

A STATE-OF-THE-ART MULTI-PURPOSE HANGAR IN FRANCE - NEW ERA FOR VALLAIR

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Vallair has opened the doors to its unique new maintenance hangar located at Marcel Dassault Airport in Châteauroux, France. The enormous state-of-the-art facility can accommodate up to five A321 size aircraft simultaneously, or a combination of A330/A340 and A321s. Together with the Centre-Val de Loire Region and the Châteauroux Centre Airport Establishment, Vallair is proud to play a key role in the reindustrialisation of France and its aeronautical scene with this A380 capable, 8,520m² hangar which will create nearly 200 jobs in the region.

As this unique facility stands as one of the largest hangars of its kind in the world, this milestone has involved unprecedented collaboration from several parties. Supply chain shortages and COVID aside, establishing the infrastructure, resources and technology for this environmentally friendly facility has necessitated the resolution of many challenges.

Grégoire Lebigot, Founder & CEO of Vallair, sums up what it means for local economy dynamics: “We are part of ‘Aérocentre’, the regional centre of excellence in Centre-Val de Loire that works to develop and sustain the aeronautical sector across the area with over 120 member organisations. Vallair stands as one of its key players over the last fifteen years and we are proud to be part of the rich aviation heritage in the heart of France.”

“During this period, we have developed an unparalleled expertise in the aerostructures arena, including composites and key components like nacelles and thrust reversers on site, along with aircraft recycling, cargo conversions, and our MRO activities which now extend to widebody capabilities. It is our aim to ensure that our customers can benefit from all these complementary on-site skills and the associated cost savings that we can offer.”

Parking and storage at CHR airport can already accommodate widebodies and Vallair believes this is the perfect timing and opportunity to enhance its capabilities and reach those airlines who are presently struggling with maintenance slots. Vallair will initially focus on Airbus A330 heavy maintenance capabilities with a view to adding A340, A350, and possibly Boeing B777 capabilities in the near future. In-house cargo conversion services will also commence with narrowbodies and quickly expand to a range of other popular platforms, including widebodies.

Lebigot adds further details about the Company’s objectives. “We’re excited to build up a new reputation for widebody excellence as we enter into 2022, this is the dawn of a new era for Vallair and our customers. Our activities in Châteauroux will also focus on passenger-to-freighter conversions and a dedicated unit will showcase our significant experience and knowledge in this area. As we step up our P2F programme it is essential for us to expand our resources across all geographical areas, and we will now be able to efficiently re-locate several conversion projects to France. In addition, our expertise with mature aeronautical assets enables us to follow our sustainability agenda as Vallair continues to grow.”

Lebigot goes on to say, “Since mid-2020, the project has been an incredible journey and a major investment. Everyone involved has been committed to reach the ambitious deadlines and everyone in the Vallair team must be congratulated for their dedication and unstoppable enthusiasm. I’d also like to thank François Bonneau, President of Region Centre Val de Loire, Dominique Roullet, President of Châteauroux Airport, and their teams, for their continuous support.”

“This new extension of Vallair’s services in Châteauroux will operate alongside our existing narrowbody MRO and painting capabilities in Montpellier” continues Lebigot. “We are part of the Aerospace Valley, a French cluster of more than 800 aerospace and engineering companies and research centres located in the regions of Occitanie and Nouvelle-Aquitaine in the southwest of France.

“The aviation industry has faced an unprecedented a time of turmoil over the past two years, but recovery is evident. Vallair’s expanded capabilities in France will offer both operators and lessors a comprehensive solution whilst improving efficiency and turn-around times.”

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