

Flying high in Basel – WOLFF cranes build tallest building in Switzerland

Basel – June 2015. If it's tall buildings you are looking for, you don't have to go as far as Dubai or China. Height records are constantly also being broken in Europe. So too in Switzerland, where the tallest building in the country, the Roche Building 1, measuring 178 meters, is just on the brink of completion. General Contractor, Marti AG, employed WOLFF tower cranes to raise the building skywards – one of, with a hook height of 204 meters, being the highest construction crane in Switzerland to date.

In addition to its impressive height, it was also the unique design of the Roche Building 1 with a tapering silhouette at the top, which required a sophisticated crane concept. To tackle these challenges, the WOLFFKRAN team closely cooperated with both the logistics specialists of the contractor and the architects of the building.

A WOLFF 7532.16 saddle jib crane with a 70 meter jib and maximum tip load capacity of 4 tons was set up at the rear of the building. With the building rising by one level every two weeks, the crane was gradually climbed alongside the high-rise to its final tower height of 191.5 meters (hook height of 204 meters including portal base). In purely static terms, the crane would have done with just three ties to building. The special construction of the façade however called for more bracings.

The right WOLFF for every step of the project

Two WOLFF cranes were used on the side of the building that tapered upwards. At first, a WOLFF 6023.8 was employed. However, after a certain height, the distance to tie the saddle jib crane to building just became too big and it had to be replaced by a WOLFF 180 B with a 45 meter jib. Unlike a trolley jib crane, the compact luffing crane does not have to stand above the building, since it can easily slew past the sides of the building structure thanks to its movable jib which can be raised up- and downwards.

Besides the design of the building, the location of the building next to a very busy street, which could not even be closed during the take-down of the WOLFF 7532.16, also challenged the construction team. A comprehensive safety concept had to be implemented, which went so far as having the service technicians secure tools and other working material to their person and additional safety nets being set up.

**WOLFFKRAN
International AG**
Simone Engleitner
International Marketing
Baaremattstr. 6
Ch-6300 Zug
Tel + 41 41-766 85 00
Fax + 41 41-766 85 99
s.engleitner@wolffkran.com
www.wolffkran.com

Press Contact
Sarah Spitzl-Kirch
Rumfordstr. 5
D-80469 München
Tel + 49 9721 67 98 587
Fax + 49 89-23 23 90 99
spitzl-kirch@headline-affairs.de
www.headlineaffairs.de

Now that the WOLFF cranes have gone, the last construction workers will soon be leaving the Roche Building 1 as well. The new offices of the pharmaceutical company F. Hoffmann-La Roche AG are scheduled to open this year and will provide space for around 2,000 employees.

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WOLFF cranes at work in Basel:

WOLFF	Crane base	Jib radius, m	Hook height, m	max. Lifting capacity, t	BGL-Group (mt)
7532.16	Portal	70	204	13.4	315
6023.8	Portal	55	86.9	8.5	180
180 B	Portal	45	115.5	9.4	180

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Pictures and captions:



The WOLFF 7532.16 and the WOLFF 180B luffing crane (left) at Roche Building 1. Due to the unusual shape of the building, the initially used WOLFF 6023.8 was replaced by the WOLFF 180 B after a certain height.

Source: Rainer Brombach



At a 204-meter hook height, the WOLFF 7532.16 was the highest construction crane in Switzerland.

Source: WOLFFKRAN



Source: WOLFFKRAN

Although the WOLFF 7532.16 standing on a 191.5 meter tall tower could have done with only three ties to the building, as many as six bracings were used due to special façade construction of the Roche Building 1.



Source: WOLFFKRAN

The trolley jib cranes were regularly climbed as the height of the building increased. The upper part of the crane and the tower were only connected in phases by the hydraulically operated climbing system. A single climbing procedure takes around one hour.

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