

# NEXT GENERATION XL



It is the hub of the transportation company that holds the aircraft production together in Airbus. Every day various components are flown between the factories in Europe. Now Airbus builds a new, larger generation of the odd transport aircraft Beluga.

WORDS: ANDERS CARLSSON / PICTURES: AIRBUS



The Super Guppy was the transport aircraft in those days.



The Antonov An-225 is a World Champion in volume.



C5 Galaxy easily swallows both one and two M1 Abrams at 67 tonnes each.

**I**t swallows whole tail sections, wings, fuselages and generally the most that can fit in the 1 400 cubic meter cargo space.

It is a transport capacity that Airbus cannot do without considering that the aircraft manufacturer right from the start in 1970 has had production facilities spread over Europe. Initially the components were shipped by truck and boat between primarily France, Germany, Britain and Spain. But it was a time-consuming and not very smooth way to keep the logistics going, especially when the aircraft was a success and volumes thus increased.

The answer was to bring in a Super Guppy, which was the best choice in the air transport context. It was basically a Boeing Stratocruiser built on with a big hump and used by NASA to ship the parts to the US space program. The problem was that the machine was essentially a 1940s construction that became increasingly expensive to operate. Moreover, the young European aerospace industry did not like to be teased with the fact that "every Airbus is delivered on the wings of a Boeing".

**AIRBUS NEEDED** their own cargo aircraft and the assignment went to two of the partners in the group, German DASA and the French Aérospatiale. They used one of the Airbus A300-600 as the base of the lower part of the fuselage, and engines, wings and landing gear from the original. On top of it they placed a cargo deck and a huge cargo hold, shaped almost like a horseshoe. By plunging the flightdeck under the cargo deck level and also allowing the large cargo door to open

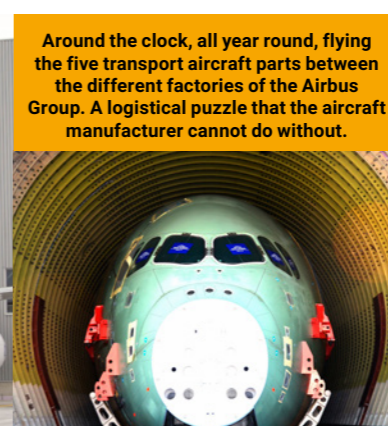
upward like a gap, it became much easier and faster to load and unload. The volume of the cargo room, 1 400 cubic meters, is the second largest in the world after the Russian giant Antonov An-225. However, the lifting capacity of 47 tons is considerably less than, for example, the C5 Galaxy that can handle almost three times as much. The reason for this was that the various aircraft parts to be shipped in the first place were bulky, not heavy. Furthermore, the cargo space is not equipped with a pressurized cabin since the aircraft is used solely to transport materials.

Everything was named A300-600ST, where ST stands for Super Transporter, but the aircraft has always been called the Beluga because it resembles the white whale with the same name.

**IN OCTOBER 1996** the first machine was in traffic and was followed by four more aircraft of the same construction. Together they form the Airbus Transport International, an independent cargo airline in the Airbus Group.

The route network consists of mainly eleven destinations including Toulouse, Nantes, Saint-Nazaire in France, Hamburg and Bremen in Germany, Seville and Getafe →

**"EVERYTHING WAS NAMED A300-600ST, WHERE ST STAND FOR SUPER TRANSPORTER"**



Around the clock, all year round, flying the five transport aircraft parts between the different factories of the Airbus Group. A logistical puzzle that the aircraft manufacturer cannot do without.



It's true that there is a certain similarity.

FOTO: STEVE SNOGRASS



“IN ADDITION, AIRBUS ITSELF  
PRODUCES A NEW GENERATION  
CALLED BELUGA XL”



A Beluga can easily transport large parts of the fuselage of an A320 from the factory in Hamburg to end production in Toulouse.



**BIGGEST IN CLASS  
GETS EVEN BIGGER**

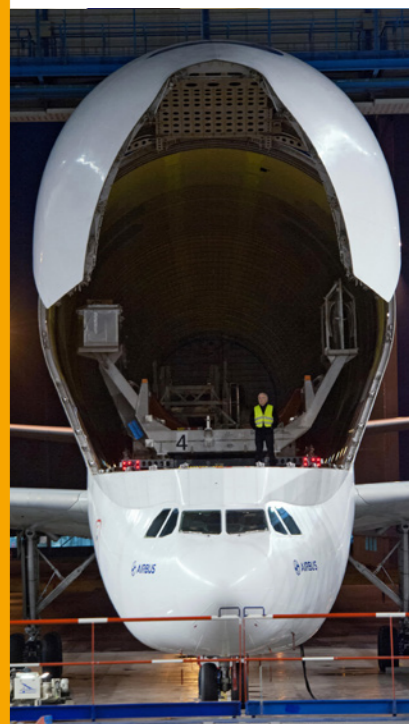
Beluga has the largest cargo space among the world's transport aircraft and beats competitors like the Antonov AN-124 and C-17 Globemaster. The new Beluga XL becomes even greater.

**BELUGA**

Platform: A300-600  
Length: 57 m  
Height: 17 m  
Wingspan: 44.8 m  
Fuselage diameter: 7.7 m  
Cargo space: 1 400 m<sup>3</sup>  
Capacity: 47 t  
Max. takeoff weight: 140 t  
Max. landing weight: 187 t  
Range: 1 660 km with full payload  
Powerplant: General Electric CF6-80C2  
Instrumentation: 3, two pilots and a flight engineer

**BELUGA XL**

Platform: A330-200  
Length: 63 m  
Height: 19 m  
Wingspan: 60 m  
Fuselage diameter: 8.8 m  
Cargo space: n/a  
Capacity: 53 t  
Max. takeoff weight: 227 t  
Max. landing weight: 187 t  
Range: 4 074 km with full payload  
Powerplant: Rolls-Royce Trent 700  
Instrumentation: 3, two pilots and a flight engineer



in Spain and Broughton in the UK.

But the machine also flies to Ankara in Turkey and elsewhere in Europe where different parts for the aircraft manufacturing in Toulouse are produced.

A normal week the fleet of five aircraft will conduct more than 65 flights that on average extend over two hours. One common flight-plan might look something like this: from Toulouse to Broughton with the return of empty cargo rigs that aircraft parts are shipped in. In Broughton two wing sections for the A320 are loaded and flown to Hamburg where they are unloaded before the mach-

ine returns to Toulouse with the tail and part of the fuselage of one of the machines in the A320 family.

**SO FAR THE FIVE MACHINES** in the shipping fleet have been able to keep pace with production. The flight time output has increased from 5 000 hours per year in 2011 to the planned 10 000 hours in 2017. That means that the Beluga will fly five flights per day, six days a week, 18 hours per day and 50 weeks a year.

But this is not enough. Airbus has decided to increase the rate of production for both

the A320 Family and A330 machines. In addition, production of the new A350XWB will increase the need for production capacity and more air transport. The first step has been to hire more pilots and introduce business 24/7 all year round. In addition, Airbus itself produces a new generation called Beluga XL.

As we have seen before Airbus will use an existing fuselage as base, this time the A330. It will provide an improved fuel economy, since it is a much newer aircraft. Furthermore they will reuse much of the technology that was developed in the con-

struction of the original machines and when it comes to the exterior, the new XL is a copy of its predecessor. The big difference is that the freight capacity will be increased by 30 per cent since the machine is both longer and higher. The new aircraft provides a cargo space with the capacity to accommodate two wings of the new A350XWB, instead of only one. The manufacturing of Beluga is not for outside buyers, the machine is and will remain an internal matter for Airbus.

**THE FIRST BELUGA XL** is scheduled to begin its test flights in 2017 and will then be included



in the fleet during 2019. The plan is to manufacture five new shipping machines that in a ten-year period will fly parallel to the existing machines. Right now there are only some first solid-metal components in the Airbus factory in Toulouse, but in time they will provide a substantial contribution to the capacity of Airbus Transport International. And above all the odd machine is now an integral part of aircraft production in Airbus, says Didier Evrard, Head of all Airbus aircraft programs.

– Without a Beluga above Toulouse, the sky is not what it should be. ☐



## European aircraft sales



2016 Piper M500  
- call for quote and delivery slot

Follow us  
on facebook



# Always many new and pre-owned aircraft and helicopters for sale



1981 Bell 206L  
LongRanger  
Reg.no. OY-HPJ

IFR Certified, w/  
dual generators  
+ triple busses



2014 Piper Meridian  
Reg.no. SE-MHB

TTSN 300 hrs.



2016 Piper Archer  
DX (diesel)

- ready for delivery  
at the factory

### Pre-owned aircraft for sale

- 2014 Piper Meridian, SE-MHB, USD 1,875,000
- 2014 Piper Mirage, D-ESGE, USD 995,000
- 2006 Bell 407, OY-SOL, USD 1,999,000 | **NEW PRICE**
- 2005 Pilatus PC12/45, M-UTIN, USD 2,749,000
- 2005 Piper Meridian, ZS-PLG, USD 995,000 | **NEW**
- 2002 Piper Seneca V, LN-AAV, USD 365,000
- 1999 Piper Seneca V, OY-JAU, USD 249,000
- 1996 Piper Seneca IV, OY-OVD, USD 245,000 | **NEW PRICE**
- 1981 Bell 206L LongRanger, OY-HPJ, USD 645,000 | **NEW**

### Factory new aircraft for sale

- 2016 Piper M600
- 2016 Piper Meridian M500
- 2016 Piper M350
- 2016 Piper Matrix
- 2016 Seneca V
- 2016 Piper Archer DX

All factory new aircraft: Call for quote and delivery slot

### Contact

Katja Nielsen +45 2043 5287  
Bjarne Jorsal +45 4016 5401  
Henrik Burkal +44 777 1 900 198  
sales@europeanaircraftsales.com

More aircraft for sale at  
[www.europeanaircraftsales.com](http://www.europeanaircraftsales.com)