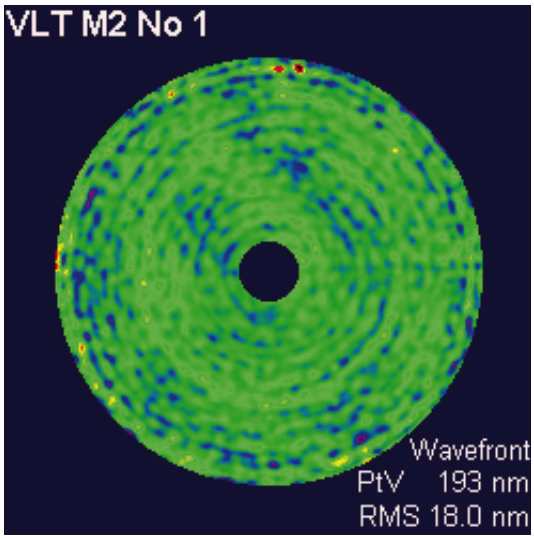

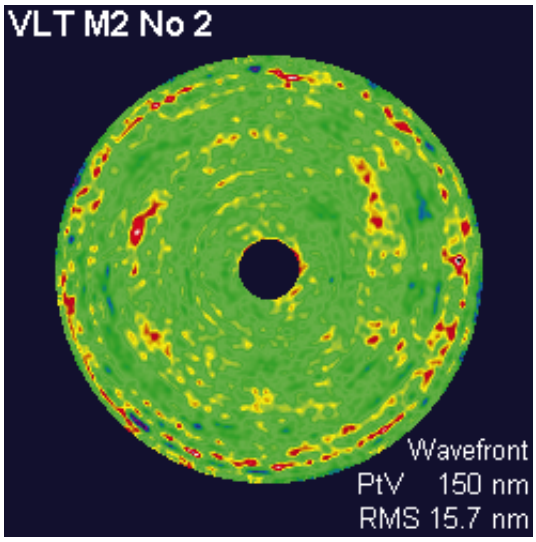

spections were also performed. The surface quality of both mirrors is excellent and within specification.

Table 2 provides the major optical performance of the first two secondary mirrors. The two mirrors are extremely similar, with only a fraction of the budget of error allocated for the radius of curvature and the conic constant being used. REOSC was also able to improve the optical quality with the polishing of the second mirror.

It is possible to conclude that while the feasibility of the Beryllium technology used had been demonstrated with the delivery of the first secondary mirror and the excellent images already obtained by the first VLT telescope, a further advance in the manufacturing process was achieved by REOSC with the recently delivered second mirror, leading to an improvement of the optical performance and to a shorter production time. The total production of the first mirror demanded more than two years, while the second mirror was produced in around 20 months.

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The La Silla News Page

The editors of the La Silla News Page would like to welcome readers of the twelfth edition of a page devoted to reporting on technical updates and observational achievements at La Silla. We would like this page to inform the astronomical community of changes made to telescopes, instruments, operations, and of instrumental performances that cannot be reported conveniently elsewhere. Contributions and inquiries to this page from the community are most welcome. *(J. Brewer, O. Hainaut, M. Kürster)*

News from the NTT

O. R. HAINAUT

During the last three months, the operation of the NTT has been particularly smooth; we did not experience any major problem, and the weather has been fairly cooperative. The technical downtime was of the order of 2%.

On August 12 and 13, the NTT and its team passed a very detailed "Acceptance Review", during which all the technical and operational aspects of the telescope were presented. This review constituted the formal return of the NTT from the VLT Division to the La Silla Observatory after the Big-Bang. The review board found the technical and operational status of the telescope to be more than satisfactory; the staff, system, operation, and procedures all received excellent reviews.

The dewar of SUSI2 was suffering from vacuum losses since the installation of the instrument (cf. last issue of *The Messenger*). It has been exchanged by a new, improved dewar, which immediately worked perfectly. Also, we identified the source of a mysterious light contamination which occasionally affected the images: the lamps of the rotator and altitude encoders were not perfectly shielded. In some positions of the rotator, a part of the instrument which was not correctly blackened was reflecting the encoder light to the detector. Additional light baffles have been mounted, and the blackening of the instrument completed, resulting in the complete removal of the contamination. SUSI2 is now performing at its expected level.

Over the past couple of months, the Observation Block (OB) database in La