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WHY GO ANYWHERE ELSE?









Spiders are buzz

Over the past few years spider lifts have become one of the most exciting and innovative sectors of the aerial lift market. Although one or two Chinese manufacturers have dipped their toe in the market, European companies dominate the market with more than 98 percent of all spider lifts shipped last year coming from - at the last count - 26 European producers. There has been a lot of activity over the past year or so, with at least one new entrant, two takeovers, lots of new models and some major new fleet investments, so it is difficult to know where to start.

It is always interesting to cover a new entrant into the market, particularly when it is an established manufacturer branching out into a completely new sector. The latest to enter the spider lift arena is Palfinger which took many by surprise when it launched the 15 metre P150 AJTK at Bauma last April. In hindsight, the addition of a new spider range was fairly predictable following the acquisition in 2013 of a controlling stake in SkyAccess rebranding it as Palfinger Italia. Its aim was to design and produce a more cost-effective, simpler range of small truck mounted platforms to take on the cost-competitive Italian-built products mounted on 3.5 tonne chassis, the traditional route into the spider lift market.

At the same time fellow German truck mounted platform manufacturer and arch rival Ruthmann also announced its entry into the spider lift market, taking a 60 percent stake in Italy's Marti group, owner of Bluelift spider lifts and RAM 3.5 tonne truck mounts. Given the copy-cat rivalry between the two companies, the news was almost inevitable!

The P150 AJTK is a typical smaller 'Italian' spider with an overall width of 800mm and capable of clearing a two metre overhead restriction. Features include a two-entry point, side opening basket with retractable steps and power is either diesel, petrol or electric. Its unusual tow hook option can be used to attach a trailer for tools, work equipment or materials.

A year on and Palfinger is adding a second model to the range - the 17.7 metre working height P180 AJTK. According to Palfinger Italia's managing director Paolo Balugani, the 15 metre P150 is now in production and two further models will follow the P180 - with 21 and





25 metre working heights - which will complete the range. The fourmodel range will use the basic lift mechanisms and components from its 3.5 tonne Smart truck mount line. The P150 and P180 both feature dual sigma type risers, two and three section telescopic booms and articulated jibs. Booms, cylinders and major components will be manufactured by Palfinger around Europe, mostly at its facilities in Bulgaria, with assembly at Palfinger Italia's head office in Modena, northern Italy.

But what about the 30 metre plus market?

Unlike Ruthmann and Bluelift which has a wider existing range - from 12 to 26 metres - Palfinger Italia surprised everyone last September by signing an agreement with fellow countryman Palazzani to provide branded spider lifts above 25 metres with key changes to differentiate between the products that the two companies sell. This could potentially mean a further 10 Palfinger spider lift models, ranging Palazzani will provide branded spider lifts above 25 metres to Palfinger

from 27 to 52 metres. Although this looks like a win-win situation for both Palfinger and Palazzani, Palfinger will have to be very careful that it maintains its level of product support that customers have come to expect with its other products. JLG for example, also followed the badging route for its range of spiders working with the leading spider lift manufacturer Hinowa. While Hinowa has a very good reputation for product support, JLG still had to invest heavily to ensure that all of its aftersales departments supported its spider lift range in exactly the same way as for the products it manufactures itself, a major undertaking.

Teupen Puma

Although the Puma 42GTX was launched just over a year ago it would be remiss not to mention what is probably the most unusual and interesting spider lift produced so far. The Puma combines the articulated boom and frame superstructure from the 40 metre Teupen Leo40GT spider lift, mated

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The Teupen Puma 42GTX is probably the most unusual and interesting spider lift ever produced

to the Swiss-built Menzi Muck M545 4x4 self-levelling walking spider excavator chassis. The end result is an amazing, go-anywhere platform with 42.7 metres working height, 16.7 metres outreach and a maximum capacity of 400kg - 300kg at maximum outreach.

The lift uses the twin telescopic booms with four lower riser sections and a three section top boom plus short articulating jib. Weighing 17.6 tonnes the Puma has a travel speed of 10kph and can wade through 1.2 metres depth of water.

Overall dimensions are 9.2 metres long, 2.48 metres wide and three metres high. The Puma - developed in partnership with four prospective buyers - can also be used with a reduced working height of 29.7 metres as a fully self-propelled boom lift. In this configuration the chassis is levelled with all four wheels operating at the same level. This would be something like JLG's new auto levelling boom concept displayed at Conexpo which uses a JLG 460J superstructure mated with a self-levelling chassis capable of levelling.



On the Puma 42GTX the boom pivot point is located onto a patented adapter that connects to the standard excavator pivot and raises the boom clear of the machine and its moving legs. This allows a high degree of articulation so the unit can travel, walk and climb over all manner of terrain with the centre of gravity moving freely between the four wheels to ensure ideal balance and safety. The current chassis will allow for further models to be developed up to about 54 metres.

Full controls are located in the platform and all electronics and systems are Teupen designed and assembled and fully integrated. The technology includes automatic boom stow and return along with full diagnostics on a large in-cab screen.

The Puma 42GTX is not cheap costing about twice that of a Teupen Leo40 spider lift and is aimed squarely at a variety of specialist applications, from remote pylon replacement and repair, tree maintenance along railway lines and cuttings to working on steep slopes, cliffs, quarries or in ports - anything on rough and/or hard to reach terrain.

One of the first companies to purchase the Puma is the UK's largest specialist spider lift rental company Higher Access which was acquired by rental group Vp at about the same time. Higher Access initially took delivery of two Pumas, part of the 10-15 or so anticipated annual worldwide sales forecast by Teupen.

As well as the Puma, Teupen has five new T-series models from the 19.2 metre Leo19T to the 35 metre Leo35T. All are available with its latest high strength steel booms, with all cables, hoses and hydraulic cylinders routed internally - on a 1.58 metre wide chassis. The three largest models - the Leo27T, Leo31T and Leo35T - will replace the Leo25Tplus, Leo30T and Leo36T. The new T-series Teupens have high strength steel booms, with all cables, hoses and hydraulic cylinders routed internally.

All-new T series lifts have a 250kg maximum platform capacity with the Leo35T having a maximum outreach of 19.9 metres with 80kg. Other features include height and width adjustable tracks - hydraulic adjustment is optional. This feature, previously only available on the larger GT models, is now also available on the Leo18GTplus. Teupen will also launch the Leo 21GT later in the year, again with 250kg platform capacity and 12 metres maximum outreach.

Why are spider lifts becoming so popular?

With its rubber non-marking tracks, variable widths, levelling capability and multiple power sources, you might be forgiven for thinking that

spider lifts

the spider lift is a 'jack of all trades' platform, suggesting that it only does everything adequately but this could not be farther from the truth and is more than a little unfair as the spider lift is actually the best machine for so many applications and apart from the needs of its outriggers, has very few down sides.

Often the main problem for many mobile work platforms is getting close to the point of work. The spider lift's compact dimensions and low weight not only helps make it easier to transport - with models up to about 22 metres able to be towed behind a 4x4 on a standard equipment trailer - but it also means that it is also able to travel down narrow aisles or passageways, through standard doors, up and down stairs and steep inclines and can cross some of the roughest terrain. And then once in position the outriggers can level the machine up even on very significant slopes. One of the spider lift's few downsides is that while it can drive into very tight situations, it does need considerable space to deploy its legs, although models with variable leg positions help with this. Spider lifts are also among the first aerial work platforms to incorporate lithium ion battery power, often in conjunction with an internal combustion engine to create a type of hybrid machine.

When working indoors their relatively low weight and crawler undercarriage results in a low ground bearing pressure and the non-marking tracks allows them to



operate without damaging delicate floors or surfaces. This go anywhere ability means that the spider lift is becoming the platform of choice for a number of applications from window installation to bridge inspection and tree care particularly with local authorities and public utilities.

Delivery safety issues

As IPAF accident statistics reflect, loading and unloading platforms is the most dangerous activity when it comes to injuries. Spider lifts - due to their narrow stowed width and relatively high centre of gravity - are particularly prone to toppling over sideways, particularly when travelling down ramps and across slopes. A classic example of this went before the UK courts last September when company director Kenneth Thelwal was jailed for 12 months, following the overturn of one of the company's 18 metre spider lifts in January 2014. The machine landed on delivery driver Paul Williamson as he walked alongside the lift using the remote controls to track it to his truck. The investigation revealed that Williamson had not been adequately trained in the use of ramps, the delivery truck or for the new spider lift. The gradient of the ramps were greater than the manufacturer's specification and they were not properly secured to the truck.

Cta

Rampless loading/unloading

One solution to the problem of loading and unloading larger spider lifts adopted by companies such as Ommelift, TCA, Teupen and more recently CMC are high lift, high clearance outriggers which raise the machine to a sufficient height and width to allow a trailer to be reversed underneath so that it can then lower itself onto the truck bed. To unload the process is simply reversed.

Teupen has taken this one step further with its purpose-built transport frame which can be specified for transport vehicles up to 10 tonne GVW. CMC has recently launched a new self-loading outrigger system for its 32 metre S32 spider lift. The design incorporates 425mm long pinned extensions which fit within in the lift's outrigger legs to give the machine additional jacking height up to a clear under track height of 1.3 metres with sufficient width to allow a trailer to be reversed underneath.

The leg extensions - made from high strength steel - are connected with two pins on each leg and an internal retention cable. A system of waterproof magnetic safety sensors prevents the machine's boom from operating with the extensions extended in what the company refers to as 'Auto Loading' mode.



New entry level Hinowa

Hinowa is set to launch its new 13.3 metre Lightlift 13.70 Performance IIIS at Apex and Vertikal Days this month. At the bottom end of the spider lift working height range, the new model is entering an interesting sector that appears to be regaining popularity. When spider lifts first appeared on the market 12 to 14 metre machines were the big sellers, but when manufacturers began to offer an extra boom section to take the work height to 15 to 17 metres, sales of the smaller units dried up. With new features and a more mature market, buyers are rediscovering the smaller machines, which are still more than capable of handling a large slice of the day to day applications.

The Lightlift 13.70 has an overall length of just 3.28 metres - with basket removed - an overall width of 870mm and is less than two metres high. Maximum outreach is a little more than seven metres and it has an unrestricted platform capacity of 230kg. Its outrigger footprint measures 2.8 metres square and power options include a Honda iGX390 petrol/propane, a Hatz 1B40 diesel or Hinowa's lithium ion battery pack option. Standard features include gradient control, which automatically decelerates the tracked undercarriage when driving on potentially hazardous slopes, built-in fork lift pockets, lifting eves on the outriggers, the innovative **RAHM** control and diagnostics system for remote diagnostics and troubleshooting, real time GPS tracking, while a range of optional extras include a wider, two-speed undercarriage with extending tracks.

The 13.70 is also the first model to feature Hinowa's version of the JLG SkyGuard secondary guarding system, which will eventually become standard equipment across the range, while a new basket option features rounded corners and is said to help with positioning the unit close to walls and with delicate manoeuvres say when working in trees.



The 13.70 is also the first model to feature Hinowa's version of the JLG SkyGuard secondary guarding system





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Spider lift rentals on a national basis

Hinowa is the world's largest spider lift manufacturer and is experiencing growth in both its own sales and increasing volume through JLG. Product dipped substantially during the recession but has now bounced back and is reaching new levels. The company recently became the supplier of smaller spider lifts to the UK's largest aerial lift rental company Nationwide Platforms, supplying 56 spider lifts this year, following an initial order for 36 machines last year. We understand that another large order may be pending. This will give Nationwide a fleet of more than 100 Hinowas including the 15.4 metre 15.70, 17 metre 17.75 Mk 2, 20 metre 20.10 Mk 2 and the 25.7 metre 26.14. It has also ordered eight 31 metre Teupen Leo31Ts.

This is a major U-Turn for Nationwide, following a decision four years ago to divest itself of all of the spider lifts that it had gained through acquisitions etc.. preferring to re-rent from a specialist spider lift rental company - mostly Higher Access. Nationwide Platforms operations director Peter Douglas said its new 'tracked boom' division has been a fantastic success since launching last year. Originally it focused on the south east region with its initial 36 machines based in Luton but is now expanding the division to provide national coverage this year.

A JLG X430AJ



Narrow width

Overall width of any aerial platform is important however for spider lifts the ability to track through doorways and down corridors is part and parcel of their raison d'être. The smaller spider lifts - and some specialist larger machines such as those from TCA - are designed to pass though single doorways, with overall widths in the region of 800mm, while the 26 metre Hinowa has a width of 990mm, and the new 31 metre Teupen Leo is 1.58 metres. The 27 metre Platform Basket Spider 27.14 is therefore an attractive proposition at 890mm, which it claims is the narrowest 27 metre platform on the market.

The tracks will extend to 1.29 metres for improved stability when space allows. It does though come with a hefty overall weight of just over five tonnes. The Spider 27.14 has a double sigma type riser, three section telescopic boom and articulating jib, providing 15.1 metres of outreach, 10 metres up and over height, 230kg maximum platform capacity at up 12.7 metres



32 cranes & access May 2017



- 136kg at full reach, a narrow outrigger setting 400 degrees of slew, radio remote controls, lithium ion battery back and hybrid power and a fibreglass basket option which is now available on all Platform Basket spiders - predominantly to meet demand from arborists.

Platform Basket intends to use a similar 890mm wide chassis on its new 30 metre Spider 30T which it is planning to launch later this year as well as having a lower overall weight than the 27 at 4.3 tonnes. Details leaked prior to the launch suggest the lift has a new design which allows the jib to be stowed

under the main boom without removing the basket, resulting in a very compact transport length. Also all hydraulic and electrical lines will be routed through the boom to avoid damage particularly on tree care work. Other features include full radio remote control with auto outrigger set up and automatic boom stowage.

Platform Basket has also introduced a hoist/winch option on the 27.14 and 22.10 to allow them to be used for material handling work, and now offers the lithium ion battery pack option on every spider lift in the range.







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The smallest Platform Basket is the 13.4 metre Spider 13.80 super compact lithium-hybrid model with eight metres of outreach, a 2.9 metre wide working footprint. Other model improvements include the Spider 18.90 PRO with fibreglass bucket platform, radio remote controls, two speed tracking and auto set-up.

Ommelift hybrid

Ommelift has launched a new compact hybrid spider lift - the 18.40 RXJ - with a working height of 18.25 metres and 10.5 metres of outreach with 200kg platform capacity. The unit is 4.85 metres long when stowed, with an overall width of 790mm and is just under two metres high.

The hybrid lift has an engine and battery power with automatic recharging of the battery pack when the engine is running. Continuous re-charging is also possible using an on-board charger which continues charging even during lift operations. In order to be reliable during longterm usage a back-up transformer for direct mains connection is included. This provides the user with a variety of options for working both indoors and outdoors. The 18.40 RXJ articulated riser extends vertically in a perfectly parallel line and has a good up and over outreach. An end mounted platform leaves the underside of the platform clean, avoiding the damage which often occurs with pedestal mounted platform connections.

Octopus 23

Oil&Steel was one of the first companies to introduce the spider lift concept to a wider range of rental companies and end users, with its Octopussy range around the turn of the millennium. Some product and corporate challenges a few years back resulted in it losing market leadership and falling behind. But the company, under new ownership with Manitex is making a comeback with several spider lift families, including the Twin, Classic and Evo which are all in the 14 to 18 metre range, as well as the 21 metre Octopussy 2190. Its latest and largest spider to date is the 22.3 metre Octopus







23, with an outreach of 11.5 metres and 200kg unrestricted platform capacity. Overall stowed width is 990mm and it weighs around three tonnes. A special feature is the jib with can rotate by up to 45 degrees either side of the main boom. When coupled with the platform rotation it allows the operator to reach around obstacles or access more difficult areas without moving the machine base. The basket also has water and compressed air outlets and the chassis has one-sided height adjustable tracks for travelling on side slopes etc.

New and unusual

With the total number of manufacturers producing spider lifts nearing 30, there are several that are new or only sell in certain markets. Vertikal Days will see two of these - French access specialist ATN with its new Mygale 23 and Finland's Leguan with its unusual tracked or wheeled skid steer chassis.

ATN's first and only model, the Mygale 23 offers a working height of 22.85 metres and 11 metres of outreach. Since its official launch last year things have been very quiet, although the final production version of the new lift will be displayed at Vertikal Days this month, and with a new sales manager on board and Alpha Services in the UK to provide local product support, it will hopefully start to make inroads into the market.

Leguan will also be at the event, with its new 19 metre 190 spider lift with an outreach of 9.6 metres and a platform capacity of 230kg, along with the new 16.5 metre Leguan 165 spider lift which is based on the 16 metre L160. The first L165



to be arrive in the UK was delivered earlier this year to Timber-Tech Tree Services. The new model supplied by dealer Central Platform Services - has an outreach of 7.85 metres and 230kg platform capacity. The lift is supplied on a wheeled chassis although it is also available on tracks. The company said that it opted for the wheeled chassis for increased operator comfort and better drive capabilities. However should they require tracks in the future, this model is reasonably straightforward to swop from wheels to tracks.

Multitel

Multitel has expanded on its range of spiders adding the new 17 metre SMX 170 E with Lithium power which has been designed with a transport length of just over three metres and compact enough to fit into a goods lift. The new spider has up to 7.5 metres of outreach and weighs 2,200kg. Layout is similar to the other SMX spiders with a three section lower and three section upper boom.

The existing Multitel range continues with only minor changes - its largest spider the 'go anywhere' SMX 300 HD now has an upgraded cage payload of 300kg as well as adding some new options. The SMX 250 continues unchanged but according to Multitel is the only 25 metre working height platform on the market that can be towed legally on a trailer behind a 4 x 4 pick-up truck. weighing 2,770 kg including soft ground plates. Most other 25 metre or similar working height platforms, it says, are about 500kg heavier. The 19 metre SHX 190 is an all hydraulic, low-cost spider that is simple to maintain - no electronics reliable and basic.



The Leguan L165 can swop from wheels to tracks





And finally to the Chinese...

Although so much equipment is produced in China, very little sees the light of day outside of the country with only a few manufacturers breaking out into nearby regions, let alone Europe or North America. There are however a few Chinese companies that have shown spider lifts further afield and these include Sinoboom and Goman Lift while Dingli is currently working on a model.

Sinoboom - now producing scissor lifts for JCB - produced its first small spider lift in 2012 and this was to be the basis of a four model range. However currently it has only one model - the 30 metre GTSZ30J with 12 metres of outreach a maximum platform capacity of 200kg - or 80kg at 14 metres, height and width adjustable tracks and remote controls are standard, while overall weight is 4,500kg.

Goman Lift or Hubei Goman Heavy Industry Technology has an extensive range of telescopic and articulated spider lifts from 15 to 53 metres, many of them looking like clones of European models. However its latest model is the 21 metre X21, articulated lift with twin sigma risers, three section boom and jib, with 200kg platform capacity and 9.5 metres of outreach. The X21 is said to comply with EN280 standards, and has CE approval. Hoses and cable are internally routed, and power comes from either a 220 volt AC motor or diesel options. Overall weight is 2,800kg and stowed width 800mm.

Dingli has also shown a spider lift at the odd exhibition in China as it dabbles with the market. The 19.13 metre GTBZ19AS has an unrestricted outreach of just 4.9 metres with 200kg platform capacity, or 6.08 metres with 120kg. Overall Width is 1.45 metres and up and over clearance 7.69 metres. Goman Lift has a range of telescopic and articulated spider from 15 to this 53 metre lift







