

# 40 years in access

**Dinolift is celebrating its 40th anniversary in business this year with the festivities culminating in a major event at its main production plant in Loimaa in late August.**

The celebrations ran over two days and welcomed its external partners - distributors and major accounts - to see the factory, hear about the company's plans for the future along with a clear statement of its principles for doing business. It wasn't all work of course - the highlight of the evening was an excellent meal and some world class entertainment. In summary a stunning yet warm and friendly presentation from a relatively small team in global terms.

40 years in powered access is something to shout about. 40 years ago in 1974 John Grove had just renamed his fledgling aerial work platform business as JLG - some three years on from unveiling his first lift. Genie was more than a decade away from moving into the mainstream powered access business and Wally Johnson was still trying to get his Flying Carpet working reliably at Upright. Outside of the USA Skyjack was not even a glint in the eye and Wolf Haessler and Pinguell Haulotte was just a crane company.

Meanwhile in Loimaa a small town in south central Finland, a good two hour drive through forested countryside from Helsinki, Mauno Kurppa, the owner of Kurppan Konepaja produced the first Dino lift having purchased the basic designs from his business partners Pentti and Matti Ala-Nissilä the year before. He had spent the year refining and modifying the design



before launching the new lift - the Dino 55 - followed by the Dino 75. More trolley mounted boom lifts than trailer mounts they

spawned a thriving access business for the small company. Growth was steady over the years as production expanded, but a major change occurred in 1997 when the business was purchased by Lars-Petter (Lasse) Godenhielm and Aboa Venture and the company name changed to Dinolift. Godenhielm expanded the business and began to invest in the facilities and in new models. In 2005 Godenhielm took over Aboa's 25 percent stake in the business becoming sole owner. Sadly Godenhielm passed away in 2011 and today the company is owned by his daughters Karin and Eva while managing director Petri Paavolainen also owns a minority stake in the business.

While the pace of development certainly picked up it was always careful and measured with products carefully tested, checked and rechecked before launch. At the same time any move into a new sector such as spider lifts or fully self-propelled booms has not been rushed or hurried, with the company seeming to prefer to make sure that



Visitors entered by an honour guard of Dinolift booms

The Dinolift plant in Loimaa



it has a product that is both 'bullet proof' and highly appreciated by its distribution partners and major customers prior to fully committing to the new sector. This caution has paid off well in the way the company and its products are regarded in its customer's eyes. All those we have spoken to cannot praise it highly enough. Today the company has an 18 model line-up covering trailer lifts, tracked spider lifts, self-drive semi self-propelled booms and a well-respected fully self-propelled boom lift. It employs almost 140 in total with 92 of them based in Loimaa. The company also has a small fabrication operation nearby.

Unlike many companies of a similar size, Dino is unusual in that it manufactures a high percentage of the end machine including all fabrications, a good deal of machined parts and most hydraulic cylinders. While the company currently sells most of its products in Europe it already covers 40 countries and is looking to expand into new markets. Total production over the past few years has run

between 700 and 1,000 machines, but it has the capacity to increase this and says that it will continue invest in doing so.

In a joint presentation by chairman Karin Nars and Petri Paavolainen the two restated and formalised the company's guiding principles:

1. Always be totally consistently open and trustworthy with distributors, customers and staff with open and clear communication.
2. To make no compromises whatsoever on safety whether that be in machine, design and build or with employees in the workplace
3. To strive to be totally customer focused at all times

Paavolainen also promised to make the company one that focused on doing things - albeit with good planning and organisation - rather than getting bogged down in creating endless policies, discussions and politics. He also said that while the company will strive to be totally open it will still look to have a few surprises up its sleeve, in the area of new products with some new additions already planned for 2015.



The first Dino work platform



Karin Nars and Petri Paavolainen welcome guests and state the company principles

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