

The TGV Atlantique, a first in LED marking with a start-up spirit in the 1980s

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As it celebrates its 40th birthday, LEC looks back at its contribution to lighting with Jean-Marie Duthilleul and the LED marking of the TGV Atlantique, at the Montparnasse train station in Paris.

« The LEC team were as passionate about the project as we were. They understood that there was innovation at the end of the tunnel. »

Jean-Marie Duthilleul, Architect

With the arrival of the TGV Atlantique, the Montparnasse train station staged the return of the train. For its arrival, Jean-Marie Duthilleul devised an innovative form of LED marking.

Inventing LED marking for TGV platforms, the bold gamble made by Jean-Marie Duthilleul

Jean-Marie Duthilleul is a brazen architect who, since 1977, has been interested in **urban planning** through the prism of energy management.

In 1985, he was made the **supervisor of major works for the French government** and drew up the basic designs for France's modern-day train stations.

It was during this project that he conceived the **first LED marking for the future TGV Atlantique platforms**, at the Montparnasse train station in Paris.

It was a **major step in the history of lighting** for new train stations. It was copied in all of France's high-speed railway stations, as well as others across the world.



LED marking of the TGV Atlantique, at the Montparnasse train station

Jean-Marie Duthilleul looks back on this avant-garde project and helps us relive what he calls "a start-up spirit in the 1980s".

Jean-Marie Duthilleul recalls his collaboration with LEC

The year is 1987, before the TGV Atlantique begins its service. By opening a new high-speed line in Western France, the French state has made train travel popular again. The Montparnasse train station is chosen to celebrate the return of the train and the emotion we feel when arriving at the station.

We were a small team of architects thinking about what would excite people as much as the new trains. We thought about the person waiting for their loved one, and we wondered if the platform could arouse excitement before the train pulls up.

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References

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We combined that image with another of the era: the magnificent airplane, which everyone dreamt of boarding. Our minds turned to the pretty lights on the ground. We ran with this analogy to make the TGV platforms like runways that lead us to the Atlantic.

LED marking notable for its innovation, professionalism and passion

Our idea was to **create a line of light that flashed when a train was arriving**. We thus invented a new light effect thanks to **first-generation LED technology**.

We worked with an engineer who was experimenting with new, durable light sources and who knew LEC. We asked them to come up with a maintenance-free stud that complied with SNCF's safety regulations... **I was delighted to see the LED marking met all the criteria!**

LED marking notable for its innovation, professionalism and passion

The result was perfect. The platform pulsated when the studs flashed. The installation was in keeping with the modernity of the TGV — the return of the train to the hearts of the French people.

We won the gamble of innovation with poetic triumph. This successful experience was replicated in other TGV stations across France, and set an example for many other countries.

I was even further overjoyed when a recent study on the movement of handicapped people highlighted the importance of this marking as an **aid for the hard of hearing when a train is approaching**.

⇒ Did you know?

In 1977, LEC decided to focus all its attention on LED technology. These decades of dedicated expertise have allowed the company to meet strict requirements in terms of reliability, efficiency, maintenance and aesthetic appeal. Relive with us [40 historic years](#) devoted to LED technology and the lighting industry.