

CMC to concentrate on spiders

The increasing in popularity of spider lifts has yet to tempt a major aerial lift manufacturer to build its own machines. Although JLG offers branded models from Hinowa - currently the largest spider lift producer selling around 1,000 lifts a year - most other manufacturers build from 200 to 500 units per annum.

Italian manufacturer CMC - celebrating its 20th anniversary this year - is unusual among the many Italian spider and truck mounted lift manufacturers in that it is based in the south of the country in Bari. Mark Darwin visited the company to find out more.

While CMC has kept a relatively low profile it exports more than 75 percent of its production, with its most successful market the USA. It also claims to be the market leader in the 25 metre spider sector, having sold more than 400 units - mainly to arborists for tree work. Machines working in this harsh environment have to be sturdy, well-built and reliable. Surprisingly only around 15 percent of its machines are sold to rental companies, which increasingly represents the largest market for spider lifts.

"We want to expand our spider production and our aim over the next few years is to increase sales into the rental sector," says Giovanni Carbonara, CMC's export director. "This will be helped with the introduction of a new range of



Export director Giovanni Carbonara (L) with president Michele Moretti

'rental' machines next year. We are also currently working on new models - the S19HD, the S22HD and the S23 with working heights of 19, 22 and 23 metres - all designed as rugged and reliable machines that are easy and simple to use. Other models are also scheduled."

CMC currently builds around 300 spider lifts a year, along with a number of 3.5 tonne truck mounted lifts. Revenues are in the region of €17 million with a target of €20 million by 2020. In addition to the USA, CMC does well in China and Australia and did well in the UK through former dealer



A lithium powered S32



The CMC S25



The new S22HD

Ranger Equipment which has dropped out of the sector to focus on other equipment. Ranger and a number of its other distributors had previously represented Teupen, widely recognised for its high quality standards. Their decision to take on CMC speaks more for the company's build quality than any promotional claims.

"We are currently looking for dealers in France and the UK," says Carbonara. "Whether we appoint an existing dealer or set up CMC UK is still under discussion. We don't want to make a quick decision but want to find the best long-term solution for our customers."

In spite of its high export ratio, CMC has not sold well in Europe, something it puts down to the fact that the market is more rental orientated. It hopes to remedy this with the introduction of its new 'rental' machines.

20th Anniversary

CMC was formed by three entrepreneurs - Carlo, Michele and Carlo (thus CMC), two of whom - Carlo Mastrogiacomo and Michele Moretti - still run the company. Its first platform in 1998 was the 16 metre PLA16 truck mounted lift and the company has been very successful in the 3.5 tonne truck mounted platform sector in Italy and

Northern Europe including Sweden, Norway and the Netherlands and has had some success in the Middle East and parts of Africa. Spider lifts followed in 2007.

Today the company builds truck mounts from 14 to 36 metres, including telescopic (PLA) models from 14 to 25 metres, with the latest the 25 metre PLA 250 - offering 15 metres outreach. Telescopic with jib (PLJ) with 25, 29 and 36 metre working heights and three articulated (TBJ), models with working heights of 13.5, 20 and 24 metres. While its growing spider lift range runs from 15 to 41 metres.

In the past few years most new product investment has gone into the spider lift range, so the company has decided to reduce its commitment in the truck mounted market and concentrate more on the spider lifts. In the past, the company has produced up to 500 truck mounted lifts a year, but this is now closer to 200.

"We have a good name in the market for spiders and our aim is to one of the leading manufacturers by producing quality machines," says president and co-founder Michele Moretti. "Constant improvements to components and design means we are eliminating problems. For example a few years ago the

electrical loom (harness) was a weak point on our machines, so we acquired the company that made them and brought the manufacturing inhouse so that we could improve the design and quality. The looms are now as good as any in the automotive sector and all problems have been sorted. This philosophy is being applied to all areas of production from fabrication and painting to design."

18 months ago the company needed more space and acquired the site of a printing company in Bari near the impressive 58,000 seat Stadio San Nicola football stadium built for the 1990 World Cup. After extensive refurbishment, the buildings now house company headquarters, sales, marketing, product support departments and the Italian service team - about 100 employees in total. The other buildings house the assembly, quality control, electrical harness/loom production and test area. In all the company has invested €8 million in the new facility.

The original facility located some 15 minutes away receives the steel fabrications, where then they are checked, sand blasted and painted before assembly. A new 'state of the art' spray booth is to be installed, while longer term, CMC hopes to bring fabrication inhouse - to 'better control quality and delivery times'. This may include producing its own tracked undercarriages.

New machines

CMC's most popular spider lift is the 25 metre S25 and after five years in production, it is one of the machines being updated for an end of the year launch. Structurally it is virtually the same but will feature many electronic improvements, as the company moves towards 80 percent componentry commonality on its spider lifts making both production and repair easier.

Other new machines include the S19HD the S22HD and the S23. The S19HD is an update of a previous model with 18.7 metre working height, 11.5 metres outreach, 200kg platform capacity, an overall weight of 2,800kg and 890mm overall width. To self load/unload from a truck or trailer the units have an outrigger jacking height of just over a metre, and multiple position set up.

The S22HD is aimed at the tree care market and uses the same undercarriage but a longer boom and jib for a 21.6 metre working height and 12.5 metres outreach. Platform capacity is 230kg, overall width 890mm and transport weight 3,000kg. The company has booked a 19 unit order from Latvia for this model to keep power lines clear of tree limbs etc... "The client tested three or four competitors but placed the order with us," says Carbonara.

The S23 is not a HD model but uses the same technology, it has a 23 metre working height, 12.4 metres of outreach and 200kg unrestricted platform capacity. It is compact with a double sigma type riser and jib but weighs 3,200kg. A slightly lighter 3,000kg rental version may appear later. For 2019 the company is planning new 28/29 metre and 38 metre models, an upgraded S25, and three smaller 'Rental' models.

Market and reputation

CMC believes that around 80 percent of all spider lifts delivered to date are between 13 to 23 metres, with 70 percent of them sold to rental companies. Highlighting the importance of its new rental machines it hopes to increase market share and expand production. As to quality it believes that its product and brand image is positioned closer to companies such as Teupen and Falcon than other spider lift manufacturers.

"We want to target the higher



All fabrications are assembled to check quality prior to paint and final build



Currently CMC produces about 300 spiders but this could double without further expansion

quality products such as Teupen, producing smaller numbers but with excellent design and quality," says Moretti. "When we have finished introducing all the new models, there are few other manufacturers that can offer our range. We currently produce about 300 units, but plan to double that over the next three to four years with our existing structure and facilities. We can expand our existing facilities by 30 percent and could move the truck production to another factory if required."

"Around 70 percent of our current sales are made up of our larger lifts - the 25 and 32 metre spiders - but only sell two or three 41 metre machines a year. The next step

is to start producing the new 38 metre and 22/23 metre machines. While we focus more on spiders, we will continue with truck mounts in Italy but will be stopping export production."

CMC has come a long way over the past 20 years and since launching its first spider lift just over a decade ago. Over the past five years it has posted revenue rises of 20 percent each year and is building a solid reputation for quality and performance which should be helped by the new models due next year. Moretti has two sons who are also in the business, with the elder, Giuseppe, being groomed to take over from his father sometime in the future.



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