



## Comfort above the Clouds: A Bright Future For Aircraft Cabins

**Crystal Cabin Award 2023 Shortlist reflects increased focus on comfort // Surge in cabin concepts for air taxis // Flying without barriers: Accessibility solutions see renewed interest**

**Hamburg, 13 March 2023:** With passenger numbers resurgent following the collapse of 2020, aviation has once again set its sights high. To make flying more attractive, sustainable and comfortable, passenger solutions have become an even higher priority across the industry than ever before. In 2023, the annual Crystal Cabin Awards will once again serve as a trend indicator for what might come by in the skies tomorrow. More than 80 entries qualified for the 2023 shortlist. This year the renowned trophy will once again be awarded in eight categories on 6 June 2023 in Hamburg, the birthplace of the award, during Aircraft Interiors Expo. As every year, an international jury of experts will crown the winners.

### **Added comfort with modular solutions and better use of space**

On long-haul flights, providing a relaxing space for sleep becomes a high priority. In Economy, however, passengers often have to make sacrifices. With **Skynest**, **Air New Zealand** presents an option for routes such as Auckland-Vancouver that long-haul Economy travellers have long dreamt of: a real, flat bed. Installed in sleep islands in the middle section of the aircraft, Skynest bunk beds can be booked for time slots, enabling a restive nap above the clouds for those on lower fares. Ultra-long-haul flights are generally becoming increasingly popular. Those allowing themselves a little more luxury in Premium Economy will in future be able to fold up the armrests and use several seats as a bed; that, at least, is the promise of the **Paradym** concept by **Lift Aero Design**.

**American Airlines** also takes a comprehensive look at the future of long-haul with its new cabin concept. Together with **Teague**, the carrier presents various layouts for wide- and narrow-body aircraft that provide a neat solution for a well-known problem: the front seat row in premium economy faces a partition instead of a backrest, forcing designers to build tables and screens into these passengers' seats in turn pushing up maintenance requirements. American Airlines' concept incorporates tables and screens into the wall in front of the front Premium Economy row.

With **Allegris**, the **Lufthansa Group** presents a new cabin product from autumn 2023 across all four classes: First, Business, Premium Economy and Economy. While the latter will primarily benefit from more legroom and Premium Economy will enjoy more privacy, Business and First



Class offering will see massive upgrades. Guests will find, among other added benefits, suites with double beds or heated seats.

### **More sustainability in the cabin**

For many people, aviation isn't closely associated with sustainability. A future in which new engines and fuels dramatically reduce CO2 emissions still seems far away. For the Crystal Cabin Award jury, it has become even more important to award prizes for entries not merely labelled as part of a "green" trend, but to honour innovations that can make a real difference in the aircraft cabin. Here, change often begins with reduced materials use, recyclable components and waste reduction. A good example is the **Food Waste App** from **Lufthansa Industry Solutions**, that uses AI to measure what passengers leave on their trays and makes suggestions for the next catering plan based on this information.

For its **BioMat** side panel, **Airbus Operations** mixes recycled carbon fibres from its A350 production with synthetic resins garnered from by-products of sugar cane processing. Meanwhile, the cabin outfitters at Austrian company **F/List** have submitted two bio-based materials into the race for a Crystal Cabin Award trophy. The company says it is introducing both to the aircraft cabin for the first time: Linfinium, a linoleum covering made from natural components, and the plant-based "Whisper Leather".

### **Not just in big planes: Cabin innovation for air taxis**

In 2023, the Crystal Cabin Award team received more entries for electric Vertical Take-Off and Landing aircraft (eVTOLs) than ever before. **EVE Mobility** and **Almadesign** have entered this year's race with a sleek, airy four-seater cabin concept for **Eve Air Mobility**, a daughter brand of aircraft manufacturer Embraer. Elements such as ceiling projection and pleasant colour moods are crafted to make the short flight experience as comfortable as possible.

**HT-01**, a cabin concept for air taxis by **Hyundai Transys** and its cooperation partner **PriestmanGoode**, also uses attractive colours and an optimized use of limited space. Building on the idea that the urban air shuttles of the future will be shared with other passengers, the South Korean company has included a variety of ideas to ensure sufficient privacy for all four seats. The German "unicorn" **Lilium** has approached its cabin concept with a strong focus on exclusivity. The **Pioneer Edition Lilium Jet** features a light-flooded interior design with many customizable options, including a sky bar.

### **Broadening Horizons: Creative Ideas with the Power to Surprise**

This year, many entrants for the Crystal Cabin Award are thinking outside the box. **AIR PREMIA** and **ZOSLEE STUDIO**, for example, take this literally, proposing a more efficient stacking method for economy tableware and giving it a new, oval shape.



Privacy during important meetings above the clouds is the premise of **Skyted's** noise-cancelling mask; the Covid-19 pandemic has made mask-wearing so widely accepted on aircraft that fellow passengers won't bat an eyelid. The innovative face covering was developed together with **PriestmanGoode, Airbus Development, the European Space Agency Accelerator Program** and **ONERA**.

Boarding processes at airports could change radically in the future, if the ideas submitted by Formation Design Group take off. Their autonomous boarding platform **Dovetail** rolls passengers directly to the aircraft and could significantly reduce turnaround times for boarding and de-boarding.

The partitions in the aircraft literally become transparent thanks to the transparent "**The Smart View**" displays by the Hamburg-based company **AerQ** (in cooperation with **Boeing EnCore Interiors**).

### **Breaking down barriers: More accessibility for all**

Improving the flight experience in the long term means taking the needs of all stakeholders into account wherever possible. This year, several entrants made the Crystal Cabin Award shortlist with concepts for barrier-free travel. Also noticeable here is a strong crop of ideas for Urban Air Mobility. This is exemplified by a concept from **Supernal** (in cooperation with **Formation Design Group**) that includes ideas for barrier-free use of air taxis, from gate to exit.

Every year, the Crystal Cabin Award is a unique opportunity for students to present their ideas to an international audience of experts and to make contact with the industry. Two American universities, the **University of Michigan** and the renowned **Virginia Tech**, have entered the fray with concepts for the safe travel of wheelchair users.

### **The Innovations of The Year: Live Awards Ceremony on 6 June 2023 in Hamburg**

The Crystal Cabin Award, an initiative of the Hamburg Aviation cluster network, is awarded in eight categories: "Cabin Concepts", "Cabin Systems", "Health & Safety", "IFEC & Digital Services", "Material and Components", "Passenger Comfort", "Sustainable Cabin" and "University".

For each category, the 28 experts will select three finalists to be announced in May 2023. Participating for the first time: Wahli Ong, VP Product Innovation at Singapore Airlines. With Mariya Stoyanova, Director Product Development at jetBlue, the Crystal Cabin Award Association welcomes another renowned US airline to its jury group. The finalists will have the opportunity to present their concepts in person to the jury at the world's leading trade fair for aircraft cabins, the Aircraft Interiors Expo (6-8 June 2023 in Hamburg). The winners of the Crystal Cabin Award 2023 will be announced on the evening of 6 June at a gala dinner at the Hamburg Chambers of Commerce.



*Note for the press:*

*A selection of images, an overview of the shortlist as well as a complete PR package for the 2023 shortlist participants with English press statements and contact details are available for download [here](https://seafife.hamburg-tourism.de/d/a436fde4dc194a1a9b1c/):*

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### **About the Crystal Cabin Award**

The Crystal Cabin Award is THE international prize for innovation in the aircraft cabin. A high-calibre jury made up of renowned academics, engineers, specialist journalists and airline and aircraft manufacturer representatives comes together under the slogan “Let your ideas take off” to honour extraordinary cabin concepts and products. The competition was launched by Hamburg Aviation and is organised by the Crystal Cabin Award Association. This unique honour has been presented at the Aircraft Interiors Expo in Hamburg every year since 2007. The trophies have become a seal of quality, known and coveted around the world.

Crystal Cabin Award Association  
c/o Hamburg Aviation  
Wexstraße 7, D - 20355 Hamburg  
Tel: +49 (0)40/22 70 19 87  
[www.crystal-cabin-award.com](http://www.crystal-cabin-award.com)



**Media Contact:**

Crystal Cabin Award e. V. | Hamburg Aviation

Julia Grosser

Telefon: +49 40 22 70 19 479

[julia.grosser@hamburg-aviation.com](mailto:julia.grosser@hamburg-aviation.com)

[www.crystal-cabin-award.com](http://www.crystal-cabin-award.com)

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