

THE 100,000TH VAN ROLLS OUT OF RENAULT'S SOVAB PLANT: COMMERCIAL SUCCESS FOR A MANUFACTURING CHALLENGE

- **The SoVAB plant in France has just seen the 100,000th example of its new van (a Renault Master chassis cab) come off the production line.**
- **Renault's teams have risen in record time to what was a considerable challenge in manufacturing terms. Launched in April 2010, the vehicle is now available in more than 350 variants: front- and rear-wheel drive, GVWs ranging from 2.8 to 4.5 tonnes, plus a choice of 26 body types, four lengths and three heights.**
- **The vehicle has emerged as a huge hit in sales terms, with Renault enjoying a record 14 percent share of Europe's big van market (up to end-May 2011). This marks an improvement of two points over the same period in 2010 and reinforces the lead Renault has enjoyed in the European LCV market since 1998.**
- **Thanks to this success, the Batilly plant was able to recruit 90 additional staff during the first half of 2011.**

The 100,000th big van rolled out of Renault's SoVAB plant (Société de Véhicules Automobiles de Batilly) in eastern France on Monday, July 11. The landmark figure speaks volumes for the vehicle's success, and orders for Renault Master have increased by 40 percent compared to the same period in 2010. The brand's 14 percent share of Europe's big van market up to end-May 2011 represents a rise of two points and 16 percent over the first five months of 2010. And this success isn't restricted to Europe either, since it is mirrored in the Euromed^[1] region where the vehicle enjoys a market share of 17.9 percent (up 49 percent).

To meet the challenge, 90 people were recruited during the first half of 2011

The SoVAB plant has pulled out all the stops to meet this growing demand which has resulted in full order books. Production rates have risen sharply, while 90 people were taken on during the first half of the year, allowing the factory to run two-and-a-half shifts. Everything is now in place for the unprecedented production rate of 600 vehicles per day to be reached by the last quarter of 2011.

"A remarkable team effort"

From New Master's launch to the availability of all 350 versions of the van in all its markets took a little more than one year, a remarkably short period of time given the immense challenge it represented in manufacturing terms. Indeed, while the broad variety of variants means that the needs of business customers are comprehensively covered, it has naturally made production more complex. *"All those involved in the project produced a remarkable team effort,"* says Pierre Monflier, Factory Director. *"Their unfailing commitment and motivation enabled us to make all 350 variants of New Master available in time. That's an achievement we can be proud of, and our biggest reward is the response of our customers which has resulted in full order books."*

"The Renault network is a big plus!"

The 100,000th vehicle was delivered to the Colas Group which took delivery of its New Master at SoVAB's premises on Monday, July 11. Philippe Brissonneau, the Group's Equipment Director, explained his firm's choice of a New Master chassis cab which will go on to be converted into a dropside platform by Renault Tech: *"We have worked with Renault for some years. Indeed, Renault is a fairly straightforward choice because our activity calls for reliable vehicles which match our needs at the lowest possible price. Renault has always met those requirements. We are convinced that this New Master will be even better than its predecessor, which is a vehicle we know very well. Being able to depend on Renault's network is obviously a big plus, too!"*

Renault Master: an office on wheels

New Master is the third generation of Renault's big van. In addition to the range's breadth, the model features extensively revised, robust styling and sharply lower running costs (down 40 percent), thanks notably to the fuel efficiency of the new M9T engine which is made in Cléon, France. New Master is also more driver-friendly, while work has gone into stowage solutions and innovations like pivoting and retractable tables, Carminat TomTom Live navigation and Bluetooth connectivity that make the cabin a genuine office on wheels.

NEW RENAULT MASTER ACCLAIMED BY THE EXPERTS

In addition to New Master's success with its customers, the model has also been acclaimed by the trade's professionals:

- **Business Vehicle of the Year 2011 (L'Automobile et Entreprise, France).**
- **Utility Vehicle of the Year 2011 (L'Argus, France).**
- **Van of the Year 2011 in Denmark and Lithuania.**
- **Van of the Year 2011 (What Van?, Great Britain)**
- **Van of the Year 2010 (Van Fleet World Honours, UK).**
- **Transporter of the Year 2010 (Kep, Germany).**

THE SOVAB FACTORY (Société des Véhicules Automobiles de Batilly)

- **Established in France's Meurthe et Moselle region in 1979.**
- **2,350 staff with unlimited-term contracts (as of May 31, 2011)**
- **1,802,410 vehicles manufactured since 1980.**
- **The factory has manufactured Masters since the model's first generation in 1980**
- **It is the only factory to produce New Renault Master.**
- **SoVAB also assembles the New Opel Movano.**

[1] Bulgaria, Maghreb nations, Romania, Turkey.

Websites: www.media.renault.com - www.group.renault.com

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