

Virgin America and Virgin Galactic Launch Race for Space, Pilot Exchange

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Airline's Elevate Loyalty Members Will Compete for a Seat on One of World's First Commercial Space Flights

Virgin America, the California-based airline, and Virgin Galactic, the first commercial space-line, today announced the start of the "Race for Space," in which Virgin America Elevate loyalty program members can compete to fly their way to a seat on a sub-orbital space flight. The program is being unveiled today to celebrate the world premiere roll-out of the Virgin Galactic spaceship launch vehicle, the WhiteKnightTwo (WK2). The companies also announced their intent to institute a pilot exchange, under which select Virgin America pilots will enter Virgin Galactic's rigorous training program.

"Virgin-branded companies are known for being innovative and for thinking big, so we're honored to link an airline that is reinventing the domestic flying experience with the world's first space-line," said Virgin America President and CEO David Cush. "True to the Virgin spirit, our loyalty program, Elevate, is unlike any other U.S. frequent flier program and will offer unique rewards with no black-out dates. The Race for Space is a perfect example of the extraordinary opportunities members will be able to take advantage of."

Today, one of the newest additions to Virgin America's fleet - an Airbus A320 named My Other Ride is a Spaceship will bring aviation luminaries, Virgin Group Founder Sir Richard Branson's Mother Eve Branson (by whom, WK2 will be christened), and Virgin Galactic's customers, from Los Angeles International Airport to the birthplace of the WK2 - Scaled Composites in Mojave, California. Upon touchdown, My Other Ride is a Spaceship will meet Branson for the first public roll-out of the WK2.

The companies will also announce the Race for Space, in which Elevate members will be able to compete for one seat on a Virgin Galactic sub-orbital space flight. Today, Elevate members can begin earning their way to the 10,000 Elevate points needed to enter the Race for Space. Over the course of the competition leading up to the Virgin Galactic launch (slated for 2010), members who reach 10,000 points will have the opportunity to sign-up and compete in a series of challenges - with one member ultimately earning a once-in-a-lifetime trip.

By Oct. 1, 2008, Elevate members will be able to begin redeeming points for Virgin America flights on-line. One lucky Elevate member was selected to join the flight to the Mojave for the WK2 unveiling event.

The Virgin America pilots flying My Other Ride is a Spaceship are among the top candidates being considered for the Virgin Galactic exchange program. Still in pre-flight testing, the WK2 will enable commercial space travel for private individuals, science and payload. WK2 is the world's largest all carbon composite aircraft with a high-altitude lift capacity capable of launching SpaceShipTwo into sub-orbital space.

"My Other Ride is a Spaceship is one of the newest and most fuel efficient aircraft flying in the U.S., and when it touches down today it will share the runway with the next generation of government and commercial aerospace -- the WK2," said Will Whitehorn President of Virgin Galactic. "I couldn't be more proud that two Virgin-branded companies will link the cutting-edge present to the very future of commercial aviation."

Virgin America currently flies to seven cities with daily flights from: San Francisco (SFO) to Los Angeles (LAX), SFO to New York (JFK), SFO to San Diego (SAN), SFO to Washington (IAD), SFO to Las Vegas (LAS), SFO to Seattle (SEA), LAX to JFK, LAX to IAD, LAX to SEA and starting Sept. 4, 2008, non-stop flights JFK to LAS.

Virgin America is a U.S. controlled and operated airline and an entirely separate company from Virgin Atlantic. Sir Richard Branson's Virgin Group is a minority share investor in Virgin America.

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