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# i+D

## Well Connected



## Uplifting Interiors

One might think size, safety, and functionality needs could make for fewer possibilities of customization on the private jets that glide overhead, but designers would argue the very fact we can fly at all proves the sky is the limit. The square footage might shrink from 20,000 square feet to 2,000 or even 200, but that opens the door to creative design solutions.

Take AirJet Designs, for example, with offices in Miami, Hong Kong, Toulouse, France, and Montreal. They, too, must consider weight (think stone veneers versus natural stone) and safety (sudden events like cabin depressurization or cabin fire, turbulence, and emergency landings—so no crystal chandeliers or sharp edges), and they must affix every piece of furniture to the aircraft frame.

Still, even with all the challenges they face, luxury is the name of the game. “Our challenge is to take safety regulations and requirements into consideration and be compliant with them, but, at the same time, go through a design process that will result in an interior that will, as much as possible, make passengers forget that they are in an airplane,” says Jean-Pierre Alfano, AirJet’s founder and creative director. “We can integrate bars, wine cellars, showers, saunas, smart mirrors, gym equipment, and even electric fireplaces. On one of our projects, we were asked to incorporate an aquarium on board an [Airbus A320 aircraft]. We designed the interior around it and the fish tank became the central part of the circulation layout, located above the wing area to minimize weight and balance impact.

“Recently, I’ve noticed an increased demand for traditional materials and techniques, such as straw marquetry, mother-of-pearl, and white lacquer with decorative wood or metal inlays,” he continues. “For flooring, we use wool or silk carpets, and even wood or stone flooring panels of a different nature and design.”

Bombardier Business Aircraft, with offices around the world, knows a thing or two (or 7,000) about customization as well. Its new Global 7000 business jet, which can be configured for up to 19 passengers, considers every need a traveler might have. That’s why the company designed four distinct living spaces: a well-appointed kitchen, a six-seat dining and conference area, a high-tech entertainment lounge, and a stateroom for overnight flights—all equipped with a lightning-fast Wi-Fi system called Ka-band. “At every step of this experience, we want to bring beauty and



functionality so that our customers can feel that they are being taken care of. This is where good design can really make a difference,” says Tim Fagan, Bombardier’s manager of industrial design, who views the Global 7000 business jet as an extension of the owners’ home and office. “Each aircraft is personalized to the individual customer and can be tailored with a near infinite selection of floor plans and furnishing designs.” Expansive windows next to every seat and centered on every table allow for unparalleled sightlines and maximum natural light.

“The owner’s intent is what really drives the layout at a very basic level,” Fagan explains, “so, at the first meeting with our clients during aircraft specification, the most important thing is to listen and understand how the aircraft will fit into their life: Where and when do they most frequently travel, who is most typically on board, what is the mix of personal versus business travel? With this understanding, we can then work with our owners in more specific choices of cabin layouts that will best meet these functional requirements, followed by the owner’s personal taste on fabrics, colors, and finish materials”—the latter of which are handmade by skilled craftspeople working in close conjunction with the designers and engineers.

Perhaps White says it best. Though designing luxury transportation like yachts and private jets comes with a host of regulations and restrictions, looking to air and sea might just be where to find the most forward-thinking inspiration. “We have to conform to very strict guidelines on weight, durability, safety, and extreme environments,” he notes. “At the same time, we are pushing materials to the limit. The most creative yacht interiors are inventing the finishes and effects that are at the forefront of research and development and will translate in time to residential, hotel, and restaurant interiors.” ●

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