



# Avant-garde

## AVANT 528 articulated telescopic loader

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The AVANT 528 and its sturdy four-in-one bucket making short work of a pile of basecourse

Not since the invention of the four-in-one bucket has there been a piece of equipment that can perform so many tasks. Also, a four-in-one bucket is just one of a hundred or so attachments that are custom-made to fit on an AVANT machine.

In fact there are so many individual attachments for the machine that it would be too confusing to try to mention more than a handful at a time. The machine has applications in six major categories, namely:

- buckets and material handling;
- property maintenance;
- ground care;
- landscaping;
- digging and construction;
- and farming.

With so many varied applications in so many diverse sectors, AVANT agents, Glenbrook Machinery of Pukekohe arranged for DOW to run a test on an AVANT 528 at a nearby horse stable. The owners had recently purchased the machine, along with a



A line up of 500 and 600-Series AVANT machines in the Pukekohe showroom



The collector box of the rotary sweeper fits nicely endways into a jumbo bin

### Specifications AVANT 528

Length	2550mm
Width	1095mm
Height	1980mm
Weight with 4 in 1 bucket	1320kg
Transmission drive	Hydrostatic
Pulling force	950kp
Drive speed	12 km/h
Turning radius inside/ outside	995/2050
Max. lifting capacity (hydr.)	1500kg
Tipping load	950kg
Max. breakout force / 50 cm	1250kg
Engine make and type	Kubota D1105
Engine output (ISO Gross)	21kW (28 hp)
Fuel	Diesel

four-in-one bucket, a general bucket, a pallet fork, a rotary broom with collector box and several augers of varying sizes.

I spoke with landscape manager James White, whose decision it was to purchase an AVANT machine in preference to an excavator, an item that had been previously considered.

One of the major reasons behind the decision was the AVANT 528 has a top speed of 12km/h. White says with around two hundred acres of property to work, it was important to him to be able to get a machine to the furthest corner of the property as quickly as possible, without putting it on a trailer.

He says that after a period of trialling the unit, it very quickly became apparent that with such a variety of attachments available for the machine, all of which can be changed in a matter of minutes, it made total sense to purchase the AVANT.

When asked how a typical day's work for the machine would pan out, White says it would be possible for him or one of his operators to be working the machine inside a barn or stable using the general bucket to scoop up all types of residue at the beginning of the day.

By mid-morning the machine would have been finishing the job off with the boxed sweeper, then after fitting forks to the

machine they could be delivering palletised goods to another part of the farm and stacking it in racking, in between taking a few moments to fit one of the purpose-built augers to plant a tree or two.

After lunch, the four-in-one bucket could have been attached and the machine would happily spend the rest of the day loading and levelling basecourse. The AVANT 528, he says, took it all in its stride.

White says both the owners and himself are extremely happy with the purchase and the service they receive from Glenbrook Machinery. He also says they would possibly add more attachments to their inventory in the future.

The AVANT 528 is a mid-range machine from the 500-series however, the range starts from the 200-series and goes up to the 700-series.



Landscape manager James White putting the rotary sweeper through its paces



Controls and gauges are ergonomically placed for viewing and ease of use



- Overall I found the machine easy to learn to operate, as all the attachments are put on and taken off in the same manner, a process that only takes a few minutes.
- The multi connector gets a big 'thumbs up' from me.
- The telescopic boom is mounted slightly off-centre and visibility of the attachment was excellent.
- Although it is possible to mount attachments to the rear of the machine, the majority of gear is mounted to the front, this makes for ease of operation.
- The boom is self-levelling, again assisting with ease of operation.
- The machine (along with several attachments) is light enough to be transported on a tandem trailer towed behind a medium sized ute.
- The AVANT's Kubota engine was extremely quiet even at full revs, so much so that it wasn't until I exited the machine that I realised I wasn't wearing ear protection.



- Only the larger models have all the controls for added functions (such as opening the clamshell on 4 in 1 bucket or extending the boom) as a part of the joystick function. However this function is easy to live without on the smaller machine.



The extendable boom allows for precise placement of the load (a side-shifting pallet fork is available as an optional extra)

AVANT articulated telescopic loaders are hydrostatically driven, which allows the operator to change from a forward motion to reverse, simply by removing his or her foot from the right-side pedal and applying pressure to the pedal beside it, thus reversing the machine.

I found the machine very easy to learn to use, even though I restricted myself to changing a couple of attachments and operating it with the four-in-one bucket attached. Having said that, realistically I would have needed a day or two on the job to become proficient in operating the unit.

One of the machine's many features I found to be of immediate benefit upon taking the controls was the telescopic boom. This function allows the operator to extend the reach by a further 600mm at the push of a lever.

The benefit of this is a load may be carried close to the machine's natural centre

of gravity while travelling but allowing a greater lift in a situation such as having to clear high-sided trucks and trailers.

The maximum height gained by using this function is almost 2.8 metres.

I found there was ample room in the cab, although it's fair to say that I'm no giant. However, somebody three times my size would be totally comfortable in the operator's seat, which is heated I might add.

AVANT loaders come with four different cab options and the one I tested was fitted with the standard ROPS safety frame with a tinted plexiglass canopy. The operator position is ideal as it is positioned in the front portion of the machine and the seat is as close to the attachment as it can possibly be, giving the operator an unrestricted view.

Taking a couple minutes to change from the pallet-fork attachment to the four-in-one bucket, this process is aided by a specially-designed multi connector.

This innovation required an effortless single-hand movement which automatically released the pressure and not a single drop of hydraulic fluid was spilt.

From my own point of view, I felt myself wishing these machines were around twenty years ago. If they had been, I probably could have saved the money I've spent over the years for treatment of a bad back — a result of many hours peering over the hood of a front end loader and twisting to operate a grader blade attached to the rear of the machine. ■

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