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STILL AN EXCITING BUZZ...

There is still an exciting buzz around spider cranes as the market develops and new applications are discovered. This has been helped by the many new products that are adding new dimensions to the traditional Japanese spider cranes that kicked the whole thing off, such as the larger articulated models that don't even have the outriggers style that gave the market its name. At the other end of the scale are the minis, small telescopic or articulated demountable loader type cranes on tracked carriers that are becoming more common. We look at some of the latest developments.

The rental market for spider cranes is now mainstream with both crane and aerial lift rental companies offering them, but it has taken almost 40 years to reach this level of international market awareness and acceptance.

Originating in the 1970s Japan, they were a local delicacy for almost 15 years before the concept was introduced into Europe and North America in the 1990s by Swedish distributor Kranlyft with the Maeda cranes. Back then it was an oddball product and very expensive, largely due to the minimal volumes/demand. Crane companies typically turned their noses up at what they considered to be a toy which none of their customers ever called and asked about.

It began to change at the turn of the millennium, when UK rental company GGR, spotted the product's potential and began adding Maeda cranes to its fleet. Not happy with Kranlyft's high prices, it began looking for an alternative and discovered the Unic range in Japan. However, Unic was not interested in the European market and refused to have its models CE tested and approved. GGR said it would carry out the CE approval, if Unic would agree to GGR being the exclusive master distributor for all of Europe, and possibly the Middle East. Unic said yes, the approvals were done and finally there was

competition, an essential requirement if a market is to develop.

Since then, new entrants have arrived as the market grew, starting with Italian company Imai, which went mainstream and became Jekko and more recently Hoeflon from the Netherlands. There have been others over the years with manufacturers such as Italmec/Heila, R&B, Kegiom and Reedyk, while more recently we have seen SPT Cranes from China and Xtreme in the US, but more of that later.

GETTING BIGGER

The market has continued to develop with the arrival of the higher capacity articulated cranes combining the versatility and capacity of a large articulated loader crane with the manoeuvrability and rough terrain ability of a compact tracked chassis. Manufacturers in the sector include Jekko which is part owned by Fassi, BG Lift and Palfinger.

Jekko launched its JF545 in 2017 after Fassi acquired its stake in company in 2016. The JF545 had a maximum capacity of 15.5 tonnes, a tip height of almost 30 metres and could handle one tonne at 25 metres. Over the years Jekko has expanded its range to include five models, from the smallest JF235 with a 6.15 tonne capacity and maximum height of just over 25 metres,



The 22 tonne, 34.5 metre Jekko JF1050



through the JF365, the updated JF545.2 with 32.5 metre maximum tip height to the 21.5 tonne capacity JF990 which is able to reach 41.5 metres with jib.

The newest and largest addition in May this year was the 22 tonne, 34.5 metre JF1050, which includes some major upgrades and improvements over existing models, which will probably be incorporated into the smaller units over time. As with all Jekko JF articulated models, the JF1050 uses a Fassi loader crane.

SPIDER CRANES

Unfolding with 4.9m square outrigger footprint



The new crane fully stowed - note the two counterweights

On its nine section decagonal main boom the JF1050 has a maximum tip height of 23 metres, at which point it can lift 5,500kg. Maximum radius is 20 metres with a capacity of 3,085kg. An optional seven section jib takes the tip height to 34.5 metres with a capacity of 950kg at a radius of almost 11 metres.

The jib can luff down to horizontal with the main boom at 70 degrees where it can handle 850kg at a height of 22.5 metres and a radius of 18 metres. With the boom and jib fully extended and horizontal or up to 10 degrees above horizontal, the capacity is 860kg at up to 32 metres radius. A range of work platforms offers working height of just over 36 metres.

The JF1050 is 2.2 metres wide, has an overall length of 6.75 metres and an overall height of 3.47 metres. The self-installed five tonne counterweight is made up of two parts - two and three tonnes - and there are load charts for no counterweight, two tonnes, three tonnes or five tonnes. Overall weight is 27.7 tonnes which can be reduced by removing one or both of the counterweights and the outrigger beams.

The winch has a maximum line pull of two tonnes with 60 metres of wire rope storage giving a below ground reach of up to 51 metres. The outrigger spread is variable, from a simple

square footprint of between 4.91 and 8.5 metres, or inboard to an overall length of 11.35 metres. Intermediate outrigger spread options and one side set-ups are also possible with the actual configuration fed into the crane's operating system and displayed on the seven inch fully waterproof touch screen.

Power options include bi-energy - diesel with an integrated electric motor providing full autonomy outdoors and clean, quiet operation indoors - pure diesel or a full electric plug in system.

A new Variable Speed Engine Management system is said to provide smoother, more precise operation and lower fuel consumption allowing the operator to choose between three working modes - Eco, Normal and Power. All engine data and details are available on the crane's main display screen.

XTREME SPIDER CRANE

At Conexpo earlier this year, US based Xtreme Manufacturing which builds heavy duty American style telehandlers, surprised many when it launched a spider crane, the 3.2 tonne XMC3530, one of the very few to be produced outside of Japan, Italy and more recently China.

The XMC3530 which looks very Jekko, has a five section 10.3 metre main boom, with a 4.42 metre hydraulic luffing jib which stows within the superstructure/turret when not in use. Maximum tip height is 16.33 metres, at which point it can handle 490kg, it can also take it out to a six metre radius at a height of 12 metres. Maximum capacity on the jib is just under a tonne,



XMC3530 jib storage

while the fully extended main boom can handle 1,450kg. The overall stowed width is 762mm, although it is fraction over two metres high - an issue with some single doorways.

Xtreme's owner and rental supremo Don Ahern, who also owns Snorkel, has previously purchased Jekko cranes and many have commented that the XMC3530 resembles the Jekko SPX532.2 so we have compared them in the chart below.

XTREME XMC3530 VS JEKKO SPX532.2

The Xtreme XMC3530 certainly looks similar to the Jekko SPX 532 but is not identical and owes more to the original Jekko SPX 532, while Jekko has moved on to a second generation model which improves on the original design. However comparing the specifications, there is little to separate them. Jekko said that it is flattered by the Xtreme, which it says includes some of the errors and issues that it has removed in its new SPX 532.2.

HOEFLOM CELEBRATES 20 YEARS

Dutch spider crane, tracked carrier and pick & carry crane manufacturer Hoeflon celebrated its 20th anniversary in June, hosting around 4,500 visitors at the opening of its new facility

Xtreme XMC3530 Vs Jekko SPX532.2

	Xtreme	Jekko
	XMC3530	SPX 532.2
Max capacity	3.17 tonnes	3.2 tonnes
Boom length	10.31m	10.3m
Max tip height main boom	11.9m	11.9m
Jib length	4.42m	5.1m
Max jib capacity	998kg	1,000kg
Jib luffing range	80°	80°
Max tip height	16.33m	17m
OAW retracted	762mm	770mm
OAW tracks extended	1.07m	1.06m
OAL	3.76m	3.14m
OAH	2.01m	1.99m
Outrigger footprint 45°	4.4m x 4.5m *	4.53m x 4.57m
Power	Lithium battery	Lithium battery
Power options	N/A	Diesel
Capacities at reach		
On full boom	1,450kg	1,450kg
At max radius main boom	499kg @ 9.5m	490kg @ 9.5m
At max tip height	490kg -16.3/1.1m	300kg -17m /2m
At max radius on jib	130kg @ 13.96m	100kg @ 14.8m
Slew	360°	360°
Max single line pull	998kg	1,050kg



Conexpo saw the launch of 3.2t Xtreme XMC3530



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SPIDER CRANES



The new
Hoeftlon
C10e Gen 3

in Barneveld, which is located alongside its existing plant. The company launched its new C10e Gen 3 spider crane - the updated version of the C10e - at the event, which features a maximum tip height of 22 metres and can handle 209kg at its maximum radius of 18.5 metres. The crane is 3.97 metres long, 810mm wide, two metres high and weighs 5,075kg. The specification is broadly

similar to the previous model, but adds a revised jib with a 1,500kg capacity, 95 degrees main boom elevation, automatic track tensioning, an updated software platform, stepless adjustable outrigger settings, auto folding and stowage, an attachment recognition system with Rated Capacity Limiter and a new remote control.

Its other new model is the C30eL - the long boom version of its nine tonne C30e - with a much greater lift height, 30.5 metres compared to 22 metres. However there are many other differences as can be seen in the table below.

The higher capacity, fully electric C30e, is fully remote controlled and can pick & carry a load. What the C30eL loses in maximum capacity - seven rather than nine tonnes - it makes up for with significantly more reach - 30.5 metres vs 20 metres - giving it more ability for jobs such as installing glass or lifting materials onto or

over buildings. Features such as remote control, negative boom and pick & carry ability remain the same.

MAEDA UPDATES

The two stalwarts of international spider crane market, Maeda and Unic, have struggled to keep pace with the product launches of European producers. When new products do come out, they are typically 'bullet proof' in terms of reliability and simplicity to operate.

Maeda recently unveiled its all electric 2.82 tonne capacity



Maeda MC285CB-3 all
electric spider crane

	Hoeftlon C30e	Hoeftlon C30eL
Capacity	9,000kg	7,000kg
Capacity at max reach	380kg	70kg
Winch capacity	6,400kg	6,400kg
Lift height incl jib	22.0m	30.5m
Max reach incl jib	20.0m	29.5m
Jib length	7.5m	7.7m
Max reach no jib	12.0m	21.5m
Boom angle	95 degrees	99 degrees
Incline angle	20 degrees	20 degrees
Slew	360 continuous	360 continuous
Dimensions	3.85 x 1.17 x 2.0m	5.08 x 1.2 x 2.02m
Total weight with options	8,700kg	8,895kg
Total weight without options	5,600kg	6,400kg



Hoeftlon
C30e



Hoeftlon
C30eL

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MC285CB-3 Eco

MC285CB-3 Eco spider crane which matches the diesel model in terms of speed, capacity and dimensions but with zero emissions and low noise.

Its maximum capacity is achieved at a 1.4 metre radius, and maximum lift height is 8.7 metres, below ground reach is 10.1 metres with standard four fall hook block setup. It has an overall length of 2.8 metres, is 750mm wide and 1.47 metres high.

The crane features advanced long-life lithium Titanate battery pack, and energy-saving modes designed for continuous work in demanding applications, coupled with a battery lifespan of more than 15 years. It can charge to 80 percent in 2.3 hours or 100 percent in 3.5 hours using a regular AC supply. The crane can be operated whilst plugged in, allowing intermittent top-ups. There are three selectable power modes - Standard: For normal multi-function operation. ECO Mode 1: For single functions at standard

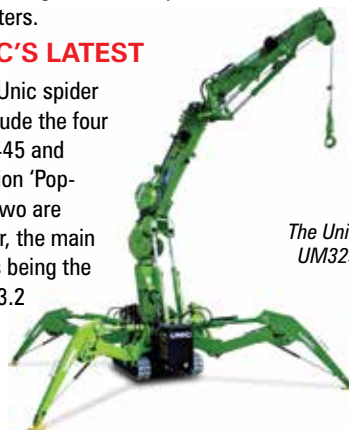
Maeda MC285CB-3
all electric crane

speed, reducing energy consumption 11 percent and ECO Mode 2: for slower speeds and a 27 percent energy saving.

Features include remote control, a seven inch LMI display, an optional 850kg searcher hook, a programmable Moment Limiter with multi position outrigger setting to and safety control lift parameters.

UNIC'S LATEST

The latest Unic spider cranes include the four tonne UM445 and UM325 Li-ion 'Pop-Up's. The two are very similar, the main differences being the capacity - 3.2 tonnes at 2.2 metres for

The Unic
UM325

The 4t UM445

the UM325 and four tonnes at 1.8 metres for the UM445, or 1,000kg and 1,500kg on the jib respectively. Both models are all electric, lithium powered eco cranes featuring a 'pop-up' turret design that minimises rear overhang when operating.

The UM445 has a five section 11 metre main boom at which point it can handle 1,840kg or take 880kg to 16.4 metres lift height on the jib. Maximum radius is 9.8 metres at which point it can lift 490kg or 100kg at 15.7 metres with the jib, while pick & carry capacity is 500kg. Overall stowed length is 3.1 metres by 750mm wide with an overall height of 1.95 metres. Total weight is 3,830kg.

The 3.2 tonne capacity UM325 Pop-Up has a 10 metre main boom with maximum lift height about



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the MK3053C knuckle boom



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SPIDER CRANES



The Unic UM325 Pop-Up

10.9 metres or 17.8 metres with the hydraulic jib. Dimensions are very similar to the UM445.

SPT CRANES

SPT is a Chinese spider crane manufacturer that was founded in 2015 and is based in Henan Province. It has a range of five spider cranes and



SPT's largest spider crane the 10t 1009



The SPT S7 spider crane

one 800kg SG80 tracked pick & carry crane.

The spider cranes range from the 2.95 tonne SPT299 with a maximum 11.5 metres radius, a battery powered SPT299 with similar capacity but 8.83 metre radius, a four tonne SPT399, five tonne/20.5 metre SPT499 and the 10 tonne SPT1009 all of which can be equipped with hydraulic jib.

In September 2022 SPT appointed German vacuum lifter company and former Kranlyft/Maeda dealer Uplifter as its first European distributor. The move came just a month after Uplifter parted company with Kranlyft. The company also set up Uplifter UPC spider cranes in the UK as a sort of SPT sub dealer. Uplifter was established in 2001 and had subsidiaries in Poland and the Czech Republic, working with partners in several other countries including Portugal, Spain, France and Australia, through which it sold its range of

vacuum/glass handling equipment which Kranlyft handled in the UK.

In 2024 SPT and Uplifter launched a European version of its new 2.98 tonne/8.7 metre radius S7 Sky Series crane. However, last November Uplifter became insolvent and went into administration because of the "difficult economic environment and the general market situation."

Three months later, German rental company Luibl acquired the operational and business assets of Uplifter while the company - Uplifter GmbH - was liquidated.

At the time Luibl's owner Karl Bauer said: 'A new company has been established operating under the name Uplifter group and includes a number of subsidiaries to handle the various divisions - Uplifter Rental, Uplifter Trading, Uplifter Service and Machine Operators.'

However, the extensive Luibl spider crane rental fleet is largely made up of Maeda cranes, and there is little sign of any sales activity. ■



The SPT S7 spider crane



BUILDING THE VILLAGE ON TRIESTE'S WATERFRONT

Every year in October, Barcolana transforms Trieste into one of the world's leading international sailing stages, drawing crews, enthusiasts and visitors from all over the world. It is not only the world's largest sailing regatta, this year's event - Barcolana 58 - attracted 1,900 boats and around 550,000 spectators, but involves the entire city for several days, bringing together sailing, tourism, business and entertainment along Trieste's waterfront.

Its popularity stems from its fascinating formula with professional sailors and amateurs competing side by side on a massive single starting line in the Gulf of Trieste. The 'Barcolana Village' sets up on the seafront next to Piazza Unità d'Italia, with exhibition stands, hospitality areas and public spaces, forming the heart of the event.

This year an Jekko SPX532.2 from rental company HLI Rent was involved in assembling the Village and its temporary structures, lifting glass panels, railings and metal pergolas, as well as equipment for the interior spaces and booths. The working environment featured limited space, uneven ground, teams operating simultaneously, tight installation schedules and a worksite alongside the sea.

Simone Ravalico, HLI Rent Technical Sales Specialist, said: "The SPX532.2 was used both with the hook for steel structures and with a vacuum lifter for the installation of more than 30 glass panels."

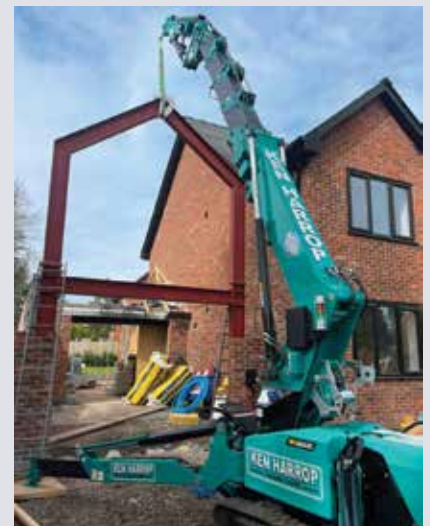
"This is the first time a mini crane has been used, normally it is carried out by truck cranes. In such a congested area the mini crane proved to be the most practical and efficient solution. Its compact dimensions, allowed us to work close to the structures and in the tightest spaces, while also enabling several teams to operate simultaneously without interfering with one another."



SPIDER CRANE CONVERT

As mentioned earlier it was many years before crane rental companies accepted the spider crane as a useful tool. One company that has recently entered the spider crane market is UK based rental company Ken Harrop Crane Hire, starting with a new 2.98 tonne Maeda MK3053-C.

The move was spurred on by Kranlyft's 'Try Before You Buy' offer. Barely two weeks in, it decided that it would be a perfect addition to the fleet. Jack Harrop, Ken's son said: "What we liked about this crane is that it can be transported on a trailer behind a 4x4 and is very simple to use. We were so impressed with it that we decided to buy it, rather than return it to Kranlyft."



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