

SANDOUVILLE: NEW PLANT, NEW TRAFIC AND 50 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE

- Opened in 1964, the Sandouville plant celebrates its 50th anniversary this year. Opening a new chapter in its history, the site is about to start building LCVs for the first time: New Trafic (to be launched this summer) and the high-roof version of the Opel/Vauxhall Vivaro, previously built in Spain (Nissan plant in Barcelona) and the UK (General Motors plant in Luton).

▪ This new human and industrial adventure involved a complete transformation of the site. Following an industrial and cultural transformation involving an investment of €230 million and three years of exceptional efforts, the plant can be compared to a greenfield site.

▪ The year 2014 sets the scene for the renewal of the plant, with a secure long-term future on the promising LCV market. The challenge now is to successfully conduct the start-up and ramp-up of New Trafic and the Opel / Vauxhall Vivaro while continuing to maintain the highest standards for Laguna and Espace, which the site will continue to build at the same time until the arrival of their successors, after which they will be produced at the Renault Douai plant.

A historic transformation: the transition from a passenger car plant to an lcv plant

Construction work began on the Sandouville plant at the end of 1963, in order to meet growing demand for cars. The site occupied a strategic geographical position: on the banks of the Seine and close to the port of Le Havre. Over the past 50 years, Sandouville has built more than eight million vehicles. The site has specialized in passenger cars since its founding, building first R 16, then R 12 (1970), R 15 and R 17 (1972), R 30 (1975), R 20 (1976), R 18 (1978), R 25 in 1984, R 21 in 1986, Safrane in 1992, Laguna in 1992, Vel Satis in 2001, Espace IV in 2002, and Laguna III in 2007.

In 2011, the Renault group announced plans to invest €230 million in the long-term future of the Sandouville plant as part of a new project: to build light commercial vehicles at the site rather than passenger cars. Leader on the LCV market since 1998, Renault was keen to relocate production of New Trafic along with the high-roof version of the Opel / Vauxhall Vivaro. The entire Renault brand LCV range for Europe will now be built in France: Kangoo at Maubeuge, Master at Batilly and Trafic at Sandouville.

It took three years of exceptional efforts, from summer 2010 to summer 2013, to transform the plant and put new resources in place, for a result comparable to a greenfield site:

- In the press shop, 5,000 tonnes of cast iron to manufacture LCV production line tooling, i.e. three-quarters of the weight of the Eiffel Tower's metal frame.
- In body assembly: 20,000 m² of space was freed up to install new tooling with 187 new robots to make the 5,000 spot welds required to assemble the body of New Trafic.
- In the paint shop: a complete transformation was necessary to adapt the process to LCV dimensions. The anti-corrosion treatment tunnel was raised by 70 cm and the paint booth extended by 12m. Resources specific to LCVs were put in place: cradles and conveyor belts to help operators adopt the correct positioning in applying part of the 120m of mastic beading, and interior robots to apply mastic and paint the interior of the van. This process is unnecessary on passenger cars, since the interior is lined.
- In final assembly, employees at Villiers-Saint-Frédéric and Sandouville have put in place the new LCV line. Until summer 2011, Espace IV and Laguna III were built on two separate lines. In September 2011, the two passenger cars were moved to the same line. As part of this process, 130 machines were moved, upgraded or acquired, and 240 assembly line workstations adapted. Owing to its specific dimensions, New Trafic has a dedicated line.

This transformation also marks a cultural shift and a human challenge that paves the way for a return to two production shifts (only one since 2009). Site management placed particular emphasis on developing the skills of operators through extensive training:

- 20 days of training for each operator prior to starting the job,
- quality and safety support for personnel with respect to the new installations.

For **Jérôme Moinard**, Director of the Sandouville plant: *“The transition from building passenger cars to building LCVs is a major industrial event and a new page in the history of Sandouville. After three years of work and an investment of €230 million, the site is like new, whereas in reality, it is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. The site is at a pivotal point, closing one chapter and beginning another. For plant employees, it is first and foremost a source of pride and the promise of a secure future”.*

The lcv market: the promise of a secure future

Sandouville is a key site in the LCV production base of the Renault brand, on a buoyant market.

Renault markets a broad range of LCVs (between 2 and 22 m³) to meet the needs and expectations of business customers. The brand is European No. 1 in the LCV market for the 16th consecutive year with market share of 14.5% at end-2013. In the first quarter of 2014, Renault reported a 4.8% rise in global LCV sales (10% for the Group as a whole).

More specifically, Trafic is an enduring success. Renault has sold more than 1.6 million Trafic vehicles since production started in 1980. In France, Trafic leads its segment with a share of 36.6% in 2013. The launch of the new generation will help Renault consolidate its position as European No. 1 in LCVs. With 270 body versions, more than 100 colours, and vehicle adaptations built into the production flow, New Trafic will seek to carry on from its predecessors. Its ambitions will be to build loyalty and to win new customers looking for a reliable, innovative vehicle meeting high standards of performance.

To support customers and continuously improve customer satisfaction, Renault is continuing the deployment of the PRO+ network of business centres for business users. At end-2013, the Renault Pro+ network included 520 centres, of which one-quarter outside Europe.

“For 50 years, Sandouville plant has developed a unique expertise on executive passenger vehicles with one of the key focus on quality. Those are assets for the launch of New Trafic whose customers expect notably excellence in perceived quality, comfort and robustness. With New Trafic, Renault offers a real “Van à Vivre”, modern, comfortable and more practical. Producing this new model enables Sandouville to progress a step forward in LCV manufacturing and play a key role in strengthening Renault’s leadership in light commercial vehicle in Europe” explains **Ashwani Gupta**, Global Head of Renault LCV Division

Renault in Normandy

Renault is the biggest industrial employer in the Haute-Normandie region. The Group has five industrial and engineering sites in the region: the Sandouville bodywork assembly plant, the Cléon engine and gearbox plant, the Grand-Couronne international logistics platform, the Aubevoye test centre, and the Dieppe site, home of the Alpine brand and now a bodywork assembly site. Renault also has two subsidiaries in this region: Sofrastock International a (specialist site managing the supply and distribution of small parts from suppliers) in Saint-André de l'Eure and Renault Tech, a vehicle conversion specialist, in Heudebouville.

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