



**Tim Clark
President Emirates:**

» We especially like the go-anywhere flexibility of the four-engine A340-500 and -600, which will take the world's longest routes in their stride. We are also very excited by the ability to carry more passengers in the A380 and by its outstanding economics – in fact we could already use some of them today «

A380 Reveal ceremony

THE NEW DIMENSION

In an impressive ceremony attended by the heads of government of the company's four European founding nations, the Airbus A380 – the world's largest, most modern passenger aircraft – was presented to the public for the first time on 18 January 2005 in Toulouse-Blagnac.

The history of aviation – and of the Airbus company – was presented in a colourful and spectacular show





**Geoff Dixon
CEO Qantas Airways:**

A giant, presented in Europe's largest building: the Airbus A380 is assembled in the Jean-Luc Lagardère hall in Toulouse, which is 500 metres long

»No one travels as far as Qantas has to travel and no one has to carry as many passengers, so the A380 is perfect for us in a lot of ways«





**Chew Choon Seng
CEO Singapore
Airlines:**

Starting in mid-2006, the first A380 will fly for Singapore Airlines on passenger routes between London, Singapore and Australia

In attendance for the A380 reveal ceremony were the CEOs of the first 14 airlines to become A380 customers, along with suppliers, partners, shareholders, politicians and journalists – 5000 guests (and many more watching live on television) were treated to a live, exciting and dramatically staged multimedia show that culminated in the unveiling of the gigantic new Airbus flagship.

Even the size of the A380 is relative

"Well, it's not all that big," commented one woman on the VIP grandstand, as the largest commercial aircraft in the world on 18 Janu-



EADS co-chairmen among themselves at the A380 Reveal: Arnaud Lagardère and Dr. Manfred Bischoff

ary finally made its debut appearance under blazing lights at the close of a spectacular show in the Jean-Luc Lagardère hall. Yet size is simply a matter of perspective in this case: the Jean-Luc Lagardère hall is the largest building in Europe; the show was held near its Number 2 A380 final assembly line, with the audience more than 100 metres away from the aircraft. Under such circumstances, even a 73-metre long, 24-metre tall superjumbo with an 80-metre wingspan might appear "unexceptional." The plane's true dimensions only became apparent later, when, during a champagne reception, guests moved in closer, even under the wing. Those who stood in front of the engines – as wide as an A320 fuselage – were left in no doubt about just how big the A380 really is.

This was all preceded, however, by a multimedia show, complete with fireworks and illuminated water fountains, that kept guests enchanted while the superjumbo remained hidden behind a black curtain. An imaginative stage design provided the backdrop for a huge projection screen, from which a virtual storyteller took the audience back through the story of one of the great dreams of mankind: flying. Four huge robed human figures – decorated with the flags of Germany, France, Britain and Spain, and with the names of great historical figures in each of these countries – were seen to open a larger-than-life book which recounts the history of the Airbus company. Images of aircraft from the Airbus family – A300, A320, A340 – flew out of the book into a backdrop of the sky, and projected onto the walls, roared forth on their virtual journey around the audience.

»We were looking for something that would be more cost-efficient, that would have the same range and larger capacity to enable us to address some of the constraints that we were facing«

On the projection screen, representatives of the 14 initial A380 customers presented their reasons for ordering the world's largest commercial aircraft and described how their passengers will benefit: "This kind of aircraft is inevitably a trump card in any airline's fleet," sums up Jean-Cyril Spinetta's views as head of Air France. Tim Clarke of Emirates, the first customer to order the A380 – and with 43 of the total 149 orders as of 18 Janu-

Images: Alexis v. Croy, MAKNA, Airbus



The heads of state of the partner countries – Tony Blair, Jacques Chirac, Gerhard Schröder and José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, pictured with Airbus shareholders, airline representatives and Airbus CEO Noël Forgeard

ary, also the largest – enthused "A wonderful aircraft!" Sir Richard Branson, chairman of Virgin Atlantic, outlined his extravagant vision: "We're putting a casino on board, and bars, and double beds – perfect for honeymooners." Malaysia Airlines chief Abdul Rashid Khan summed up his company's aims with the words: "What we are striving for is cruise-ship elegance, but at 40,000 feet!"

When four children then opened the large curtain, to reveal at last the A380 bathed in surrealistic crepuscular

blue light, the audience burst into applause and enthusiastic cheers.

Afterwards, Airbus boss Noël Forgeard spoke of the optimism and ingeniousness of the 50,000 Airbus employees, who together represent 85 countries. Driven by confidence in the future and enthusiasm for their work, the commitment shown by employees – coupled with the enterprising spirit of shareholders and risk-sharing partners, and of course the customers – was essential to making the flagship of the 21st century a reality, he said.

French President Jacques Chirac lauded the A380 as a "European and national dream" and extended special thanks to five people for their valuable contributions to the aircraft: Jean-Luc Lagardère, Jean Pierson, Jürgen Thomas, Charles Champion and Noël Forgeard.

British Prime Minister Tony Blair also praised the A380, calling it a "symbol of economic strength," while German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder expressed his pride at the ideas and technological accomplishments of which "good old Europe" is still capable. José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, prime minister of Spain, saw "four flags united behind European Blue – this Airbus is the flagship of European industry."

The flagship of European industry

Representatives of A380 customers then came on stage for a photo session, proceeding with Noël Forgeard to a raised platform placed right up against the nose of the aircraft, where they were joined by the Airbus shareholders and the representatives of the four countries. Dr Manfred Bischoff, co-chairman of EADS,

took the opportunity to emphasise how the Group's strict economic focus had made it possible to build the A380 at all, while Richard Olver,



24 metres high: the tail of the A380 in the new Airbus corporate design

chairman of BAE Systems, underscored the spirit of partnership. But the event was probably summed up most fittingly by EADS co-Chairman Arnaud Lagardère, who just before pressing the button to begin the "baptism of light" for the A380, said simply: "Today is a wonderful day!"

René Chapelon

Further information at <http://www.airbus.com>