

EXHIBITION PREVIEW



Can't make it to the show? Then keep up to date with the news and rumours on www.Vertical.net which will be reporting daily from Las Vegas.

CONEXPO: An essential experience

Conexpo is not the biggest construction equipment show in the world – that honour goes to bauma in Munich. But it is certainly one of the most exciting. The heady mix of new technology and brash American show business makes a cocktail that anyone who needs to keep up with this business should taste.

Conexpo is held right next to the Las Vegas Hilton – the outdoor exhibits are in fact on part of the Hilton's car park (but start thinking on a grand scale now). So while you are looking at the latest lifting technology you are only a ten minute taxi ride from the famous Las Vegas 'Strip', the neon illuminated road that features some of the most famous casinos and bizarre hotels in the world.

You can be sure that the arrival of the world's construction industry in town combines with the Las Vegas magic to produce an irresistible atmosphere of high spending, hard playing and big business. Spinning off come rumours, thick and fast, with a good smattering of actual news events. This year the rumours are already

Anyone who needs to know the lifting industry should try to get over to Las Vegas this month, says Tim Whiteman



The bright lights are only ten minutes from the Conexpo showground

in full flow before the show has even started. The strongest one in the crane industry is that Manitowoc will announce the purchase of a major US or German mobile crane manufacturer. But don't be too hasty – we have been here before.

Last Conexpo saw Mannesman, now Demag, tipped to merge with Link-Belt

(part of Sumitomo). Nothing came of that, although insiders say the deal was tantalisingly close and really did fall at the last fence.

Again, at Intermat in 2001, Manitowoc was rumoured to be fixing a deal with a mobile crane manufacturer – nothing came of that and at bauma last year there was a very definite silence on the subject of mergers despite heavy hints that Demag and Manitowoc were talking. To most people's amazement, Manitowoc then went on to announce that it had bought Potain soon after the show. Who knows, perhaps Manitowoc, or even Terex, will pull a surprise out of the hat at this year's event.

Terex is a name to be reckoned with in the crane industry. Three years ago, at the last Conexpo, visitors were surprised at the size of the company's stand. Now there is no doubting its commitment to cranes and the construction industry generally, excepting powered access, where it is probably true to say that Terex got its fingers a little burned. The company has pulled out of this sector completely (see news story in this issue about the sale of Holland Lift) and has in recent months bought a range of ▶

1999's opening. 135,000 visitors from 135 countries are expected in Las Vegas for Conexpo this March, where about 2300 exhibitors await them.



◀ construction equipment manufacturers. For example, Conexpo is to see the launch of the Atlas Terex range of telescopic handlers. Featured on its stand are also a new range of truck cranes, a new crawler crane from Terex American Crane, articulating loader cranes from Atlas Terex and a Peiner SK 415 tower crane.

The US powered access industry has been through some terrible times recently and Conexpo will be an opportunity for European visitors to assess the mood at the parent companies of some of their major suppliers. JLG, Genie, Upright and Skyjack's North American operations have all laid off staff and even closed manufacturing facilities in the last year. Grove went into and then out of Chapter 11 protection, Upright is still there but predicting an early return to normal trading.

There are also a crop of rumours growing up around the powered access industry, many of them about the long predicted entry of a major international construction equipment manufacturer into the sector. These reports have been around for a long time - maybe they will come to fruition one day. However, it's more likely that Conexpo will provide a good chance for senior company executives to once again talk over the pros and cons of mergers, 'strategic alliances' and buyouts. Most of these come to nothing, but it is worth remembering that Manitowoc's purchase of Potain started as an informal conversation at Intermat!

Exotic creatures

Conexpo is also an opportunity for European visitors to view some of the more exotic creatures of the US lifting industry. Broderson, for example is a well established US crane manufacturer, but one that you will never see outside North America. The company is launching a new industrial crane at Conexpo and has a



range of RTs on show. Bil-Jax and Polecat are US manufacturers of powered access equipment seldom seen outside the US; both have ambitions to gain CE approval for their products and begin European sales. Elliot Equipment is another US native to see; the company combines cranes, man baskets and concrete pumps on one chassis. A new model is launched at Conexpo. Link-Belt is not present in Europe, but its modern truck cranes provide European visitors with food for thought while its RT range is one of the most modern in the world.

Conexpo is also a great opportunity to examine the jacking systems and specialist equipment used to such great effect by North American rigging companies. Lift Systems, which has sold systems into Europe through its dealers in the UK and Germany is showing two lifting gantries and a mini jack. Rivals Riggers Manufacturing Company is unveiling its Quad 4 gantry system, which can be used in a two or four-leg configuration.

Perhaps the most remarkable animal is actually part European. Manitowoc is launching a truck mounted self-erecting tower crane at Conexpo. The tower crane is of course from Potain, but it will be novel to see it on an American truck and in Manitowoc red. Also in the Manitowoc livery will be a Potain MDT-302 L16 topless tower crane. Representing the com-

pany's crawler cranes is a Model 555 lattice-boom crawler crane. The 150-ton (136-metric-ton) crane was introduced at Bauma in April 2001.

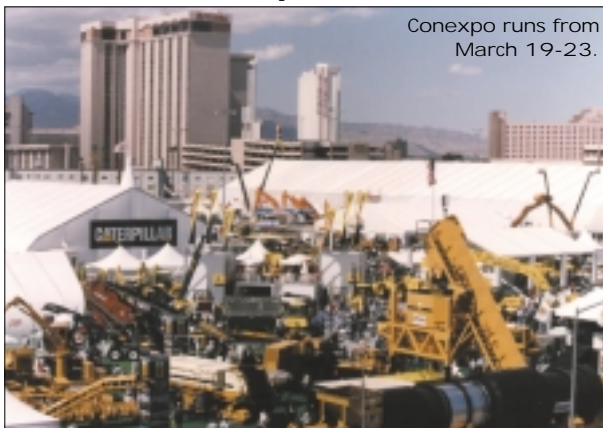
Kobelco will display 2 cranes, the CK1000 and the brand new CK2000. Both have a self-assembly-system and the new strong, extra wide winches with oil-cooled, maintenance free, low wear multi-disc brakes. The CK2000 is the US name for the 180 metric tonne (200 US ton) crane which was introduced in Europe with the model name CKE1800. CK1000 is the US model name for the 90 metric tonne (100 US ton) introduced in Europe at Bauma 2002 as the CKE900.

New launches

Conexpo is a major show for such European stalwarts as Haulotte, Liebherr and Demag. Grove, which straddles the Atlantic with its factories in Shady Grove and Wilhelmshaven, is also out in force. It is launching a new top-of-the-range 7-axle AT, which will take its maximum lift capacity to more than 400 tonnes. Current top of the range is the 350 tonne GMK6350. Also new is the 115 tonne capacity RT9000E rough terrain, which Grove believes is the largest capacity 2-axle RT in the world. The five section boom gives a maximum tip height of 85 metres.

Meanwhile, Haulotte has a full range of scissors, booms and personnel lifts on show. It is also promoting the fact that it now has a fully owned US subsidiary from which its comprehensive range of products is available with full after sales service.

Genie is on home territory here, with a



Conexpo runs from March 19-23.

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which is putting on a big show together with its US subsidiary Palfinger USA Inc. The PK 120000 will be shown on a Kenworth truck and is bound to impress.

Big booms

One of the longest telescopic booms at the show will undoubtedly be that on Liebherr's new 250 tonne capacity, 6-axle mobile crane, the LTM 1250/1. The crane's main boom is a phenomenal 72 metres. When raised to a steep angle, the 1250/1 can lift 14.7 tonnes to 70 metres. The crane uses a maximum of 97.5 tonnes of counterweight, but offers a range of partial ballast configurations. Also new is the 350 tonne LR 1350/1 crawler crane. This has a 120 metre main boom to which a 78 metre luffing fly jib can be added, which allows 150

metres of lifting height. Features of the crane include five hoisting winches and up to five Liebherr-built slewing gear drives. Whilst on the Liebherr stand, check out the new HS 855 HD duty cycle crawler crane. This has hydraulically telescopic crawlers and is designed for easy use with attachments like power hammers, drill rigs, casing oscillators etc

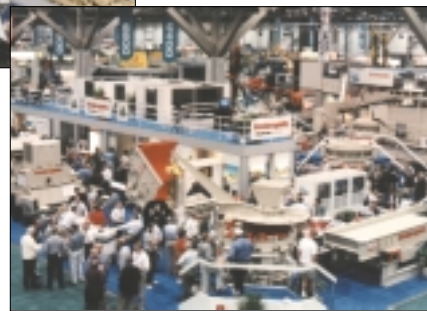


Most lifting equipment will be in the 'Gold Lot'

big display of new and established products. One of the stars is the improved S-85 telescopic boom. Brand new for many people will be the 'Big Deck' rough terrain scissor lift, the GS-3384. At the smaller end of the range is the GS-2632. A full range of straight booms, articulating booms, trailer mounts and other scissor lifts rounds out the display.

One of the largest collections of mast climbing work platforms ever assembled at a major exhibition is promised from Interverct, owner of the Alimak and Hek ranges. See the new Hek MS 25100 work platform and a Hek GTP 1500 transport platform. To show that the integration between Alimak and Hek is a reality, Interverct will exhibit a former Alimak product now marketed under the Hek brand in the familiar red and blue livery.

Certainly worth a visit is Shuttlelift, which has sold some of its industrial cranes in Europe. An important feature of its 'Carrydeck' range of cranes is that they can move loads after lifting them. A complete contrast comes from Palfinger,



without the use of an external power pack. Representing tower cranes is the 32 TT from the established range of telescoping tower cranes.

Among JLG's full range of powered access equipment will be a new line of telescopic handlers for European markets, to be built at Maasmechelen in Belgium based on designs bought from F Weyhausen of Germany. Bill Lasky, president of JLG, said: "Rather than an adaptation of an existing North American design, the telehandler line was developed to meet the specific requirement of the European marketplace and incorporates many new-to-the-market features and benefits". Also on the JLG stand will be its new 135-foot (41 metre) boom lift, the Model 1350SJP.

JLG believes this is the largest telescopic boom lift in the industry.

Other telescopic handler manufacturers at the show include Manitou with its new MVT 665 and Bobcat, which is showing its latest range at Conexpo for the first time.

Visitors to Conexpo will see the US launch of Tadano truck cranes in North America. On show are new 80 tonne and 60 tonne models. These feature the upper sections of two new rough terrains launched at the show, the TR600-XL and the TR800XXL. The carriers are made in Germany by Tadano Faun. The biggest crane on the stand will be the 130 tonne ATF1300.

Demag has long been a major force in heavy lifting throughout North America. Now it is moving into the small and medium lift capacity markets too, and its stand will reflect this. Exhibited will be two of its City Class cranes, the 2-axle AC 30 and the 4-axle AC 40-1. Just three years ago it would have been almost inconceivable that the company would try to sell such models in the US. However, a strengthened US service network added to changes in the market have altered all that. Representing the heavier end of the company's products is the 350 tonne capacity AC 350 SSL which features the innovative Sideways Superlift capacity enhancement system.

Most of the lifting equipment will be outside in the "Gold Lot" area of the show, where Wylie Systems, for example, is launching the i3000 crane safety system and a new range of load monitoring systems. But it is worth going into the halls to find components, accessories and other vital items. Watch out for Bleijenberg, a Dutch manufacturer of crane grabs. It is showing mechanical, hydraulic, electro-mechanical grabs. From Triple R Continuous Oil Purification Systems come a range of filtration and cleaning systems and the company promises "Ongoing demonstration of continuous oil purification to 1 micron absolute".

Also indoors is The Vertikal Press, publisher of *Cranes & Access*, *Kran & Bühne* and *Vertikal.net*. We can be found in the official British and German pavilions. ■

Conversion Factors

Remember, not everything is bigger in the States! A US ton, for example is just 907 kilograms while a yard (3 feet) is 91 centimetres. A mile, in contrast is 1.6 kilometres.