



A VERY GOOD YEAR?

2025 was a very good year for the aluminium boomed truck cranes with the two major manufacturers - Böcker and Klaas - both introducing and selling large volumes of new and existing models into an expanding market outside of their home market of Germany and increasingly beyond European shores.

The aluminium truck crane continues to gain popularity in new countries, as more crane owners comprehend the difference between a low nominal/maximum lift capacity and their overall performance and ability. It's a similar story to the emergence and growing popularity of spider cranes or mobile self-erecting tower cranes, the nominal capacity is not the relevant factor - it never was. The aluminium truck crane's forte is handling relatively light loads at great height and reach - for example, when placing roof trusses, air conditioning units or solar panels. The benefits over and above their incredible performance is an extremely cost-effective and versatile lifting machine, particularly as they are also mounted on commercial truck chassis which benefits from substantially lower running costs, both in terms of fuel and maintenance than the typical alternative, an All Terrain crane.

SURPRISING PRODUCT SECTOR

This market sector is surprising for several

reasons. First, there are only two serious manufacturers - Böcker and Klaas - which are both based in Germany. Even in a small but growing specialist market sector, this is unexpected. It is true that the total unit sales numbers are still too low to grab the interest of high volume Chinese manufacturers, but it is shocking that no other company has tried its hand at a similar type of crane. A related product that uses the same boom technology is the trailer crane, which both Böcker and Klaas also offer, but it brings in a third manufacturer - Paus - which is also based in Germany.

The other surprising thing about this market is that while it derived its name from using aluminium booms, only Klaas now features an all-aluminium boomed product line. Over the past year or so, Böcker has moved away from aluminium booms entirely, preferring to use the new ultra-high strength steels. Its last aluminium boom crane was the AK46/6000, which has been replaced by the steel boomed AK48. It does, however, feature an aluminium jib.

According to chief executive Alexander Böcker, steel allows a larger profile thin walled boom which can accommodate all of the hydraulic lines and electronics internally for a cleaner boom, with less chance of damage. "Aluminium is lighter but has a thicker wall, and when starting with a steel boom base section, it makes sense to continue with the same material, making it easier to produce, more precise and easier to install," he says.

Given Böcker's move away from aluminium booms, some of those in the industry thought about a rename - possibly to 'lightweight truck mounts'? However, that term might also include truck cranes from manufacturers including Tadano, Liebherr and a few Italians, which are completely different beasts. Given the speed of setting up an 'aluminium truck crane', the term Quick Lifter Lightweight crane might be appropriate...but as it's a bit of a mouthful, aluminium truck crane seems to have stuck as is often the case, long after the original reason for the name has changed.

The vast majority of the 'aluminium cranes' are sold in Europe - particularly Germany, Belgium, the UK and France, although New Zealand and Australia take a few units each year, while a few find their way into the USA, but variable road regulations often complicate matters. Böcker tends to focus on its trailer cranes in North America.

NEW KLAAS MODELS

Over the past 12 months Klaas has delivered the first of several new models, including the five tonne all-electric K950LEX, the very first K2350 truck mounted crane off the production line, as well as a new 4.5 tonne K2500 truck mounted aluminium crane on a four axle chassis.





The Klaas K2350 is now in production, the very first unit off the line went to London, UK based rental company Lee Aerial Lifting



The first all-electric Klaas K950LEX was purchased by Dutch crane rental company Kraanbedrijf Nederhoff. Mounted on a Volvo FE fully electric three axle chassis, the K950LEX is the result of a collaboration between Klaas, Nederhoff, All-Up and the Hengelo branch of Volvo Truck dealer Nijwya.

The crane uses a four section main boom with a four section luffing upper boom/jib for a maximum tip height of 45 metres. It can take its five tonne maximum capacity to a height of up to nine metres at a radius of seven metres. However, the benefit of this type of crane is its reach and lifting one tonne at a 28 metre radius or taking 500kg to 36.5 metres is typically more desirable. A useful option is the platform attachment, which offers a working height of just over 41 metres.

Standard features include self-leveling outriggers, extendable counterweight, slew limit settings and point-to-point memory function. Power is provided by two electric motors driven by a 225kW battery pack, giving a driving range of up to 275km on a single charge. The crane joins Nederhoff's fleet alongside its diesel version - the K950 - and will largely be used on urban construction projects.

Managing director Sjoerd Nederhoff said: "The K950LEX is a revolutionary machine that not only helps us comply with emission regulations but also enhances efficiency and sustainability in our operations. We are proud to take this step and contribute to the future of emission free construction projects."

FIRST KLAAS K2350

The Klaas K2350 is now in production, the very first unit off the line went to London, UK based rental company Lee Aerial Lifting - the second Klaas truck crane in its fleet.

The K2350 is mounted on a three or four axle chassis, while the K2300, on which it is based, is on three axles. It features a three section 31 metre main boom topped by a five section telescopic jib for a maximum hook height of 50 metres at which point it can handle 750kg. Its optional maximum capacity when used in the newly developed two fall operation is nine tonnes at a radius of six metres and a height of 18 metres. In single fall operation it can take its maximum of 4.5 tonnes to eight metres and a height of 32 metres. However, of more interest is that it can take two tonnes to 26 metres at a height of 16 metres, one tonne to 17 metres at a height of 44 metres, and 500kg to 44 metres radius at a height of 21.8 metres.

Klaas says changing from single to double fall operation is automatic, tool-free and at the



touch of a button on the remote controller. As the second crane hook is already integrated into the boom, no additional assembly is required. Maximum width with the outriggers fully extended is 7.34 metres. The K2350 was ordered at Bauma last April and follows Lee Aerial Lifting's purchase of a 4.5 tonne Klaas K2300, which has

proved to be a popular unit in the film and TV industry since it was delivered.

A DIFFERENT KLAAS

Danish crane rental company Bas Krane took delivery of a new 4.5 tonne Klaas K2500 with a difference last year. The new K2500 - the largest in the Klaas range - is designed for 26 tonne three axle chassis, but the crane was mounted on a four axle, 36 tonne Volvo chassis, the first Klaas to be mounted on a four axle carrier. The configuration provides numerous benefits, while three axle steering keeps it relatively manoeuvrable.

The heavier truck means that it has a narrower outrigger footprint at seven metres with higher capacities on the reduced outrigger spreads, as well as a full 360 degree load chart with the maximum capacities. The crane is also able to travel on public roads permit free.

The crane is equipped with a hybrid package with an electric motor driving the superstructure and a diesel engine driving the chassis, while also being capable of powering the upper structure. Other options include a fully integrated aerial work platform attachment with a roofer's guardrail - which offers a maximum working height of 51 metres and a maximum outreach of 36 metres with 250kg in the platform or 33 metres with the maximum platform capacity of 400kg - along with boom and jib tip cameras which feed into the remote control screen.

The K2500 uses a four section, 34 metre main boom topped by a five section, 22 metre telescopic jib, taking the maximum tip height to 59 metres. The 4.5 tonnes maximum capacity can be lifted to a height of 22 metres and a radius of six metres at a height of 20 metres. The crane can

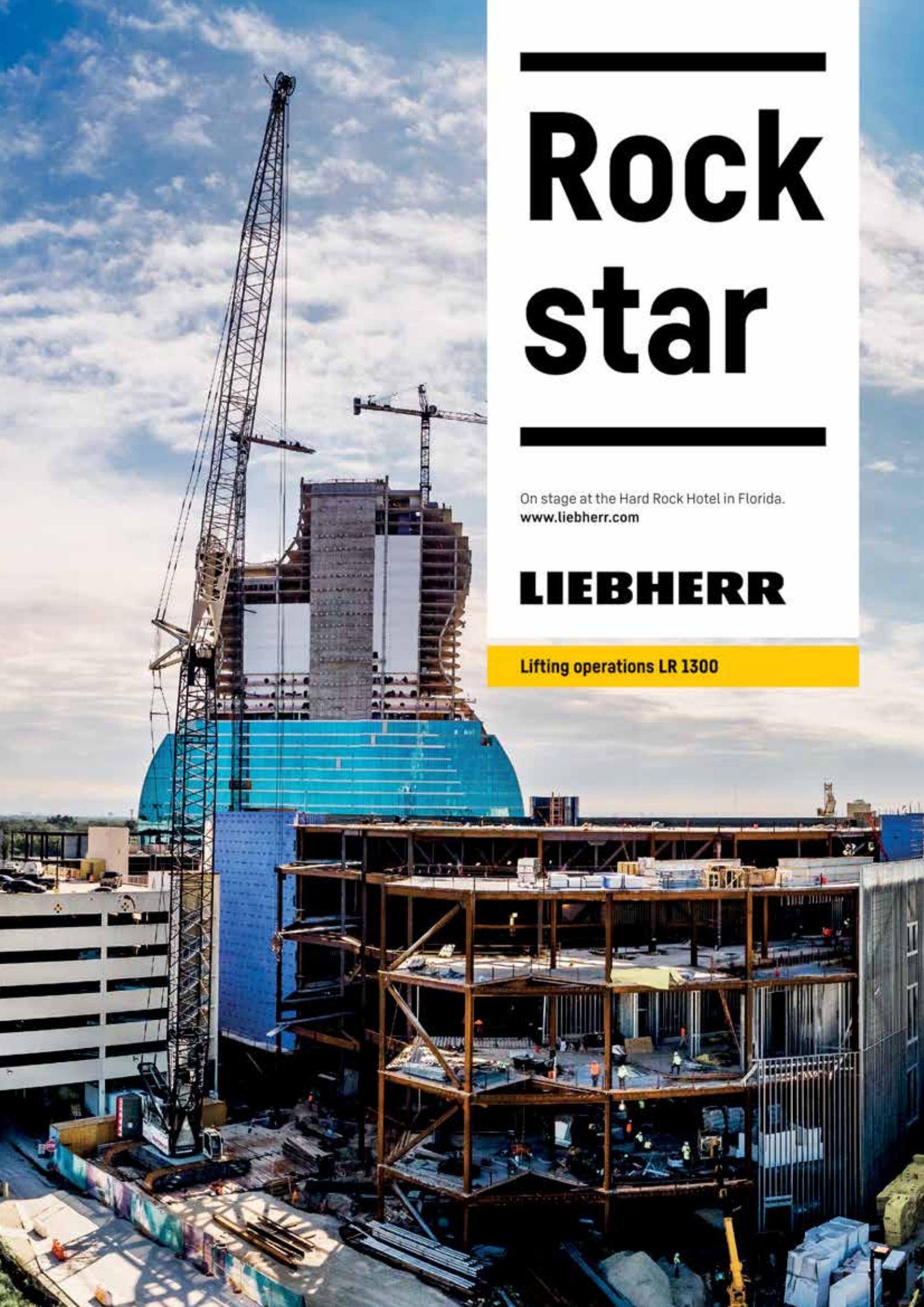


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also handle 500kg at its maximum tip height or take it out to a 45.5 metre radius and a height of 20 metres. Bas also added a two axle, 6.5 metre Wecon trailer with locks for a 20ft container, to tow behind the crane.

THE 'NORMAL' K2500

The 'normal' Klaas K2500 - mounted on a three axle chassis - is also a recent addition to the range, with the first in the UK going to Newmarket based ALN Carpentry & Joinery. Mounted on a three axle Volvo chassis, it features a four section 37 metre main boom topped by a five section telescopic jib for a maximum hook height of 58.5 metres at which point it can handle 500kg. It can also take one tonne to a radius of 35 metres at a height of 28 metres, while at its maximum radius of 45 metres, it can handle 500kg at a height of 21.5 metres.

BUSY BÖCKER

Böcker has also been busy in 2025, adding new models to its range and expanding its production and service facilities. At the beginning of the year, the first new six tonne AK 48 truck crane was purchased by German roofing company Theo Milte Bedachungs and last month its new flagship model and most powerful truck crane - the 12 tonne, 55 metre boomed AK52 - was delivered to Berry Cranes in the UK.

Böcker also opened a new branch in Burghaslach, near Nuremberg, its seventh location in Germany and has broken ground for a new service centre on a 3,200 square metre site in Eschbronn, Baden-Württemberg, southwest Germany. The company has been producing truck cranes at its headquarters in Werne since 1989. The first aluminium crane from Klaas was produced in 1993.

BÖCKER AK 48

The AK 48 features a four section high-strength, structural steel main boom plus a three section 14 metre aluminium telescopic jib for a tip height of 49 metres with a maximum radius of 40 metres. It can handle its maximum capacity of six tonnes at eight metres and 1.5 tonnes at a radius of 24 metres and a height of 27.5 metres. The unit can also be used as a work platform with the simple



The Klaas K2500 with platform attachment



The six tonne capacity Böcker AK 48

fixed PK 250-1 platform featuring a working height of almost 50 metres and a maximum platform capacity of 250kg at up to 33 metres outreach. Maximum outreach is 35 metres with 100kg in the platform.

The rotating and extendible PK 600-D platform offers a 600kg maximum platform capacity and a working height of more than 43 metres with 25 metres of outreach. The crane also has an 11 metre below ground reach with 100kg in the platform.

As well as being available as a conventional diesel, a hybrid version can be ordered with an additional 400 volt electric motor for the chassis' PTO, while a fully electric crane features a larger battery with 230/400 volt charging point on the chassis.



Along with the AK 42 and the AK 48, the AK 36 is the third and most compact of the new generation of Böcker truck cranes



German roofing company Theo Milte Bedachungs took delivery of the first six tonne Böcker AK 48 truck crane



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ALUMINIUM TRUCK CRANES

The main boom can be raised to the vertical, with the jib horizontal for tower crane mode. In this format it has a maximum main boom height of 34.7 metres with a 14.4 metre three section extendible jib, at which point it can lift one tonne. There is the option of extending the jib a further three metres.

Managing director Theo Milte said: "We are impressed by the new crane's sophisticated technology and the high level of automation during erection, levelling and operation. The ease of use is outstanding, thanks to the intelligent control system - anyone can operate it. What I consider its most impressive detail is the new boom geometry with tower crane function. We can work very close to the building and telescope much faster. However, the decisive factor for us is that the crane does not require an extendable counterweight. It delivers maximum performance with minimal superstructure dimensions. It can also work with a single side outrigger set up."

BIGGEST YET

Two UK rental companies - Berry Cranes and City Lifting - have taken delivery of a 12 tonne Böcker AK 52 'Quicklifter' crane - the largest in the Böcker line up. It can be mounted on 26 tonne three axle or 32 tonne four axle chassis. It has a maximum tip height of 52 metres, can take 500kg to a maximum radius of 45 metres and can take three tonnes out to a 17 metre radius at a height of 31 metres.

Like the AK 48, it can work well as a truck mounted work platform, its extendable 3.5 metre platform has a 600kg maximum platform capacity thanks to its small tail swing, closed boom, and its 14 metre hydraulically telescoping jib.

BÖCKER EXPANDS

As already mentioned, Böcker has been expanding its service and training facilities in Germany, it also plans to offer crane and hoist rental from its new locations which will be powered entirely by renewable energy through roof mounted solar panels and heat pump technology. This expansion increases Böcker's presence in Germany to eight locations, including its headquarters in Werne.

TRAILERS ON THE UP

Aluminium trailer cranes are a much rarer sight

than the truck cranes - particularly outside of Germany. Böcker has been manufacturing aluminium trailer cranes since 1997 and although not often seen on construction sites, they offer many cost effective advantages particularly in battery electric form. A good example of how they are employed comes from German roofing contractor M. Höfges Bedachungen, which used its Böcker AHK 36e battery electric trailer crane with direct drive electric 100 metres a minute winch - to help renovate an old farmhouse roof. With an all up weight of 3,500kg the crane can be towed by most large 4x4 and pickup trucks.

Böcker AHK 36e



The three hour job involved lifting roof timbers and battens for the new roof over the existing construction. All the work - including manoeuvring, assembly and dismantling - was carried out entirely on the crane's 12.2kWh battery without any additional need to plug in or recharge the lithium ion battery pack. The new electric winch on the AHK 36e uses far less energy than the hydraulic alternative, with few components and no chance of leaking. It also recovers energy when the load is lowered via the cable winch, feeding it back into the battery.

At the end of the job, the battery charge was still 70 percent despite temperatures close to freezing point. Should the battery need recharging, it can be done via any 230 volt household socket. Böcker says that manoeuvring the crane to the work area in the backyard of the house with its

Böcker AHK 36e



wheel drive system, setting and levelling up and raising the boom required just eight percent of the battery charge. The crane can work up to 10 hours performing up to 140 lifting cycles without the need to recharge the battery pack.

With the electric winch option, the maximum capacity for two falls is two tonnes at a radius of 5.4 metres. One tonne can be lifted at a 10 metre radius and a height of 19.5 metres, whereas 500kg can be taken out to 16.5 metres at a height of 26 metres. Maximum lift height is almost 34 metres, at which point it can handle 250kg as it can at a radius of 23.1 metres and a height of 21 metres. Standard features include work lights, outrigger warning lights and a hook camera. ■



Böcker AHK 36e

Berry's new Böcker AK 52



The new crane takes its place in the Berry fleet in Towcester, Northamptonshire





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