

Uplifting work

A global leader in crane rental services, heavy lifting and engineered transport, Sarens' adaptability has helped it grow from a small family company, to a trusted name on the international stage.

The SGC-250 embodies two of Sarens' most abiding traits: ingenuity and size. Standing at 250 metres in its tallest configuration, with a lift capacity of 5000 tonnes, 'Big Carl' as it is affectionately known, is the largest land-based crane in the world. Designed and constructed by Sarens, the crane is currently installed on a rail system at Hinkley Point in the UK, where the company is working on the construction of a new nuclear power station.

"At present, Hinkley Point is one of the biggest construction sites in Europe," Sales Director Gert Hendrickx explains, "but the special design of the SGC-250 means we can move the crane up to 500 metres from one



The fact that Sarens is a family business means we have short communication lines and a short decision-making process, which is very important in our business. If an opportunity comes up, it doesn't take three to six months to make a decision. The shareholders are a very small, reachable and approachable group of people, which means we can easily shift from one decision to another

position to another. It is a 5000-tonne crane on rails. It has never been done before. It's a unique piece of equipment."

A company with a rich history of creativity and innovation, Sarens is always striving to find solutions. Although most of its actual work lies in the energy sectors, the company does not focus exclusively on newbuilds like Hinkley Point, and prides itself on a flexible approach to business.

"We are active in the maintenance of existing nuclear facilities, but a lot of countries, like Germany for example, are decommissioning their nuclear power stations, so we take part in the dismantling of the plants too," Gert says. "The good thing for us is, whatever happens in the nuclear sector, there will always be work for heavy lift and heavy transport companies like us. Installing new builds, maintenance, and dismantling - for Sarens there will always be business."

As the spotlight on renewable energy sources grows brighter, Sarens has experienced a decreasing volume of work on oil and gas projects over the last couple of years. This, however, has been compensated by a sharp increase in global projects concerning offshore wind power. "More European countries are investing in offshore wind farms," Gert declares. "First Germany, then the UK, then Belgium, Holland, and now

France is getting involved. We've been active in that business for over 15 years now and we see more and more of our big equipment, which previously was used in the refineries, shifting over to this side of the business.

"A company like Sarens, we don't have our equipment that goes "in the sea", but we are able to do some very important work in the marshalling yard. It's more of a logistics exercise. We transport all the different pieces of the offshore wind turbines and take part in other onshore related activities. For example, we have had a 3200-tonne ring crane at Smulders Projects Yard in Newcastle for the last three years, which has been working on a load-out and assembly operation for the Beatrice Offshore Wind Farm."

Transportable equipment

With over 60 years' industry experience, Sarens longevity has been supported by the company's versatility. The ability to remain flexible in the face of challenges presented by an unpredictable industry has enabled Sarens to quickly and deftly shift its focus between different regions or sectors whenever it was required.

"Between 2010 and 2014, there was a huge expansion in LNG plants in Australia," Gert recalls. "There was a lot of demand, so we moved a big stake of our equipment to Australia, but the LNG investment was really



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Bertling was founded 155 years ago and has since then grown into a global company with an established reputation in ship owning, chartering, transport logistics and project freight management. Bertling accompanies the client throughout all the stages of the project even in the most challenging and remote locations. In doing so, Bertling always applies the highest QHSSE and compliance standards. Bertling also offers transport solutions for GFF and resupply business with a comprehensive service portfolio adjustable to any type and size of cargo.

Last year Bertling assisted our valued client Sarens with the provision of a barge to carry two of their bespoke lifting trusses from Sarens' facility in Belgium all the way to Kazakhstan. Restrictions in the Russian river systems resulted in a very limited availability in barges, but Bertling mobilized its network and found a suitable operator. The barge was carrying its absolute maximum in terms of cargo volume. Therefore Bertling's heavy lift team in close collaboration with the local offices issued a comprehensive grillage, lashing, securing and towage solution to handle this project safely and securely. The operations, from barge preparation to sail away, were attended and supervised by Bertling's transport experts who ensured that everything went smoothly. We look forward to the next transport order from Sarens.

➔ Read more about Bertling's heavy lift and engineering expertise on <https://www.bertling.com/logistics/heavy-lift-engineering/>

getting blown out of control and in 2015, it all stopped. We had the opportunity to move everything to new regions – to Africa and the United States. All our equipment is easily transportable from one region to another and so we are able to adjust from sector to sector and from region to region. We can follow the peaks in the markets.”

Gert suggests that another key contributor to Sarens’ success can be found in the company’s roots. The business, which now has over 100 offices across 65 countries, was founded by the Sarens family, and multiple generations are still active in its operation today, at both a board of directors’ level and on the company floor.

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and a short decision-making process, which is very important in our business,” Gert asserts. “If an opportunity comes up, it doesn’t take three to six months to make a decision. The shareholders are a very small, reachable and approachable group of people, which means we can easily shift from one decision to another.”

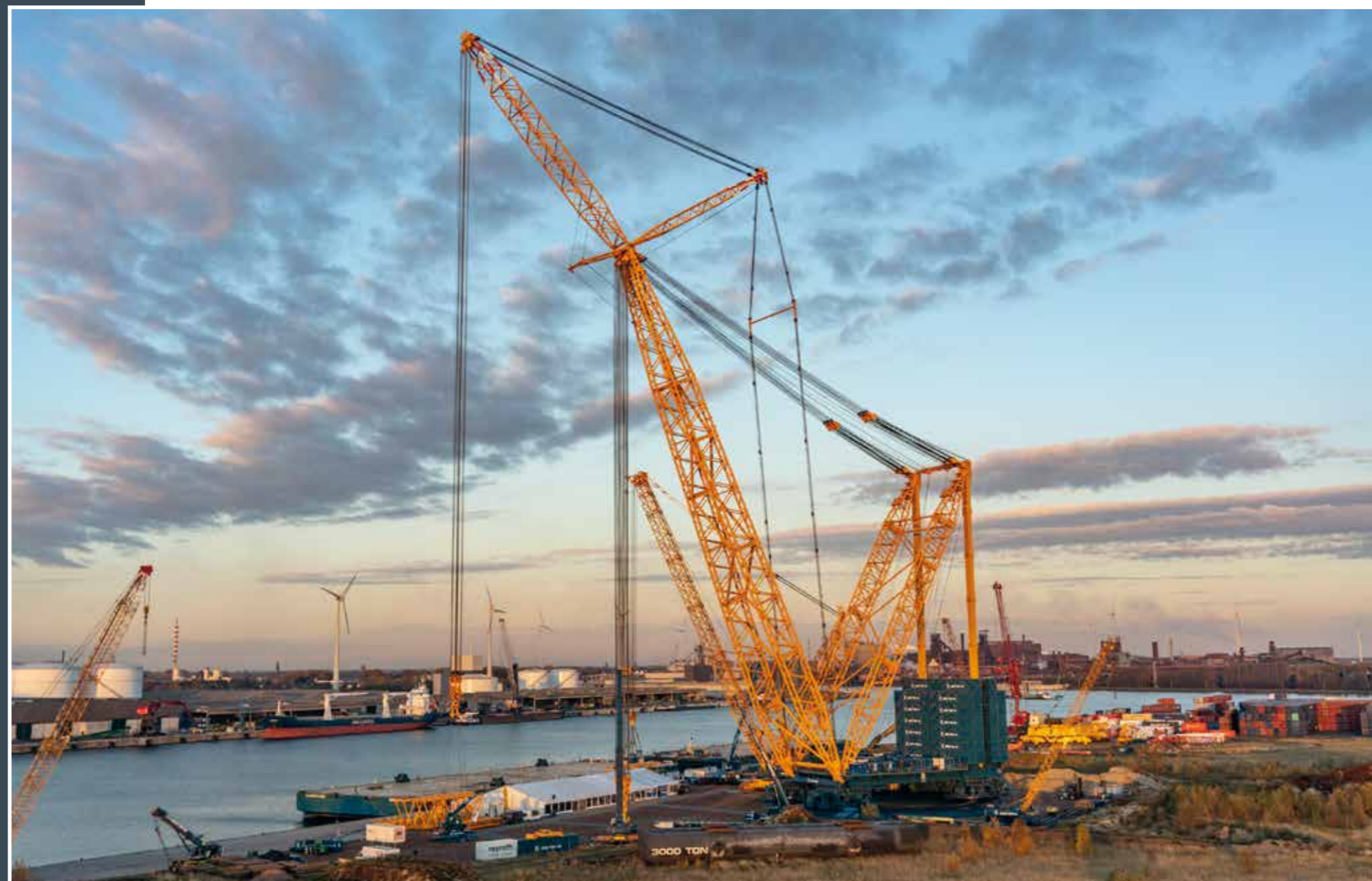
Problem solvers

It’s not just about family ties though. A combination of unrivalled industry expertise, an inventive approach to problem solving, and a committed programme of investment has played a significant role in what Sarens has been able to achieve over the years. The company has forged a reputation for creating tailored solutions in response to some of the

sector’s biggest challenges and problems.

“Big construction companies appreciate that Sarens is not just a rental business. We think with the customer,” Gert states. “Special problem? Need special devices? Okay, we are happy to invest, develop, design and engineer until we find an answer. It’s not always equipment that is available on the market either. It’s not just something from one of the big manufacturers. We develop, engineer, design and build our own devices. Special lifting devices, special transport devices, we can do all that ourselves.”

After what Gert describes as two ‘difficult’ years for the heavy lifting industry in 2017 and 2018, Sarens enjoyed a successful 2019 and, before the outbreak of Covid-19, a positive start to 2020. “Slowly, things are



starting to pick up again,” Gert notes. “Of course, we don’t quite know the impact coronavirus will have on economics, but before it hit, everything looked good; the future looks positive.”

Never far from its next major project, Sarens remains proactive in its globetrotting quest for new markets. So where in the world is next? “We are really focusing more and more on the United States,” Gert reveals. “There is a lot of investment going on there, both in oil and gas, but also in civil infrastructure as well. We can see that Asia is picking up too. Taiwan is investing more money per person in offshore wind power than anywhere in the world, so that is a big opportunity. China is also growing, and we have a big joint venture there. The United States, Taiwan and China are going to be very important for us over the next few years.”

Sarens
www.sarens.com

 Services and Products:
 Crane rental services, heavy
 lifting and engineered
 transport