

The Irizar Group officially inaugurates its new Ormaiztegi facility, coinciding with its 125th anniversary.

Ormaiztegi, 18 July 2014

At a time of great strength and strong growth, Irizar celebrates its 125 years of history today.

The event, which took place at its Ormaiztegi head office, was attended by the Lehendakari of the Basque Government, Iñigo Urkullu, and the General Deputy of Gipuzkoa, Martin Garitano, as well as other authorities, representatives of the Irizar family, customers, vendors, local partners and Irizar staff, for a total of more than 700 people.

There were presentations by Gorka Herranz, President of the Cooperative, and José Manuel Orcasitas, CEO of the Irizar Group, who looked back on these 125 years, followed by Martin Garitano and Iñigo Urkullu.

After the speeches, there was an emotional piece full of historical symbolism in which twelve coaches manufactured by Irizar throughout the years were displayed, accompanied by the beautiful voice of the soprano Nerea Erauskin.

Irizar was created in 1889, and its founder, a Gipuzkoan entrepreneur named José Antonio Irizar, decided to evolve the company from manufacturing iron fittings for carriages to the world of passenger transport. At the end of the 19th century, the family company sealed its perfectionist stamp and focused on manufacturing elegant carriages and stagecoaches, an activity that it carried out for almost three decades.

Those who built the first power driven Irizar coach never considered that their small company would become a global reference in the production of coaches for road passenger transport. They faced this challenge with the innovative spirit that defined them and that they would convey to future generations, becoming the Irizar brand's identifying symbol.

In 1948, metal was incorporated in the vehicles and the first semi-metallic vehicle built by hand was launched to the market. Fully metallic coaches would arrive five years later.

In 1963, Irizar became a Cooperative Company.

Its internationalisation process began in 1995 as a result of the bodywork technology transfer strategy. This process was implemented by opening production plants in China, Morocco, Brazil, Mexico, India and South Africa. Hispacold and Masats were also added to the group.

Irizar has experienced 14 years of strong economic growth as well as strong growth in Ormaiztegi, building 1500 bodywork elements each year.

In 2009, in the midst of the crisis, Irizar carried out a strategic revolution that strengthened it and allowed it to reach new historical records.



It focused on the brand, decided to become a coach manufacturer, and made a strong commitment to industrial diversification and technology.

At the same time, the company's products were given a strong boost in terms of their quality and reliability.

Efforts were also made to build closer relationships with customers throughout the world by adapting and personalising all the company's products and services to individual needs, resulting in exceptional growth, especially in Mexico and Brazil.

The industrial diversification strategy was a key factor in strengthening the group. Between 2009 and 2013, Jema Energy, Datik and Alconza were added, focusing on power electronics, ITS solutions for transport management, and rotating electrical machinery, respectively.

In 2011, the Irizar brand's range of complete buses was launched to the market, transforming the company from a bodywork firm to a coach manufacturer.

2011 also marked the launch of the project for sustainable mobility in cities by developing a 100% electric bus with zero emissions.

Creatio, Irizar's Research and Development Centre, was established in 2012 to promote the Group's applied research and technological development for the brand's complete products as well as the main bodywork components it provides. It also launched a Trainee Programme for hiring highly qualified individuals that would progressively form part of the centre, in accordance with its needs.

The Irizar Group's first electric bus based on 100% Group technology was presented in San Sebastian in 2014 with the Irizar i2e.

Stronger and younger than ever, Irizar is a currently solid group with geographic and industrial diversification and continuous growth. The Group is firmly committed to the brand, technology and sustainability as well as to its coach and electric coach products and the products for the other sectors in which it is present.

The group is comprised by six coach plants located throughout the world, five companies as a result of its industrial diversification and a Technology Centre focused on the long-term aspects of applied research process and the development of proprietary systems and products.

Inauguration of new facilities

The event to celebrate Irizar's 125th anniversary will be the ideal setting to inaugurate the new modern facilities that have been created primarily by and for customers.

A second 1200 m2 plant has been built to house a modern and innovative space for defining coaches, meeting with customers and developing the brand, along with the Creatio R&D centre and a modern corporate area.

The showroom includes physical and virtual versions of all the upholstery and lining options to design each customer's coach in an exclusive and personalised manner.

The new building and the new reception area plan to welcome visitors and transfer them to the world of Irizar, a solid brand that is continuously growing, where the future and technology are especially important.



In addition, a new and modern building has been built to deliver coaches to customers. In light of the company's anniversary, it has been transformed into a temporary historical museum of the most emblematic Irizar coaches, starting with the first wooden coach.

To conclude the expansion, today marked the unveiling of the sculpture that will be the commemorative piece of this anniversary and that has been exclusively designed for Irizar.

The sculpture, with its simple shapes, includes three curved elements that give the feeling of movement and rhythm. This movement is highlighted by the sculpture's slight inclination, which conveys a feeling of direction and route, always looking forwards and towards the future. The design of the piece is clean and precise, accentuating the idea of modernity and technology. All with a soft reference to the brand's characteristic rear-view mirror and a firm semicircular shape that not gives a conceptual reference to roads as well as an enveloping and synchronised rhythm.

In the words of José Manuel Orcasitas, *"Today's Irizar Group is the result of 125 years of having many people do things right, starting with the founder, to create the foundation of what we are today. It is time to acknowledge and give thanks to those who have formed part of Irizar, in the past we well as today, for their involvement and contributions. Thank you very much."*