is well over 1,000kgs which is far from practical but it also has a high stowed height of 1.98m, however if you need a short, relatively light 20ft machine the GR20 could be ideal.

JLG also produces a range of aluminium masted self propelled lifts, including a first class French built product, the Toucan Junior, that it acquired with the Grove Manlift takeover. The first Toucan Juniors were not a success, due largely to their castor type steering axle. The axle was redesigned and existing units recalled and reworked. The lift was then relaunched with a heavy duty front axle. The latest version is a much better product than the market seems to appreciate.

More recently the company has launched a version it calls the Toucan Duo, this unit has been designed with retail and warehousing applications in mind. Other JLG models contending this market include the DVL, DVSP and



SVP10 ranges, all of which are made in North America. The DVL and DVSP are clearly closer to the company's portable push around lifts than they are to its scissor lift models. With castors on the front axle they lend themselves to institutional and industrial applications only. JLG has been working on a new product that resembles the UpRight TM12; units have been out with distributors for evaluation and testing for several months now. JLG would not be drawn on when we might expect the final production units to start shipping, but expect to see them early in the new year, at least in North America. (See box story) One major advantage of both the Genie and JLG aluminium mast units is that they offer 15ft and 20ft platform height options. For many applications 12ft is marginally too short. The 15ft

The Star is steel

capability is a popular feature.

Haulotte entered the market a few years back with its all steel Star 6. While it is a nice machine with

personnel lifts

smooth controls and a good sized basket, it has not sold quite as well as Haulotte might have hoped. One reason for this might be the fact that it has a centrally mounted mast. This makes it difficult to work over the front of the machine, although it this is known then the work can always be approached from the other direction, to give a full working frontage. The unit is also slightly on the long side at 1.65metres, the same as a 10ft scissor lift keeping it out of some elevators.

Haulotte is likely to "re-visit" this type of machine in the future, but are most likely fully absorbed at present, introducing more profitable larger booms and concentrating its industrial and institutional efforts on the larger Star products which fall into the mast boom category.



At APEX the company introduced a full range of portable push around lifts, under the Quick Up name with platform heights of between 4.5 and 12 metres.

As these units are assembled in Korea, it is possible that Haulotte will follow JLG and Genie's lead, using the aluminium mast on a new self propelled model?



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Italian flair

A company that is beginning to do well in the UK and in Scandinavia. is Italian based Bravi. Represented by APS in the UK and Ireland, the company produces a range of compact lifts that use an aluminium box section mast. While it does not meet the heavy duty steel construction that some buyers prefer, each model offers phenomenal gradeability of up to 40 percent! And most models boast a large platform that thanks to dual extensions can retract into a compact package. The smallest model, the Lui Mini or Leonardo, as it is also known, with its 2.9 metre platform height, offers an overall length of just over 1.1 metres a width of 750mm and best of all a gross weight of only 495 kgs. The platform features dual extensions which provide an extended length of almost 1.7 metres, plenty of room to move about in.



The Bravi Mini is unusual in that its light weight and high gradeability allow it to climb steps and reach most indoor areas Bravi also produce a slim version at 450mm wide, however the laws of physics dictate that its weight rises to 850kgs.

The larger Lui 400 offers a 12ft/4.1 metre platform height, but is over 1,000kgs, which for many users of these smaller lifts is simply too heavy.

Another innovative Italian company in this area is Faraone, it builds a 13ft/4 metre platform height machine, the PKS 600, which weighs 643kgs and is 1.47 metres long, more than

acceptable for larger elevators

although a tad longer than ideal.

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JLG to launch new 12ft mast lift

JLG is currently going through an extended test and evaluation process for a new micro lift using a telescopic steel box section mast type lift mechanism. The new model is expected to carry the designation 1230ES, signifying Electric Scissor with 12ft platform

height. The prototype features a 1,359mm overall length and 722mm overall width, with a gross weight of 725 kgs.

The new model looks very much like a TM12 clone, although JLG has introduced a number of significant differentials and improvements, such as direct electric drive, a multi-stage lift cylinder - avoiding the need for chains, excellent access to components, a two piece saloon style gate and a marginally lower overall weight.

Having managed to achieve 12 ft with a three section mast(the TM12 is four section), JLG could add a fourth section in order to create a 15ft version, in order to combat the most popular model in the Genie Runabout range.

The lift is at a prototype stage of course and so may well change prior to launch, probably at the ARA in February.



Unofficial pictures of the pre production JLG 1230ES



Something new something different

Earlier this year at the London Rental show, NSG launched what it calls the Pop Up. The company has concentrated on driving down the cost of a powered lift for the lower working heights. Given that the HSE has identified that a very high percentage of serious injuries resulting from falls are from heights of under two metres (what it calls "head height") the company is likely to have a winner on its hands.

The Pop Up is essentially a small ultra compact, two man battery powered push around scissor lift with a platform height of just over 5ft/1.63metres, 1.1 metres length, 700mm width and best of all only weighs 270kgs. With a price for volume buyers as low as £3,500 it offers a real powered alternative to podium steps or staging.



The Pop Up takes powered access into new areas.

Something lower but lighter

The smaller lifts, such as the Pop Up and the smallest Bravi, could well be the ideal lift for general rental and tool hire stores. Given their compact dimensions and low cost, they could also be the product that takes powered access into these locations. The European market for powered access still has a long way to go in terms of market penetration. One of the greatest drivers for increased usage is easy local availability.

Slightly higher than the Pop Up, at 10ft/3 metres platform height is the American made HyBrid from Custom lift. The company is looking to launch it on the European market later this year, it uses a standard scissor type structure, and is self propelled. With a gross weight of under 550kgs and a good sized deck with roll out extension is it attractive. However with an overall length of over 1.6 metres it is a little long for some

applications.



