



The first Palazzani spider, the TSP28

PALAZZANI MARKS 90 YEARS

Vertikal's Imogen Campion visited the spider lift manufacturer Palazzani Industrie's facility in Brescia, Northern Italy days after the company celebrated its 90th anniversary, to learn about its history and recent developments including the new 16 and 18 metre platforms unveiled at Bauma.

The Palazzani story began in the early 1900s when the family operated one of Lombardy's largest carpentry and fabrication workshops, Falegnameria Palazzani. Founded by Davide Palazzani and his three brothers, the rapidly growing company employed around 200 and produced everything from industrial components to prefabricated emergency housing, including homes for victims of the 1916 Abruzzo earthquake. The Great Depression forced the business to close in 1929, but in 1935 Davide's three sons - Renato, Alfredo, and Luigi - founded a new Palazzani company starting off with basic metalwork fabrications and repairs. The brothers expanded into agricultural equipment after World War II, becoming Ford tractor dealers and developing hydraulic attachments. The breakthrough came in the early 1960s when Luigi Palazzani and his technical director designed the first wheel loader with four equal sized drive wheels which they patented and launched as the Storm 61.

The company diversified through the 1970s and 80s, producing wheel loaders, backhoe loaders and mobile cranes under the Paload brand. However, the transformation towards where it is today began in 1983 with truck mounted aerial work platforms, which led to the spider lift.

When I arrived, president Paola Palazzani was on top form - as always - and provided insight into the company's unique position in the spider lift market saying: "I remember when I was 12 or 13 with my father at an exhibition with his first spider lift and a visitor laughing at it and us!" Her father said that inspiration for the lift came after he spotted a trailer lift in England that was being used for work within Parliament. On his return he



Paola Palazzani at the 90th anniversary celebrations

created his first spider lift with a 220v electric motor and a diesel engine allowing it to move independently.

By 2020, Palazzani made the strategic decision to end earthmoving machinery production and focus exclusively on spider lifts, becoming one of only two companies focused on designing and building large spider lifts, the other being Falck Schmidt. This year's launch of the 16 metre TZJ 160 and 18 metre TZJ 180 is aimed at taking a share of the smaller spider lift market, where it currently has no presence. "We are now one of the few companies which are 100 percent spider manufacturers," says export sales manager Laura Gasparini, who has been with the company for more than 20 years. "Having left cranes and earthmoving machines in the past to be spider focused, we must offer everything."

The company now produces a full range of spider lifts from 16 to 52 metres and has decided to

target its new TZJ models at first time buyers. Palazzani said: "Since Bauma, we have booked 30 orders for the new machines, 90 percent of them placed during the show. One of our customers came on to our stand and said 'I didn't know you made this machine, can I buy one? I said of course and we did a handwritten order confirmation there and then. The day after he came back and paid us."

The company recently added to its export team appointing Claudio Teoldi as export sales director. While international manager, Laura Gasparini continues to oversee the existing worldwide dealer network, Teoldi will focus on developing new markets. Speaking of his appointment he said: "Our big effort is to expand our presence everywhere. Despite many markets having



The TZJ180 on display at Bauma

Laura Gasparini with Claudio Teoldi



relatively low volumes individually, they all add up to something significant and more importantly helps reduce dependence on a few larger markets."

The company produces all models in the one plant, working with 60 dealers around the world, 30 of which place regular orders. Key regions include the Middle East - the company's largest - and North America, of which Palazzani says: "We plan to send the first new 16 and 18 metre spiders to the US for the TCI Expo as this size of machine is very popular with arborists."

The company hopes that its new machines will provide a step up in Germany looking to reach "painters and building restoration companies. We are targeting this kind of end user rather than rental companies," says Teoldi. The company has also reported an increase in sales to India, where it has worked with local rental company Gemini for almost 30 years. "India is becoming very interested in the Eco machines, and demand there is growing rapidly," adds Palazzani.

China presents a more complex picture. Despite a 30 year presence and loyal customers who continue to seek out the Palazzani brand, the market, as a whole, faces intense competition from new Chinese manufacturers offering significantly lower costs.

Palazzani produces its fabrications in-house and develops its own software and control systems, providing, it says, shorter lead times. However currently battery availability is beginning to create a bottleneck, with lead times of up to four months prompting the company to maintain



The 30m TSJ30.1 hybrid spider



The 90th anniversary celebrations



interchangeable battery stock. All electric models represent 20 percent of sales, up from five percent over the past couple of years.

"We are also working on upgrading the sales and service support we provide to dealers," says Gasparini, "including improved warranty terms etc... We are listening more to our dealers and customers. After all it's not only the product that makes you win, you also need good communications, innovation and presence, we are working on every aspect."

Its 90th anniversary celebrations took place at the 'Tabaccaia' in Castrezzato - a former early 20th century tobacco factory transformed into an elegant event venue. The evening featured a video that retraced the company's history, decade by decade, from the founding of "Falegnameria Palazzani" by Davide Palazzani and his brothers through to recent developments including the generational transition with Paola Palazzani as

president and Francesco Zola as chief executive.

In her speech, Palazzani expressed gratitude to employees, customers, partners, and suppliers, stating: "This anniversary is not just a number; it's a chapter in a story made of sacrifice, innovation, and above all, extraordinary people. Our history is a testament to resilience, teamwork, and adaptability. But it also reflects a clear and bold vision - that of always striving for excellence."

"Now, with hearts full of gratitude, we look to the future. 90 years are just the beginning of a new chapter we want to write together, with the same determination, passion, and trust that have brought us this far."

Palazzani also paid tribute to her father, Davide Palazzani, who led the company for 40 years. During the evening, Matteo Meroni, vice president of Confindustria Brescia, presented a 90 year commemorative plaque as did Marzia Giusto on behalf of Assodimi-Assonolo. ■



Engineers in the workshop



The XTJ32 ready to be shipped