



# Hills Prospect goes all-electric with Doosan

## Making the change from LPG to electric

**Hills Prospect is the largest independent drinks distributor in London and the South East, supplying beers, spirits and soft drinks to many of the biggest names in catering and entertainment, across restaurants, hotels and public houses.**

The business has grown rapidly over the last forty years and in 2012 it moved into a 54,000 sq ft distribution centre in Romford, where it assembles orders for its expanding customer base from its range of over 3,500 products.

### Efficient running of the warehouse is crucial

Fast and dependable customer service is a cornerstone of the business, a critical success factor that places a heavy emphasis on the efficient running of the warehouse and the reliability of the materials handling fleet. As Nigel Metcalf, Depot Manager at Hills Prospect points out: “We’re operating six days a week, 22 hours a day, so there is very little room for downtime.”

### No mixed fleet anymore

Until six years ago Hills Prospect operated a mixed fleet of forklift trucks, but in 2012 the business decided to single source its materials handling equipment from Forktruck Direct, the local Doosan dealer, and standardised on selected models from Doosan’s extensive range of counterbalance and warehouse trucks. Equipment supplied included reach trucks, powered pallet trucks and gas powered counterbalance trucks.

“The drivers really like them”

### LPG for yard duties

At the time, gas powered counterbalance trucks seemed the best option for yard duties, unloading lorries and transporting pallet loads of heavy drink products and kegs of beer. However, when it came to reviewing the



contract in 2018, Doosan's latest, technologically advanced B20X-7 electric counterbalance trucks were considered to be the most cost-effective and environmentally friendly option for outside work.

## A wide assortment of equipment

Under the new six year rental and full service contract, Forklift Direct have supplied an all-electric Doosan fleet comprising: two of Doosan's latest BR16JW-7 reach trucks, three industry-leading B20X-7 electric counterbalance trucks, five easy-access LEDH20SP platform pallet trucks and two LEDH20M powered pallet trucks.

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## Maximum reliability, safety and efficiency

The trucks supplied to Hills Prospect are all feature-rich standard Doosan models – designed for maximum reliability, safety and efficiency. The latest AC drive and hydraulic motors on the new Doosan reach trucks offer powerful performance, and the mast reach design and damping system provides excellent stability. In the yard, safety and performance go hand-in-hand as the two-tonne capacity electric counterbalance trucks are fitted with Doosan's renowned oil-cooled disc brakes as standard.

## Approved by the operators

“The drivers really like them,” says Nigel Metcalf. “We had speed limiters fitted for safety reasons which took them a little time to get used to, but they were impressed with the smooth operation, comfort of the driving position and good ergonomics – and they find them very easy to get on and off.”

## Demand for maximum uptime

Operating to a tight order-fulfilment schedule, with a 2pm cut-off for next-day delivery, demands maximum uptime from the forklift truck fleet, both

within the warehouse and outside in the yard. So, ensuring uptime comes down to running a well-maintained fleet on a balanced charging regime.

## Great Service

“With a mixed fleet you have different people dealing with different parts of it, and it's just not practical. We've had Doosan trucks for six years now and Forktruck Direct have always provided us with a good, reliable service and they maintain our fleet well,” says Nigel Metcalf. “So when it came to reviewing and upgrading we were confident in what they could do and they came up with a good package.”

## Electric is meeting the challenge

The all-electric fleet is meeting the challenge well. “Charging cycles are not a problem as the batteries last for a long time on one charge. Although we have quite a number of forklift trucks and powered pallet trucks, they are not used constantly, so one full cycle per week is sufficient – and it's working well,” says Nigel Metcalf.

Having proved the case, a further Doosan B20X-7 electric counterbalance truck will soon replace the last remaining gas truck.-

