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The wild frontier

Many boom launches from the world's producers over the past 12 months have specifically targeted the growing desire for more rugged platforms. *C&A* looks into the increasingly popular rough terrain (RT) articulated boom market.

THE MARKETING material issued with the launch of a new RT boom will often illustrate a shiny new boom, one that looks like you could eat your dinner off it, carefully positioned in the midst of what looks like a horrific bomb blast. And deciphering which came first, the rubble or the boom, is usually easier said than done. The first lunar platform pictured on the moon will nevertheless be an interesting one.

This said, the marketing material has come thick and fast, and this year has borne witness to several RT boom entries. Earlier in the year JLG came out with an unusual height unit positioned between the two main RT articulated boom sectors, the 15 metre platform height (45 foot) sector (see fig 1) and the 18/20 metre (60/65 foot) sector (see fig 2). The 16-metre platform height 510AJ combines an up-and-

over height of 7.63 metres with a horizontal outreach of 9.48 metres and a 1.24-metre jib with 145-degree vertical rotation incorporated as standard.



Italian producer, Tigieffe, who market their machines under the Airo brand, introduced its new 23.1 metre working height RT articulating boom, the Airo SG2100-JD4WD. The unit shares the same chassis as its SG21800 predecessor, but includes an additional third boom section.

FIG 1 RT ARTICULATED BOOMS – UP TO 15 METRES PLATFORM HEIGHT (49 FEET)

Make/model	Outreach (m)	Platform height (m)	Up and over (m)	Overall width (m)	Gradeability (%)	Turning rad (in)	Capacity (kg)	Jib standard/no jib
Haulotte HA12PX	6.60	10.30	5.25	1.85	40	1.55	230	standard
Basket 16 AX	7.10	14.00	n/a	2.10	30/60	2.8 (ext)	200	no jib
Snorkel UN041	7.20	13.00	6.90	2.20	30	n/a	227	no jib
Genie Z-45/25 RT	7.30	13.70	6.90	1.83	45 (4wd)	1.37	227	no jib
Genie Z-45/25J RT	7.30	13.70	6.90	1.83	45 (4wd)	1.37	227	standard
JLG 450A	7.47	13.70	7.67	2.08 (4wd)	45 (4wd)	1.73	230	no jib
JLG 450AJ	7.47	13.70	7.67	2.08 (4wd)	45 (4wd)	1.73	230	standard
JLG 450 Semi-Track	7.47	13.70	7.67	2.06 (2wd)	30 (2wd)	1.73	230	no jib
Niftylift HR15	9.60	13.70	5.50	1.60	45	1.30	225	standard
Matilsa Parma 16D	7.50	14.00	7.30	2.25	40	n/a	240	no jib
Upright AB46RT	7.50	14.10	7.80	2.00	40	0.60	227	standard
Tigieffe SG 1400-JD 4WD	8.10	14.00	7.80	2.00	40	0.98	230	standard
Manitou 150ATS	8.36	13.00	6.78	2.36	42	1.76	250	no jib
Haulotte 15 X	8.45	13.20	6.75	2.25	45	2.40	230	no jib
Haulotte 16 X	8.45	14.00	6.75	2.25	45	4.65 (ext)	230	no jib
Snorkel AB50J	8.50	15.20	7.00	2.30	25	n/a	227	standard
Manitou 160 AJT	9.10	14.50	7.20	2.30	45	n/a	230	standard
Haulotte HA 16PX	9.20	14.00	6.60	2.30	50	1.90	230	standard
Basket 17 AJX	9.50	15.00	n/a	2.10	30/60	2.80 (ext)	200	standard
Manitou 165 ATJS	10.44	14.60	6.78	2.36	37	2.25	250	standard

S-125



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RT ARTICULATED BOOMS



JLG's steel semi-track option, pictured here mounted on a JLG 450AJ, fits over a machine's existing drive wheel tyre and an additional idler wheel with a built-in suspension system for better ride control.

The overall width of the 510AJ has been kept to 2.3 metres while four-wheel drive and an oscillating axle of 20 centimetres is fitted as standard. Gradeability is 45 per cent, falling second only in the 18/20-metre class to Haulotte's HA 18 PX that gives 50 per cent.

The now almost universally fitted oscillating axle assists the wheels to follow the contour of the ground, maintaining four tyre contact for a better traction and braking, particularly on grades. The level of axle oscillation is measured by the amount of vertical movement - 20 centimetres per side on most JLG models and up to 30 centimetres per side on the company's Ultra Boom series.

JLG took the up-and-over reach capabilities of its RT booms to a different level at the ARA show in the US earlier in the year with the launch of its class-leading 38.1-metre platform height model 1250AJP Ultra Boom. The unit offers more than seven metres extra up-and-over reach at 18.47 metres than its closest rival, Haulotte's HA32 PX, launched at last year's Intermat exhibition in Paris and currently the largest offering from Haulotte's RT boom line-up.

Technology on the 1250AJP includes JLG's JibPLUS jib boom, which rotates 130 degrees vertically and 125 degrees horizontally to give maximum access in hard to reach areas, and the company's QuikStik telescoping boom design which allows the platform to be raised to the full 38.10-metre platform height in just over a minute and back down again in just under two. Other features include JLG's SkyPower package comprising a 7,500-watt generator for welders and other platform-mounted equipment.

Manitou also boosted its RT line-up earlier in the year with the launch of two new machines that are still in the pre-production stages and are currently being field tested throughout Europe. All being well, the 16 and 18 metre platform height 160ATJ and 180ATJ, with maximum outreaches of 10.6 and 9.10 metres respectively, will go into full production in September this year and will replace Manitou's existing 10.4-metre outreach 165ATJ and 165ATJS models.

"In the development of our RT booms, Manitou has used all its experience from the production of its telescopic handlers," explains Dave Faultless, Maniaccess Product Manager for the UK and Ireland. "All Manitou RT booms have identical drive systems and heavy-duty axles as used with our telescopic handler range. These factors, combined with impressive ground clearances and a powerful Perkins engine, enable all of our RT booms to cope with the most arduous site conditions.

"The new 160ATJ and 180ATJ will be supplied with four-wheel drive, four-wheel steer and crab steer as standard and continuous turret rotation and an oscillating drive axle as optional extras," continues Mr Faultless. "We have seen success in selling this kind of equipment to the rental industry and have also seen a steady increase in end user sales." Manitou will be adding further models to the range in 2005.

According to Shaun Day of Promax Access, "The problem with the standard manufacturers' RT booms and their claims of extreme capabilities on the most severe terrain, is that once a machine eventually arrives at its place of work and the ground is not reasonably level, well, certainly not within five degrees, the machine is therefore not usually capable of working within the



Manitou expects that its new 160ATJ and 180ATJ (pictured) RT booms will be in full production by September this year. The units will replace the company's existing 165ATJ and 165ATJS models.

FIG 2 RT ARTICULATED BOOMS – 18/20 METRE (60/65 FOOT) SECTOR

Make/model	Outreach (m)	Platform height (m)	Up and over (m)	Overall width (m)	Gradeability (%)	Turning rad (in)	Capacity (kg)	Jib standard/no jib
Niftylift HR17	9.60	15.20	7.0	2.0	45	1.75	225	standard
JLG 510AJ	9.48	15.80	7.63	2.30	45	2.00	230	standard
Basket 19 AX	10.40	17.00	6.80	2.10	30/60	2.8 (ext)	200	no jib
Genie Z-60/34 (industrial)	10.40	18.30	8.50	2.13	30	1.22	227	standard
Genie Z-60/34 (construction)	10.40	18.30	8.50	2.29	35	3.35	227	standard
Haulotte HA 18 PX	10.60	16.00	6.60	2.30	50	1.90	230	standard
Manitou 180 ATJ	10.60	16.00	7.50	2.30	40	1.35	230	standard
Upright AB62RT (4wd diesel)	10.70	18.90	9.10	2.30	40	2.5	227	standard
Tigieffe SG 1850-JD 4WD	11.25	16.50	9.40	2.40	40	2.75	230	standard
Tigieffe SG 1850 JE 4WD	11.25	16.50	9.40	2.40	40	2.75	230 kg	standard
JLG 600A	12.07	18.30	8.10	2.44	45	1.68	227	no jib
JLG 600AJ	12.02	18.30	8.10	2.44	45	3.48	227	standard
Basket 20 AJX	12.50	18.00	n/a	2.10	30/60	2.8 (ext)	200	standard
Snorkel AB60J	13.10	18.30	6.00	2.40	20	n/a	227	standard
Tigieffe SG2100-JD4WD	13.90	19.00	9.40	2.40	40	2.75	230	standard
Haulotte HA20 PX	14.00	18.00	6.80	2.38	40	n/a	230	standard

requirements of the EN280 standard.”

Within Promax's UK distributor portfolio is Italian producer, Basket, which Mr Day says has overcome the issue by making a 'tilting turret' system available with all of its RT booms. "The system can be independently levelled up to eight degrees once the machine is at its place of work, and therefore enables safe working access on the most severe inclines," explains Mr Day. "The 'tilting turret' can be supplied across the entire range of Basket's self-propelled machines."

Also now in Promax's portfolio is the RXT range of booms from Dino Lift, which includes the firm's latest stowed, self-propelled RT unit unveiled at bauma, the 24ORXT.

"With low machine weights and four-wheel drive and crab steer capabilities, these machines can be manoeuvred in to the most extreme places where they can be levelled using each machine's four outriggers," says Mr Day. "This simple set-up operation can be carried



Tony Havercroft, Genies sales manager (left) and Lee Perry, sales director at The Platform Company after the sale of a new Genie Z80/60 at last year's SED exhibition.

out either manually or automatically, and although extremely strong and robust, each RXT unit is around one third of the weight of self-propelled machines that are not fitted with



With a 21.3-metre maximum outreach and an 'up-an-over' clearance of 11.35 metres, Haulotte's HA 32 PX is the company's flagship articulated boom

FIG 3 RT ARTICULATED BOOMS – 19.8 METRE PLUS CLASS (65 FT)

Make/model	Outreach (m)	Platform height (m)	Up and over (m)	Overall width (m)	Grade-ability (%)	Turning radius (in)	Capacity (kg)	Jib standard/no jib
Niftylift HR21	12.00	19.20	7.00	2.25	45	0.78	225	standard
Basket 22 AX	12.00	20.20	8.10	2.40	30/60	3.2 (ext)	200	no jib
Basket 23 AJX	14.10	21.20	8.00	2.40	30/60	3.2 (ext)	200	standard
Haulotte HA26 PX	15.10	24.00	6.80	2.38	40	2.3	250	standard
JLG 800AJ	15.80	24.40	9.78	2.44	45 (4wd)	4ws 2.13	227	standard
					30 (2wd)	2ws 3.66		
JLG 800A	16.15	24.40	9.78	2.44	45 (4wd)	4ws 2.13	227	no jib
					30 (2wd)	2ws 3.66		
JLG 740AJ	16.15	22.40	7.65	2.44	45	2.13	230	standard
JLG 1250AJP	19.25	38.00	18.47	2.49	45	4.39	230	standard
Haulotte HA32 PX	21.30	30.00	11.35	2.50	45	5.10 (ext)	250	standard

FIG 4 STOWED SELF-PROPELLED BOOMS

Make/model	Outreach (m)	Platform height (m)	Up and over (m)	Overall width (m)	Grade-ability (%)	Turning radius (in)	Capacity (kg)	Jib standard/no jib
Niftylift 170SD	8.50	15.10	6.50	1.60	n/a	2.25	200	no jib
Dino 24ORXT	12.00	22.00	n/a	1.99	35	2.15	215	no jib
Kesla XS 240	12.80	22.00	n/a	2.10	36	3.20	230	standard
Niftylift 210SD	13.20	19.00	n/a	1.90	35	1.50	225	standard

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Announcing its breakthrough onto the UK market through Russon Access at bauma, Spanish manufacturer, Matilsa, currently offers a four-strong articulated RT boom range including this, the largest, 16 metre working height Parma 16D.

The unit comprises independent hydraulic stabilisers, which can be fitted to the platform's chassis to allow levelling on rough ground conditions. Working outreach is 7.5 metres.

outriggers. This leads to reduced transportation costs and once the machine is on site it is less likely to become bogged down by adverse weather conditions."

Indeed, the advantage of this type of unit, which can only be driven in the stowed position after which it uses outriggers just like a trailer lift, is that the weight and cost of the unit is much less than fully self propelled units.

On Dino's 240RXT the total weight has been kept down to 4.25 tonnes, some 10,000 kilograms less than the JLG and Haulotte machines of similar platform heights.

Also in the 24-metre height class (self-propelled when in stowed position) is Kesla Oyj's latest RT boom offering, the flagship XS 240, also introduced at bauma. With a transport length of 6.95 metres the unit is 1.5 metres shorter than its Scanlift SL 240 predecessor and at 4.85 tonnes, is slightly heavier than Dino's 240RXT, possibly accounting for the extra 1 per cent gradeability

offered. Other improvements on the Scanlift model include an improved outreach of two metres, a four cylinder engine over the old three cylinder version, an extra 1.4 kilometres per hour travel speed and 120-degree fly-jib compared to 90 degrees on the old model. The pump and drive motors are also much more powerful than on the older model. Kesla also told C&A that the model XS 190 will be launched later in the year, but at the time of writing was not prepared to disclose any details until the machine is fully tested and approved.

ON HOME TURF

Despite the influx of new RT boom technology, it is Genie's "benchmark" Z45, along with JLG's 450, that remain the main machines at UK hire firm, The Platform Company, according to its sales director Lee Perry, although its latest purchases include a couple Nifty Lift Height Rider units.

"When buying RT machines, our primary concerns are cost, availability, reliability and longevity," says Mr Perry. "Plus, it [the machine] has to be proven. In our experience this means Genie or JLG. Anything else just isn't as robust and loses value faster. Many of our customers simply mention 'Genie 45' when ordering and, just like Hoover and the vacuum cleaner, its become a byword."

According to Brian Price, operations manager at GT Access, Genie machines also make up the largest portion of the firm's RT boom fleet, which also includes units from JLG, Nifty Lift, UpRight and Terex and ranges from 15 to 26-metres working height.

For Mr Price, it is the machine's overall value for money that is the primary factor, although he also says, "if the truth be known [rental] rates at the moment do not warrant spending the sort of money that is being asked of the manufacturers for the return that you can expect."

For the firm's customers on the other hand, "ease of obtaining and commonality of parts" are where the main concerns are focused, according to Mr Perry. "Using the larger manufacturer who has confidence in the product and therefore can offer an extended



Dino says that the total weight of its RXT RT booms are around

one third that of fully self-propelled machines that are not fitted with outriggers. Pictured is its new 240RXT.

warranty, not too technical a machine, and ease of servicing...the inclusion of swing out engine bays, speed and gradeability for example, are also important characteristics."

Speaking of his own customers demands, Mr Perry says: "As powered access has improved in recent years, construction sites are less well prepared and users expectations of where powered access can operate are on the up. Therefore, the main consideration is a machine's ability to tackle tough site conditions.

"The Platform Company is experiencing high utilisation across the board, particularly for RT machines," says Mr Perry. "There's also been a steady rise in [rental] rates, which can be explained by a combination of strong demand and the demise of competitors. Health and safety is the big factor in the market and the rewards for companies offering the right package of machines, training and advice is a significant trend."

Mr Price at GT has also noticed the changes in the market. "It is becoming more demanding as more and more people go away from the idea that the only solution to their access problem is scaffolding," he says. "Our market is not the steel work dominated market of most of our competitors, but the short-term building repair market.

"More customers are realising that RT booms are an effective answer to a short-term access problem."

C&A

Nifty on the move



Niftylift 210SD

UK-BASED NiftyLift used the recent Access Daze event, organised by the company along with Skyjack, APS/Snorkel, BlueLine and Valla, to unleash its new 19.2 metre platform height 210SD (stowed position self-propelled boom). Niftylift describes the unit as a combination of its self-propelled boom technology and its 210 trailer-mount that offers the same working height as its Height Rider 21 model.

The hybrid machine features full independent suspension, four-wheel steer and the option of four-wheel drive, while its low weight design makes transportation quick and economical. The inclusion of four-wheel steering and special 'turf tyres' also make the 210SD suitable for work on sensitive surfaces. ■

Niftylift says that the inclusion of four-wheel steering and special 'turf tyres' make the 210SD ideal for working on sensitive surfaces.

