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Versalift & Mercedes Benz Unimog Join Forces

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Closer ties: Versalift Managing Director Cameron Burnett, right, and Director Andy Bray, centre, are pictured with Mercedes-Benz Head of Special Trucks – Unimog Bernhard Dolinek, and the versatile U218 access platform

Unveiled! All-new Mercedes-Benz Unimog-based Versalift platform offers high performance at low cost.

The vehicle made its world debut on the Versalift stand at last week's (24-25 May) Vertikal Days exhibition, a major European showcase for lifting and access equipment.

Truck-mounted access platform market leader Versalift and the team responsible for the legendary Mercedes-Benz Unimog in the UK have joined forces to launch an exciting new model.

Based on a Unimog U218 implement carrier with nominal 7.5-tonne gross weight, it is designed to provide utilities companies with a compact, fast and reliable off-road package for work on low-voltage power lines in difficult-to-reach areas, at a highly attractive price.

Following the Vertikal Days event, which took place at Silverstone, the new truck is being made available to operators for trial – although Versalift has been mounting its equipment on Unimog chassis for many years, this is the first time the two have invested together in a joint demonstration unit.

The Mercedes-Benz Unimog is renowned for its unrivalled combination of on-road speed and all-terrain capability. The new vehicle is fitted with an all-steel boom and platform that offers a maximum working height of 15 metres. The equipment is insulated to safeguard operatives working on lines carrying up to 1,000 volts – crucially, should the boom make contact, the chassis is also protected. To maintain its Certified LV integrity, the unit requires an annual dielectric test.

Given the demanding conditions in which the Unimog is likely to be employed, Versalift has opted for the sturdy reliability of traditional, fully hydraulic boom operation. However, in the unlikely event that the team using the truck run out of diesel, a clever electronic override ensures the platform can be brought down safely.

Other features of the design include an exceptionally low centre of gravity, enhancing off-road stability, and very little overhang behind the back axle, which makes for excellent departure angles. The Unimog's panoramic windscreen is also an aid to drivers negotiating rough terrain.

The U218 variant is powered by an advanced and economical 130 kW (177 hp) four-cylinder engine. The truck's four-wheel drive system provides ultimate traction when the going gets tough while, provided the 7.5-tonne gross weight is not exceeded, it can also be driven under 'Grandfather Rights' by anyone who passed their car test before 1st January 1997.

An official bodybuilding partner of Mercedes-Benz Trucks, Versalift is the world's largest vehicle-mounted platform manufacturer – its UK operation, which is based in Kettering, Northamptonshire, enjoys a domestic market share of almost 90%.

Director Andy Bray confirmed: "We do a lot of work with Mercedes-Benz in general, and with its Unimog team specifically, but the joint development of our new demonstrator has elevated the relationship to another level.

“At Versalift we certainly build more complex equipment on Unimogs – the Cat C platform mounted on a 13.5-tonne U530 chassis and delivered recently to Northern Powergrid, for example, is insulated to 46,000 volts and features twin buckets so two operators can work simultaneously, as well as a materials handling jib.

“But the new demonstrator also ticks a lot of boxes as an entry-level, Unimog-based alternative to less flexible machinery such as tracked spider-lift platforms which have to be towed into position. For low-voltage line work, perhaps by arboreal teams clearing foliage, it’s a highly attractive proposition.”

Bernhard Dolinek, Head of Special Trucks – Unimog at Mercedes-Benz, added: “This compact but highly capable and efficient new product offers utilities sector operators the opportunity to benefit from the design and engineering excellence of two market leaders, at a surprisingly low price.

“We are delighted to be working even more closely with Versalift. Its expert team of field service engineers, coupled with the extensive coverage of the Mercedes-Benz Trucks Dealer Network, mean customers are also assured of the industry’s finest after sales back-up.”

www.versalift.co.uk



Focus of attention: The new Mercedes-Benz Unimog U218 drew plenty of visitors to the Versalift stand at Vertikal Days 2017



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