

busworld newsletter



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BEST-EVER BUSWORLD KORTRIJK

The small Flemish city of Kortrijk once again became the centre of attention for the world's bus and coach industry. From 19 to 24 October, a total of 25,870 visitors came from 110 countries around the world. Of those, 65% came from outside Belgium and 12% of the total were from countries outside Europe.

It is amazing where they came from. There was a large party of coach operators from North America. Major markets like China, India, Japan, Russia and Turkey were well represented. Coaches brought parties of visitors for as far afield as Sweden. There were also visitors from South American and Africa. Every day, one

was reminded that Busworld has become a global brand.

Busworld Kortrijk is outgrowing the facilities at Kortrijk Xpo. In order to accommodate 358 exhibitors, four large temporary pavilions were erected outside the halls. This gave a total of 50,000sq m, the largest ever area for any exhibition held in Kortrijk. Demonstration vehicles were lined up outside some of the halls. Even the weather played its part, being bright and sunny almost every day. It is fair to say that Busworld Kortrijk is bursting at the seams. In her introduction to the Busworld catalogue, Mieke Glorieux, Director of Busworld Kortrijk, said: "What the future may hold, as a result of the hall complex becoming too



Mieke Glorieux



Scania launched the triaxle OmniExpress

small, is one big question mark. We are hoping for an improved infrastructure to be put in place by 2009 and a more liveable situation in terms of extensions or temporary fair premises. Busworld Kortrijk may well be doomed to pitch its tents elsewhere."

That would be unfortunate, because Busworld Kortrijk has a unique character. It is quite simply the biggest and best international exhibition of its kind. It also benefits the economy of Kortrijk and the West Flanders region. On the other hand, it is important to be able to meet the growing demand for space from exhibitors and the increasing numbers of visitors.



Otokar from Turkey took a large stand.

Walking around the halls and stands, this year's exhibition was more about evolution than revolution. Many manufacturers made substantial changes to their model ranges in preparation for Euro 4, and they were launched in Busworld in 2005. Those new model ranges are now in volume production, therefore there were fewer completely new vehicles but some interesting refinement

of designs. Many manufacturers can already offer the option of vehicles with Euro 5 emission limits, even though they do not become mandatory on new models until October 2008, and one year later for existing models.

There tends to be a bias towards coaches at Busworld Kortrijk, but there are important developments



Kutsenitsof of Austria showed this low floor bus with hydraulic drive.



The new Citea city bus from VDL Bus & Coach

with city buses. There seems to be less interest in gas as an alternative fuel, but with the price of oil now around USD90 per barrel, hybrid buses are starting to appear. They will not come in overnight, like low floor buses did a few years ago, because bus fleets will need time to gain experience and be able to predict accurately the operating cost per kilometre.

Fuel cell buses are even further into the future, but Van Hool displayed a hybrid fuel cell bus that is currently running on extended trial with De Lijn, the Public Transport Agency in Flanders. Somehow, it seems very fitting that the most advanced technology in Busworld Kortrijk came from a Belgian company!

EUROPEAN COACH WEEK

The 13th European Coach Week was held from 13 to 16 October, immediately before Busworld Kortrijk opened its doors. This year, it was organised by Sonja Vande Wiele and Martial Benoot.



Together with a team of judges, they carried out a series of practical tests to assess the comfort and safety of competing coaches for drivers, tour guides and passengers. Martial has extensive experience of instructing bus and coach drivers and has driven practically every kind of vehicle on the roads. He assessed vehicles for active safety features such as stability, acceleration, braking, field-of-vision and new features like satellite navigation and electronic safety systems.

After extensive testing, the judges gave the Grand Gold Award Kortrijk 2007 to the new Setra TopClass 415HD and the Special Award for Safety Innovation. A Van Hool T917 Astron won the Grand Silver Award Kortrijk 2007 and the Special Award for Tourism Equipment. This coach was particularly well equipped to enable a tour guide to give audio and visual explanations to passengers touring a city or other area of special interest. Descriptions of buildings could be interspersed with video clips on the coach's screens.

A Neoplan Cityliner HD won the Award for Aesthetics while a Scania K310 chassis with the new Irizar i4H body won the Award for the Best Multi-Purpose coach. Irizar introduced its new lower deck model earlier this year and it is available with optional internal floor layouts and at various lengths.

The jury did not award a prize for minicoaches this year, but gave an honourable mention to the BUSINESS Mercedes-Benz Sprinter because of its suitability for sightseeing tourism, and especially the equipment for a tour guide.

Other participants were: Lion's Supreme Coach; Mercedes Integro; temsa Tourmalin Intercity 12; Fast-Man Syter; Aquablue; VDL Kusters Picardie MDO818.



*FAST Concept Car's Syter
in the multi-purpose sector*



The Van Hool T917 Astron

The new Setra Top Class



A COACH IS NOT A TRUCK

Visitors to Busworld Kortrijk soon noticed large red octagonal signs proclaiming that a coach is not equal to a truck. During the course of the fair, thousands of lapel badges with the same message were distributed.

Busworld and its parent, BAAV, are seriously concerned that the new 12-day rule will have a serious impact on the industry and especially on extended tours.

Marc Van den Bossche, President of Busworld, said: "Our profession is in the business of carrying people, not goods. The reduction of driving times may be well intended for truck drivers but in no way can it be made to apply to coach and bus drivers. Our sector deserves much better.

The new regulations have made it almost impossible to organise coach excursions where passengers get on and off the vehicle during the day at regular intervals, stop for lunch, and arrive at hotels in the early evening."

Busworld and BAAV lobbied a number of politicians during the fair and also held, at short notice, a conference to highlight the problem.

The change in the regulations is affecting not only the coach industry, but also hotels and tourist attractions, especially in more remote and distant parts of Europe. Busworld has made a number of short films which describe the serious impact of the change in a number of ways.

Emissions from coaches, per passenger, are far lower than those of cars and aircraft, yet the amendment to the regulations is threatening to drive many potential coach passengers to low cost airlines or the use of their own cars.

You can see the films on Busworld TV at www.busworld.org

IRISBUS LAUNCHES THE MAGELYS

One of the stars of Busworld Kortrijk was the world première of the Magelys luxury coach. This is an important new model in the Irisbus range, replacing the long-running Iliade and FR1 family.

The Magelys is practically the last stage in the completion of the convergence programme, initiated when Irisbus started to rationalise the former Iveco and Renault bus and coach ranges. Over the last four to five years, completely new vehicles have been rolled out, covering all sectors of the bus and coach market. One of the teams responsible for the development of Magelys was led by Régine Debernis who has a wide-ranging senior position in Irisbus, covering product development and communications.



Régine Debernis

experience coach travel. I and my team went round the coach, with questionnaires, asking all about their comfort, travelling experience, ability to see out of the coach, and all the other matters that are relevant to coach passengers. It was a very

In order to accommodate this feature, luggage racks are mounted further inwards than usual. Régine and her team paid particular attention to seats. They observed that many people nowadays carry bottles of water. If these are placed in traditional net pockets on the rear of the seat in front, the nets soon become unsightly and over-stretched. Instead, under each double seat, they have fitted a unit that can carry two water bottles, slightly tilted, so that bottles do not fall out when the coach brakes. Small bins are fitted behind each seat and can easily be emptied of litter accumulated during the journey. Magazines can be secured by a simple holder on the back of each seat. Another novel feature is the mounting of reading lights in the rear of each headrest, along with a hostess call button. This makes it much easier to adjust the number of seats in a coach, for example, if fewer are required for a particular excursion.

The floor does not look like that of any other coach. It has a wood finish, like one would expect to find in a good quality house. Seating materials were also completely reviewed. Traditional cloths have gone out and in their place there are modern, friendly, materials that one might expect to find on good quality furniture.

All of this has been achieved while still complying with the many regulations on the construction of vehicles, on security of seats and seat belts, use of fire retardant materials, etc.

The Magelys is already going into volume production and the Irisbus team was taking orders on the stand.



Magelys basking in the sunshine at Busworld Kortrijk

Régine is famous for saying that no-one would let a man design the interior of a house, so why should men think that they can design the interior of buses and coaches?

These are not idle words. She put her thoughts into practice by taking a team of design and development engineers away from their desks in the Annonay factory in Central France for a two-day excursion by coach.

Régine said: "They normally come into work by car and do not

important exercise. We also carried out similar surveys with coach operators and their customers."

The most noticeable external result of this exercise is the improved ability to see out of the coach, even for passengers sitting on seats next to the gangway. The main side windows continue almost to roof level. Additionally, on the roof itself, there are two long, relatively narrow, rows of double glazing at each side of the roof, enabling passengers to see tall buildings, mountain scenery, and other high objects more easily.

New seats and materials



BUSWORLD IN ASIA AND TURKEY 2008

Registrations for exhibitions stands at Busworld exhibitions in Shanghai and Istanbul are running at a very high level.

Busworld Asia 2008 will be held in Shanghai from 11 to 14 March. This is one day longer than previously, while the space available to exhibitors will increase from two to three large halls in the modern Pudong International Exhibition Centre.

Busworld Asia is a showcase for the Chinese industry, representing both the largest markets in the world and the largest manufacturing industry. It ought to be particularly interesting in 2008, leading up to the Beijing Olympics.

While much of the output of Chinese manufacturers is still delivered to the massive domestic market, one can always expect to find new concepts, designed to appeal to large fleet customers and export markets. The Chinese component industry has also expanded rapidly in the last few years, in many cases offering products built to international standards.

The inaugural Busworld Turkey, held earlier this year, was voted an outstanding success. The second edition will be held again in the Istanbul Expo Centre, close to the Ataturk International Airport, from 24 to 26 April.

At the opening ceremony for Busworld Kortrijk, Busworld signed



The new Mercedes-Benz Conecto is built in Turkey.

the contract with its Turkish partner, HKF Trade Fairs of Istanbul. Quite a number of Turkish vehicle and component manufacturers attended Busworld Kortrijk. Their industry is growing rapidly and is becoming increasingly international. In order to keep control of costs, several Western

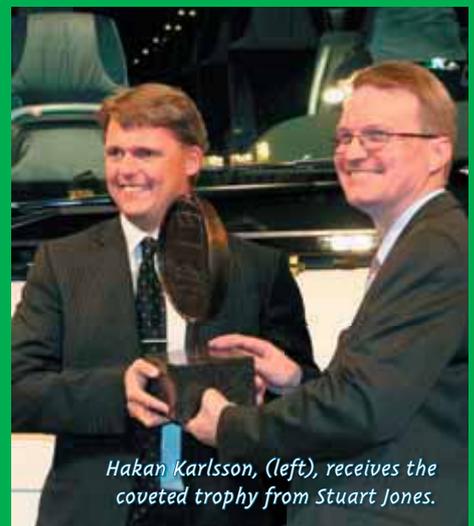
European manufacturers have now signed contracts with Turkish suppliers.

For information about participating in Busworld Asia and Busworld Turkey, please contact Mieke Glorieux on +44 32 51 22 6060 or on line at mieke.glorieux@busworld.org

VOLVO WINS COACH OF THE YEAR 2008

During Busworld Kortrijk, Stuart Jones, Chairman of the International Bus & Coach of the Year Jury, handed over the International Coach of the Year 2008 trophy to Håkan Karlsson, President of Volvo Bus Corporation.

The International Jury, each representing a leading trade magazine in 17 different countries, awarded the prize to Volvo's 9700 coach, following the Coach Euro Test, held in Switzerland in June. The jury was particularly impressed by the driveability of the coach, especially the I-Shift automated gearbox.



Håkan Karlsson, (left), receives the coveted trophy from Stuart Jones.



One of the stars of Busworld Asia in 2007.

HYBRID UPDATE

Although there is a lot of talk about hybrid buses these days, there were only two hybrid buses in the exhibition. One was the hybrid fuel cell bus, built by Van Hool, and currently running on extended trail with De Lijn in Flanders, and loaned back to Van Hool for the duration of the exhibition. Considering that it had covered several months in regular service, it looked immaculate.

Solaris, the progressive Polish builder, showed an articulated hybrid bus for a customer in Germany. This uses the Allison drive system which is already well proved in North America.

During a visit to Busworld Kortrijk, Kathleen Van Brempt, the Flemish Minister of Mobility, Social Economy and Equal Opportunities, announced a budget of an extra €15.8m for 2008-2010.

With this money, the Minister hopes to enable De Lijn to buy 50 hybrid buses, with the first 30 going into operation in Leuven and Bruges.

The Minister said that De Lijn had long been investing in eco-friendly buses. Neither Bruges nor Leuven have any trams, therefore hybrid buses were capable of offering similar environmental benefits.



The Solaris hybrid bus

VOLGABUS

Visitors to Busworld were probably surprised to see a Russian-built bus in the exhibition, the first time that one has appeared. Alexei Bakulin, General Manager of Volgabus, came with a 15 metre City Rhythm low floor bus. He said that his company had recently opened a sales and service market in Germany, but was also looking at other countries in Western Europe.

He considered Busworld the ideal venue to meet existing customers



and to make new contacts. The City Rhythm has an Alcan aluminium structure and uses a number of Western European components in its driveline.



Van Hool's hybrid fuel cell bus

She said: "We started our search for good constructors in Busworld. I am hopeful that we shall be seeing the first hybrid buses in Leuven and Bruges by the end of next year."

CLEVER INVENTION

It is always great to come across new ideas in Busworld, especially when they are so simple. One wonders why nobody has come up with the idea before.

One such example is a new tyre pressure measuring system, developed by Ventech, a company based in Marl, Germany. It is essential to check the pressures of tyres on buses and coaches regularly, but it is a time-consuming job. If tyres are not correctly inflated, they wear out more quickly and also have an adverse effect on fuel consumption.

Ulrich Pingel of Ventech has developed a sensor that can be placed in the floor of a bus depot. The vehicle drives over the sensor and the pressure is automatically displayed. The more vehicles that are based in a depot, the greater the saving in man hours. Find out more at www.ventech.de

NEWSLETTER ON LINE

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