

Boscaro Personnel Basket Offers Flexibility, Safety, and Value



The Boscaro personnel basket has an access door and wraparound inner safety railing.

Italian crane equipment manufacturer Boscaro and partner Eagle West Equipment Inc. determined that an innovative personnel basket was central to a successful under-the-hook product line. Eagle West worked with Boscaro's factory to develop this basket specifically for the North American market.

In addition to the personnel basket, soon to be available in multiple sizes, the Canadian distributor redeveloped other Boscaro products for North America during 2009, including self-dumping bins, pallet forks, and concrete and clamshell buckets.

The basket redesign meant increasing its size and capacity, adding a test weight system, and offering value-added features, explains Gerry Wiebe, vice president, sales and business development for Eagle West, Abbotsford, British Columbia. "Because of the strenuous engineering process, the personnel basket took awhile to get just right," says Wiebe, who at press time reported that the basket was in production. "We're quickly looking at two more models. We just have to decide which to bring over next."

A better price point

The goal was to bring enhanced value and be price competitive, says Wiebe. Most personnel baskets, he says, are available either with or without a top. A single Boscaro basket can be configured either top-on or top-off. Manufactured of top-grade steel, the bottom section of the basket weighs 463 pounds; the top weighs 200 pounds and comes with an 815-pound test weight. It is 7.9 feet tall (with roof) or 4.6 feet (no roof).

Rollers mounted on the basket transfer up and down vertical surfaces. "People are often working with a personnel basket literally adjacent to a wall, glass, or siding. The personnel basket has to be kept an inch or two away and that can be a very tricky process," says Wiebe. "Often the basket rubs into the building, damaging the structure and the basket."

To reduce this problem, the Boscaro basket is equipped with four nylon rollers. If they touch the wall, they roll, so if the personnel basket kisses the wall, there's no damage to the basket or the structure, Wiebe says.

The patent-pending basket has a fully functional access door, a 43.5-inch-high guard railing, a wraparound inner safety railing, and a 24-inch lower enclosure to minimize the chance of tools falling out of the basket. It has a 24-inch built-in tool crib, and two lanyard connection points on the roof. Tested to nine times the legal requirements, the basket meets or exceeds both OSHA and ASME standards.

Steel test weights are also included. "We looked at existing test weights, and we designed the EZ Test Weight System to prevent people from having to bend over and get on their hands and knees to perform the test," says Wiebe. The weights can be attached and detached while the user stands beside the basket, simply by sliding out the balanced forks, pulling the safety catches, sliding the forks back in, and setting the safety pins. "We looked at every conceivable value point we could find and built them into the unit at the standard price," says Wiebe.

The word from the field

Customer input, the guiding force behind the basket's design, started at Eagle West. The company's nine operating divisions that use personnel baskets made the process of gathering operator input much easier. Eagle West also got input from its dealer network, which spans across North America. Once preliminary drawings were completed, the company worked with the factory. "We did no less than 10 revisions before we made one out of metal," Wiebe says of the finished product. "It was very well reviewed and researched."

In service now, the basket is stocked by two Eagle West dealership locations, and two more dealerships await delivery. The baskets have also been purchased by crane companies in Ohio and California. Specialty Crane & Rigging, Goleta, Calif., has three, which Mike Dawson, vice president and sales manager, describes as "a beautiful tool." Specialty Crane's crews will likely use the baskets in missile silo cleanout work, particularly at Vandenberg Air Force Base in California.



The EZ Test Weight System can be used while standing.

"After a missile is launched, we clean out the silo, pull the liner out and put a new liner in," explains Dawson. "We lower our crew into the silo with the personnel basket." The jobs usually last about two weeks, and are performed with the top on the basket. Dawson says crew members usually want the top on the basket, but the option of removing it increases its value.

"Safety, ease of use, and flexibility were key to the basket's design," says Wiebe.

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