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MORE OF THE SAME...

A year ago, the spider lift market was going through a spate of acquisitions and consolidation, especially among the manufacturers, which seemed to have curbed the number of new products coming to market. This year we have had a bit more of the same with some interesting and unusual company moves as well as increased activity in the mid to large end of the sector.

Late last year the world's oldest spider lift manufacturer Falcon, filed for protection from its creditors having struggled to service its debt load for several years. The company - which changed its name to Falcon in 2018 - can trace its roots back to Falck Schmidt and the man who came up with the original spider lift concept - a machine with spider leg outriggers that could pass through a single doorway and then extend a wide base - more than 40 years ago. Over that time, the company has passed through a number of owners since it was acquired from the founding family by VT Holding in 2005 - at that time the parent company of Denka Lift. It rebranded the two companies as Worldlift, which was then acquired by concrete company Skako to become Skako Lift in 2010.

MANAGEMENT BUY OUT

A Management Buy Out followed in 2011 including another name change to TCA Lift. More recently the company signed an OEM supply deal with Chinese manufacturer Sinoboom, and it is thought that the volumes involved together with payment terms may have played some part in its pushing the company over the edge. The final

straw on the camel's back if you like.

However, just a few months after filing for protection, Falcon reopened its doors having completed a restructuring process to put it back on a more solid financial footing. The new business - Falcon Lifts - has purchased the company's assets and signed a new lease for the production facilities, with most of the staff retained.

Technical sales director Brian Falck Schmidt said: "We are all very happy to be back and in a position to support and work with our customers and suppliers, most of whom have been really supportive as we worked through this challenging and unfortunate process which has been a truly humbling experience. Our number one aim now is to focus our time and effort on catching up with those things that might have slipped over the past two months and winning back the full confidence of all those we work with."

MORE TOP END CHOICE

Falcon has a 13 model base range with working heights from 13 to 52 metres including the more unusual, wheeled spider lift models. The company is best known for its larger models which are



widely used in high atriums, found in airports and large hotel complexes. This is a sector of the market that has had relatively few players over the years with just Palazzani and - with a slightly different concept - Teupen competing. More recently Platform Basket and Falcon have introduced models of 50 metres or more along with Easy Lift but more of this later.

PRIVATE EQUITY SPOTS OPPORTUNITY

Before we look at the products, it is interesting to note that a surprising level of consolidation is underway among spider lift manufacturers. Surprising because they are almost all family owned Italians, while those leading the charge are now private equity firms that clearly see further potential in this market.

The process kicked off in 2022 when Metrika SGR acquired a 70 percent stake in southern Italian manufacturer CMC, which was followed in 2023 when JLG/Oshkosh completed its acquisition of long time market leader Hinowa, which is increasingly being absorbed into JLG's corporate structure and now manufactures a range of



The all electric, wheeled Falcon FS320



A tracked Falcon spider lift



Hinowa LL26.14



Ruthmann
Bluelift SA22

JLG platforms. For those with a good memory Ruthmann acquired Bluelift in 2016, but that was a much about gaining a low cost 3.5 tonne truck mounted lift line than an avid interest in the spider lift market. Now part of the Versalift group it has further potential for expansion.

This year the march goes on as growth in the spider lift market gains momentum. Changes such as these often throw up opportunities for well funded smaller players.

ALMAC/WISE TAKE EASY LIFT

Easy Lifts' growth from a 'bit player' into an increasingly significant spider lift manufacturer in recent years was obviously an attraction to Italian tracked aerial lift and spider crane manufacturer Almac which in July acquired the company in an all-share purchase deal following its acquisition by private equity firm Wise Equity in late 2022. In recent years Easy Lift has become an increasingly major player in the sector releasing many new products including the 52.4 metre RA53 launched at Bauma 2022 and significantly increasing revenues and sales around the world.



Easy Lift founders and senior managers Michele and Emanuele Sorianini will remain with the company in their current roles and will join the Almac board of directors. The company will continue to operate as a separate brand and business within the new 'group' and retain its own sales and distribution network. The two companies are joined in the group by steel fabricator and metalworking company Plas - now AlmacPlas - in which Almac acquired a majority stake last September.

The company said: "Thanks to this industrial combination, the group will benefit from greater strength in terms of investments dedicated to technological innovation and the development of new products, with the aim of further improving its service and offering globally."

EASY LIFT RA21 READY TO GO

Just prior to the acquisition, Easy Lift started shipping its new 21 metre RA21 following its launch at Bauma earlier this year. The RA21 has two long risers topped by a three section boom and 1.8 metre jib with 90 degrees of articulation, providing a maximum working height of 20.4 metres, while the maximum outreach is almost 10 metres at an up & over height of nine metres with the unrestricted platform capacity of 230kg. Platform rotation is 160 degrees.



The new 21
metre Easy Lift
RA21

The new machine uses thin wall Strenx high strength steel in order to reduce the overall weight whilst maintaining structural integrity, with all critical hoses and cables routed internally. The new unit has an overall stowed length of 4.5 metres and a retracted width of 860mm with the basket detached. The outrigger footprint is 2.9 metres square, while the total weight is 2,850kg.

A choice of standard power includes petrol, diesel, 200AH lithium battery, electric or hybrid with a 100AH lithium battery pack teamed up with either of the engine options. A Scanreco remote controller is standard, with automatic single button levelling and an auto 'Home' function for stowing the boom. Easycom remote diagnostic system and telematics are also included, while a 230kg winch option is available to convert the unit to a spider crane.

SOCAGE ACQUIRES CTE

Just a few weeks after Almac's acquisition, Italian truck and spider lift manufacturer Socage took a majority stake in one of its main competitors - fellow Italian access manufacturer CTE - which should boost the Socage 'group' revenues next year to somewhere in the region of €190 million.



(L-R) Giampaolo Piovan of CTE, Fiorenzo Flisi of Socage, Lorenzo Cipriani of CTE and Alessandro Flisi of Socage

Given that there is a fair amount of product overlap between the two manufacturers, this deal was something of a surprise. They both have a similar selection of spider lifts as well as producing a full line of truck mounted lifts, although Socage does have a strong pickup and van mounted range in addition to truck mounts up to 100 metres. However, when it comes to distribution and market penetration, they are generally strong in different markets which potentially has the makings of a good combination in terms of synergies.

SOCAGE'S RAPTORS

Socage has a rapidly expanding eight model lineup of Raptor spider lifts from 15 to 35 metres including three new all electric SE versions launched at Bauma - the 18 metre Raptor 18SE,



At Bauma Socage showed two Raptors - the all electric 24SE and its largest spider the 35S

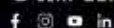
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SPIDER LIFTS

the 20.8 metre 21SE and the 23.8 metre 24SE. The Raptor range topper is the new Raptor 35S with a 35 metre working height, 21 metre maximum outreach, 300kg platform capacity and the ability to work up to 11 metres below ground level. Total weight is 8.2 tonnes, and it also has the option of a 500kg winch attachment.

NEW CTE MODELS

CTE's seven model range of Traccess spider lifts runs from the 13 metre Traccess 135 to the 27 metre Traccess 270 and includes three electric versions - the 15.8 metre Traccess 160E, the 17 metre 170E and the 23 metre 230E.

At Bauma it unveiled two new models - the Traccess 230 EVO and the 200 EVO. Utilising Strenx lightweight steel the 200 EVO has a working height of 20 metres with a maximum outreach of 11 metres with 120kg or more than nine metres with its maximum 250kg capacity. Overall weight is 2,900kg, minimum travel width is 1.15 metres and features include CTE's S3 EVO Smart Stability System and Rise and Drive function. The 23 metre Traccess 230 EVO is slightly heavier at 3,000kg and has similar features but has a maximum outreach of 11.5 metres with 200kg in the platform or just shy of 11 metres with 250kg.



CTE unveiled its new Traccess 230 EVO at Bauma

Socage chief executive Fiorenzo Flisi said: "CTE has a strong knowhow in the market of truck mounted and self-propelled spider lifts, offering a solid range of products and solutions worldwide with high added value for its customers. We share those same values. The CTE product range and services are highly complementary to those of Socage, allowing for broader support to customers in Italy and internationally, thanks to its own sales and distribution network, which will continue to operate independently."

True to his word Flisi has just announced a new distribution subsidiary - Socage UK - and has appointed industry veteran Craig Rooke to head the venture as managing director. It will work completely independently from the long established CTE UK, which Rooke used to run.

OIL&STEEL NOW TADANO

The start of 2025 saw the completion of Tadano's acquisition of Manitex International, which



The Tadano (Oil&Steel) OctoPlus 21 at Bauma

included Italian manufacturer Oil&Steel. The Japanese company has not been slow to get on with integration and rebranding. By the time Bauma opened in April, Tadano had rebranded models of Oil&Steel aerial work platforms including a range of three OctoPlus spider lifts - the OctoPlus 17, 21 and 30. They join Tadano's own range of aerial lifts, along with the tracked boom lifts from Nagano which it acquired last year. It said that no immediate changes to the products will be made but that going forward it will be seeking manufacturing efficiencies.

CMC ON A ROLL

Another Italian spider lift manufacturer currently 'on a roll' is CMC, which is probably market leader in the US driven by its booming tree care market. CMC has six series of lifts - the fully hydraulic F Series from 13 to 18 metres, the Heavy Duty HD Series from 19 to 22 metres, the light and compact LC Series from 15 to 23 metres, the 'Double Performance' DP series with heights of 27, 30 and 32 metres, along with its largest spider lift, the 41 metre S41 in the Extra Large XL Series. On top of that it offers two fully insulated models the 23.3 metre i23 and 26.6 metre i27.

Its latest new product is the 20 metre S20. The new lift has dual sigma type risers for a maximum working height of 19.9 metres, with a maximum outreach of 10.4 metres at an up & over height of just over eight metres with a capacity of 230kg. Platform rotation is a full 180 degrees, while slew is 360 degrees non-continuous. Overall length is 5.38 metres or 4.5 metres with the basket removed. Overall width is 790mm extending to



The new CMC S20

just over a metre for travel on uneven ground. Total weight is 2,980kg and outrigger footprint is just under three by three metres. Standard features include protective covers for the outrigger cylinders, proportional hydraulic controls and radio remote controls. All power options are available with electric power for indoor use.

NEW CAPITAL FUNDS EXPANSION

A capital injection from Metrika - its owner since 2022 - has enabled CMC to implement several new development programmes, including the expansion of its 12,000 square metre production facility with new production lines, development of further new models and targeted acquisitions both production capacity related and distribution - such as its US distributor All Access Equipment, which it acquired early last year. Almost two years on and it's all change at All Access - now CMC North America - with a new chief executive Jeff Poggi.

NEW PALAZZANI'S

Palazzani manufactures a wide range of spider lifts and has built a strong position at the top end of the market for machines with working heights of more than 25 metres producing the world's largest spider lift, the 58 metre TTJ58 unveiled at Bauma 2022. The first units of were shipped at the end of last year. However, its range starts from 17 metres upwards and includes a number of kits/accessories that effectively turn some of its lifts into spider cranes.

The company unveiled three new spider lifts this year - the 16 metre TZJ 160, the 18 metre TZJ 180 and the 21 metre TZX 210 which replaces the current TZX225 in the company's articulated TZX aluminium boomed range that spans from 17 to 25 metres, part of a long term collaboration with Multitel.

The TZJ 160 has a 16 metre work height and 7.6 metres of outreach at an up & over height of seven metres with an unrestricted platform capacity of 230kg. The unit has an overall stowed width of 775mm extending to 955mm for travel. Overall height is 1.98 metres and the overall length of 4.7 metres, while total weight is 2,400kg.

Its larger sibling, the TZJ 180, has 8.2 metres of outreach at an up & over height of eight metres whilst maintaining the same 230kg unrestricted



The TZJ 180 on Palazzani's Bauma 2025 stand with the TZJ 160 on the roof in the background



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The TZJ 160 on Palazzani's stand at Bauma

platform capacity and widths, with an overall length of 5.28 metres and all up weight of 2,500kg. The outrigger spread is three metres. Both models feature 180 degree platform rotation and are available with either Honda petrol or Kubota diesel power units. Electric and hybrid versions are scheduled to join the line-up in the near future.

President Paola Palazzani said: "The launch of the new 16 and 18 metre TZJ models are our concrete response to a market that demands compactness, user-friendliness, and sustainable solutions. The new TZJ platforms were born from direct feedback from our customers and operators

in the field, who asked for a light machine, easy to manoeuvre, and ready to work even in the tightest spaces."

The 21 metre TZX 210 maintains the TZX twin boom design with a three section telescopic riser/lower boom topped by a three section upper boom and pedestal mounted platform for a maximum working height of 21.2 metres. Maximum outreach is 9.5 metres at an up & over height of six metres, with an unrestricted platform capacity of 200kg, or where the maximum up & over height is 10 metres the outreach of around eight metres.



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The unit is available with non-marking rubber tracks or as a wheeled machine, both of which can be either diesel powered with onboard AC electric motor, or as an all-electric Eco model with LiFePO4 lithium iron phosphate battery pack. Total weight on both units is 2,500kg.

The lift has an overall width of 985mm, an overall length of just over five metres, and is just under two metres high. Maximum outrigger footprint is 3.65 by 3.60 metres, and it is able to level on slopes of up to 22 degrees. Features include 360 degree slew, a 1.4 metre by 700mm basket with 180 degrees of rotation and intuitive controls. Options include auto levelling, 'return to home' function, Palconnect telematics, an anti-collision device for the platform, plus air and water lines to the platform.

PLATFORM BASKET'S 54M SPIDER LIFT/Crane

Another Italian company producing large, tracked spider lifts and now cranes is Platform Basket. It recently delivered its 54 metre 54T spider lift/crane to crane and aerial lift rental and heavy lift/transport group Dufour.

The unusual model features an eight section telescopic boom, topped by a four section telescopic jib. In addition to its 54 metre working height the 54T has a maximum outreach of almost 21 metres with 136kg in the platform, or 19.5 metres with the maximum platform capacity of 400kg. The maximum up & over reach is 44 metres at which point it has 15 metres of outreach.

When working as a spider crane it has a maximum capacity of 1,000kg which it can handle at a radius up to 15 metres and a height of 44 metres. Capacity at the maximum radius and 53 metre lift height is 136kg, while 500kg is possible at 19 metres radius and the 53 metre height.

When stowed with the platform in place, it has an overall length of 9.55 metres and overall width of 2.43 metres with an overall height of 2.77 metres. The new model has an all up weight of 23,000kg.



Platform Basket's 54 metre 54T

NEW SPIDER LIFT AND OWNER FOR TEUPEN

In April last year US based vehicle mounted and utility equipment manufacturer Altec acquired German spider lift manufacturer Teupen Maschinenbau from its owner Martin Borutta. Since then, the company has been busy developing new models including a 72 metre truck mounted lift launched at Bauma.



Altec Teupen's new
Leo 27 GT Plus at Bauma 2025

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MADE IN ITALY



Leguan's spider lifts are more stable when travelling over rough ground due to their wider chassis



However, its latest spider lift is the 27 metre Leo 27GTplus which features the classic dual telescopic boom format, with a three section telescopic riser/lower boom, topped by a three section telescopic upper boom and articulating jib with 160 degrees of articulation. All cables and hoses are routed internally within the boom, protecting them against dirt and dust etc.

The new model includes all existing Teupen outrigger set up configurations, plus an additional Narrow front/Wide rear, allowing it to be positioned between rows of seats/pews when working in university lecture halls or churches etc. Other features include standard radio remote controls, an improved full colour display screen and new 'Fuzzy V' controls, as well as wider and longer rubber tracks and 180 degrees platform rotation.

The Leo27GTplus has a maximum outreach of 14.5 metres at an up & over height of 12 metres with 100kg in the platform and can take its maximum platform capacity of 250kg to 12.5 metres. The machine's overall width is 890mm, overall length seven metres with basket fitted - 6.45 metres without - and it has an overall height of 1.99 metres, while weighing 3,900kg.

A FINNISH PHILOSOPHY

Over the 40 or so years since the first spider lift was introduced, a main design philosophy has been to create the largest lift that is narrow enough to travel through a standard door frame. The result has produced sizeable lifts weighing up to four tonnes with working heights to about 30 metres with transport widths of less than 900mm. The downside of this design is a high centre of gravity which is inherently unstable even when travelling on slightly uneven ground or when loading or unloading.

If you have work indoors then this is an issue that everyone has to live with - there is no alternative. However, if you do not need to work indoors - for example if you are in tree care, the electricity/power distribution sector or external maintenance - the additional stability when travelling over rough, undulating ground over a long distance - afforded by a wider chassis - is invaluable.

One company - and probably the only one with this 'wider chassis' design philosophy - is Finnish spider lift manufacturer, Leguan. It has been

producing aerial lifts for more than 35 years and now has a newer range of three 'All Terrain' models - the 19.7 metre Leguan 195, the 22.5 metre Leguan 225 and the recently launched 26.5 metre Leguan 265 - all with a fixed track widths of 1.25 metres.

The new 265 has a competitive performance with a 26.5 metre working height, 250kg maximum platform capacity, 13.6 metres of outreach with an up & over height of 10 metres and is relatively compact with a 6.89 metre overall length with basket - 6.24 metres without - while weighing 3,920kg. However, it has been designed specifically for outdoor work environments such as tree care and construction, combining a low centre of gravity, a high profile track system giving unrivalled ground clearance and 45 percent gradeability. All these add up to a very stable machine allowing the operator to travel safely in the basket across rough terrain.

As well as its off road driving performance the machine has a rapid set up along with quick boom movements. Leguan claims it is the fastest 27 metre spider lift on the market taking just 90 seconds to reach its maximum working height, two to four times faster than some of its competitors.

Chassis width for the three larger Leguan spiders is 1.25 metres



Operators can start work immediately without any manual pre-operation tasks such as adjusting outriggers, widening tracks, placing mats or lifting the boom," says Leguan's Juuso Valtakari. "Just step into the platform, attach a safety harness and start working. With a market leading drive speed of 3.1kph, the Leguan moves between work areas faster. You simply get more done in less time."

All three Leguan All Terrain spider lifts feature a 'Home function' which can return the boom from its maximum height to transport position in 55 to

90 seconds depending on the model. With rapidly growing demand from arborists, the market for wider fixed width models looks set to surge. Leguan currently builds around 300 spider lifts a year, but it aims to increase this to around 500 while also looking to expand the range with a larger machine. ■

The Leguan control panel



Spider in the Sistine Chapel: Earlier this year an 18 metre R180 Easy Lift R180 spider lift was used to help restore Michelangelo's frescoes in the Sistine Chapel at Vatican City, Italy. The R180 - supplied by Rome based Skylift Piattaforme Aeree - has a long riser topped by a three section telescopic boom and articulating jib for a working height of 17.6 metres, a maximum outreach of 9.6 metres with 80kg or 200kg at 7.7 metres. The retracted width of the machine is 890mm with an overall weight of 2,330kg and non-marking tracks allowing it to move through the chapel without damaging the delicate flooring.

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