

SCISSOR LIFTS

Although some say that "radical" scissor technology is scarce on the ground, it doesn't seem to have upset the flow of new scissor products. *C&A* reports.

The cutting edge

Leigh Sparrow, senior vice president sales and distribution at UpRight says that development in the scissor sector in the mid to late 90s was fast and furious and largely fuelled by the launch of the company's own "radically different" MX and X generation of machines. "Rough terrain scissor design has progressed significantly in the past three years. Interestingly, electric power has made its mark in this sector with the appearance of battery powered rough terrain scissors and cross-over machines capable of working on-slab and off-slab", he says.

While radical innovation in scissor technology may be scarce, the current slow period has seen an increase in the unit percentage of the AWP market for electric scissors. This can be explained by faster replacement cycles for units and the wide range of applications for small scissors, most of which are in growth sectors outside of heavy primary construction (industrial, amenities maintenance)".



The "off-road" capabilities of JLG's 3394RT rough terrain scissor lift impressed onlookers at the recent Vertikal Press' Vertikal Check day.

Sparrow says that the new trend in scissor platforms is for greater height from a more compact chassis base. "The need to be able to pass through a standard single door or down a 1 to 1.5 metre aisle, or even to make it through standard double doors, is always a pressure on an electric slab scissor", he continues.

"Our X26 Ultra-N for example is capable of passing through an 82 centimetre doorway while giving a driveable working height of up

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Genie says that its GS 1930 is the leader in the 5.8 metre class and that it has been a "big deal" in terms of the company's profile on the electric scissor market.

to 10 metres. Such very high, ultra low units need to be comparatively heavier in order to meet increasingly stringent stability criteria, which often leads to machines with very poor and often impractical gradeability".

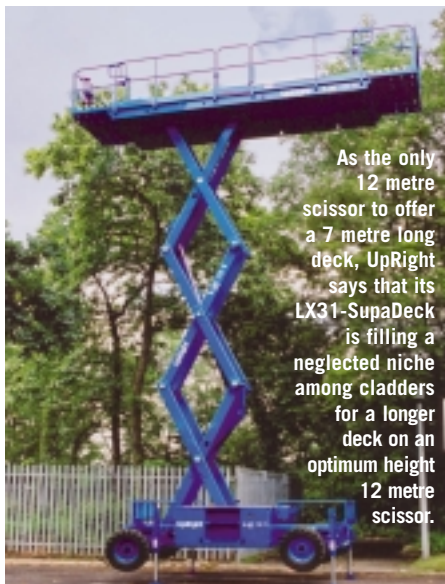
The X26 Ultra-N features a combination of high-powered wheel motors with integral multi-disc brakes, plus a new traction control system to maintain full dual-wheel drive at all times. UpRight has since leant this drive technology to its 7.8 metre MX19 micro-scissor, increasing its gradeability to almost 30 per cent.

"While radical innovation in scissor technology may be scarce on the ground, the current slow period has seen an increase in the electric unit percentage of the AWP market."

Perhaps the biggest surprise to Sparrow has been the popularity of the company's 11.5 metre LX31 with Supa-Deck. "As the only 12 metre scissor to offer a 7 metre long deck, it is filling a neglected niche among cladders", he says. "Previously, they would have to rent a higher reach scissor, at an extra premium, to get the longer deck."

In the near future, UpRight says that it will be phasing in production of more scissor lift models at its European plant in Ireland, following the successful introduction of the new all-metric SL20 towards the end of last year. Sparrow says that plans are also moving ahead to produce more of the company's scissor lift range at the purpose-built plant near Dublin. ► 32

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As the only 12 metre scissor to offer a 7 metre long deck, UpRight says that its LX31-SupaDeck is filling a neglected niche among cladders for a longer deck on an optimum height 12 metre scissor.

◀29 "Most models will be dual-sourced from our US and European plants", says Sparrow. "Intensive restructuring over the last 18 months makes it very easy to add products to either plant and rapidly ramp up or down between sites to meet large orders or to take advantage of change in demand or currency rates".

In the rough

An area that has been the focus of significant development, particularly at the larger end of the scissor market, is the off-slab scissor. JLG's contribution comes in the form of the 10.5 metre 3394RT and the larger 13.10 metre 4394RT, the former of which impressed during the Vertical Check (see C&A Nov 2002).

Both units feature a load management system for the fuel injected engine which prevents the engine 'bogging-down' in extreme rough terrain conditions, while a dual pump hydraulic drive and 3-speed selectable drive motions give the machine a "job tested" 45 per cent gradeability. JLG says the machines also feature the industry's largest standard deck in their size class, measuring 2.18 metres by 5.03 metres, including the 1.22 metre manual extension. The optional MegaDeck platform with dual extensions increases the deck length to 6.25 metres.

Both machines can also be equipped with a 3500-watt generator to complement the hydraulically powered Easi-Cladder panel positioner for panels up to 100 kilograms. The company says that its UK sales of diesel powered platforms fitted with on-board generators has risen by 17 per cent over the last two years (over 200 generators over the last 18 months).

The scissor lift has gained immense popularity as an access solution in the cladding sector over recent years and continues to be a key target area for many scissor producers. Hans Neu, export manager for Liftlux-Potain, comments: "Times are good for us in the UK at present, particularly in terms of our larger scissor units. Buildings are becoming taller in the UK due to the increasing prices of m² space, so in this respect we offer a niche product by way of our tall scissor range.

"The success starts for us with our 17 metre unit with the range topping at 32 metres. We are a small company and avoid competition with manufacturers such as JLG and Genie in terms of the smaller machines but our bigger scissors are well received as we are the only manufacturer supplying machines of this size. In turn, the machines generate good rental rates because there are not so many around". Neu states that there are approximately 120 Liftlux-Potain units in the UK at present and the figure is growing nicely by around 30 to 40 machines per year.

The UK market has also been a subject of focus over the past 12 months for Manitou, where it says that it has dramatically increased the profile of its Maniaccess range. Maniaccess product manager Dave Faultless commented: "This increased profile has enabled Manitou to secure orders from major players within the UK access hire industry including AFI, The Platform Company and AMP Access, as well as numerous end user sales". Launched early this year was the company's compact 8.1 metre 81XE electric scissor, which joins the company's existing smaller 78XE.

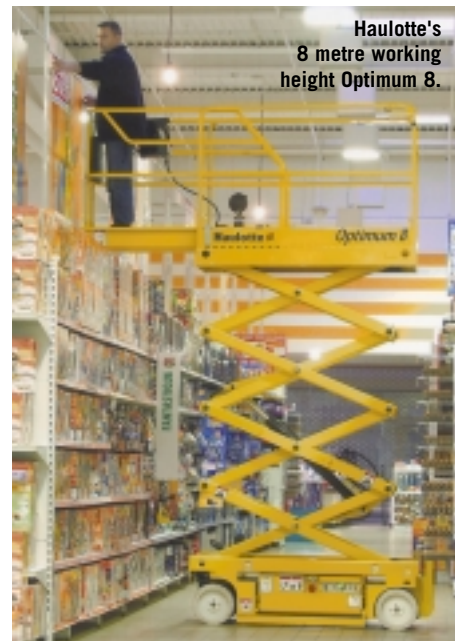
Also looking to build on its presence in the UK this year is Pinguely-Haulotte, which is hoping to significantly increase its market share over the next couple of years. Taking the UK reigns for the company is ex-marketing director at Haulotte's French head office, Pierrick Lourdain, now managing director of Haulotte UK. The company says that it is currently in search of new bigger premises in the UK and will be targeting UK rental companies to boost its sales in the region.

Meanwhile, the company launched its smallest ever electric scissors at the recent Batimat exhibition. Its Optimum 6 and 8 versions have working heights of 6 and 8 metres respectively and now start the company's scissors range which is capped at the 18 metre H 18 SDX.

And it would seem that Manitou and Haulotte's timing is commendable, as John Fuller, divisional manager for Genie UK comments that at the moment it is a very busy time for the electric scissor in the UK. "What has more or less become a commodity in the US in recent times, is becoming increasingly so in the



Hans Neu, export manager for Liftlux-Potain says that the company offers a niche product to the UK scissor market with its bigger machines with working heights ranging from 17 to 32 metres.



Haulotte's 8 metre working height Optimum 8.



Manitou has targeted the fruitful UK electric scissor market with the introduction of its Maniaccess 78XE and 81XE units.

UK. The sheer number of electric scissors available in the UK means that rental rates are extremely attractive to the end user. They are also becoming an increasingly sound investment to rental companies as the bigger manufacturers have more or less ironed out the bugs in their technology, meaning that the machines hold a strong residual value. And when the time comes, manufacturers are able to offer very good trade-in rates to their customers.

"We have a range of nine electric scissors with working heights from 6.5 metres to 11.75 metres, but it is the 5.8 metre working height GS-1930 electric scissor that has been the aggressor for us in the rental market", he says.

Fuller is also aware of the demand for the bigger boom models - Genie has five rough-terrain diesel scissors ranging from 9.9 metre to 18.2 metre working height - in the UK and says that he expects it to continue over the coming months, contributing to what Genie UK is expecting to be a good year in terms of its own unit sales. "Although our sales have dropped slightly since a better than anticipated 2001/2002, they have dropped from a very successful level, so we still expect 2003 to be a comfortable year for us and a good year for the scissor market in general."

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