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## Grenoble-Isère launches **Minatec**

From the left to the right: François Loos, André Vallini, and Jean-Jack Queyranne listening to a researcher

**Friday 2 June 2006 will long be a date to remember in Grenoble-Isère but also for global research in micro and nanotechnology. As the result of a major group undertaking, involving unprecedented collaboration between local authorities, research institutes, the university and companies, Minatec should more than live up to its initial expectations and ambitions.**

The official opening by André Vallini, President of the Isère county Council, Alain Bugat, the Atomic Energy Commission (CEA) Administrator, and Paul Jacquet, President of the National Polytechnic Institute of Grenoble (INPG), in the presence of François Loos, Minister Delegate to Industry, marks the realization of a Europe's top centre for micro and nanotechnology research, of which we are likely to hear a great deal.

The Minatec innovation centre occupies a site covering about 20 hectares, with 44,000 sq m of new premises. Some 3,600 people will be working or studying there in 2006. It represents a total investment of €193.5m, bringing together teaching, research and industry under one roof. As Europe's top centre for micro and nanotechnology research Minatec now ranks among the four or five centres worldwide that count in this field.

In 2000 when Jean Therme, the director of CEA-Grenoble and the project's prime mover,

first proposed to bridge the gap between research and teaching on the one hand, and industry on the other, he ensured Minatec would be particularly ambitious. *"Thanks to the solidity of our partnership we were able to surmount the various difficulties we encountered and stay on course, while making allowance for the interests and constraints of each of our partners,"* says Paul Jacquet.

Though barely finished the Minatec centre already enjoys an international reputation. The number of conferences on miniaturization has doubled in the last two years in Grenoble and the centre itself already accommodates researchers, students and companies. As early as 2003, the marketing of available space for companies in the High Technology Building was started. On the day of the official opening 80% of the space has already been reserved for the end of 2006, with almost all of it allocated for the end of 2008.



## bioMérieux opens Grenoble research centre

The Lyon-based in vitro diagnosis firm bioMérieux has opened its molecular biology and microsystems centre in Grenoble. With micro and nanotechnology increasingly key to meeting market demands, bioMérieux considered it a strategic necessity to gain a foothold in France and Europe's leading centre for advanced technology. The seed for the idea was first planted in 1997 when bioMérieux and CEA-Leti set up a joint research unit. In 2001 the need to further miniaturize diagnosis techniques prompted CEA Valorisation and bioMérieux to start Apibio.

The centre, operational since September 2005 and officially opened in April, develops analytical tests and systems based on the use of DNA and RNA in infectious diseases, oncology and the control of industrial processes. On the clinical side the new systems enable the diagnosis of infectious diseases such as HIV-Aids and hepatitis-B. In industry they will be used, among others, to check samples of foodstuffs, drugs or cosmetics. The tests developed by the Grenoble centre will streamline diagnosis, making it more reliable and easier to use.

Peter Kaspar, who holds a doctorate in biochemistry, heads the new unit. Before joining bioMérieux he worked in departments supervising research, marketing, management and business development at various pharmaceutical and diagnostics firms. There are currently 90 people working at the Grenoble centre, their number ultimately expected to rise to 130. bioMérieux employs more than 5,500 people worldwide and is represented in more than 130 countries. In 2005 it reported €993.6m pre-tax sales, up by 6.9% on the previous year.

# Minatec: the challenge of extreme miniaturization

**The Minatec innovation centre is one of the few places worldwide to bring together the human, corporate and material resources needed to rise to the challenge of further miniaturization.**

Several initiatives are taking shape in different parts of the world but only a few large international centres have the human and material potential to undertake what is nothing short of an industrial revolution. Minatec is one of them. For instance it is home to France's largest clean room dedicated to training and Europe's biggest nano-characterization platform.

Minatec brings together in one place top-grade teaching, research and industrial transfer skills. It holds all the cards for success: an across-the-board approach to innovation, a massive concentration of skills and resources, strategy rooted in international alliances and partnerships, an ambitious policy of constant investment, and lastly a job market that enjoys the economic benefits associated with development of advanced technology.

## A pluridisciplinary approach

Another key strength of Minatec is the innovation ecosystem that has developed over the last 50 years in Grenoble-Isère.



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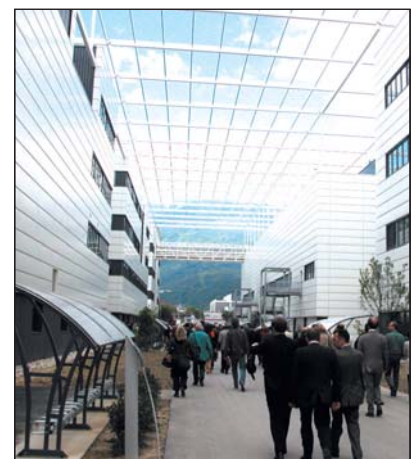
*Mens and infrastructures to serve the XXth century research*

Founded on interdisciplinary working and international openings this innovation centre aims to foster exchange, streamline the innovation process and ultimately pave the way for the production of tomorrow's micro-smart devices... That is why, logically enough, the scientific, academic and corporate community working in micro and nanotechnology has broadened its scope to embrace computer hard and software, for the design of systems-on-chip.

For more than 20 years Grenoble-Isère has played a leading role in microelectronics, in France and the world at large. With Minatec it plans to become one of the key places worldwide for nanotechnology research and development.



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# Jindal of India

## gives **Rexor** a new lease of life

**Rexor, a firm located in Paladru since 1954, produces life manufacturing yarn for the textile industry. In response to demand it switched to producing film, and metal and plastic thread, at the crossroads between three trades – metallization, coating and cutting. To continue its development it has found a new investor, the Indian firm Jindal, another example of a successful international alliance.**

In 1993 Rexor, a Rhône Poulenc subsidiary nearing the age of 40, was in serious difficulty. Its parent company appointed Jean-Paul Rousselet as CEO. To put the company back on the rails he decided to diversify out of textile, developing into the graphic arts, insulation and the manufacture of various different types of yarn. Rexor established itself as the market leader in several sectors and started making a profit again in 1995.

In 1996 Rhône Poulenc Films was sold to the Japanese firm Toray. Rexor was not part of the package, remaining a subsidiary of what was now Rhodia, which decided to sell it. Jean-Paul Rousselet and a member of the executive team bought Rexor in 1998 and growth continued until 2001, enabling them to invest €5m in new machinery. But the market downturn that followed 9-11 hit the company hard and sales flattened out. Assisted by

a merchant banker Rexor set about finding a new partner.

### Mutually beneficial exchange

Jean-Paul Rousselet contacted suppliers all over the world, including Jindal, a plastic-film manufacturer. When he informed the workforce the company was in the process of being sold to an Indian firm, they were worried, in particular regarding the management and long-term strategy.

In practice the takeover by Jindal in November 2003 did not lead to the arrival of an Indian manager. Mr Rousselet remained at the helm, promising the staff he would stay on for at least five years. For the time being he is still there and there are no plans for his departure as long as he has new ideas for Rexor.

*"Jindal, named after its chairman Shyam Jindal, secured us a steady supply of plastic film, our key raw material, and a new approach to negotiation. Now we discuss everything at Paladru, not just purchasing policy. The resulting cut in costs is remarkable,"* says Rousselet. Jindal has also given Rexor access to a new market, in flexible metallized food packaging, and regular or metallized plastic film, a high-volume market that Rexor would never have entered on its own. Rexor, now Jindal's top international subsidiary, purchases 2,000 tonnes of film annually and operates as an independent company.

### Joint research centre

This exchange of good offices was only the first step. Jindal is investigating new

technologies and Rexor needs to innovate to stay competitive. So the two firms have decided to build a research centre on a plot of land next to Rexor premises in Paladru. AEPI keeps an eye on Rexor and helps M. Rousselet for developing the company: present and explain Grenoble-Isère economic assets and actors to the Indian firm, provide guidance on development openings and help it qualify for a research tax-credit. Rexor, which currently employs 160 people, plans to double its sales (€25m in 2004-5) by 2010. With increased production, new markets and new acquisitions by Jindal the doors to the future are wide open.

Shyam Jindal and Jean-Paul Rousselet



© Rexor

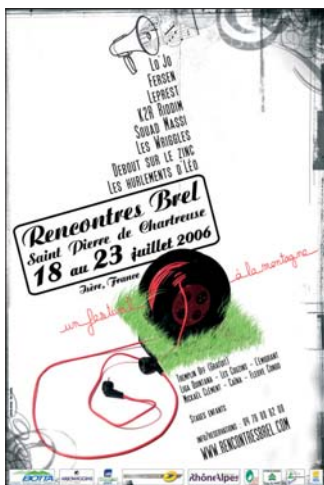
### Made in Rexor

The Paladru company manufactures three different types of product. For the art market, and gilding and coating of carton for packaging of luxury goods, such as perfume and liqueurs. In the field of insulation, survival blankets and foil sandwiched between insulating materials for use in the construction industry. Various yarns: technical yarn, used in blinds, for instance; security strips inserted in bank notes; and complex strips which may be used to tear open individual cheese portions or in silicone films on self-adhesive labels.

# A summer of sport, music and art



Without forgetting the international exhibition of hang-gliding



Sport, music and the arts have long gone hand in hand in Grenoble-Isère. This summer offers further proof of this happy alliance with a wide variety of competitions, festivals, exhibitions and attractions of national and even international standing. It would be impossible to detail them all, so here is a selection of some of the highlights, some of which are rather unusual.

The summer's biggest sporting event is of course the *Tour de France* cycle race. On 18 July a stage will finish at L'Alpe d'Huez, departing the next day from Le Bourg d'Oisans. The Oisans range will also be hosting the *World Mountain Bike Championships*, a marathon event on 13 August between Les Deux-Alpes and Le Bourg d'Oisans. The *Iron Tour triathlon* competition, an even tougher proposition, will start from Allevard-les-Bains on 16 August. And in a completely different vein Saint-Martin-d'Uriage will be hosting a *cricket match* on 18 June with various events on the sidelines.

Music lovers can naturally look forward to the great summer classics. The *Vienne jazz festival*, with its open-air concerts in the Roman amphitheatre, will run from 28 June to 13 July. The *Brel festival* at Saint-Pierre-de-Chartreuse will be hosting French singers, notably Thomas Fersen, from 18 to 23 July. Down in the valley Grenoble will once again be staging its *Cabaret Frappé*, from 18 to 29 July in the Jardin de Ville, with concerts and entertainment under canvas. From 29 June to 1 July the Tullins *country music festival*, now in its 10th year, will be featuring Lucky Peterson, Rachael Warwick and Blankass. In a slightly different style Saint-Antoine-l'Abbaye will be hosting its *festival of church music*, for organ and choirs, from 5 July to 20 August. For the purists there is the *Berlioz festival*, in La Côte-Saint-André from 16 to 27 August. This year's theme is German romanticism, so our homegrown Berlioz will be rubbing shoulders with Beethoven, Brahms, Schubert, Schumann and Wagner.

For those who are neither sports enthusiasts nor music lovers the *exhibition "Lesueur, gouaches révolutionnaires"*, at the Museum of the French Revolution in Vizille will be showing exceptional items from the Musée Carnavalet in Paris, from 30 June to 25 September. Perhaps more unusually the *"Stendhal mystery tour"* offers to take you on an illustrated nocturnal tour of Grenoble every Friday night, with particular attention to the famous novelist. And for a touch of folklore do not miss the mountain pasture fair in Allevard-les-Bains on 24 June, with several thousand sheep as its special guests!

Additional info:  
[www.isere-tourisme.com](http://www.isere-tourisme.com)  
[www.vienne-tourisme.com](http://www.vienne-tourisme.com)  
[www.grenoble-isere-tourisme.com](http://www.grenoble-isere-tourisme.com)



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AEPi is the Grenoble-Isère Economic Development Agency. It provides companies with all the information and assistance they require to set up business in Grenoble-Isère: economic data, offers of building land, offices and industrial premises, meetings with local decision-makers, help with overall project management, notably funding, available grants, etc. Do not hesitate to contact us!

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