

Kelley Hydraulic Lift Serves as an Inventive Solution for Micro-Distillery Service Yard Dock's Tight Constraints

Equipment Focus: Kelley KDL Series Hydraulic Dock Lift

Putting into practice Plato's famous proverb "necessity is the mother of invention", San Antonio's [Dorcol Distilling & Brewing Company](#) (Dorcol) got highly inventive to properly manage their micro-distillery's new warehouse service yard dock.

After closing their doors in 2020 to on-premise consumption due to COVID-19, Dorcol and co-founder, distiller, and proprietor Boyan Kalusevic transitioned to a full-scale distribution business model. Plans also called for scaling up the self-distributing micro-distillery's production which would require more space to handle expanding cold and dry storage needs.

As a result, Kalusevic and his team decided to build a new warehouse and dock on the back of the company's existing building. However, those plans ran into a challenge that involved the existing grade of Dorcol's property.



Four feet below finished grade a challenge

Located in San Antonio's Lone Star District and facing a twin set of railroad tracks, Dorcol's south elevation is at finished grade. The micro-distillery's north elevation is four feet below finished grade.

To accommodate raw material deliveries and finished product shipments at their dock, Dorcol required a solution to easily change elevation 48 inches vertically from street level to finished grade. Compounding that requirement is the location of the dock itself. It faces a narrow street and confined environment that is



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Impacts & Results



End User Focus:

More Operating Space

Fully elevated hydraulic lift expands the operational area for Dorcol's dock activity.



Key Impact:

Grade Issue Solved

With a 12,000 lb. weight capacity, the hydraulic lift elevates raw material deliveries a full four feet to finished grade.



Financial Benefit:

Increased Productivity

Improved operational performance for deliveries and shipments adds up to positive results in Dorcol's bottom line.



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not conducive to traditional dock equipment because it prevents vehicles from backing up to the dock.

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Kalusevic decided to reach out directly to 4Front Engineered Solutions for lift recommendations and some much-needed help. After evaluating Dorćol's situation, Doug McLeod, Director, Lift Products teamed up with Kelley distributor [Miner](#) and San Antonio-based account representative Sam Beltran.

“The result was an atypical hydraulic lift solution beyond what I would consider as an average lift application,” related Beltran.

No more front-door deliveries

In late 2022, Miner installed a pit-mounted [Kelley KDL Series Hydraulic Dock Lift](#) (6' x 10' deck rated for 12,000 lbs. capacity) directly into the northeast corner of Dorćol's dock.

Before their dock and Kelley lift, Dorćol primarily loaded finished product into trucks out their front door with raw material deliveries handled in much the same way.

“Without the Kelley lift, Dorćol's daily operations would be much more difficult due to the dock's configuration and location,” explained Beltran. “Now when supplies are offloaded at the dock, deliveries are transferred to the Kelley lift using either a pallet jack or forklift which are then easily elevated four feet to the dock's finished grade.”

Kalusevic shared that he originally considered installing a ramp, but it would have been too short to obtain the desired incline. He determined that going vertical via a hydraulic lift was the best solution due to his dense urban setting and lot line constrictions.



“Doug McLeod was an incredible resource because of his technical expertise and support,” Kalusevic emphasized, who added that the Kelley lift is a critical piece of equipment for offloading raw goods such as grain, bottles, and cans.

Lift expands dock's operational space

Kalusevic further explained that when it's fully elevated, the lift expands the operational area of Dorćol's dock so that pallet jacks or a forklift can both easily move around the space.

“If I had two acres, we could have installed a ramp with a gradual slope,” Kalusevic added, “but in our case, a Kelley hydraulic lift that could accommodate a combined weight of 10,000 lbs., including a forklift, driver, and load of grain, was our best solution for going vertical to reach finished grade.”

Kalusevic also stressed that McLeod offered excellent pre-purchase technical sales support and possessed a thorough understanding of Dorćol's needs, including design criteria, mechanical and electrical engineering requirements, post-sales support, and a dedicated interest in making sure that the project was implemented per Dorćol's plans and expectations.

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