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It's a special year for Colt

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Colt Car Company

Car importer

Managing Director: Jim Tyrrell
Number of employees in Gloucestershire: 350
County base: Cirencester
Turnover: £470.4m

THIS is a special year for The Colt Car Company. The sole UK importer for Mitsubishi Motors reaches its 25th anniversary of being based at its head office premises at Watermoor in Cirencester.

The company's first base was Dollar Street House in Cirencester town centre and was established as a joint partnership between Colt and the Mitsubishi Corporation of Japan in 1974.

The Roman market town was chosen as its HQ because, as in Roman times, it forms a natural crossroads with the rest of the country, with ease of motorway access to London and the South East, Wales, the Midlands and the North.

Nine years later, the company moved to a new complex at Watermoor, which covers an area of 6.2 acres.

It houses accounting, customer service, information technology, marketing, parts and accessories, public relations, retail and fleet sales, and warehouse depot.

The millennium brought the launch of the company's own apprenticeship training programme. Since 2000 Managing Director Jim Tyrrell has headed a new management team.

He implemented a new strategy for fleet business, product and pricing and new terms for dealers. Mitsubishi soon became the fastest growing Japanese marque in the UK and annual sales more than doubled between the years 2000 - 2005 from 18,000 to 38,000 units.

The number one selling Mitsubishi vehicle in the UK in recent years is the L200 pick-up with more than 79,000 vehicles sold between 1998 and 2007.

The new L200 drives forward the success of Mitsubishi's dominance of the pick-up market in the UK, sustaining the retail share of the outgoing L200, at 35.6 per cent in 2007.

The strength of Mitsubishi's 4x4 heritage is demonstrated by a record-breaking 12th win in the 2007 Paris-Dakar Rally: the seventh successive and consecutive victory.

Today, the company remains a privately-owned concern with its shares split between British shareholders (51 per cent) and the Mitsubishi Corporation (49 per cent).

Other subsidiary companies include Mitsubishi Contract Motoring (contract hire), Shogun Finance (retail finance company) and Colt Cars Mid-West (a group of 10 dealerships).

Currently, the company has a strong network of 130 dealerships nationwide and employs a total of 235 head office staff.

2007 brought the launch of three new major vehicles; the new Outlander, revised Shogun and the 'i' city car.

2008 is an exciting year so far: firstly with the launch of the New Lancer and the iconic Lancer Evolution X, followed by the company's 16th year supporting the Mitsubishi Motors Badminton Horse Trials (which breaks the record for the longest sporting event sponsorship relationship) and now June marks the 25th anniversary of being based at its head office premises at Watermoor.



ALL TOGETHER: The team at the Colt Car Company, Cirencester



BUSY: the call centre



HQ: Colt Car Company



UNDER THE BONNET: mechanics at work



BUSY: A view of the warehouse floor at the Cirencester base



THE BOSS: Managing Director Jim Tyrrell