
Swedish Machine Guidance Pioneer Sells SBG, the GEOROG Company

Sven Vejde, well-known to many civil contractors in Australia especially in NSW, has sold SBG, the Swedish company he founded in 1970.

The company has been acquired by the multinational Hexagon Group of Sweden, owner of Leica Geosystems, Scanlaser, and Mikrofyn amongst other enterprises engaged in this field.

A very agreeable and quietly spoken individual, Sven is rightly regarded in the machine guidance industry as one of the great innovators and pioneers. Despite the hype, it's recognised by today's well known players that Sven had solved a great number of practical problems while they were still figuratively in nappies, and put practical solutions to work in his sophisticated GEOROG software.

Hexagon's press release indicates that SBG will continue to run independently under its current management, and that its dealer arrangements will not be altered. Distributor in Australia, Brian Rowland of 3DX Australia, says that he has received assurances from Sven Vejde and Hexagon that as far as 3DX is concerned, it's "business as usual".

Below: Sven Vejde, founder of SBG in 1970, is very much a hands-on CEO—here seen refining one of his GEOROG installations on board a concrete paver working at Sydney's Westlink M7 project last year.



Thomas is Back on Track

You may have heard rumblings about the skid-steer manufacturer, Thomas of Canada, and it's a fact that they've been through some difficult problems. We've been following the story and it's taken so many twists and turns that we'd waste a lot of paper telling the complete tale.

Sufficient to say that there's new management installed by a major new investor, the Canadian facility has resumed production, and a new skidsteer model 155 is now rolling off the line at their brand spanker state-of-the-art factory in Korea.

Hewlett has stock on the water from both places, but the product that most excites dealer manager Rohan Anderson is the new T155. Having made a lot of recommendations during the design phase, he's recently been to Korea with John Hewlett to put the final production version through its paces. No-one would argue that between them, these two blokes know a thing or two about skid steers.

Totally New Cab Design

"This new model really looks the part—its lines are terrific," says Rohan. "We wanted a good many enhancements to the 153, and we got them. For starters, the old protruding back end has been trimmed off and replaced with a swing-out

radiator and oil cooler built into a very slim door."

"The simple no-nonsense concept of the 153 remains, but the improvements are significant. The 155's powerplant is now a turbo Cummins delivering 60hp compared with the naturally-aspirated 50hp Kubota of the 153. One hand is all you need to lift the cab up for maintenance, and the new machine is visibly beefier where it counts—splined axles rather than keyway, stronger hubs capable of taking a future track system, and a longer wheelbase."

Terrific Visibility

One of the best design features, according to Rohan, is the excellent visibility—as good as he's seen on any machine. The front cutting edge and about 100mm of the bucket floor is easily seen from one corner to the other, as is the rear cutting edge.

Factory airconditioning is an option, and if you prefer to leave it till later, ducts and vents are built into the cab to accommodate a factory kit, avoiding the 'tack-on' look. Keeping up with the times, the 155 sports pilot controls, but that's the only concession to high technology—apart from that, the machine is just as electronically simple as its predecessor, without the computers that cause annoying downtime on other brands.

Rohan reckons that this little baby is priced right and is going to win a lot of hearts for Thomas. 