

Charles de Gaulle Airport in Paris undergoes large-scale expansion

With total investment of 570 million euros, Paris Airport consolidates its No. 2 position in Europe – and sets its sights on becoming No. 1.

26 kilometres northeast of Paris, Charles de Gaulle Airport has extended its site by a further 225,000 square metres by building the new boarding satellite S3. As the final architectural element of Terminal 2E for international flights and 2F for inner-European routes, the complex is now of a size enabling the airport of the French capital to secure its position as Europe's second-biggest airport in the long term.

The steel structure alone is twice as heavy as the Eiffel Tower. Total surfaces over 3 hectares in area have been glazed. And involved in this has been the TROSIFOL Division of Kuraray Europe GmbH with Europe's leading PVB-film for laminated safety glass for architectural applications.

600 companies with over 12,000 employees were contracted to create an airport extension that will boost annual passenger capacity from almost 57 million (56.8 million travellers in 2006) by a further 8.5 million passengers per year.

A major contribution to planning came from findings from surveys of passengers that went into the design, interior finish and logistics of the new satellite S3. Top of the list was the desire for light and brightness. Daylight illumination thus has become the key element of the new "Galerie parisienne" with its 5,000 seats. Reflective glass surfaces in orange and silver from Bischoff Glastechnik, Bretten (D), have provided the 750 metre long and 800 metre wide terminal with an unusual air of brightness and transparency.

The toilets and supply rooms in the middle of the terminal have vanished behind reflective glass surfaces and endow the building with a seemingly see-through quality. The large glass surfaces on the outside give those waiting an unobstructed view of the aircraft as they take off and land and create the

impression of immediate proximity to the runway outside. Passengers thus become acquainted with the aircraft long before boarding, thus shortening the subjectively experienced time spent waiting. While the external architecture may appear conventional, the carefully chosen colour scheme in the interior conveys an impression of agreeability and comfort. Along with plenty of natural light, warm and enlivening colours such as orange, yellow and green promote travellers' sense of well-being and are complemented by such natural materials as wood and leather. Coloured TROSIFOL PVB films provide a visible contrast – for instance, the white translucent films of the Italian TROSIFOL customer SUNGLASS in partitions in the waiting areas or combined with bright green PET films from CONCEPTA in France in the partitions of the passenger conveyors under the hall ceilings for rapid transit through the hall. Or as a contrast in dazzling blue in the new Air France check-in counters made partly of glass in front of the boarding gates – produced and supplied by TROSIFOL customer CURVET (Italy). The modern shades of orange in the glass of the interior design are continued in the sanitary areas and make them genuine eye-catchers – made by TROSIFOL customer V2S in France.

It is even more relaxing to wait in the adjacent spa area. Benefiting from Japanese relaxation techniques (shiatsu), massages with hot rocks, cosmetic face treatments, aroma therapy and the fitness studio, many visitors may even forget that they're at an airport. Further amenities are designed to enhance customer satisfaction still further: children's play zones, video games, relaxation areas with various types of seating, screened-off work areas with plug sockets close to the seats and, of-course, Wi-Fi hotspots.

Passenger logistics and guidance through the terminal building through to departure was another important aspect of design. Simple routing, readily comprehensible signage, clearly identifiable information panels framed in orange glass (also from TROSIFOL) and straight-line routes make finding one's way that much easier.

The original plans also incorporated check-in sectors for extra-large passenger planes. The two new terminals thus have 6 gates for the new Airbus A 380

with its 800-passenger capacity. In optimum conditions, these areas can serve up to 5,000 passengers at a time. This makes Charles de Gaulle perfectly equipped for all future needs. The new satellite was officially opened in the presence of French President Nicolas Sarkozy at the end of June 2007.

In order to build on its position as Europe's second-biggest airport after London-Heathrow, Aéroports de Paris is planning the next satellite S4 for 2012. Similar in size to the new satellite S3, it will be dedicated exclusively to long-distance planes. Of the total of 16 gates, 7 alone will be reserved for the A 380.

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