

2 Post Lifts – What to consider



Buying a 2 Post Lifts can be like navigating a minefield. “A lift is a lift, they all go up and down” – a phrase we hear all too often!

There is an element of truth in that, they should all at least all go up and down. But, in the same way all cars get you from A to B, we all know that there is a huge disparity between cars, including quality, reliability, comfort, capacity and much more. The reasons for spending more on a lift are very similar, except they are even more important. With a car, much of it is personal choice. What you see is what you get; if it is a 2 seater then you know you won't be taking the family out in it, and if it is not an estate car then you will accept you might not be throwing the bikes in the back. With a 2 post lift, however, most people do want to cover most bases, and that means vehicle large and small, that can be lifted safely, and hopefully for many years.

So what are the main things to consider when buying a 2 Post Lift?

Versatility – It is very difficult to find 'one size fits all' when it comes to lifts. To make a product suitable for the varying extremes is difficult, and requires additional engineering. Ask to see the suppliers specifications for the lifting zones and, ideally, what vehicles these cover.

Life Expectancy – We live in a throwaway society, and it has become normal to accept we buy things at lower prices today, and accept we replace them more often. With something as logistically difficult to manage as a 2 post lift, we don't think this is a good approach. It is wise to do some homework as to how long the brand / manufacturer has been around, can the supplier cite any historical installations where the lift is still going strong, and parts are still available?

Country Of Origin – Probably the most obvious differentiation and price dictator, whether a lift is made in Europe or China is a real consideration. The reasons for this are numerous; quality of steel and pre-painting preparation, quality of welds, familiarity of the European spec vehicles we are working with, all of this has a bearing on life expectancy, reliability and usability. If China made lifts as good as the traditional European factories, those Europeans wouldn't exist. That is not to say China doesn't make decent products, but the price to you reflects the cost savings, and what is saved in labour is put back in on freight -so there really is a tangible difference. It is also easy to be fooled by the name, as

many European factories actually source from China, so ask the question, and if the lift is made in China, it should be cheaper, it is that simple. Method of operation – In historical terms, electro-hydraulic lifts are a relatively new design. Electro-mechanical, or 'screw' lifts, are the traditional style that European lifts were founded upon. An electro-mechanical lift is more expensive to manufacture, but it is extremely low maintenance. A simple threaded bar, lifting nut and synchronisation chain makes them extremely simple and lacking in things to go wrong; there will never be any leaky rams or pumps to replace. Hydraulic lifts came about because they are cheaper to manufacture. The warranty someone is prepared to offer is normally a great indicator as to whether the lift is mechanical or hydraulic, and, of course, a great indicator as to the potential reliability and faith the supplier has in their product!

Based or Clear Floor - Lower priced lifts tend to need a base, or cover plate, to house the synchronisation components, simply because this is the cheaper manufacturing option. Many people confuse this base plate as being structural, but that is something completely different (and a structural base plate, if available, is an additional cost option). A true structural bases lift has its place if the floor isn't of good quality as the load is spread, but the benefits of having a completely clear floor are, well, clear! Baseless, or 'clear floor' lifts allow for the synchronisation to be made via an overhead gantry, leaving the working area completely open. The convenience and safety benefits of having a totally clear working area vs a substantial cover plate are self-evident.

Footprint - Cheaper lifts tend to be bulkier, because the integrity of the steel and construction has to be countered by bigger columns with a bigger footprint, and this has an effect on space consumption and convenience. A premium lift will generally have thicker, better quality steel allowing for a slimmer column. The end result is that a slimmer column reduces the footprint of the lift, and allows better internal distance between the posts (more convenient for working and door opening).

Standard Accessories - A premium lift will usually have more features and useful additions, and many of those shouldn't really ever be options, because they are really pretty essential. Look out for things like additional Height Extension Pads, tool trays, and solid bar toe traps (not hollow tubes which notoriously, continuously snap).



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