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THE HAULOTTE GROUP UNVEILS ITS BRAND NEW HTL (Haulotte Top Lift) TELEHANDLERS RANGE at the BAUMA TRADE FAIR in world Premiere.

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Innovation experience

Buying a used lift



Many companies, offer refurbished machines, this is a Genie boom to AFI-Resale's 'Band-A' classification

Aerial work platforms are largely a rental item, with such a wide variety of product types and heights it suits most people to rent what they want, when they want it. In markets such as the UK, Ireland, Sweden and Holland over 85 percent of all aerial lifts are rented rather than purchased.

However as the market grows and powered access expands into an ever wider range of applications, a greater number of companies find themselves using one or more lifts almost constantly. If you are in this position it could be worth looking at a lift or two of your own. You can of course buy new, however if the cost puts you off you might well be considering a second hand lift. In the following pages we provide a few tips that might prove helpful.

Consider how involved you want to get
You have decided to buy second hand, but where do you start?

The first two things you should ask yourself are:

1. How much effort do you want to put into your purchase?

Tracking down the very best deal might consume more in time and expenses, not to mention distraction from your day job, than you save from finding a bargain.

2. What sort of back-up support do you want? If you need or want to pick up the phone and have your hand held all the way, there is no point in buying a used lift from the USA or at an auction, sight unseen. It could end up costing more than a new machine!

If you want to make it easy and stress free you should look at buying from a reputable company that will make your purchase as simple as buying a new lift. We will address this type of purchase later. In the meantime we'll consider the options for the more adventurous buyer, some of these only make sense if you get a real kick out of tracking down a bargain-basement deal or you are buying a large number of lifts.

The options include:

Large public Auctions, such as those held by Ritchie brothers. These massive events, often lasting three days, mostly offer general plant and earthmoving equipment. However the number of aerial lifts going on sale is increasing steadily and range from unused models from inventory to units that barely function. All lifts must be sold on the day with no reserves allowed. The very best deals are to be had when there are few lifts in the sale thus failing to attract buyers for aerial lifts, be careful though that the low price does not tempt you into buying a lift that is totally unsuitable for your application. Although if it is a bargain that is simply too good to pass up, it might be worth taking it home and using it as a trade-in against a new or used product that is closer to what you need.

You can now bid on-line at these auctions, however we would advise against this unless you have had someone physically inspect the machines first.

Single company auctions:

There has been an increase in the number of auctions of a single company's equipment, usually a liquidation sale. But Hewden, the UK's largest rental company, as started holding auctions each year to dispose of its surplus equipment. The rules are the same but at least you know where the equipment comes from and it might be more local to you.

Buying on line:

This is an increasingly popular way to buy many items and anyone trading in used aerials will have a web site with a list of available machines. Unless you know and have a relationship with the company you are buying from we would strongly advise against making a purchase sight unseen. It is better to use the web to make contact then inspect the machine and conduct the purchase in the traditional face-to-face manner. At least in the first instance, after getting to know who you are buying from and building up a layer of trust, web and email can work nicely.

Buying across the pond

The low dollar makes used machines advertised on American web sites or publications look very attractive indeed. Beware though, aerial lifts sold in North America are built to ANSI specifications and rarely carry CE approvals. A JLG sold in the USA can be quite different from the CE version sold in Europe.



One persons 'rental ready' is another's turn off



Easi-UpLift is already selling machines as young as 2005

This need not put you off, unless you felt that our first two warnings regarding effort and support, apply to you even 'somewhat' if so skip the next section.

If you are interested consider that boom lifts are easier to convert than scissor lifts, diesel is simpler than DC power and larger is more practical than small. With these three pointers you could end up

with a really good deal. Most manufacturers have designed their boom lifts, particularly the larger ones, to convert fairly easily between Ansi and CE, you will though need the manufactures co-operation to obtain CE certification and could be questioned at the port for importing non CE marked products.

A general rule is to forget small electric machines, these require far more modification, including battery charger, gates, guardrails and often counterweight, not to mention the overload system.... life is too short.

Beware definitions 'Good', 'Excellent' and Rental-Ready

Another point to be aware of is that "good condition" and "rental ready" often has a different meaning on each side of the Atlantic. Many budding business relationships have turned nasty over these definitions. To quote an actual example:

A reputable rental company I know in North America sold a container of lifts to a reasonable European buyer. He carried out remedial work on the lifts, tested and charged them and



APS and AJ Access stock specialist units such as this 29m Spider lift (APS)

in good faith and confirmed to his buyer that they were in good condition and ready to rent. When the buyer opened the container in his yard he was horrified. He thought the paint on the 30 month old machines was poor, the solid tyres had chunks out of them and to him they looked scruffy and not at all rentable. The buyer thought he had been lied to and was most upset.

This highlights the biggest single problem when buying used equipment at a distance, one persons 'excellent' is another mans 'scrapper'. This can be bad enough neighbour to neighbour but the gulf can be even larger internationally. Avoid buying from across the pond unless you are doing it regularly, and can develop the relationships and the systems to deal with CE conversions, even then it is best to avoid small electric scissors.

Less adventurous buying

So having explored some of the more exotic ways of buying used aerial lifts what about advice for those who want a nice machine, low mileage - one lady owner with some local support?

Our definitive advice is contact one of the companies that has made a business of supplying good used machines to end users and local rental companies. The number of companies doing this has expanded rapidly in recent years, mostly divisions of larger rental companies as they renew their equipment more frequently and seek to get the maximum value for their old machines.

The choice is wide, so use the web and publications such as Cranes&Access to see who is selling regularly and what sort of



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An AFI 'Band B' machine

companies still do part exchange deals and can be a particularly good source for used examples of their own models and will sometime offer a good warranty. The best deals can come from those that are not set up to sell used equipment, as they simply look to get used machines off their books and out of their hair before the ends up rotting in the corner of their yard.

Buy from those you know

If you rent machines from one of the larger companies, they will almost certainly also have a re-sale department that will be happy to sell you a good used lift. As you have an ongoing relationship with them, they should make sure that you are well looked after. Do shop around though before making a final decision.

Get it fixed up and serviced

If you want to have the machine you have selected spruced up or some work done on it, negotiate this as part of the purchase, don't wait till after you have agreed a price. And make sure that the machine is delivered with a full service and inspection and an up to date, ideally new, test certificate. Many company's such as AFI resale offer repainted 'Band-A' machines or 'Band B' units that are simply checked cleaned tested and delivered.

There has never been a better time to buy a used aerial lift, (although there have been times when it was cheaper) in terms of the number of good companies offering quality used products of a variety of ages, with various levels of refurbishment and support.

You can start by checking out the ads in the back of this magazine.

products they have available. Then call them, most companies have a far wider range than they advertise and some will help you find a specific model and age. You will quickly note that the average age of the lifts being sold by one company will vary compared to another. Some hirers such as Easi-UpLifts have adopted a policy of changing out their fleet every three years and will mostly have very young machines for sale, while others prefer to run units on for five years and some longer than that and so will have lower prices. It all depends on what you are looking for.

Try a manufacturer

Manufacturers or their distributors can be a good source for used equipment, while the number of machines that they trade-in has reduced in recent years, most



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