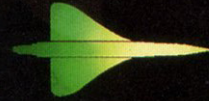


CONCORDE UNIQUE



MPH
1340

Supersonic Cabin Initiatives - A Series by Jennifer Coutts Clay, CMILT



British Airways Concorde

As we continue to explore the return of commercial supersonic flight, let's review the challenges of Concorde operations.

In principle, reducing travel time between major cities is a boon to passengers, but it is the supersonic boom heard by those who live on the ground that has caused the greatest debate. Even now, concerns remain about noise pollution related to supersonic operations and while the FAA has reopened studies it has not, for now, approved overflight of the continental U.S. In 1970, when it was introduced into commercial service, Europe had welcomed with boundless enthusiasm the giant Boeing B747, but in the US there was no such reciprocal welcome when Concorde commenced operations in 1976. As detailed in the article **CONCORDE TO NEW YORK**, written by Jennifer Coutts Clay, author of *JETLINER CABINS: Evolution and Innovation*, for *Aircraft Interiors International Magazine* in 2017, restrictions on service and delays in approving key routes impacted the economics of Concorde and seriously impeded recovery on investment for airlines.

In some ways, the political and operational challenges of Concorde endure. When supersonic service returns to the skies, will manufacturers and airlines succeed in cutting out the noise and streamlining the politics of speed?



CONCORDE TO NEW YORK

As supersonic commercial flights look set to return, now is a good time to recall the remarkable Concorde project – with a little expert insight

With exciting plans afoot for second-generation supersonic aircraft, as reported in this magazine (March 2016, p68-78), top-tier flyers can – once again – look forward to three-hour transatlantic crossings.

“Concorde could cross the Atlantic Ocean in less than half the time of any other jetliner flying that route, even today,” states John Lampl, vice president of corporate communications for the Americas at British Airways (retired).

Concorde commenced operations in January 1976, with initial routes being British Airways from London, UK, to Bahrain, and Air France from Paris, France, to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (via Dakar, Senegal). But the struggle for US market acceptance involved courtroom battles.

“The US government blocked access to the USA,” explains Lampl. “There was political pressure as Boeing was trying to build the 2707 as a competitor to the British-French supersonic airliner. Opposition groups and community lawyers argued that Concorde’s sonic footprints would cause terrible damage to people’s health, homes and other buildings, and adversely affect commercial property values. After months of testing, however, it was shown that other subsonic aircraft actually produced more noise than Concorde. And even after years of testing Concorde operations, no physical damage was ever shown or proved.”

In May 1976, Concorde was granted landing rights at Washington DC. But it took until November 1977 for Concorde to be permitted to operate supersonic passenger services into New York, the world’s most-coveted business hub.

With its legendary client list of tycoons, moguls, royalty, pop idols, and TV and film stars, the British Airways London-New York service became by far

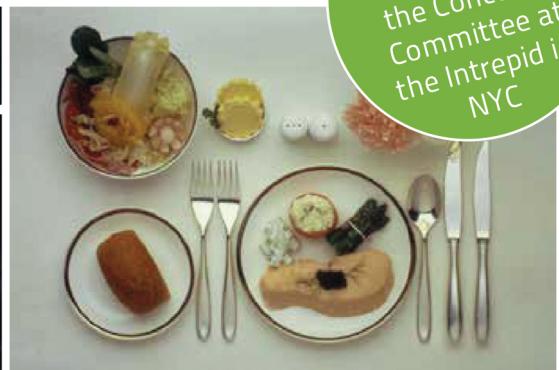


the most successful route in Concorde’s 27-year operational history.

In 2019, to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Concorde’s first flight, the Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum in New York City is planning to launch an exhibition that will explore supersonic flight in the context of global innovation. A starring attraction will be the record-breaking British Airways Concorde G-BOAD (aka Alpha Delta), which is currently on display and open for guided tours at Intrepid’s Pier 86.

The Alpha Delta cabin features the dramatic ‘indigo-shade’ treatment created by Conran and Partners, Factorydesign and Britax Aircraft Interior Systems. Key points include cradle-mechanism seats with footrests and ergonomically contoured headrests and backrests; dark-blue seat covers made of glove-soft Connolly leather; and refurbished and restyled carpets, curtains, overhead bins, lighting filters, accessory items and lavatory finishes.

Incorporating cutting-edge technology, the ‘indigo-shade’ program, which reportedly cost £14m (US\$17m), was implemented in 2001 to replace the iconic silver-gray scheme created by Landor that had flown, with interim updates, for 15 years. The indigo cabin was made from



Jennifer Coutts Clay serves on the Concorde Committee at the Intrepid in NYC

lighter materials than the previous design, with an estimated weight saving of 20%.

Passengers often expressed surprise that the interior was so constrained. The configuration was 2-2 for the 40 passengers in the front cabin and the 60 in the rear cabin, with an aisle width of 16in, a seat pitch of 38in, and window panes measuring only 6.5in by 4.5in.

But at 60,000ft, flying at Mach 2, passengers could see the glorious colors of the ‘edge-of-space’ horizon and the curvature of the Earth. It provided unforgettable experiences, without the need to wear helmets or oxygen masks.

There is detailed information about Concorde cabins in the Concorde Unique Case Study attached to Chapter 4/Aero Identity, in JETLINER CABINS: Evolution & Innovation E-BOOK app.

JETLINER CABINS: Evolution & Innovation

E-BOOK App by Jennifer Coutts Clay

AVAILABLE ON AMAZON, APPLE ITUNES®, AND GOOGLE PLAY™



www.jetlinercabins.com

CONCORDE TO NEW YORK



Air France Concorde



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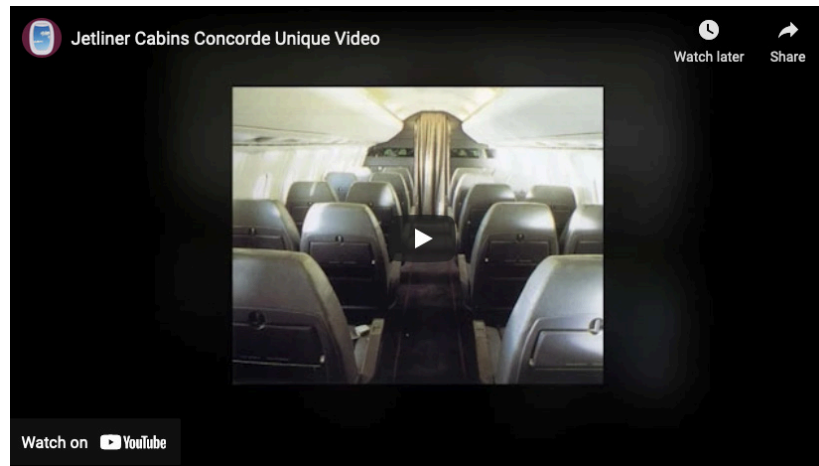


British Airways Concorde



Jennifer Coutts Clay is the author of *Jetliner Cabins: Evolution & Innovation*, still the only comprehensive guide to aircraft-cabin design, covering trends from the 1970s to the present day (www.jetlinercabins.com). At British Airways, Jennifer held senior positions including head of western USA (operations and sales), head of Scotland, and controller of corporate identity, responsible for the implementation of the US\$75m program during the privatization of the airline and fleet refurbishment, including Concorde. At Pan Am, as general manager of product design & development, Jennifer led a US\$25m passenger-experience upgrade. As principal of J. Clay Consulting, Jennifer supports historical aviation research. She is a member of The Cornell Club, The Institute of Directors, The Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport and The Wings Club (Golden Eagle Status). Jennifer is a founding sponsor of The Crystal Cabin Award, a founding member of The Pan Am Historical Foundation Museum, and she serves on the Concorde Advisory Committee at The INTREPID SEA, AIR & SPACE MUSEUM, New York City.

Watch the Jetliner Cabins Concorde Unique Video



Jennifer Coutts Clay visits British Airways Concorde G-BOAD (the record-breaking Alpha Delta) at The INTREPID Sea, Air & Space Museum, New York City.

Images in this article have been selected from the Concorde Picture Galleries displayed in *JETLINER CABINS: Evolution & Innovation E-BOOK App* by Jennifer Coutts Clay, available at Amazon, Apple App Store and Google play.
www.JetlinerCabins.com.