



TRAILER CUSTOMISATION

THE KEY

Safely and efficiently transporting equipment, materials and components to and from their point of use is an essential part of the process for equipment owners or users, whether they are rental companies, in-house equipment departments or owner operators. Here we cast our eye over some of the latest trends, developments and new products.

In recent years, trailers have become far more customised to the needs of a specific product or range of equipment from spider lifts and cranes, scissor lifts and telehandlers, right up to wind turbine blades and even boats. Most forms of transportation are manufactured and sold by specialist companies, however, there has been a growth in equipment manufacturers offering their own customised transport solutions - both trailers and trucks - as part of their overall equipment package.

CUSTOM TRUCKS

While custom trailers for work platforms have been around for two or three decades, the past few years have seen a growing number of equipment manufacturers adding customised trailers and even trucks to their product lines designed to carry their products efficiently and safely. For equipment such as spider lifts, this can offer a neat and efficient solution, even eliminating



the need for ramps for loading and unloading. Spider lifts, by their nature are narrow and top-heavy and therefore not very stable when moving in their narrow track transport mode.

Several manufacturers already offer this solution. German spider lift manufacturer Teupen - now part of American group Altec - has been offering customised truck chassis for some of its spiders for many years. It also offers lightweight trailers allowing certain lifts to be towed by a 4x4 or pickup truck. It introduced the idea of high and wide jacking with the outriggers, which not only provides a greater levelling capability on slopes, but also allows the lift to be jacked high enough for the delivery truck to be reversed underneath for loading/unloading.

Another spider lift manufacturer - CMC - also offers this benefit, and in North America it offers a range of custom trucks called Tracked Lift Truck Mounts to transport its Arbor Pro models,

allowing them to operate both as a self-propelled lift or as a truck mounted lift. This dual functionality increases the versatility of the equipment while reducing investment and running costs. CMC says that the set-up is more cost effective than purchasing a specific boom truck or truck mount, for example.

The truck mounted spider lift can self-load and unload from the truck chassis - such as a modified Ford F550/F600 - by deploying its outriggers and raising its tracks off the truck bed - negating the usual potential loading and unloading incidents. CMC spider lifts up to 33 metres can be transported this way. The system also provides the option of using the lift whilst still on the back of the truck. Before you scream unsafe, it is technically not on the truck bed, it is jacked slightly clear of the bed after the tie downs are removed. An added safety feature is that the operator has no need to climb up and down from the truck deck.



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A custom built trailer for the Maeda MK3050-C - fully enclosed if required - can be supplied by Hazlewood Trailers



The new Böcker AHK 36e X



CUSTOM TRAILERS

An increasing number of manufacturers of smaller equipment that is light enough to be towed - such as sub-compact telehandlers, spider cranes and spider lifts, as well as small boom lifts and pick & carry cranes - are offering customised lightweight trailers so that equipment can legally be towed behind a 4x4, van or pick-up. In much of Europe, the maximum weight of the trailer and equipment must be less than 3.5 tonnes. Other parts of the region are slightly different in that a Licence B+ or BE is required if the combined weight of the car and trailer exceeds 3,500kg. With BE, you can generally tow up to 3,500kg behind the vehicle. The standard B License only enables the driver to tow a trailer up to 750kg, provided the combined Maximum Authorised Mass (MAM) of the car and trailer does not exceed 3,500kg. And while not a law, it is recommended to keep the loaded trailer weight under 85 percent of the vehicle's rated towing capacity.

In North America, the bands are generally much higher depending on the vehicle. A Mid-Size (Class 1) truck such as a Chevrolet Colorado, has a towing capacity of 7,700lbs (3.5 tonnes), whereas Ford claims its F-450 Super Duty truck (Heavy-Duty Class 3/4) - can haul up to 40,000lbs (18.1 tonnes) although this is only possible with a gooseneck hitch and high output diesel engine.

Dutch tracked boom manufacturer Hyrax, for example, offers an easily transportable aerial work platform - the 12.6 metre working height Hyrax 27.12 which weighs less than 3,000kg - on its braked trailer, the total weight not exceeding 3,500kg. The company says that it has several trailers in its product range that fall well within this limit and that there is even spare capacity to carry extra work equipment or materials needed for the job.

Spider cranes with capacities up to about three tonnes can also be carried on trailers. The three tonne capacity, 16 metre maximum lift height Hoefflon C6 which weighs 2,850kg can legally be towed by a 4x4 as its combined weight with trailer is less than 3,500kg - with the right trailer of course. The same applies to the popular 3.2 tonne Jekko SPX 532.2 CDH, which weighs 2,750kg. In the UK, the new Maeda MK3050-C can be supplied with a dedicated custom-built trailer supplied by Hazlewood Trailers.

For equipment weighing more than 3,000kg and too heavy to be transported on a trailer, a larger vehicle such as a 7.5 tonne beavertail or tilt back truck is often the vehicle of choice, although this comes with additional cost and lack of flexibility.



The Midi crane ready to tow to site

In North America, CMC offers a Dual Axle Steel Trailer using two 6,000lb (2.7 tonne) capacity torsion axles. The trailer can be derated to 9,990lbs (4.5 tonnes) GVW in order to meet Department of Transport rules and regulations. This heavy duty trailer is equipped with electric, self-adjusting brakes on both axles. Long aluminium loading ramps make it easier to load the tracked lifts onto the trailer safely and quickly. The trailer weighs just over 930kg, whereas the company says, "other trailers can weigh from 1,500kg to 1,750kg, which generally requires a CDL Class A license, which is expensive and difficult to obtain".

COMBINED EQUIPMENT TRAILERS

Of course, several types of lifting equipment such as trailer cranes, self-erecting tower cranes or trailer lifts include their own in-built trailer transport. German crane and hoist manufacturer Böcker, for example, recently launched its new 1.5 tonne - with a 2.4 tonne option - electric powered trailer crane, the AHK 36e X, with hydraulic jib in a total package weighing 3,500kg.

The new chassis design includes an improved outrigger setup with auto levelling and sensing, which increases the working slope angle at the rear by 25 percent, while also providing greater ground clearance when stowed for transport.

Self-erecting tower cranes - very popular in parts of mainland Europe - also have a built-in trailer system. Cranes such as the trailer mounted MiDi LS15.17A-RD from Spain are starting to make inroads into a wider range of markets. The crane has an overall width on the road of 2.2 metres, an overall length of 10 metres over the tow bar, and an overall height of 3.2 metres. Total weight is 3,500kg, allowing it to be towed behind a 4x4 or pickup truck.

NEW TRAILERS AT ARA AND CONEXPO

The increasingly popularity of trailer and aerial lift packages was a very noticeable at the two American shows last month, especially the ARA



MEC's purpose-built trailer and 34J boom combination at the ARA



show which appeals to small to medium rental companies. The product that particularly stood out was a purpose built trailer and 34ft self-propelled telescopic boom lift combination from California

based manufacturer MEC which teamed up with locally based Premier Trailer Mfg. The 34J weighs 3,900kg and the combination is light enough in most states to tow behind a typical half ton and three quarter ton capacity pickup truck.

Another interesting looking package came from the new American subsidiary of Italian truck and spider lift platform manufacturer Cela. Its DT Trailer 80 combines the North American version of its 24 metre DT25 spider lift, which weighs 2,900kg, and also has the ability to lift itself clear of a truck or trailer bed, with an unusual single axle trailer, allowing it to be towed by a typical North American pick up truck.

LARGER TRAILERS AT CONEXPO

At the other end of the scale are the trailers and self-propelled heavy-duty modular transporters (SPMTs) designed to move larger, heavier and bulkier loads. Introductions at Conexpo last month included Goldhofer's PST/SL-E Split, designed for ultra heavy loads, featuring a hydraulic widening system that increases track width for improved stability and versatility. It offers axle loads of up to 45 tonnes, hydraulic axle compensation and 270 degree electronic multiway steering for manoeuvring in tight spaces. The module can be hydraulically split longitudinally for widths from three to 5.1 metres, with an option to extend as wide as 6.8 metres. It can also be paired with Goldhofer's high output power packs with outputs of up to 390kW to provide the hydraulic and electric power for the widening system and traction.

Faymonville, which recently acquired Italian material handling manufacturer Morello, launched its Max Trailers for the North American market in the form of the single drop trailer Max110 SD140 and the Max510 LD140 - a three axle, steerable double-drop low-deck trailer engineered for transporting tall or oversized freight that would otherwise exceed standard height restrictions.

Nelson Manufacturing unveiled a West Coast Crane Boom Dolly with axle spacing optimised for the Californian market, equipped with a trailing rear axle for a shorter turning radius. The updated model includes an airbag boom tower support system, allowing for controlled movement of the tower to facilitate safe boom connect and disconnect operations. The company also showed its updated BLXLT line of boom launch trailers at the show. This updated design is available in tri-axle, quad axle and 2+2 axle configurations. An optional front jeep may also be added.

Kansas based Landoll unveiled the 850XT Extendable Detachable Trailer, which the company says is the "most versatile extendable detach trailer it has ever produced." The 850XT is available in 48ft (14.6m) and 53ft (16.15m) configurations, featuring an extendable lower deck with various locking positions - closed, mid-extension and fully extended - that quickly adapt to changing load requirements. This flexibility allows operators to handle oversized and heavy equipment without the delays and complications of switching trailers, reducing downtime and increasing productivity.

A Goldhofer PST/SL-E



The Landoll 850XT is available in 48ft (14.6m) and 53ft (16.15m) configurations, featuring an extendable lower deck with various locking positions

The 850XT shares features from the current Landoll 800 series and provides a loadable low deck height all the way to the rear bumper with ride height adjustments in the gooseneck and rear trunnion.

LOW HEIGHT AND CAPACITY

In the UK, heavy transport specialist Collett & Son has taken delivery of four Goldhofer Stepstar step frame trailers - two three axle and two four axle units. The trailer beds extend to 16.14 metres and include 10 x 10 tonne lashing points with twistlock securing points. The three axle trailer has a 52 tonne payload while the four axle unit can handle up to 62.5 tonnes. Additional features



Collett has taken delivery of four - two three axle and two four axle - Goldhofer Stepstar step frame trailers

include side extensions up to three metres and drop down rear landing legs.

SPECIALISED TRAILERS

For something a bit more unusual... Boat Lift - which has offices in Italy, the US and Dubai - manufactures travel lifts, gantry cranes and self-propelled trailers for lifting and moving boats up to 1,500 tonnes. ■



Italian company Boat Lift offers a wide range of lifting and moving solutions for boats

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