

Rethinking the (really big) business jet cabin

Designs that turn heads—and could also start trends

by Kirby J. Harrison

Let's face it: Some business jet interiors are about as exciting as a bowl of cold oatmeal. But in recent years, the situation has been changing, thanks partly to entre into the field of independent cabin designers who had previously occupied themselves with homes and yachts. In the beginning, the industry looked askance at these designers' bold and dramatic computer renderings, viewing them as little more than the imaginings of artists who had yet to deal with FAA regulations, weight restrictions and limited space.

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Art deco at its finest embodies a modern elegance and glamour, and at the same time function. The cabin dining area art deco rendering by L-3's Platform Integration Division is an example of that art form in a functional interior that could be certified easily. The company is in the preliminary planning stage for a head-of-state Boeing 747-8.

Design Q in London is well known for venturing "where no man has gone before." This creation was done for BAE Systems for its Avro Business Jet Explorer One and Explorer Four reconfigurations for the Avro RJ regional jet. The rendering demonstrates the unfinished field capability of the airplane, and how the cargo door can serve as a patio during an aerial safari. Design Q has also created a luxury Q-VR version of the Range Rover.



Today, however, such proposals garner more respect—and are seen almost as often from independent completion centers as from independent design studios. Not everything in such computer renderings is certifiable, and designers have to reconsider some ideas when they face such realities as certification cost. But even designs that haven't survived intact have contained ideas that resulted in now-commonplace innovations—freestanding furniture, fiber-optics woven into carpets, trompe l'oeil ceilings and granite and marble flooring and countertops, to name a few. *(continued on next page)*



Lufthansa Technik has developed a reputation for solid, beautifully crafted interiors. But its designers are unafraid to take it beyond the accepted boundaries, incorporating curvilinear designs such as in this cabin rendering. The company created its Innovations business unit several years ago to incorporate new technology into the modern jet cabin.

AirJet Designs of Toulouse, France, takes pride in an ability to blend old and new designs into a modern classical style. The independent firm demonstrated that ability in this rendering of a Xin Ge interior, which brings together Chinese "glamour and exquisite fabrics" with its concept of French Art de Vivre in a fusion of East meets West. AirJet recently opened an office in Shanghai.



M&R Associates Design of Geneva has been in the private jet interiors business for a decade: more recently under its current brand name. One of its latest designs was this rendering for an Airbus A350 XWB. The cabin includes such coming technology as OLED video screens set into transparent walls and a large dining table with a thick marble surface through which "E-foil" light can pass, resulting in the interplay of diffused light with the crystal tableware.

Squared corners and straight lines have given way to curves, in everything from carpet design to cabinetry, and light-emitting diode (LED) technology has made possible illumination to fit virtually any mood.

On these pages we've showcased some of the more dramatic renderings from adventurous independent design studios and completion centers. These cabin proposals are not necessarily for everyone. But on the other hand, you aren't everyone, are you? ■



Greenpoint Technologies developed this private suite for the nose of a wide-body. It shows a simplicity of design, using tones of beige with darker chocolate accents and contrasting pillows. The chairs are not unlike what you might find in an elegant home, stylish and comfortable.

A wall is a wall. But not at Edése Doret's New York City design studios. This particular Boeing 787-9 interior by Doret will have four "living walls" made of ferns, fed and watered by a hidden irrigation system. In addition to artificial grow lights, natural light is channeled via a series of mirrors to each of four walls. The ferns were selected for their non-allergenic properties. They do not shed, and do not attract insects. The interior is being built and installed by L-3 Avionics Systems of Waco, Texas and the airplane is scheduled for 2015 delivery.

Earlier this year, Airbus, with an eye to the Asian market, introduced its Phoenix cabin concept. The main cabin features seating for six around a circular lazy Susan table common in Chinese restaurants and homes. The table will also fold into a square to accommodate business meetings or games. A karaoke machine is offered as an option.

