



Traveling by Air

21st Century Style

The Best in Premium Class

Much media attention these days is devoted to the growth of low-cost airlines and the bargains they offer passengers willing to endure a no-frills experience. But the airline industry is hardly neglecting premium passengers; indeed, business travelers willing to spend a little more can find a whole new range of amenities and services, plus some new options for premium passage.

If your budget allows business- or first-class fares – or you can snare a precious upgrade – your options are better than ever. Established airlines are revamping the premium cabins aboard their planes, not to mention their airport lounges. And a new form of international transportation has emerged, the all-premium-class airplane; some major airlines are contemplating all-business-class flights in response to competition from new entrants focused on that concept.

More Creature Comforts in the Lounges and in the Air

Passengers on **Lufthansa** can expect to find more pre-departure creature comforts in the months ahead as the German carrier spends \$137 million upgrading its airport lounges worldwide, according to Don Bunkenburg, director of corporate sales and regions-North America.



“We do extensive research with clients to find out where we can get better, and one area is the ground product,” he said. Thus Lufthansa is building a new lounge complex for first- and business-class flyers at New York JFK, due to open in mid-2008 for customers of Lufthansa and sister airline Swiss.

“In addition, we’re working on new lounges in Detroit, Houston and Washington D.C.,” he said.

In Europe, Lufthansa won acclaim for its first-class terminal at Frankfurt Airport, where front-cabin flyers get extravagant perks like valet parking, personal assistants, day rooms and limo service. In August, Lufthansa opened a new first-class lounge at its Munich hub, part of a new concentration on its most valued customers. And that’s just the beginning: “We’ll be testing new (first-class) seats this fall on several routes to the U.S.,” with a revamped first-class cabin on long-haul routes to follow.



Visit: www.lufthansa.com

International Business Class has changed a lot in recent years. Many airlines have installed “lie-flat” (or nearly flat) seats with more legroom, so even the worst in-flight insomniac can catch a few winks. They’re adding new technology like on-demand entertainment systems with big individual screens and scores of movies, TV shows and audio options; also individual power ports, USB connections, noise-reduction headphones, even iPod jacks. And they’ve recruited celebrity chefs to put new gusto into in-flight menus.

The new generation of business-class comfort was long exclusive to foreign airlines. But major U.S. carriers are finally joining in. By the end of 2007, **American Airlines** should have new business-class cabins on all its overseas 767-300s. It recently completed the same overhaul on the first of its 777s (which are also getting new first-class passenger compartments called Flagship Suites). On October 29, **United Airlines** rolls out the first 767 in its international fleet equipped with

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the carrier’s brand-new Business Class. The new United Business Class will then go into the airline’s other 96 long-haul aircraft – 767s, 747s and 777s – a job that will take until 2009.

Foreign competitors aren’t sitting idle. **British Airways** is already working on the second generation of a new Business



Class, with a wider, ergonomically redesigned, fully flat seat-bed; larger digital video screens; and other enhancements. It’s in more than 40 aircraft, with the whole international fleet due for completion next year, according to Robin Hayes, executive vice president-the Americas. **Singapore Airlines** is adding a unique feature to its KrisWorld inflight entertainment system –

office software so passengers can work at their seats without a laptop; they plug a little “thumb drive” with personal files

into the USB port at their seat, and can work with word processing and spreadsheet programs.

To see who’s got what in the way of easy-sleeping business-class seats, go to www.flatseats.com. It has rankings by airline, user reviews, even photos of seats offered by different carriers.

Meanwhile, a new breed of carrier has come on the scene – the all-premium-class airline. This hybrid service was started by **Lufthansa** in 2002, with its transatlantic Lufthansa Business Jet service – 44- to 48-seat 737s, or A319s with full business-class services for every passenger. It currently flies from Chicago and Newark to Dusseldorf and Newark-Munich; Newark-Frankfurt starts October 28. More recently, new all-business-class airlines emerged, including **Eos**, **MAXjet** and **Silverjet**, operating between the U.S. (mostly New York/ Newark) and London; and **L’Avion**, flying Newark-Paris. They’ve been so successful they’ve raised new capital and are adding more aircraft and frequencies – and the new competition has been driving other airlines’ business-class fares downward.

Sir Richard Branson’s **Virgin Atlantic Airways** plans to begin all-premium-class flights between the U.S. and continental Europe in 2008. Meanwhile, media reports



Adding Flights and Routes to Meet Demands of a Growing Market

Got business in China? Beijing and Shanghai have good non-stop air service from the U.S. However, “we’re seeing a lot of business travelers and companies move away from the main cities (in China),” said John Jackson, manager-general marketing, **Korean Air**. “The cost of doing business in Beijing and Shanghai is much greater than it was just a couple of years ago, so a lot of people are looking into secondary cities – and that’s where our focus and strength is.”

“Korean Air flies from 12 cities in North America to 22 in China – more Chinese cities than any non-Chinese airline,” he said. Add Korean’s code-shares with U.S. SkyTeam partners like Northwest, Delta and Continental and the increased number of U.S.-China markets served is “exponential,” Jackson said.

In between is an easy connection at five-year-old Seoul Incheon Airport, where international connecting times average 90 minutes. “Korea and the U.S. have open skies, so we can add flights and routes any time, anywhere,” he said. “Korea and China have something similar, so we’ve added a dozen routes in the last year and a half into China. U.S. and Chinese airlines are restricted to how many flights they can offer between the two countries, but we’ll route you through Seoul. We’ve been very successful at doing that.”

The airline has beds in First Class and lie-flat business-class seats with the latest high-tech personal, on-demand entertainment.

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from Asia indicate Singapore Airlines is considering an all-business-class service on non-stops from Los Angeles and New York to Singapore.

Lufthansa has another new service for high-end travelers. It teamed up with **NetJets** to offer passengers on flights of Lufthansa and partner Swiss the option of a private jet connection to 1,000 points in Europe and Russia. Passengers book the transatlantic flight and private jet connection in one call; they are taken from the plane in Frankfurt or Munich to the first-class terminal, then they're driven to the small jet in a Mercedes or Porsche. "It's like a VVIP service. We put a very

high focus on the service chain for that product, and it's been very successful," said Don Bunkenburg, Lufthansa's director of corporate sales and regions – the Americas.

If Business Class is beyond your budget, another option is gaining acceptance: the premium-economy section, a middle ground between economy- and business-class. Passengers get slightly wider seats, more legroom, enhanced dining options and so on – just not as much as Business Class. For example, **Air New Zealand's** recently upgraded premium-economy service includes 39 to 40 inches of seat pitch, on-demand in-flight entertainment via high-res personal video screens, hot towels and amenity kits; passengers get pre-takeoff drinks and printed menus too.

The website **SeatGuru**, which tracks seating options on the world's carriers, lists nine airlines that offer Premium Economy from the U.S.: Air New Zealand, ANA, bmi, British Airways, Eva Airways, SAS, Singapore Airlines, Thai Airways and Virgin Atlantic. Qantas reportedly plans to add Premium Economy in the future. For more information: www.seatguru.com/charts/premium_economy.php/

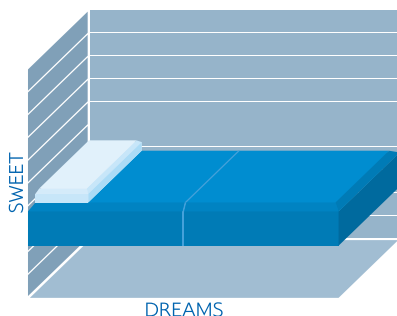
Business travelers looking for the best service should remember that it's a good

idea to explore international connecting options as well as non-stops. For example, non-stop routes between the United States and China on U.S. and Chinese carriers are fairly limited and are only slowly being expanded, even though traffic is growing by 10 percent a year, twice as fast as other transpacific markets. But **Korean Air**, whose in-flight service has won a number of awards, has by far the biggest connecting network between the two countries, linking 12 North American gateways with 22 cities in China via its hub at Seoul Incheon.

Finally, a new generation of international low-cost airlines is emerging, and some are targeting North America. Unlike their all-coach cousins, these carriers often provide two-class service. For example, Asian low-cost airline **Oasis Hong Kong** now flies 747s between Hong Kong and Vancouver with Business Class for as little as \$1,599 roundtrip. Oasis has applied for authority to fly from Hong Kong to Oakland and Chicago. A new U.K. company called **Zoom Airlines Ltd.** now flies New York JFK-London Gatwick with economy and premium-economy seats; we found the latter during October for as little as \$259 each way.

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More are on the way. British carrier **bmi**, a low-cost airline that flies to Manchester from Chicago and Las Vegas, expects to begin U.S. service from London Heathrow in 2009 (bmi is also introducing lie-flat seats this fall on its U.S. routes). Australia's **Virgin Blue**, an affiliate of Sir Richard Branson's empire, plans to begin a low-cost airline called

V Australia, which could start flying between Australia and the U.S. next year. **Air Berlin**, a low-cost carrier within Europe, has ordered 25 new Boeing 787 Dreamliners – long-haul aircraft perfect for transatlantic routes – for delivery starting in 2013. And **Ryanair**, one of Europe's largest low-fare airlines, said it expects to launch a new transatlantic

low-cost airline within the next few years, offering both economy and premium seating.

Writer: Jim Glab is a business travel specialist and frequent contributor to various consumer, trade and online publications.
Design: Sundberg & Associates Inc, New York, NY
Produced by: Meigs Media Group, Inc., Millerton, NY
E-mail: jon@meigsmedia.com

Coming Soon: Convenient Connections – Zero Queues

Transatlantic travelers' connections through London Heathrow have become increasingly troublesome due to congestion, overcrowding and security complications. But **British Airways** aims to change all that with the opening of its brand-new Terminal 5 (T5) on March 27, 2008.

British Airways will consolidate Heathrow operations from Terminals 1 and 4 into the new T5 – one of Europe's largest infrastructure projects, designed to accommodate 30 million passengers annually.



"The whole experience has been designed for zero queues," said Robin Hayes, British Airways executive vice president-the Americas. "For first-class passengers there'll be a dedicated check-in area;

there'll be dedicated premium check-in assistance desks. We'll offer business-class and premium-service travelers priority service during disruptions, and fast-track facilities through security." Hayes said British Airways is also spending \$120 million on a whole new lounge concept for premium passengers in T5 – six lounges in all.

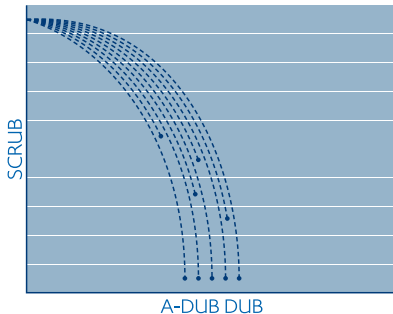
Business flyers who still want to avoid a Heathrow connection will get some new options from British Airways after an "open skies" pact between the U.S. and the E.U. takes effect next spring: It will give European airlines the freedom to bypass their home countries on U.S.-Europe routes – and BA intends to do just that, Hayes said, by opening non-stop routes from the U.S. (New York initially) to business destinations like Paris, Amsterdam, Frankfurt, Brussels and Milan.



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