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Last year at Intermat Haulotte announced its 'Blue Orientation' strategy and unveiled its first electric/ hybrid Pulseo generation boom lift. A key part of the strategy is that from 2020 all new products introductions will be powered by alternatives to pure diesel, while it will stop producing any diesel powered models by 2028. At the same time it will eliminate paper from its operations and switch from an engineering driven company to a service related business. Does this mean the company is ahead of the 'emissions' game or following a very risky strategy?

Based in France Haulotte is the leading European manufacturer of aerial work platforms with a product range extending from trailer and self-drive lifts to six metre mast type lifts, Rough Terrain scissors up to 18 metres, articulated and straight booms up to 43 metres as well as telehandlers.

The company has a long history dating back to 1881 when Alexandre Pinguely set up a business to work with steel products, moving into locomotive production 16 years later. Separately Arthur Haulotte set up a construction equipment business in 1924 under his own name, launching his first crane - the truck mounted GR20 - in 1930. In the 1930s Pinguely developed a line of steam shovels and excavators and by the 1960s had entered the crane

market, becoming market leader in France. The two companies began cooperating in the 1970s, introducing the jointly developed TTR220 All Terrain crane in 1979, by then part of the steel conglomerate Creusot-Loire, which merged the two companies into Pinguely-Haulotte

The big change came in 1985 when Pierre Saubot - a crane sales manager and importer - took over the ailing Pinguely-Haulotte business and was instrumental in transforming it from a minor crane and aerial lift manufacturer into a focused aerial lift company. His son Alexandre took over in 2004 and still leads the company today. From its latest results Haulotte has revenues of €556 million, operating from 21 international subsidiaries with 2,000 employees.



An artists impression of the new global headquarters in Lorette which includes a new research and development centre.

In recent years the group has been exiting the rental business by selling the rental companies it owns, although the process dates back to 2008 when Loxam purchased Haulotte's French rental operations, Lev and Royan Levage. In mid 2013 it sold UK Platforms - incorporating Access Rentals - to HSS and Italy's No.Ve to Loxam last June, avoiding any claims that it was competing with its major customers.

At the same time it began investing heavily in new facilities, both for manufacturing and more significantly at its distribution subsidiaries. In 2013 it established Haulotte India in Mumbai India, in 2105 it opened a brand new facility in Eschbach, south west Germany and moved its North American

distribution business into a new 7,700 square metre facility in Virginia Beach.

In 2016 its Russian subsidiary Haulotte Vostok moved to new headquarters on the western edge of Moscow and in 2018 acquired Acarlar Makine's sales, service and parts business in Turkey, having taken a 50 percent share in 2014. Already this year it has established Haulotte Japan in March, a wholly owned sales and service subsidiary, laid the foundations for a large new global headquarters in Lorette which will also include a new research and development centre in April, moved Haulotte UK into new purpose built premises in Cannock and in June 'broke ground' on a new headquarters building for Haulotte Australia.







Haulotte



The Haulotte UK sales team (L-R) Ged Kelly, Richard Wakeley, Keith Davies and Natalie Reynolds at the opening of the new facility.

Haulotte points out that while some in the UK still associate the company with its old rental company UK Platforms, it has not been a part of the group for almost seven years. It adds that the Haulotte brand and Haulotte UK have come a long way since then, culminating with the official opening its new premises near Cannock in the West Midlands in June. The events began with a worldwide Haulotte management team visit and the official ribbon cutting ceremony by chief executive Alexandre Saubot, followed on the next day with a dedicated Loxam/ Nationwide Platforms and a general open day for other UK and Irish customers.

Located less than 45 minutes from Birmingham Airport and just off the M6 motorway, the 3,500 square metre site will hold a larger inventory of new platforms and parts for the UK and Ireland markets, while providing a base for the company's service and training operations. For customers it was also an opportunity to check out the company's latest new products with a full line up of booms, scissors, mast booms and push around lifts on display. Haulotte UK currently employs 20, but says this figure is expected to grow as it expands its sales and service teams.

At the launch Haulotte UK general manager Natalie Reynolds said: "This move will benefit Haulotte UK customers by offering much larger inventory for quick deliveries along with a dedicated training area to enable our customers to

be fully skilled and confident in the technology and innovations of our machines.'

"Today we successfully welcomed many of our customers to celebrate with us the grand opening of our brand new facility. This marks a new chapter for Haulotte in the UK and highlights the commitment and confidence that we have in the UK powered access market. The new facility will allow us to better serve our customers with an increased stock holding and a larger capacity workshop for all our customers servicing needs. The day has been very successful, and feedback has been very positive with the new facility very well received."

Diesel-less platforms?

Haulotte says that its customer feedback in the UK generally acknowledges that non diesel aerial work platforms are the future. Since the hold statement of 'no more diesels' made at the launch of the Blue Orientation strategy and the all electric HA20 LE 'many end users and rental companies have assumed that all Haulotte machines will be

electric from 2020 but this is not the case'. It would appear that current ranges will continue to be produced with diesel engines and only when a new range is launched will pure diesel engine power no longer be available.

All manufacturers are experiencing the customer trend of moving away from diesel powered machines towards alternatives such as full electric or hybrid power. Certain markets have bought into these alternatives more than others. In Europe, Germany, France, the Netherlands, Belgium and the Nordic countries are all quite advanced when it comes to adopting environmentally friendly products. While in the UK some rental companies are fully on board and have been moving towards all hybrid or electric fleets - where possible - for some time, but many are wary because of the higher capital investment and in some cases lack of infrastructure. Many construction sites appear to be happy to use the latest technology and pontificate on the subject in public, but then shy away from paying the high rental rates, or even investing in the infrastructure to recharge them.

In its home market Haulotte recently supplied national training company Aftral with 42 units of its 33ft HA12 IP all electric articulated boom lifts. The battery electric HA12 IP provides an outreach of 6.5 metres at an up and over height of 5.3 metres, while platform capacity is 230kg. The new lifts will be used for the hands-on practical training element of the company's CACES courses for the safe operation of aerial work platforms.

First Pulseo model

The first model in Haulotte's new electric Pulseo range is the 61ft HA20 LE and LE Pro articulated booms. Two of the first LE Pro units were ordered by Indian rental company Shakti Equipments at the end of 2018. However Germany appears to be one of the best markets for the new boom, as might be expected. It is also Niftylift's largest hybrid market. German rental company Udert Mietgeräte is one of several companies to have already ordered the HA20 LE Pro and the latest to have taken delivery.







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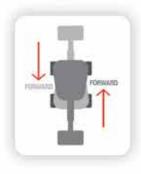
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The HA20 LE has a small Stage V 'range extender' diesel engine that simply tops up the batteries

Udert Mietgeräte managing director Tobias Etscheid said: "The potential of the HA20 LE Pro was immediately clear to us. Fully electric and yet fully suitable for practical outdoor use, that is the future. And of course, we want to have a share of that market, and above all, let our customers benefit from the technology."

Haulotte Germany's Sven Willmann adds: "The development of Pulseo was focused on the elimination of pollution and noise emissions. It is most suitable for use in cities, for example in the vicinity of hospitals and schools, but also in hotels and parks as well as nature conservation and recreational areas."

Another German rental company Induma-Rent has also taken delivery of the HA20 LE. Managing director Dominik Dejon says: "This machine has a characteristic that does not appear in any technical data sheet. It triggers enthusiasm and not only with technology savvy people. The Pulseo is much more than just a workhorse or articulated platform with its skills and ratios - it is an innovation that embodies a vision at the same time. It really impresses, it stays in your memory. This makes it an ideal machine with which a premium supplier like Induma-Rent can differ."

The HA20 LE/LE Pro has a working

height of 20.6 metres, an outreach of 11.9 metres with an unrestricted platform capacity of 250kg while the maximum capacity is 350kg at just over 10 metres - both with an up and over height of 8.52 metres, four wheel drive with a choice of two or four wheel steer. The LE Pro has an upgraded specification with 360 degree continuous slew - compared to 355 degrees on the LE - oscillating axles and secondary guarding all standard equipment.

Electric/hybrid?

Open the covers of the HA20 LE Pro and you find a small Stage V 'range extender' diesel engine. However the diesel simply tops up the batteries, the machine is powered 100 percent of the time by the electric motors. When the charge in the batteries drops below a pre-set level the diesel automatically kicks in to restore the battery charge to a sufficient level. When fully charged the HA20 is said to be able to work continuously for around three hours, which translates roughly to a full nine hour shift under normal working conditions.

Haulotte's policy of phasing out diesel models after 2020 is a bold and brave move and from an environmental point of view certainly puts it ahead of most competitors. It will be interesting to view how well each new 'electric'



Part of the HA20 LE's control panel showing fuel and battery charge remaining.

product redesign is adopted and how the sales compare with the diesel versions they replace. However given that most major countries around the world - except America and China - will follow through with their commitment to reduce emissions over the coming years demand for such products can only increase.

In the UK, London is the main focus with regard to emissions, but other large cities such as Birmingham and Manchester are also looking to adopt similar policies. Unless something changes though, the UK contractor's focus on price above all else may well slow the uptake,

this will change however with the introduction of tighter legislation. Until then many 'hi-spec' electric or hybrid machines are tending to go out at the same rate as lower cost diesel machines. More contractor's and other end users need to 'walk the talk' if the uptake is to gain momentum.

Possibly the biggest adoption hurdle is whether rental companies will buy into the new technology and the totally different way of managing electric/hybrid machines, particularly over the longer term. Many electric machines - including the new Haulotte - require extended charging cycles (about 20 hours solid) every three to four weeks. However, one aspect that will appeal is the savings in the whole life costs (TCO) that could be as much as 20 percent.

When the HA20 LE Pro was launched at Intermat both the machine and the batteries were offered with a five year warranty and all machines are fitted with telematics, allowing the battery charge cycles and daily maintenance to be monitored. Haulotte's Activ'Screen system also has the capability to self-diagnose













faults and provide the operator with a visual image of the problem and its location, via the screen on the machine. Remote diagnostics although not currently available will be introduced in shortly given the telematics progress currently available on competitors' machines.

Machine trends

Another area of customer demand is higher platform capacities in boom lifts, as reflected in Genie's Xtra capacity range. Since 2014 a number Haulotte booms have also offered this feature, the HT23 RTJ has a 230kg capacity with a 450kg option, the HT26 RTJ articulated and HT28 RTJ telescopics both have the option of up to 350kg, the new LE and LE Pro have 250kg as standard but an option of 350kg and the 43 metre HT43m telescopic now has 450kg capacity as standard.

Compared to other manufacturers Haulotte has relatively few attachments including a pipe cradle and one for glazing, something that it does not wholly approve of.



replace its SX line which are now looking a tad dated? Or perhaps an 86ft telescopic as an alternative to Niftylift's highly popular HR28 4X4 Hybrid articulated boom lift? Haulotte prefers not to be drawn on the subject, so we will have to wait until next year's round of exhibitions.

New low level platforms

At Intermat Haulotte also showed two prototype low level lifts - one push around and one self-propelled although details were limited. However we understand that both models are scheduled to be available from next year, in order to benefit from the expected uptake in the growing market for smaller, simpler models.

Haulotte telehandlers

Haulotte entered the telehandler market in 2007 and earlier this year introduced its smallest model to date - the 'compact' 3.2 tonne/ seven metre HTL3207 - however it has never troubled the market leaders.





had to make do with a very small market share. However even one percent of the estimated 65,000 to 70,000 units sold annually would mean sales in the region or 600 to 700 units a year. Although Haulotte describe the new HTL3207 as its most 'compact' its width and height put it into the next size category up.

Shipments of the new machine began at the end of April, after its unveiling as a prototype at Intermat last year. It can take 2.5 tonnes to its maximum lift height of 6.85 metres or handle 1.3 tonnes at its maximum forward reach of 3.8 metres. Power comes from a Kohler Tier IV Final, Stage 3B diesel, driving through a full hydrostatic transmission, offering a maximum road speed of 25kph.

Overall width is 2.26 metres, overall height 2.33 metres, so while not fitting into the less than two metre by two metre 'compact' classification, does still allow it to squeeze into - or load and unload - a standard sea container. Overall length is 4.67 metres. The stabilisers fall within the machine's overall width when fully set, while its overall weight with forks is just over seven tonnes.

The cab is just under a metre wide, with a large glazed area for maximum visibility, a fully adjustable seat with shock absorbers and a 4 in 1 joystick for single handed operation. The load moment indicator includes an automatic cut off when operating in a danger zone with automatic reset in case of a malfunction.

Most popular model

The 10 metre Star 10 mast boom is Haulotte's most popular model and with increased competition a good number of changes have been made to improve manoeuvrability and ease of use, including AC direct drive wheel motors, centralised battery top up and longer service and major overhaul periods. Other

features include the Activ'Screen diagnostics and unrestricted drive at full height.

Got it right?

It does appear that Haulotte's image and reputation has improved significantly in recent years - the result of a concerted effort to improve the machine quality and reliability with features that customers want.

It will be interesting to follow sales figures and take up of its electric work platforms. If slower than anticipated would this mean that older existing models will have their lifespan extended, rather than being replaced with potentially a less popular electric/hybrid versions? The company prefers not to comment. The market however is changing rapidly, so perhaps Haulotte has timed its new strategy perfectly?

