

cranes & access

April/May 2026 Vol.28 issue 2

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**CRAWLER
CRANES**

**CONEXPO
& ARA
REVIEW**

**TRUCK
MOUNTED
LIFTS**

TRAILERS

**SOURCE
GUIDE**



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17



27



31



53

CONTENTS

COMMENT 5

NEWS 6

Grove unveils new 700 tonne AT, Xtreme spider crane, New Terex luffer, MEC enters crane market and unveils new scissors, Vertikal.net is 25, Klubb reorganises and launches two new vehicle mounts, New 45ft Skyjack narrow booms, JLG shows 860SJ+ prototype, Three new Magni telehandlers, Versalift's new V-Range, Scanreco adds new remotes, Liebherr updates 90 tonner, LiftSmart's new CL Series, plus News Highlights and Financials round-up...

CRAWLER CRANES 17

In an ever changing world, crawler cranes play a key role in major infrastructure construction projects and repairs. This year, there seems to be a greater focus on small to medium lattice and telescopic crawlers. We take a look at the changes and new introductions in a varied and busy year.

VAN AND SMALL TRUCK MOUNTED LIFTS 27

C&A talks to Marc Paish and Paul Dillon of UK manufacturer Aldercote, possibly the most engineering driven van and pickup mounted lift manufacturer over the past few years, as well as rounding up new products and developments in the 3.5 tonne truck mounted sector.

TRANSPORT AND TRAILERS 31

Safely and efficiently transporting equipment, materials and components to and from their point of use is an essential part of the construction process. We cast our eye over some of the latest trends, developments and new products.

SOURCE GUIDE 2026 37

This year's C&A Source Guide lists all the crane, access and telehandler manufacturers that participate in the global market, detailing the specific product types they offer. This year, we have added glazing robots and small tracked carriers.

ARA AND CONEXPO SHOW REVIEWS 53

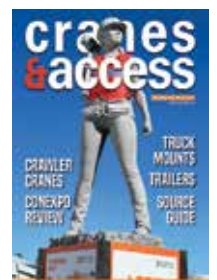
March was a busy month for equipment shows in the USA. We report from the ARA in Orlando, Florida and Conexpo in Las Vegas.

REGULARS

TRAINING	61
IPAF FOCUS	63
ALLMI FOCUS	65
CPA FOCUS	67
BOOKS & MODELS	69
IN THE NEXT ISSUE	70
LETTERS AND OBITUARIES	71
WHAT'S ON	75
ONLINE DIRECTORY	78

ON THE COVER

The world's largest 3D printed statue representing the role woman play in the construction industry welcomed visitors to this year's Conexpo exhibition in Las Vegas. Standing 19ft/5.8m high it was designed by 3D artist Anna Benjamin and unveiled in the show's Tech Experience area in Silver Lot.



IN THE NEXT ISSUE

Scheduled for publication in mid June, the next issue of Cranes & Access will include features on Low Level platforms, Telehandlers, All Terrain cranes and the APEX show review. If you have any contributions or suggestions to make or are interested in advertising in this issue, please contact our editorial or sales teams.



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COMMENT

ORIGINAL AND BEST?

The expression 'original and best' implies that subsequent versions of a product are never better than the original. I mean - apart from perhaps the Godfather Part II and Sister Act II - name any film sequel better than the original?

Manufacturers are often guilty of introducing new versions in order to pressure customers to 'upgrade' even when the new model is just a slight rehash of the original.

At first glance, aerial lifts, cranes and telehandlers appear to have changed very little over the past 15 years. However, developments in materials - high strength steel, electric motors, controls and paints etc... coupled with modern production processes, mean that today's machines are usually superior in almost every way. And while the basic designs may not have changed that much, the internals certainly have, including emission friendly and quieter power sources, no-oil scissor lifts, cameras, telematics and a whole host of other safety and convenience features.

With technology based products - computers, tablets and smart phones etc - an upgrade often means improved performance and more features. However, with products such as cars, for example, MK II or MK III versions are often minor body changes and a few more 'features', to make them more appealing on paper, and often, in my opinion, rarely as good looking as the originals.

At Conexpo, two interesting new carry deck cranes from MEC and Sany caught my eye in what is a very traditional crane type. As MEC's first ever crane, it said it wanted to take a fresh look at carry deck crane design and "address long standing pain points in a market that has seen limited change for decades".

From the outside, both cranes look like classic carry deck cranes produced over the past 30 or more years. On closer inspection, however, there are major differences and improvements. The MEC - unlike the Sany - has a low-level, side mounted engine similar to a telehandler, giving a clear view

to the side and over the flat deck to the rear, while a modified turret weldment provides good vision to the right side. The Sany with a classic rear mounted engine is equipped with six cameras (MEC has four) for full surround vision from the cab.

Both are diesel powered but have modern features. So, it was a shock to sit in the 12 tonne MEC's cab and be met with a row of control levers - similar to most 'traditional' carry deck cranes. Sany, on the other hand, uses joysticks and a wireless remote control, allowing lifting functions to be operated from a distance.

MEC says that it intentionally kept the 'old fashioned' control panel. If there was one area that probably needed updating it was that - but they did not want to upset existing operators.

Perhaps MEC's market research highlighted 'keep it original' and it has delivered. However, ask anyone if they want to change a product they have been happy with for many years, and most will say "No thanks". Think original VW Beetle, or updates to Microsoft Office, which are a major headache for most of us.

Sometimes changes need to be imposed otherwise we would not have smartphones, sat nav, digital cameras or personal computers. When given the opportunity of a blank piece of paper, it seems a waste not to have been more progressive and radical. However, as both cranes look very similar, perhaps the ideal carry deck crane design was actually achieved many years ago.

Maybe original is best after all... but personally, I would rather not drive around in a car looking like it was from the 1990s even if it was thoroughly modern inside.

Mark Darwin

Comment and feedback is most welcome via post, email or phone stating if we may publish them or not: editor@vertikal.net