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Blohm+Voss La Ciotat opens under MB92 management

On 3 April Blohm+Voss La Ciotat's 200m dry dock was officially inaugurated. The newly opened facility is to be managed under the auspices of MB92.



French regional and political officials on Monday officially inaugurated the 200m dry dock at La Ciotat after a €15.8 million upgrade and renovation project. Peter Lürssen pressed the button to flood the basin, after Jean-Yves Saussol, CEO of La Ciotat Shipyards proclaimed, "In Lürssen we trust!"

In his inaugural speech, Lürssen paid tribute to the traditions of shipbuilding and the spirit of cooperation as he announced that the La Ciotat dry dock would be managed by the Barcelona superyacht refit firm MB92.

"For over 20 years, we have trusted MB92 with the refit and warranty work of our vessels," Lürssen said. "When we faced the situation of how to develop La Ciotat, it was a natural step for us to talk to our partners at MB92 and to our new partners in this region."

La Ciotat Shipyards is redeveloping the historic marine facilities of the city for the yachting sector. Established superyacht refit firms Monaco Marine and CompositeWorks already operate within the shipyard, sharing the 2,000 Syncrolift that was installed in 2007.

The refurbished dry dock was awarded to the newly-created Blohm+Voss La Ciotat entity after a tendering process last year. Blohm+Voss was acquired by Lürssen shortly thereafter. La Ciotat Shipyards CEO, Jean-Yves Saussol explained that the dry dock concession is for 35 months, with five months already elapsed, so the current set up will end on the 31st of September 2019.

"MB92 being appointed to manage the dry dock was clearly unexpected," Saussol said. "But, in Lürssen we trust. They told us that MB92 are the right team to handle megayachts, so we listened. Why not give it a try and see what happens? Of course there are some concerns: MB92 are our main competitor. We don't want to be a number two option with the biggest and best projects going to Barcelona and the overflow coming here."

"There should be two places in the Mediterranean for refit and repair of very large yachts," Lürssen proclaimed during his inaugural speech. "One should be La Ciotat, and one should be Barcelona. What better chance to combine the forces of La Ciotat and Barcelona together?"

Under the brand Blohm+Voss La Ciotat, MB92 management Pepe Garcia-Aubert, Henk Dreijer, Miguel Llitas and their teams have been preparing the facility for work, and with the flooding of the dock, have their first yachts in place.

"We had been looking for extra capacity for some time, as we expand our own facilities in Barcelona with a new 4,000t Shiplift," Pepe Garcia explained. "When this opportunity came to us, we were very happy to take it and to work with SEMIDEP and the local suppliers and subcontractors to achieve the MB92 level of quality, for the benefit of everyone."

"We will be cooperating with CompositeWorks, Monaco Marine and all of the companies here," Lürssen confirmed. "I think every one of all the major players understands that by helping each other, we improve this location. If we work together, all of our businesses prosper."

On 7 April, the board of SEMIDEP, the shareholders of la Ciotat Shipyards, will meet to decide on the next round of investment in the shipyard. There are two main projects under consideration: Development of a new "megayacht" platform which will include the installation of a 4,000t Syncrolift, which will be able to service five yachts between 100 and 150m in length and up to 4,000t.

The second main project is to develop 10,000m² of workshops, offices and warehouses to support La Ciotat Shipyards' subcontractors.