



BENETEAU

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PRESS RELEASE

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BENETEAU USA INC. TRANSFORMS FACTORY INTO “JUST IN TIME LEAN MANUFACTURING”

MARION, SC, OCTOBER 19, 2009: With a huge investment in a new CNC machinery driven woodshop and a complete overhaul of its production areas, Beneteau USA Inc. is in the process of revamping its 250,000 square foot facility into the most modern big sailboat factory in America. Contractors, advisors from parent company Groupe Beneteau, and South Carolinian team members are scurrying to change the 25 year old factory from the past style of eight independent production lines into a new, single line, continuous flow production facility comprising 20 operation positions. The outcome of this new way of building will allow shortened lead times, less work in process and greater flexibility in model mix. The Marion plant will be the only American sailboat plant able to build anything from 30 footers up to 50 footers, all in the same quick-flow process.

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“This is an amazing feat for our team, as it truly was an internal initiative that came from the leadership of our Vice President of Manufacturing, Gerard Martineau, working with the full spectrum of production from managers to those on the floor. They have developed a system that is unique in our end of the industry and will eliminate wasted time while improving quality and flexibility,” said Wayne Burdick, President of Beneteau USA. “When the plant reconfiguration work is complete and we are able to turn on the new, lean, mean, production machine, no one else in the US will be able to make cruising sailboats with as much efficiency and flexibility of product mix. This should give Beneteau a strategic advantage to quickly provide the best value in exactly the model our customer wishes to buy.”

“I am proud of all the work by our people in Marion to prepare for this mode of manufacturing. We all went to school together to learn about lean manufacturing, work flow and value stream mapping, and the result proves that this great team of boat builders is equal to any in the world when it comes to new ways of thinking and doing. Great work by this very motivated group will launch us into a new era of excellent quality at the best price and the quickest delivery, continuing Marion’s claim of being the largest producer of sailing yachts on this continent,” stated Mr. Martineau. “In the month of November current production will temporarily cease, so that the remains of the existing independent lines can be moved into the new

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continuous flow platforms which are already in place. I can't wait to see the results when we start humming in early December!"

Beneteau USA, the American division of the world's largest sailboat manufacturer, builds hundreds of 31 to 50 foot production sailboats in Marion, SC and imports sailing and power yachts up to 58 feet in length from its parent company in France.