

## **Press Information Kit**

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## **Company background and history**

Since it was founded twenty-four years ago, Virgin Atlantic Airways has become Britain's second largest airline serving the world's major cities. Virgin Atlantic is the quintessential Virgin story. It has every ingredient: the small newcomer taking on the giant and complacent establishment, the people's champion introducing better service and lower costs for passengers with a reputation for quality and innovative product development.

Virgin Atlantic was developed as an offshoot of Richard Branson's Virgin Group, which was better known at the time in the world of pop and rock music. In early 1984, Branson was contacted by an Anglo-US lawyer called Randolph Fields with a proposal for involvement in a new airline. Recognising that, like the music business, aviation was a consumer led industry, and tired of the conveyor belt attitude to passengers, Branson decided it was time for Virgin to diversify. His fellow directors thought he was mad – particularly when he announced the new airline would begin operating in just over three months.

Never one to take 'no' for an answer, Branson's infectious enthusiasm ensured that staff were hired, an aircraft was found, licences were obtained and the uniforms were designed. It was not easy, especially with incidents such as an engine failure on the eve of the airline's maiden flight. On 22 June 1984 Virgin's inaugural flight to Newark took place, a flight filled with friends, celebrities and the media. The airline's aim was simple: "To provide the highest quality innovative service at excellent value for money for all classes of air travellers". Hugely popular, Virgin Atlantic has won top business, consumer and trade awards from around the world. The airline has pioneered a range of innovations setting new standards of service. Despite Virgin Atlantic's growth the service still remains customer driven with an emphasis on value for money, quality, fun and innovation.

From those early days the airline has gone from strength to strength. Now based at Gatwick, Heathrow and Manchester airports, it operates longhaul services from Heathrow to New York (Newark and JFK), Los Angeles, San Francisco, Washington, Boston, Miami, Tokyo, Hong Kong, Johannesburg, Cape Town, Shanghai, Delhi, Mumbai, Lagos, Sydney, Dubai, Chicago, Nairobi & Mauritius. Virgin also operates services from Gatwick to Orlando, Barbados, St Lucia, Antigua, Las Vegas, Grenada, Tobago, Cuba and Montego Bay & Kingston in Jamaica. It also operates a service from Manchester to Orlando, Barbados and St Lucia.

On 20 December 1999 Richard Branson signed an agreement to sell a 49% stake of Virgin Atlantic to Singapore Airlines to form a unique global partnership. The cost of the transaction to

Singapore Airlines was £600.25 million, which included a capital injection of £49 million and valued Virgin Atlantic at a minimum of £1.225billion. The deal was finalised in early 2000.

In summer 2003 came the launch of Virgin Atlantic's revolutionary Upper Class Suite, the longest and most comfortable flat bed and seat in the airline industry. The Upper Class Suite has won twelve of the most prestigious designs awards including a Yellow Pencil award for product design and an IDEA Gold Award for Transport Design.

**Since December 2004 Virgin Atlantic has launched services between London and Sydney, Mumbai, Dubai, Havana, Montego Bay, and direct flights between Manchester and Barbados and Manchester and St Lucia. New services from Heathrow included Chicago in April 2007, and the launch of services to Nairobi, Mauritius and Kingston later that year.**

Virgin Atlantic announced in 2007 that it had ordered 15 of the 787-9 Dreamliners – with options on ordering another eight 787-9s and purchase rights on a further 20 aircraft. The 787-9 Dreamliner burns around 27% less fuel per passenger than the A340-300, the aircraft it will replace in the Virgin Atlantic fleet.

## ***A brief history of Virgin Atlantic***

<b>Year</b>	<b>Month</b>	<b>Details</b>
1984	February March May June	Concept of a high quality, value for money airline is first developed. Licence granted for London (Gatwick) to New York (Newark). Lease purchase for the first aircraft, a Boeing 747, successfully negotiated. Virgin takes off from Gatwick starting a regular connection to New York (Newark).
1985	October November	Virgin Cargo and Virgin Holidays are established. Licence granted for London (Gatwick) to Miami.
1986	January April June	First class sleeper seats installed in Upper Class. The Miami service from Gatwick takes off. Virgin takes delivery of a second B747 and the Miami flights are increased to four a week.
1987	July September	UK licence granted for the Boston route. Virgin's one-millionth transatlantic passenger takes to the air.
1988	March May September	Licence granted for the Los Angeles and New York (JFK) routes. Virgin commences charter services to Orlando, Florida. Lease agreements entered into for the third and fourth 747.
1989	May  August  September October	Virgin commences its three flights a week service to Tokyo. Introduction of video walkmans makes Virgin first airline to offer individual TVs to business class passengers. Virgin establishes aircraft maintenance facilities for its own aircraft and to provide a service to other airlines. Virgin doubles its capacity to New York with seven flights a week to JFK. Cargo opens terminal at JFK airport. Fourth frequency to Tokyo commences. Negotiations concluded in respect of Virgin's fifth and sixth B747.
1990	May	Virgin commences its service to Los Angeles. To coincide Virgin opens Upper Class lounge at Gatwick and Inflight Beauty Therapy for Upper Class passengers. Virgin becomes first airline to introduce automatic defibrillators and trained staff to aid inflight cardiac arrest victims.
1991	January  April May  June  July October November	Civil Aviation Authority opens the door to Heathrow for Virgin's award winning operations. Launch of new uniform. Service to Tokyo increases to six flights a week. Daily service from London Gatwick to Boston starts. Virgin obtains seventh and eighth 747s. Virgin becomes first airline to offer individual TVs to all classes of passenger on wide-bodied aircraft. Virgin commences services from Heathrow to Los Angeles, New York (JFK) and Tokyo. Cargo opens its own terminal in Miami. Cargo opens its own terminal in Los Angeles.
1992	March  April May	Sale of Virgin Music to Thorn EMI for \$880m. Richard Branson pledges to invest proceeds in Virgin Atlantic. Virgin is first airline to provide child safety seats. Launch of Virgin Mid Class, first airline to offer super economy service for full fare economy passengers. Daily scheduled service from London to Orlando commences.
1993	March June July  December	Virgin Atlantic launches service between Gatwick and Athens. Virgin Atlantic is the first airline to introduce a Snooze Zone in Upper Class cabin Virgin Atlantic introduces Virgin TaxiJet – the bike service to be offered to passengers in addition to the limo service. HRH Princess of Wales names Virgin Atlantic's first new airbus A340 300.
1994	January February  May June October November	New service launched from London City Airport to Dublin in partnership with CityJet. Daily service to Hong Kong commences. First Boeing 747-400 joins the Virgin fleet. San Francisco service launched Virgin Atlantic celebrates 10 <sup>th</sup> anniversary and introduces new global corporate identity. Fourth Airbus A340 and second 747-400 join the fleet. Mid Class rebranded Premium Economy.

1995	<b>January</b> <b>April</b> <b>May</b>  <b>June</b>  <b>July</b>  <b>November</b>	<p>Announcement of marketing alliance with Malaysian Airlines.  Launch of marketing alliance with Delta Airlines.  No smoking flights introduced on Virgin Atlantic's transatlantic and Hong Kong routes.  O2FLY, oxygen concentrator enabling chronic chest and lung patients to fly long distance introduced onboard.  Virgin Atlantic commences service to Athens.  Launch of ten year partnership with Malaysian Airlines.  Virgin CityJet services commence between Dublin and Brussels.  Codeshare with British Midland commences.  Formation of the Asia Pacific – partnership with Ansett Australia Airlines and Malaysia Airlines.  New JFK Clubhouse opens.</p>
1996	<b>January</b> <b>February</b> <b>May</b>  <b>June</b>  <b>July</b> <b>October</b>  <b>December</b>	<p>Virgin LimoBikes now operate the existing chauffeured motorcycle service.  Newark Clubhouse opens.  Refurbished Heathrow Clubhouse. Manchester – Orlando service launched and naming ceremony of new Airbus A340-300 "Virginia Plain".  Virgin Group acquires 90 per cent of the equity of Euro/Belgian Airlines, renamed Virgin Express and based in Brussels.  Naming ceremony of a new Boeing 747-400 "Tinker Belle"  Daily service launched from Heathrow to Washington.  CityJet franchise terminated by mutual agreement.  New service launched between Heathrow and Johannesburg.  Drive Thru Check In service for Upper Class passengers.  New Clubhouse opened in Johannesburg.</p>
1997	<b>January</b>  <b>March</b>  <b>April</b> <b>May</b> <b>June</b>  <b>July</b> <b>August</b>	<p>Virgin Atlantic announces enhancements to its frequent flyer scheme.  Express hand baggage check in available to all passengers.  Virgin Atlantic launched new economy meal service  Continental Airlines and Virgin announce codeshare agreement replacing Virgin Atlantic's alliance with Delta Airlines.  Take delivery of 4<sup>th</sup> new 747-400 aircraft.  Take delivery of 6<sup>th</sup> new A340 aircraft.  Take delivery of 7<sup>th</sup> A340 aircraft.  New daily service from Gatwick to Newark. Miami service moves from Gatwick to Heathrow.  New daily service to Johannesburg.  The airline moves into new headquarters.  Delivery of 5<sup>th</sup> new 747-400 aircraft.  New second daily service from Heathrow to Los Angeles. Take delivery of 8<sup>th</sup> new A340 aircraft.  Virgin announces it will become the world-wide launch customer for the new A340-600.</p>
1998	<b>January</b> <b>February</b> <b>March</b>  <b>April</b>  <b>May</b> <b>June</b>  <b>July</b>  <b>September</b>  <b>October</b> <b>November</b>  <b>December</b>	<p>Launch of K-iD, a new range of products aimed to keep children amused during flights.  Continental Airlines and Virgin Atlantic launch codeshare agreement.  Opening of Washington Clubhouse and Drive-Thru check-in at Newark.  Virgin takes delivery of 9<sup>th</sup> A340-300.  Flying without Fear courses commence.  Steve Ridgway is appointed as the Managing Director of Virgin Atlantic.  Phase II of Johannesburg Clubhouse  Delivery of the 10<sup>th</sup> new A340 aircraft – named Diana.  Drive Thru Check In service for Upper Class passengers introduced at London Gatwick.  New Virgin Atlantic Clubhouse opens at Chep Lap Kok Airport, Hong Kong  Medlink satellite telemedicine services introduced on all Virgin Atlantic flights.  Second daily service to Orlando commences from London Gatwick.  Virgin Atlantic Clubhouse opens at Gatwick Airport.  Launch of services to St Lucia and Barbados on 27 September  Delivery of first 747-200 from Cathay Pacific.  Launch of services to Antigua on 21 October  Catwalk launch of Virgin Atlantic uniform designed by John Rocha.  Delivery of second 747-200 from Cathay Pacific.  New Drive Thru service opens at San Francisco International Airport.</p>

1999	February	Virgin Atlantic moves its New York JFK Operations to the new state-of-the-art Terminal 1 offering more Check In desks and space.	
	March	New cabin crew uniforms introduced across the company.	
	May	Tokyo Clubhouse opens. Virgin Sun launched, offering flights and holidays to 13 Mediterranean destinations from Gatwick and Manchester.	
	June	Virgin Atlantic unveils new aircraft livery, a fresh corporate identity and £37m package of product and service improvements including a stylish new cabin and flying beds – both single and, for the first time ever, double beds in business class. Launch of the “daylight” service between Heathrow and JFK, the airline’s fifth London – New York frequency.	
	July	Virgin Atlantic celebrates 15 years in the air. The Shanghai inaugural takes place on 12 July	
	October	Virgin signs fleet deal with Volvo to provide the airline’s famous limousine service Virgin makes limousine service nationwide CAA declares Virgin Atlantic ready for the millennium	
	November	Virgin Atlantic relaunch its frequent flyer programme renamed <i>flying club</i> 1 November – Virgin launches services to Chicago 17 November – Virgin Atlantic relaunch the new Upper Class cabin Johannesburg Drive-Thru check-in opened	
	December	Virgin Atlantic is granted extra frequencies to Shanghai from mid-2000 Virgin Atlantic’s first flight to Cape Town takes place on 2 December Virgin Atlantic signs codeshare agreement with Air India to operate services between London and Delhi from the summer of 2000 Extra frequencies to Shanghai and Cape Town awarded to Virgin Atlantic by the CAA On 20 December Richard Branson signs agreement to sell a 49% stake of Virgin Atlantic to Singapore Airlines for £600.25 million	
	2000	February	Opening of Revivals – Virgin Atlantic’s first arrivals lounge at Heathrow airport on 8 February Economy and Premium Economy products and cabin receive a revamp.
		May	Virgin Atlantic moves its Shanghai operations to Pudong airport New clubhouse at JFK Airport opens Virgin Atlantic’s Inflight Beauty Therapy service celebrates its tenth anniversary Virgin Atlantic signs a deal to be the first airline to introduce the latest telemedicine equipment onboard
		June	Virgin Atlantic launches the first direct scheduled service to Las Vegas on 8 <sup>th</sup> June Flying club celebrates its tenth anniversary
		July	Virgin Atlantic launches services to Delhi on 5 July Virgin Atlantic launches ‘Earth Calling’ service onboard allowing passengers to be contacted via their mobile number to the in-seat phone.
October		Revolutionary Upper Class sleeper seat introduced onboard Improvements in benefits offered to <i>flying club</i> members New baggage reclaim facility at Heathrow San Francisco Clubhouse opens in new International Terminal	
December		Virgin Atlantic wins OAG Airline of the Year	
2001	February	Virgin Atlantic confirms order for A380 aircraft	
	May	New version of onboard Health video launched	
	August	Virgin Atlantic launches new daily service to Toronto on 12 June Virgin Atlantic launches a new service from Heathrow to Lagos on 16 July	
	September	Virgin Atlantic cuts capacity by 20% as a result of the terrorist attacks in the US Suspension of services to Chicago, Toronto and Athens Cockpit doors strengthened across fleet and other security measures introduced	
	October November	New safety video onboard Virgin Atlantic offers tickets for £98 with Daily Express	
2002	February	Frequency increases following September 11 A340-600 order confirmed	
	July	Launch of the A340-600 for which Virgin Atlantic is the launch customer	
	August	First commercial flight of the A340-600 to New York Announcement of launch of services to Grenada and Tobago Virgin Atlantic launches SMS text messaging onboard	

	<b>October</b>	Virgin Atlantic announced plans to launch a twice-weekly Port Harcourt service in January
<b>2003</b>	<b>February</b>	Virgin Atlantic launches twice weekly services between Gatwick and Port Harcourt, Nigeria
	<b>May</b>	Virgin Atlantic launches new Upper Class Magazine - Carlos Virgin Atlantic operates the first aid flight to Basra to help with relief aid Virgin Atlantic launches weekly service between Gatwick and Tobago and Grenada Virgin Atlantic introduces Passports for Pets Scheme
	<b>June</b>	Virgin Atlantic submits response to Government White Paper on future runway development
	<b>July</b> <b>December</b>	Richard Branson launches a campaign to keep Concorde flying Virgin Atlantic launches Upper Class Suite – the longest bed flying today Virgin Atlantic announces plans to operate to Australia
<b>2004</b>	<b>January</b>	Virgin Atlantic unveils the Virgin Atlantic GlobalFlyer – The Ground Breaking aircraft in which Steve Fossett will attempt the first solo circumnavigation of the world.
	<b>February</b> <b>March</b>	Virgin Atlantic opens a new Clubhouse at JFK Airport Virgin Atlantic announce expansion plans for the airline, including the order of two more A340-600 aircraft and the recruitment of 1400 staff this year.
	<b>June</b>	Richard Branson takes on the Channel Challenge and sets a new record for the fastest crossing of the English Channel in an amphibious vehicle. Virgin Atlantic announces it has reached an agreement to take delivery of 13 new A340-600 aircraft with options for a further 13. In total the deal is worth in excess of \$5.5bn.
	<b>August</b>	Double Suites are launched onboard aircraft.
	<b>October</b>	Virgin Atlantic starts to fit Upper Class Suite onto its Gatwick fleet
	<b>December</b>	Virgin Atlantic launches daily services between Hong Kong and Sydney Virgin Atlantic opens new Hong Kong Clubhouse.
<b>2005</b>	<b>February</b>	Steve Fossett completes his solo circumnavigation of the world in the Virgin Atlantic GlobalFlyer.
	<b>March</b> <b>June</b>	Virgin Atlantic commences services between London Heathrow and Mumbai. Virgin Atlantic celebrates its 21 <sup>st</sup> birthday by operating a commemorative flight between London and New York with Richard Branson, celebrities and media.
	<b>July</b>	Virgin Atlantic launches a weekly service between Gatwick and Nassau.
	<b>November</b>	Virgin Atlantic launches a twice weekly service between Gatwick and Havana. Virgin Atlantic launches a weekly service between Manchester and Barbados
<b>2006</b>	<b>February</b> <b>March</b>	Steve Fossett completes the longest flight in the Virgin Atlantic GlobalFlyer Virgin Atlantic commences services between London Heathrow and Dubai
	<b>July</b> <b>September</b> <b>November</b>	Virgin Atlantic commences services between Gatwick and Montego Bay, Jamaica Virgin Atlantic launches its new Premium Economy seats Virgin Atlantic launches direct services between Manchester and St Lucia
	<b>2007</b>	Virgin Atlantic re-launches direct daily services between Heathrow and Chicago
	<b>April</b> <b>June</b> <b>October</b> <b>October</b> <b>October</b> <b>December</b>	Virgin Atlantic launches services between London Heathrow and Nairobi Virgin Atlantic launches services between London Heathrow and Mauritius Virgin Atlantic launches services between Gatwick and Kingston, Jamaica Virgin Atlantic launches its new Upper Class Wing facility at Heathrow Virgin Atlantic launches new terminal at T3 with the Spice Girls
<b>2008</b>	<b>February</b>	Virgin Atlantic operates World's First Biofuel Flight from Heathrow to Amsterdam
	<b>May</b> <b>June</b>	Virgin Atlantic announces increase to beauty therapy service on the ground and ceases beauty treatments inflight Virgin Atlantic celebrates its 24 <sup>th</sup> birthday

## **The Virgin Atlantic fleet of aircraft**

Virgin Atlantic operates one of the world's youngest fleets of aircraft. Currently the fleet comprises of 38 aircraft, thirteen 747-400s and six A340-300s and nineteen A340-600s. The current average age of the fleet is 6 years and **12** months.

<i>Aircraft</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Manuf</i>	<i>Into Service</i>	<i>Configuration (U/C, P/E, E)</i>
G-VFAB	B747-400	Birthday Girl	1994	1994	54/62/228
G-VHOT	B747-400	Tubular Belle	1994	1994	54/62/228
G-VBIG	B747-400	Tinker Belle	1996	1996	54/62/228
G-VTOP	B747-400	Virginia Plain	1996	1997	14/58/380
G-VAIR	A340-300	Maiden Tokyo	1997	1997	34/35/171
G-VSEA	A340-300	Plane Sailing	1992	1997	34/35/171
G-VHOL	A340-300	Jetstreamer	1992	1997	34/35/171
G-VAST	B747-400	Ladybird	1997	1997	14/58/380
G-VELD	A340-300	African Queen	1997	1998	34/35/171
G-VFAR	A340-300	Diana	1998	1998	34/35/171
G-VSUN	A340-300	Little Miss Sunshine	1996	1996	34/35/171
G-VXLG	B747-400	Ruby Tuesday	1998	1998	14/58/380
G-VROS	B747-400	English Rose	2001	2001	14/58/379
G-VGAL	B747-400	Jersey Girl	2001	2001	14/58/379
G-VLIP	B747-400	Hot Lips	2001	2001	14/58/379
G-VROM	B747-400	Barbarella	2001	2001	14/58/379
G-VROY	B747-400	Pretty Woman	2001	2001	14/58/379
G-VWOW	B747-400	Cosmic Girl	2001	2001	54/62/228
G-VSHY	A340-600	Claudia Nine	2002	2002	45/38/225
G-VMEG	A340-600	Mystic Maiden	2002	2002	45/38/225
G-VOGE	A340-600	Cover Girl	2002	2002	45/38/225
G-VFOX	A340-600	Silver Lady	2002	2002	45/38/225
G-VGOA	A340-600	Indian Princess	2003	2003	45/38/225
G-VATL	A340-600	Atlantic Angel	2003	2003	45/38/225
G-VROC	B747-400	Mustang Sally	2003	2003	54/62/228
G-VEIL	A340-600	Queen Of The Skies	2004	2004	45/38/225
G-VSSH	A340-600	Sweet Dreamer	2005	2005	45/38/225
G-VNAP	A340-600	Sleeping Beauty	2005	2005	45/38/225
G-VGAS	A340-600	Varga Girl	2005	2005	45/38/225
G-VWKD	A340-600	Miss Behavin	2005	2005	45/38/225
G-VBLU	A340-600	Soul Sister	2006	2006	45/38/225
G-VWIN	A340-600	Lady Luck	2006	2006	45/38/225
G-VFIT	A340-600	Dancing Queen	2006	2006	45/38/225
G-VFIZ	A340-600	Bubbles	2006	2006	45/38/225
G-VYOU	A340-600	Emmeline Heaney	2006	2006	45/38/225
G-VRED	A340-600	Scarlet Lady	2006	2006	45/38/225
G-VWEB	A340-600	Surfer Girl	2006	2006	45/38/225
G-VBUG	A340-600	Lady Bird	2007	2007	45/38/225

### **A340-300 BASIC FACTS**

The Airbus A340-300 is a 4 engined long-range aircraft from the Airbus "fly by wire" aircraft family and is assembled in Toulouse, France. Virgin Atlantic first added the A340 to its fleet in 1993. Virgin Atlantic currently operates six -300 series aircraft which typically carry 240 passengers in our 3 class configuration and have a range of over 7,000 nm. The now long established Airbus wide-body fuselage cross section is wide enough for passenger comfort but slim enough for optimum fuel efficiency. The wings for the A340, with their innovative aerodynamic design, were designed and are manufactured in

the UK, by Airbus UK. The –300 is powered by four CFM International CFM56-5C2 or –5C4 engines, each delivering 31,200lb or 34,000lb of thrust respectively.

### ***A340-600 BASIC FACTS***

The A340-600 entered service with launch customer Virgin Atlantic in July 2002. The –600 series retains the same fuselage cross section as the –300 but is some 11.6 m longer, at 75.3 m making it the longest civil aircraft produced. It also has a modified wing with an increased span of 63.4 m.

The A340-600 is designed to fly up to 7250 nm with a full payload of passengers and is configured with 308 seats in the Virgin Atlantic three class layout. The aircraft is powered by four Rolls Royce Trent 500 engines each delivering 56,000lb of thrust.

### ***BOEING 747-400 BASIC FACTS***

These aircraft are powered by 4 GE CF6-80C2 engines. Carrying more than 57,000 gallons of fuel, the –400 series consumes up to 13 per cent less fuel than previous versions of the B747 and engine noise levels are half that of original 747s in the 1970s. The typical maximum range is 7000 nm.

## **Virgin Atlantic Route Network**

- **USA**

Heathrow/New York (Newark)/Heathrow*	VS001/VS002 VS017/VS018
Heathrow/New York (JFK)/Heathrow**	VS003/VS004 VS009/VS010 VS045/VS046
Heathrow/Miami/Heathrow	VS005/VS006
Heathrow/Los Angeles/Heathrow*	VS007/VS008 VS023/VS024
Heathrow/Boston/Heathrow	VS011/VS012
Gatwick/Orlando/Gatwick*	VS015/VS016 VS027/VS028
Heathrow/San Francisco/Heathrow	VS019/VS020
Heathrow/Washington DC/Heathrow	VS021/VS022
Gatwick/Las Vegas/Gatwick	VS043/VS044
Manchester/Orlando/Manchester	VS075/VS076
Heathrow/Chicago/Heathrow	VS039/VS040

- **Indian**

Heathrow/Mauritius/Heathrow	VS372/VS373
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- **Africa**

Heathrow/Johannesburg / Heathrow	VS601/VS602
Heathrow /Cape Town / Heathrow	VS603/VS604
Heathrow/Lagos/Heathrow	VS651/VS652
Heathrow/Nairobi/Heathrow	VS671/VS672

- **Asia Pacific**

Heathrow/Tokyo/Heathrow	VS900/VS901
Heathrow/Hong Kong/Sydney/Hong Kong/Heathrow	VS200/VS201 VS238/VS239 **
Heathrow/Shanghai/Heathrow	VS250/VS251
Heathrow/Delhi/Heathrow	VS300/VS301
Heathrow/Mumbai/Heathrow	VS350/VS351

- **Middle East**

Heathrow/Dubai/Heathrow	VS400/VS401
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- **Caribbean**

Gatwick/Barbados/Gatwick	VS029/VS030
Gatwick/St Lucia/Gatwick	VS031/VS032
Gatwick/Antigua/Gatwick	VS033/VS034
Gatwick/Tobago/Grenada/Tobago/Gatwick	VS051/VS052
Gatwick/Havana/Gatwick	VS063/VS064
Manchester/Barbados/Manchester	VS077/VS078
Gatwick/Montego Bay/Gatwick	VS065/VS066
Manchester/St Lucia/Manchester	VS079/VS080
Gatwick/Kingston/Gatwick	VS069/VS070

\*Two services per day, \*\* Four services per day

## Performance Statistics

### Financial Statistics

	<i>Group Turnover</i>	<i>Group Profit (Loss) Before Tax</i>
<i>Year ended</i>	<i>(£m)</i>	<i>(£m)</i>
31 July 1989	106.8	8.4
31 July 1990	208.8	8.7
31 October 1991 (15 months ended)	382.9	6.2
31 October 1992	356.9	(14.5)
31 October 1993	400.9	0.5
31 October 1994	503.4	(3.0)
31 August 1995 (10 months ended)	507.0	36.5
30 April 1996 (8 months ended)	440.0	41.3
30 April 1997	785.1	64.7
30 April 1998	942.3	91.2
30 April 1999	1,066.6	98.7
30 April 2000	1,267.6	4.1
30 April 2001	1,517.5	45.5
30 April 2002	1,499.8	(92.6)
30 April 2003	1,401.2	15.7
29 February 2004 (10 months ended)	1,272.0	20.9
28 February 2005 *	1,630.0	20.1
28 February 2006 *	1,912.3	41.6
28 February 2007	2,141.4	46.8**
28 February 2008	2,336	60.9

\*pre-tax profit, pre-exceptional items

\*\* excluding Virgin Nigeria

### Passenger Numbers

<i>Year</i>	<i>Total passengers carried</i>	<i>Total cumulative</i>
1984	124,711	124,711
1985	245,404	370,115
1986	289,060	659,175
1987	464,196	1,123,371
1988	626,319	1,749,690
1989	619,506	2,369,196
1990	837,136	3,206,332
1991	1,044,760	4,251,092
1992	1,239,011	5,490,103
1993	1,398,834	6,888,937
1994	1,679,403	8,568,340
1995	2,029,624	10,597,964
1996	2,293,802	12,891,766
1997	2,806,538	15,698,304
1998	3,206,117	18,904,421
1999	3,622,422	22,526,843
2000	4,280,044	26,806,887
2001	4,105,115	30,912,002
2002	3,808,687	34,720,689
2003	3,850,578	38,571,267
2004	4,323,268	42,894,535
2005	4,483,262	47,377,797
2006	5,142,080	52,519,877
2007	5,921,766	58,441,643
2008	5,764,603	64,206,246

## *Virgin Holidays – Company Background*

Virgin Holidays was formed in 1985 following the creation of Virgin Atlantic Airways with a view to selling seats on the new Virgin Atlantic routes to New York, Orlando and Miami. Forming the leisure marketing wing of the Virgin Atlantic Group, Virgin Holidays has become one of the largest and most successful scheduled tour operators in the UK, providing tailor-made holidays World-wide.

Built on the Virgin principles of excellent customer service, high quality and value for money, Virgin Holidays offers maximum convenience and flexibility with an emphasis on fun and excitement. The brand is particularly known for the “magic touches” our customers have come to expect whatever destination they choose. Furthermore, the brand has become synonymous with honesty and reliability, delivered with a sense of fun and an innovative twist.

Since its creation, Virgin Holidays has gone from strength to strength. The company now offers an extensive selection of holidays to mainland USA, Canada, Florida, Caribbean and South Africa. In addition, a well-established ski programme and ‘taste of adventure’ product have enabled the brand to ensure that travellers’ lifestyles are reflected in the offerings sold.

The worldwide product offering has grown extensively, and 2007 saw the addition of a direct service to Mauritius and a brand new Indian Ocean selection to match. Other new destinations include: Madagascar, Malaysia, Reunion and bigger and better adventures in Kenya, Thailand and even Panama. The company’s latest partnership with Intrepid Travel offers ‘Real World Adventures’ for the young and adventurous.

As the number of featured resorts has grown, so has the number and type of passengers that choose Virgin Holidays. In 1986, Virgin Holidays carried just over 14,000 passengers, this year the company is expected to carry around *400,000* passengers. A clear indication of the high passenger loyalty and the enviable level of repeat business that Virgin Holidays receives can be seen by the growing membership of the Frequent Virgin Club.

Virgin Holidays has become one of the largest and most successful transatlantic tour operators in the UK, holding the position of market leader to Florida, USA and Caribbean. The future will see the brand cement its place as an operator offering a comprehensive world-wide product. This year saw the company scoop the prestigious “Best Long Haul Tour Operator” at the 2008 TTG Awards for the second year in a row. This trade endorsement, from the agents on the front line, ensures that consumer satisfaction is matched by strong ties with Industry partners. The consumer ‘nod’ came soon after with the British Travel Awards, where the business scooped the ‘Tour Operator to the USA and Canada’, ‘Best Tour Operator to the Caribbean’ and the ‘Best Weddings And Honeymoons Tour Operator’.

Spring 2008 saw another ‘first’ from Virgin Holidays, with the launch of V ROOM, a dedicated lounge for Virgin Holidays customers with three areas – kids, adults only and family. And in September 2008 a new partnership with Hip Hotels – each customer is provided with a personal Travel Guru who locates the hippest hotels, the most extraordinary design and architecture, and the most enticing locations, to the customer’s exact specifications. With a Travel Guru from start to finish, customers will have the world they way they want it – from guest lists in New York, to wine lists in the Bahamas, spa lists in Hong Kong or piste lists in Aspen.

## ***Airline Partnerships***

Virgin Atlantic announced its unique global partnership with Singapore Airlines in December 1999. Under the terms of the deal Singapore Airlines acquired a minority stake of 49% of Virgin Atlantic. The partnership is a perfect match - both airlines have an unparalleled reputation for quality and innovation, and have won countless awards from the travel industry.

The cost of the transaction to Singapore Airlines was £600.25 million, which included a capital injection of £49 million. At the time Virgin reinvested a further £51 million into Virgin Atlantic. This transaction for a minority equity investment valued Virgin Atlantic at a minimum of £1.225 billion.

Virgin Atlantic, the UK's second largest long haul airline, operates a fleet of 38 aircraft to 30 destinations in Africa, Asia, Middle East, Indian Ocean, North America, the Caribbean and Australia.

The two carriers' route networks do not overlap and are uniquely complementary. Under the terms of the memorandum of understanding, the two carriers have retained their distinctive identities and have continued to develop their own products. The two companies have retained their independent management teams but Singapore Airlines has some representation on the Virgin Atlantic Board of Directors.

Frequent flyers on Virgin Atlantic and Singapore Airlines are able to earn mileage and redeem travel rewards on each other's services. Additionally Virgin Atlantic and Singapore Airlines work together to offer their passengers greater benefits including Round The World fares, access to lounges world-wide, and an increasingly seamless travel experience across their networks.

## **Airline Alliances**

To enable us to offer flights to even more destinations around the world, we have entered into alliances with a number of partner airlines – each hand picked for their high levels of service and customer care. On alliance services connecting with Virgin Atlantic flights we are able to through check passengers and their baggage to their final destination, where local customs regulations permit.

We have synchronised our schedules with those of our partners to enable us to offer passengers the shortest possible connections between our services. Passengers are also able to earn and redeem Flying Club miles on our alliance services, subject to the terms and conditions of individual Agreements.

### **Singapore Airlines**

Our Codeshare Agreement with Singapore Airlines enables Virgin Atlantic passengers to purchase tickets in Economy and Business class on Singapore Airlines services from both London Heathrow and Manchester to Singapore and passengers can now travel between both London and Manchester to Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Brisbane and Perth (can only be sold in connection with VS Codeshare flights from Heathrow/ Manchester to Singapore ). Singapore Airlines passengers are able to purchase seats between Singapore and Orlando, Boston, Miami, Washington, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago and Dubai using Virgin Atlantic operated services.

### **bmi British Midland**

Our Codeshare arrangement with bmi British Midland (BD) allows European passengers greater access and simple connections onto our worldwide network of services operated from Heathrow. Our partnership allows us to offer connections between Amsterdam, Brussels, Dublin, Hanover, Venice, Palma and many other of our Heathrow operated services. The Codeshare has recently been expanded so that passengers travelling to and from the Middle East can benefit from seamless connections onto Virgin's network, via London Heathrow. Passengers can travel on the following routes:

New York JFK, Boston, Los Angeles to Amman via London Heathrow

New York JFK, Newark, Boston, Los Angeles to Beirut via London Heathrow

New York JFK, Newark, Boston, Los Angeles to Yerevan via London Heathrow

New York JFK, Newark to Tel Aviv via London Heathrow

Los Angeles to Tehran via London Heathrow

Additionally Virgin Atlantic customers will also be able to make bookings to travel to/from the airline's long-haul destinations and the following UK cities served by bmi:

- Aberdeen
- Belfast
- Durham Tees Valley
- Edinburgh
- Glasgow
- Leeds Bradford
- Manchester

### **Continental Airlines**

Virgin Atlantic's Codeshare Agreement with Continental Airlines (CO) allows us to jointly offer high quality, high frequency services to New York. We sell seats in Economy class and BusinessFirst on one Continental operated London Heathrow - Newark services allowing us to make six daily services available to NYC. VS also codeshare on services from Newark to various destinations in the US operated by CO. These services can only be sold in connection with the VS1/VS2 Heathrow -Newark services.

### **South African Airways**

Virgin Atlantic's Codeshare Agreement with South African Airways (SA) enables passengers to connect between Virgin Atlantic services to and from Johannesburg, and SA service between Johannesburg and Cape Town, Durban, Port Elizabeth and East London.

**US Airways**

Virgin Atlantic's Codeshare Agreement with US Airways (US) enables Virgin Atlantic passengers convenient connections between Virgin Atlantic services from Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Las Vegas, and American West services from Phoenix and Las Vegas.

**Virgin Blue**

Virgin Atlantic's Codeshare Agreement with Virgin Blue enables Virgin Atlantic passengers to connect between Virgin Atlantic services to and from Sydney and Hong Kong with Virgin Blue flights between Brisbane, Adelaide, Cairns, Melbourne, Canberra and Gold Coast domestic flights

**Air China**

Virgin Atlantic's Codeshare Agreement with Air China enables Virgin Atlantic passengers to purchase flights between London Heathrow and Beijing, complimenting Virgin Atlantic's daily flights into Shanghai. Air China will codeshare on Virgin Atlantic's daily services between London Heathrow and Shanghai.

**All Nippon Airways**

Virgin Atlantic's alliance agreement allows Virgin Atlantic passengers to fly onwards in Japan on ANA's domestic services. The deal will also allow ANA travellers to fly on Virgin Atlantic services from ANA destinations on the Virgin route network.

**Air Jamaica**

Air Jamaica (JM) Codeshare on Virgin Atlantic services from London Gatwick to Montego Bay and Kingston, and also on Virgin Atlantic's Heathrow-Miami service.

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## **The Virgin Atlantic product**

On its long haul routes Virgin Atlantic operates a three class service: Upper Class (the airline's business class,) Premium Economy and Economy. Virgin Atlantic launched the Upper Class Suite in November 2003 – a product which has won some of the most prestigious design awards in the industry and is now onboard all aircraft in the airline's fleet.

### **THE UPPER CLASS SUITE:**

- The Upper Class suite is different to anything else flying today. The product has been designed to be separately both the most comfortable bed and the most comfortable seat in the air.
- Instead of extending from a seat into a bed, Virgin Atlantic's seat provides the passenger with a luxury leather armchair to relax on which then flips over into a separate bed with a mattress to sleep on.
- The Upper Class Suite has won some of the most prestigious design awards in the industry including the Wallpaper award for the Most Life Enhancing Item and the D&AD Yellow Pencil (Silver) award for Product Design.

### **HEADLINE FACTS:**

- The longest bed of any airline's business class product and many first class products.
- It provides passengers with customised luxury furniture for sitting on and a mattress for sleeping on so passengers do not have to compromise on the comfort of either.
- The 1-2-1 / 1-1-1 configuration means passengers have their own personal space with no 'step over' by other passengers.
- Passengers can recline in the seat even for take-off and landing!

### **THE COMPARISONS:**

- The seat is 2" wider than British Airways' First Class seat and the bed is 3.5" longer, and 3.5" wider in the lower bed area.
- The seat is 2" wider than the First Class seats offered by 10 major airlines including British Airways, Lufthansa, United Airlines, and American Airlines.

### **THE BED FACTS:**

- It is the biggest bed in business class at 79.5"
- At its widest point, the all – important shoulder area, the bed is 33"
- With one touch of a button the seat converts into a bed by flipping over.
- The mattress is totally flat for optimum sleeping comfort.

### **THE CABIN FACTS:**

- The seats television screen is 10.4 inches wide.
- The Upper Class cabin features a private bar in an area discreet from the cabin.
- White cotton bedding, duvets and sleeper suits are provided.

## **Upper Class**

- The Upper Class Suite provides the passenger with a luxury leather armchair to relax on which then flips over into a separate bed with a mattress to sleep on. The Upper Class Suite is available across Virgin Atlantic's network and is fitted onto all Virgin Atlantic's 747-400, A340-600 aircraft and A340-300 aircraft.
- The Freedom menu offers a wide selection of light bites, main meals and snacks which can be ordered at any time during the flights allowing the passenger to eat what they want when they want. A good night flight service is also offered to passengers on flights departing after 9pm – so passengers can enjoy a gourmet meal in the Clubhouse before their flight so that once onboard they can maximise their sleep.
- Onboard bar - a private bar in an area separated from the cabin, which has a welcoming atmosphere.
- The Upper Class amenity kit - socks, toothbrush/toothpaste, earplugs, eye mask. The items above are viewed by passengers as the essentials they need to receive on a flight. We also offer passengers pens, lip balm, moisturiser and stain remover if they require these items.
- Sleeper service – “Snoozezone” is available on all evening flights of eight hours or under, departing from an airport, which has a Clubhouse where passengers can enjoy an evening meal. After takeoff they are offered a drink, then the lights are dimmed in their cabin so they can enjoy the maximum amount of sleeping time in their Upper Class Suite.
- State-of-the-art inflight entertainment system. The majority of aircraft have the v:port system offers 300 hours of video on demand where passengers can watch or listen to what they want and can start, pause or rewind their chosen movie, TV show or CD. Alternatively, there is a choice of between 14 - 20 video channels plus 9 - 14 audio channels and 10 – 15 games on selected aircraft.
- Dedicated check-in and priority boarding.
- Complimentary drinks including pre-take off champagne and ice creams during the movies.
- Unique Clubhouse lounges at selected airports featuring a health and beauty salon offering beauty treatments and hairdressing. In addition the flagship Heathrow Clubhouse has a poolside lounge, Multiscreen, observation deck, sky lounge, library, music room, playground/video games room, study, bar, brasserie/deli.
- Arrival facilities – Virgin Revivals at Heathrow features a reception, eighteen shower rooms with a valet cleaning service, a bar and lounge area and a business area with free phone calls, access to email and Internet and faxing facilities.
- Complimentary airport transfers are available to and from most airports of arrival and departure; UK options include chauffeur driven Volvo or Virgin LimoBike in the UK and first class Gatwick Express travel.
- The new Upper Class Wing recently launched at London Heathrow enables business passengers to speed through the terminal quicker than ever before, moving from limo to lounge in under 10 minutes. For the first time, passengers can now benefit from a dedicated security channel, for use exclusively by Virgin Atlantic customers. After passing through this unique fast-track, they will emerge in the heart of the terminal building and only a short walk from the Virgin Atlantic Clubhouse. Upper Class passengers and Flying Club Gold members making their own way to the airport can check-in at the Upper Class Check-In, in Zone A of the main terminal, before taking a priority lift straight to the dedicated security channel. For those Upper Class customers not wishing to linger and enjoy the delights of the Clubhouse they can now check in 40 minutes prior to their scheduled departure time at the latest, and whizz through the dedicated security channel straight to the gate.
- Drive-Thru Check In is available at London Gatwick and Johannesburg airport.
- Membership of Virgin FlyingClub, Virgin Atlantic's frequent flyer programme offering a wide range of awards and participating companies.

## **Premium Economy Class**

Virgin Atlantic's economy service is segmented into Premium Economy and Economy. Premium Economy was first introduced in 1992 as Mid Class, a service aimed at the cost conscious business traveller who for budgetary reasons travels economy but still requires extra space in which to work or relax. The product was rebranded as Premium Economy in November 1994.

### **Premium Economy seat**

Virgin Atlantic's Premium Economy seat features:

- Enhanced ergonomics for increased comfort
- Leather seat covers
- Increased seat width of 21 inches (equivalent to other airlines' business class) – around 3 inches wider than other airlines' Premium Economy seats
- Dual position footrest
- Adjustable headrest with wings
- Lumbar air bags
- Additional 2 degrees of recline – 16 degrees
- Redesigned tray table
- Laptop power

The Premium Economy cabin and service features:

- A comfortable and spacious ergonomically designed seat with 38" seat pitch (equivalent to some airlines' business class).
- Laptop power in all seats on LHR aircraft
- Priority boarding
- Separate cabin
- Dedicated toilet on selected aircraft
- Pre-departure drink.
- State-of-the-art inflight entertainment system. On the majority of aircraft the v:port system offers 300 hours of video on demand where passengers can watch or listen to what they want and can start, pause or rewind their chosen movie, TV show or CD. Alternatively, there is a choice of between 14 - 20 video channels plus 9 - 14 audio channels and 10 - 15 games on selected aircraft.
- Enhanced dinner service served on china with stainless steel cutlery with a choice of three entrees, including a vegetarian option.
- Priority economy duty free choice.
- The amenity kit is a smart aubergine and mink coloured wallet including every traveller's essential needs inside: toothbrush and toothpaste, eyeshades, a pen, socks and earplugs.
- Newspapers
- Priority baggage reclaim.
- Dedicated check-in at all locations.
- Membership of Virgin flying Club, Virgin Atlantic's frequent flyer programme offering a wide variety of awards and participating companies.

## **Economy Class**

Virgin Atlantic's Economy class aims to give maximum value for money

- Contoured, space-saving seats, maximising legroom; an average seat pitch of 31"; new seats have adjustable headrests and lumbar supports.
- Pillows and blankets.
- State of the art inflight entertainment system. A majority of aircraft feature the v:port system offers 300 hours of video on demand where passengers can watch or listen to what they want and can start, pause or rewind their chosen movie, TV show or CD. Alternatively, there is a choice of between 14 - 20 video channels plus 9 - 14 audio channels and 10 - 15 games on selected aircraft.
- Choice of three entrees with main meal including a vegetarian option
- Free drinks.
- Membership of Virgin *flyingclub*, Virgin Atlantic's frequent flyer programme offering a wide variety of awards and participating companies.
- Special features for children (see separate section).
- For the outbound journey the amenity kit is filled with added extras including socks, eyeshades, a Virgin Atlantic pen and a toothbrush and toothpaste - all packed into an opaque rucksack. For the inbound journey passengers receive some eye shades, ear plugs, toothpaste and a toothbrush in a wash bag.
- Leaving the UK, passengers get the choice of a complimentary newspaper.
- Passengers can check in online for all flights except Nigeria and when travelling to the UK from Havana, Grenada and Tobago.

## ***Inflight entertainment***

### ***Virgin firsts in inflight entertainment***

First airline to offer business class passengers individual TVs with the introduction of Sony Video walkmans and a library of films in 1989.

First airline operating wide-bodied aircraft to offer individual TV screens and a choice of channels to passengers in all classes when in 1991 it introduced a six channel system and individual seat arm or seat back TVs.

First airline to install interactive entertainment with individual TVs in all classes with the introduction of Virgin Arcadia.

### **1 *v:port***

This system is onboard some 747-400s and all A340-600s. It offers Video on Demand where passengers can watch or listen to what they want and can start, pause or rewind their chosen movie, TV show or CD.

#### **What it features:**

300 hours of video on content

A jukebox with over 100 CDs. Passengers can listen to an entire CD or just an individual track. There is also a choice of playlists, comprising of specially selected tracks.

A selection of audio books.

18 computer games, some of which are multi-player and one, Battlemail Kung-fu, has been developed exclusively for Virgin.

A Quick Find facility that allows passengers to look for films starring their favourite movie star, comedy shows or language programming.

A dedicated Kids Zone that has it's own menus and contains programming suitable for children and a parental block.

Laptop power is available in Upper Class and Premium Economy cabins on aircraft operating from Heathrow.

IMap is a fully interactive map application - not only can passengers track their flight, but they can also roam around the world, zoom in on different destinations and points of interest

Air to ground send and receive SMS text messaging to mobile phones and email addresses.

Seat to seat message facility

Live Text News facility providing passengers with round the clock news stories which are updated hourly!

AQA (Any Questions Answered) facility providing passengers with the facility to text their questions via the handset and receive a reply back in minutes!

27 destination guide channels

In-seat phones

## **Virgin Atlantic's new facilities at T3, London Heathrow**

### **New Check In area**

The new fast and efficient terminal at Heathrow T3, will give millions of its passengers a seamless and simple journey through the airport. Virgin Atlantic's brand new Check-In area for Premium Economy and Economy passengers, in Zone A means passengers will benefit from a new Check In area which is wider, brighter and more spacious, enabling passengers to check-in at kiosks in a fast, efficient and stress-free way. Virgin Atlantic expects 80% of its passengers at Heathrow to be using Online or Kiosk Check-In by the end of 2008.

### **Upper Class Wing**

Virgin Atlantic recently introduced the world's fastest airport check-in with the launch of its new Upper Class Wing at London Heathrow's Terminal 3. The new Wing enables Virgin Atlantic's business passengers to speed through the terminal quicker than ever before, moving from limo to lounge in under 10 minutes.

The Upper Class Wing is like no other business or first-class check-in. Upper Class passengers travelling to the airport in a limo, who will already have supplied check-in details to their driver, are taken in their limos up a curved ramp onto a 22-metre wide arrival area. After being welcomed by a Virgin Atlantic host, check-in formalities are completed before the passengers walk through a new hotel-style lobby area and through the dedicated security channel for use exclusively by Virgin Atlantic customers. After passing through this unique fast-track, they emerge in the heart of the terminal building and only a short walk from the Virgin Atlantic Clubhouse.

Upper Class passengers and Flying Club Gold members making their own way to the airport can check-in at the Upper Class Reception, in Zone A of the main terminal, before taking a priority lift straight to the dedicated security channel.

### **Upper Class airport lounges**

### **Arrivals lounges**

Lounge facilities are available on arrival at:

London – Heathrow Revivals – arrivals lounge with facilities including showers, Cowshed spa, business centre (with PCs, fax and photocopier), lounge bar and deli serving breakfast and snacks. Daily newspapers and magazines available.

### **Departure lounges**

Virgin Atlantic offer Clubhouse facilities at the following airports. At other airports Virgin Atlantic fly to, there are agreements with other carriers or the airport itself to offer lounge facilities.

- London - Heathrow The Virgin Clubhouse Heathrow
- London – Gatwick The Virgin Clubhouse Gatwick
- New York – Newark The Virgin Clubhouse Newark
- New York – JFK The Virgin Clubhouse JFK
- Boston The Virgin Clubhouse Boston
- Washington The Virgin Clubhouse Washington
- San Francisco The Virgin Clubhouse San Francisco
- Tokyo The Virgin Clubhouse Tokyo (recently refurbished)
- Hong Kong The Virgin Clubhouse Hong Kong
- Johannesburg The Virgin Clubhouse Johannesburg

Facilities available in these lounges include:

- Complimentary drinks & bar menu
- Newspaper and magazines
- Fax, photocopier, computers.

Complimentary WiFi is now available for passengers visiting the Heathrow, Gatwick, JFK, Washington, Narita and Hong Kong Clubhouses. WiFi is currently being rolled out across all the clubhouses.

- Check-in at lounge for passengers with hand baggage only where possible
- TV, video, games
- Toilet & showers

## **Upper Class lounges**

### **The Virgin Clubhouse at Heathrow**

The new Virgin Clubhouse at Heathrow opened in March 2006. The £11m flagship lounge, which is over 2,500 square metres in total, was created by the Virgin Atlantic design team with the help of Softroom, the London based architectural practice, with interiors designed to feel like a private members' club. The Clubhouse provides the ultimate pre-flight experience for every passenger with an array of exciting and unique features.

**The Reception** – Guests enter the clubhouse via a grand staircase and are welcomed at a concierge desk that offers travel and secretarial support. Alternatively, passengers can press a concierge button on any phone situated around the lounge for service at their seat.

**Cowshed at the Clubhouse** – A range of treatments available for both men and women. The range of treatments available is:

Shave treatment - a shoulder massage, power cleanse & invigorating scrub, wet shave and tone & condition.

Facial – shoulder massage, double cleanse & exfoliation, hot towel infusion and eyebrow tidy.

Collagen eye treatment – shoulder massage, double cleanse, pressure point massage around eyes & collagen eye mask.

Manicure – file tidy, cuticle clean up, hand & arm massage or polish

Pedicure – cleansing & exfoliating foot soak, file tidy, cuticle clean up, refreshing leg massage or polish.

There is also a range of shorter treatments including:

Shoulder & neck massage

Head massage

Leg & foot massage

Eyebrow tidy

File & paint

St Tropez spray tan

**Bumble and bumble Hair Salon** – Offering a range of stylish cuts to men and women.

**Spa** – Spa pool, sauna with six steam rooms and six showers.

**St Tropez Tanning Booth** – Fully automated tanning or spray tan by professional therapist.

**Poolside Lounge** -Upper Class passengers can relax in an oasis of tranquillity. A ceiling to floor Japanese water wall runs gently into the pool helping passengers to unwind and relax.

**The Den** - Games area featuring a pool table and retro video games consoles.

**Multiscreen** – Entertainment area featuring state-of-the-art video projection system, which can simultaneously show a multitude of channels or be reconfigured as one single cinema screen.

**Playground** – Children's activity centre featuring the latest games and toys and dedicated children's television.

**Observation Deck** – South-West facing area running along the length of the Clubhouse with large windows for great views of the runway.

**Gallery** – Viewing area behind the bar.

**Sky Lounge** – Hideaway mezzanine at the top of a white staircase with loungers, daybeds and leather seating, a skylight and full width sloping windows.

**The Roof Garden** – Unique outside garden with great views of the runway and airport action.

**The Brasserie** – An informal area with a continental feel, where diners can choose from a menu to cater for every appetite and sit at individual tables or booths.

**The Deli** – Deli offering a light new food alternative with fresh produce and daily specials. There is a 7 metre long marble clad table for diners.

**Grab and Go** – Two stations offering healthy and indulgent snacks as well as selection of drinks and bottled water.

**Cocktail Bar** – The 14 metre long cocktail bar serving a selection of classic drinks and sophisticated cocktails.

**The Office and Library** – Private room with eight business stations, fax machines, telephones, printers, photocopiers and library with antique refectory table (which has been retained from the previous Clubhouse and originally came from Sir Richard Branson's house.)

**Internet Access** – The Clubhouse is fully wireless and there are numerous lap top points dotted around the different areas. There are also 8 Sony laptops with internet access at different points for those wishing to browse the net. The Clubhouse is also a T Mobile Hotspot.

## **The Virgin Clubhouse Gatwick**

The Gatwick Clubhouse was opened on 22 September 1998 by Roland Rivron, Jonathon Ross and Richard Branson. The Virgin Clubhouse offers a modern classic environment offering a comfortable, innovative, witty and colourful atmosphere.

The Clubhouse is located beyond passport control in the South Terminal. It is designed to offer a choice of environments where the passenger can relax, have fun and enjoy themselves whilst waiting for their Virgin Atlantic flight.

Travellers are invited to explore the Clubhouse to find the space which best captures their mood at that particular time of day. The full spectrum of choice available is best explained by a tour through the rooms:

### **The Reception**

On entering the Clubhouse, guests are greeted and welcomed at the concierge desk that offers information on Virgin Atlantic services.

### **The Bar**

Located at the far end of the Clubhouse, the bar offers a breakfast menu that includes a selection of hot and cold food, plus a drinks bar.

### **The Library**

The library offers a wide selection of books, with antique leather furniture to relax on. Newspapers and magazines are also provided.

### **The Games Room**

A spacious room with Guitar Hero and interactive gaming machines. A selection of children's toys and books are also available.

### **The Business Centre**

This room has individual work stations offering phone, fax, photocopying facilities as well as access to the Internet and international financial news services.

### **Virgin Touch**

Virgin's pre-flight grooming and relaxation salon offers a wide range of facials, massages and beauty treatments for male and female passengers, all by Virgin's fully qualified beauty therapists. Hair cutting and styling is also available.

### **Cinema**

A red floor to wall padded surround sound cinema, which offers comfy sofas and beanbags with a wide-screen cinema where terrestrial and Satellite television can be viewed.

**In addition the Clubhouse offers:**

### **Toilets and showers**

Ultra modern restrooms with showers and facilities for baby changing and for those with disabilities.

### **Telephone booths**

Local and national are free of charge. There is a charge for international calls.

### **Wardrobe area**

Offering lockable lockers and hanging facilities.

### **Special features for children & infants**

Virgin has paid close attention to the safety, comfort and entertainment needs of children and infants, providing the following additional features for young travellers:

- Special children's meals – plain food designed to appeal to children.
  
- KiDs brightly coloured record bag containing:
  - Watch
  - Reading book
  - Baseball cap
  - Pop a point pencil
  - Magazine
  - Love Heart sweets
  
- Virgin Atlantic's award winning inflight entertainment gives kids a superb selection of the latest movies as well as their own dedicated TV channels.
  
- Unaccompanied minors programme, including 'Virgin Aunties', for groups of unaccompanied minors on all routes.
  
- Baby changing facilities on all aircraft.
  
- Virgin 'Skycots' – bassinets for infants under 1 year old.
  
- Infant care chair (child safety seat specifically designed for airline use) pioneered by Virgin for children aged six months to three years depending on height and weight.
  
- Complimentary nappies, bottles and baby food available in all classes.

## ***Passengers with Special Needs***

Virgin Atlantic has pledged to the Airline Passenger Services Commitment, the UK Department for Transport's Code of Practice on Access to Air Travel for Disabled People and other national legislation & guidelines where appropriate. This sets out to improve the accessibility of air travel to people with reduced mobility by ensuring their needs are understood and provided for and their safety and dignity are respected.

Virgin Atlantic has a UK office-based department called Special Assistance to deal with any special needs requests. Special Assistance requires as much notice and information as possible (a minimum of 48hrs) so that they can communicate all requirements to the airports and crew operating the flights and reserve any equipment necessary.

### **DETAILS OF SPECIAL ASSISTANCE SERVICES AVAILABLE**

Cabin crew and airport staff undergo special training courses in assisting passengers with restricted mobility and/or impaired sight or hearing.

Large print and braille safety cards are available on all Virgin Atlantic flights and can be requested in advance of travel, providing 2 working days notice is given.

Assistance to and from the aircraft can be arranged via wheelchair or motorised buggy if available. \*

Onboard wheelchairs are available on all aircraft for transfer through the cabin. Toilet access - Although weight bearing passengers will be able to access all toilets from the on board wheelchair, on some aircraft side to side access to the toilet from the on board wheelchair for non weight bearing passengers may be limited - please phone Special Assistance for more details.

Most special medical or religious dietary needs can be catered for with 24 hours notice.

With effect from 10th August 2005, Assistance Dogs can now be carried within the cabin on our East Coast routes. Restrictions apply so please contact our Special Assistance department for full details and requirements.

Two types of support seating are available for children with disabilities who are unable to sit upright. The Burnett Body Support has vacuum technology, which moulds to the body and holds the desired posture. The Travel Chair has head support, a pommel strap, foot rest and is designed for smaller children aged between 3-11 years. Suitability assessment and availability must be made for both support seats. \*

For those that have respiratory conditions, therapeutic oxygen can be supplied onboard free of charge, however this is subject to availability and route - please contact our Special Assistance department for details and process requirements.

Virgin Atlantic was the first airline to provide 'neck loops', which allow hard of hearing passengers to enjoy better quality sound from the inflight entertainment system. A limited number of open caption movies are available onboard. Cabin crew with sign language skills can be requested on flights, however 6 weeks notice is required before the start of the month in which the signer is required, but this service cannot be guaranteed.

## **Medical Equipment Available Onboard**

Therapeutic oxygen is available onboard, but the amount available may differ on different routes.

Automatic External Defibrillators (AEDs) are carried on all Virgin Atlantic flights. Virgin was the first airline to equip its fleet with AEDs in 1990. These devices are able to re-organise the chaotic electrical impulses of the heart in some cardiac arrest victims.

All crew are trained in resuscitation techniques and the senior cabin crew (the Flight Service Manager and two Cabin Service Supervisors on each flight) are trained to use the AED.

The cabin crew are all extensively First Aid trained, annually refreshed and are rigorously tested. As well as other medical equipment each aircraft carries a First Aid Kit (for crew use) and an Emergency Medical Kit (for use by suitably qualified medical volunteers). We have a 24 hour radio/satellite link to specialist medical advice via a response centre – MedLink (MedAire) in Phoenix, Arizona.

Virgin is proud to **have** a telemedical device called Tempus **on all its** fleet. Tempus is designed for use by non-medical experts in remote situations – ideal for on board medical emergencies. Tempus **uses** the satellite technology, which operates Virgin Atlantic's onboard telephone system, to transmit medical information such as pulse rate and blood pressure readings as well as video images to medical experts at the MedAire Centre in Phoenix. The ground-based doctors can then diagnose the problem and advise the crew on the next course of action, enabling crew to use their medical training to assist the passenger.

Tempus' advanced technology significantly increases the airline's onboard medical provision. Cabin Crew now have expert help to differentiate between serious and non-serious medical incidents and do not have to make crucial medical decisions nor interpret medical information themselves. As with defibrillators, it is expected that this technology will soon be adopted as industry standard.

## **'Flying Without Fear'**

Virgin Atlantic launched its 'Flying Without Fear' course on 4 April 1998, designed to help people overcome their anxieties of flying.

The one-day courses are held at either Gatwick, Heathrow, Birmingham, Manchester, Luton, Newcastle, Southampton, Leeds-Bradford, Bournemouth, Edinburgh & Glasgow airport. The courses consist of a morning session led by a Virgin Atlantic Captain who talks on flight safety, take-off and landing procedures, as well as teaching people to recognise the sort of noises that aircraft routinely make in these manoeuvres.

After lunch David Landau teaches relaxation techniques. David Landau has a long track record in psychoanalysis and has made appearances on TV and radio. David talks in depth about fears and phobias and teaches the skills to help people learn to control their fears, preparing them for the flight.

Following this, participants have the opportunity to go on a 45 minute flight. This was a brand new addition to the programme in 2003. The aircraft used are Boeing 737's that have been chartered specifically for the course. The participants are accompanied on the flight by Virgin Atlantic captains, cabin crew and ground staff, who can support them and alleviate any fears. The day ends with a post flight debrief and participants will receive a free CD specially compiled by David Landau.

The course has been designed to allow plenty of time for questions. This creates a very relaxed atmosphere and participants are amazed at how much they enjoy the day. Statistically speaking, the course has a success rate in excess of 98%.

What distinguishes the Virgin Atlantic's 'Flying Without Fear' programme from other courses is the aftercare that participants will receive. After the course, if participants take a flight with Virgin Atlantic, the Virgin Atlantic Special Assistance department will be onhand to help with special requirements tailored specifically to their needs or anxieties regarding the flight. In addition to this there is a 'Flying Without Fear' channel available onboard the aircraft, which is narrated by David Landau, who provides a familiar voice to help relax the passenger.

Virgin Atlantic recently announced that following the success of its Flying Without Fear course the FWF team have brought out a book called – "101 of your questions answered". The book contains answers to 101 questions about flying, valuable information from a cabin crew safety trainer, top tips from aviation experts and psychological tools to help people combat their fear of flying.

## **Loyalty Programmes**

### Flying club

*Flying Club* is Virgin Atlantic's frequent flyer programme and it's one of the most generous around. Every time you take a qualifying flight with us or our wide range of partners you can earn miles which can be spent on a wide range of rewards.

As soon as you join *Flying Club*, you'll become a red member and be entitled to some great benefits such as regular news and offer updates, access to your *Flying Club* account online, and the use of a dedicated helpline.

Once you move up to Flying Club Silver you'll get all the benefits of *Flying Club* Red, plus a good deal more, designed to make your travelling experience even more enjoyable. Benefits include: Use of Premium Economy Check In on every Virgin Atlantic flight (regardless of your class of travel), upgrades for the Gatwick and Heathrow Express train services and much more.

At the pinnacle of *Flying Club* is our gold tier, where you'll receive extra privileges designed just for our most frequent travellers. Benefits include use of Upper Class Check In (on every Virgin Atlantic flight), use of Virgin Clubhouses around the world, bonus miles when flying with us and many more exclusive entitlements.

You can ensure that whatever your travelling habits, *Flying Club* and its partners can offer you a wide range of benefits and rewards to meet your personal travel needs.

For more information please go to [www.virginatlantic.com/flyingclub](http://www.virginatlantic.com/flyingclub)

### Flying Co.

Virgin Atlantic has a sales incentive designed especially for small and medium-sized businesses under the new brand *flying Co.*

*Flying Co* is a unique incentive for smaller businesses because miles are earned twice over. Not only does each business traveller earn miles for their business as a member of *Flying Co*, but they also earn miles for themselves as members of Flying Club, our frequent flyer programme.

*Flying Co* miles can be redeemed on rewards including Virgin Atlantic flights, Virgin Atlantic flight upgrades, chauffeur driven car transfers, London Heathrow and Gatwick Clubhouse invitations, bmi flights, Eurostar tickets and Hertz car rental.

Visit [www.virginatlantic.com/flyingco](http://www.virginatlantic.com/flyingco) for more information.

## **Environmental and recycling programme**

### **Virgin Atlantic's Sustainability Challenge**

Virgin Atlantic is committed to reducing its environmental impact by becoming a more efficient business, leading the industry to practical and technical solutions and engaging, inspiring and empowering our staff and customers to help us meet this challenge

### **In the air**

Virgin Atlantic is continuing to evaluate more efficient ways of operating its existing fleet of aircraft, until the manufacturers can develop technological solutions to reduce carbon emissions such as innovative aircraft design or commercially viable and truly sustainable alternative fuels.

- Putting our planes on a diet - We've also been working hard to remove any extraneous weight from our aircraft. Weight (and the fuel needed to fly it around) is now a key consideration in developing new onboard products and services, and finding lighter-weight alternatives to existing materials can add up to considerable emissions reductions over the course of a year. We have set a target of removing one tonne per aircraft this year alone.
- Cleaner planes – We have ordered 15 new Boeing 787 Dreamliner which burn around 27% less fuel per passenger than the A340-300 they will replace due to new engines, less weight, more efficient systems and advanced aerodynamics. This will help us to achieve our target of improving our fuel efficiency per revenue tonne kilometre by 30% by 2020.
- Ground power – We have been working to improve the availability and reliability of fixed electrical ground power to our aircraft from the central airport system rather than using the aircraft's auxiliary power and burning substantial fuel to run onboard electrical systems whilst on the ground.
- Biofuel demonstration – In February 2008, we operated a biofuel demonstration flight with Boeing, Virgin Fuels and engine manufacturer GE Aviation. This was a world first flight using biofuel by a commercial airline.
- Other initiatives - Where Virgin Atlantic can't have a direct impact on reducing our emissions and environmental footprint, we're working closely with other sectors of the industry to develop models of best practice that can be adopted globally. Reducing emissions generated during the taxiing phase of the flight needs the cooperation of many different companies and organisations, but we're confident that there are a variety of initiatives underway which will allow us to operate our aircraft even more efficiently in the not-too-distant future.

For the first time ever, air passengers will be able to offset their travel during a flight as Virgin Atlantic introduces a Gold Standard Carbon Offset Scheme. The airline has partnered with myclimate to offer the scheme which is available onboard and online, and will benefit projects in India and Indonesia. Virgin Atlantic has committed to Gold Standard projects because it believes that this is the only offset standard that guarantees a positive additional impact on the local communities and the environment.

We are also campaigning for a Single European Sky that, by providing more direct air traffic control routings over Europe, would have a dramatic impact on reducing carbon emissions and allowing aircraft to operate more efficiently. Like the EU Emissions Trading Scheme, of which we are also a big supporter, this will need international cooperation and should be treated as a matter of priority by all governments.

### **On the ground**

- All of the electricity we purchase to run our key office sites is from renewable sources and we are looking into extending this across all of our ground operations. We have set a target of onsite generation of 100% of our electricity for our main UK sites by 2020 and reducing our energy consumption by 10% by 2020.

- We are also working hard to reduce our consumption of natural resources where we can and so have set targets to reduce our water consumption by 10%, and our paper consumption by 25%, both by 2012.
- Virgin Atlantic has a well-established recycling scheme at all of our office locations and ensure that waste from our engineering facilities is disposed of in the appropriate manner. We are now receiving how our off-aircraft waste is dealt with and have set a target to only 50% of our waste will go to landfill by 2012.
- We are working to inspire and engage our customers on the subject of climate change, to empower them to understand what they can do to reduce the impacts of their lifestyle on the environment. To that end we have launched our Gold Standard carbon offset scheme in 2007 which our staff and customers can get involved in on our website and onboard our planes.
- We are also reviewing our key products and suppliers to evaluate where we can provide more sustainable products as part of our award winning service. For example we switched all of our coffee and tea to Fairtrade onboard our aircraft last year.

### Richard Initiatives

- Travel Profits – Sir Richard Branson has committed all of his profits from the Virgin Group's transport interests, including Virgin Atlantic and Virgin Trains, over the next 10 years. The funds will be invested in schemes to develop new renewable technologies, through an investment group called Virgin Fuels.
- \$25 Million Prize – Sir Richard and Al Gore have set up a global science and technology prize – The Virgin Earth Challenge – to encourage technological advancements for the good of mankind. The prize will be awarded to the individual or group who is able to remove one billion tonnes of greenhouse gases from the atmosphere.

## **Recent Awards**

### **2009**

#### **Travel Weekly Awards**

Best Scheduled Airline to the US and Canada

### **2008**

#### **The Sunday Times Travel Magazine Readers Awards 2008**

Best Long-haul Airline

#### **Chinese National Geographic Traveller 2008**

Narita Airport Clubhouse awarded the best designed clubhouse

#### **OAG Airline Industry Awards**

Best Airline in Europe

#### **Design Week Awards**

Hall of Fame – Design Excellence

#### **Design Management Europe Awards**

Large Company award for Design Management

#### **DBA Design Effectiveness Awards – Bronze**

Narita Tokyo Clubhouse

#### **DBA Design Effectiveness Awards – Gold**

Premium Economy Super Seat

#### **Wallpaper Magazine**

World's Fastest Airport Check in for The Upper Class Wing at Heathrow

#### **Red Dot Award – Product Design Distinction for High Design Quality**

The Base, Staff Training Facility

#### **Rough Guides**

Voted most child-friendly airline

#### **Business Travel World Awards**

Best Long-Haul Business Airline

#### **Globe Travel Awards 2008**

Best Scheduled Airline to US/Canada  
Favourite Airline

#### **Skytrax 2008 World Airline Awards**

World's Best Business Class Lounge

#### **Business Destinations Travel Awards 2008**

Best Longhaul Airline

### **2007**

#### **World Travel Awards 2007 - US**

World's Leading Airport Lounge

#### **Zagat's 2007 Global Airline Survey - US**

Best Frequent Flier Program in the World

#### **Travel & Leisure's 2007 Global Vision Awards - US**

Corporate Initiative for Environmental work

#### **Business Travel Awards 2007**

Airline of The Year

Best Airline - Economy

Best Airline - Business

Best Scheduled Airline, Long-Haul

Favourite Scheduled Airline, Long Haul

Best Customer Service for an Airline

#### **Business Traveller Awards**

Best Business Class

Best Premium Economy

#### **Travel Trade Gazette Awards**

Best Business Airline

#### **Conde Nast Reader Travel Awards**

Best Leisure Airline – long-haul

#### **Red Dot Awards**

Product Design – LHR Clubhouse

#### **D&AD Awards**

Environmental Design – LHR Clubhouse

#### **Jet Set Airline Awards - US**

Winner of eCityofStyle 2007 Jet Set Airline Award

#### **Lighting Design Awards 2007**

Isometrix Lighting & Design for the LHR Clubhouse

#### **Design Week Awards**

Best of Show – LHR Clubhouse

Hospitality Environmental – LHR Clubhouse

#### **Travel Weekly's Readers Choice Awards - US**

Best International Airline

#### **Travel Weekly Globe Awards**

Best Scheduled Airline to USA/Canada

#### **TTG Business Travel People Awards**

Best Sales Team

### **2006**

#### **Buying Business Travel Diamond Awards**

Best Business Airline

#### **Buying Business Travel Diamond Awards**

Best Transatlantic Airline

#### **FX Design Award**

Winner - Best Leisure or Entertainment Venue

#### **Campaign Poster Awards**

5 Awards – Advertising

#### **Group Leisure Magazine Awards**

Best Airline for Groups

#### **TTG Awards**

Airline of the Year - Business

**Business Traveller**

Best Business Class  
Best Premium Economy

**Conde Nast Traveller Awards**

Top Business on Transatlantic routes

**BACA 'Excellence Awards'**

Best Passenger Airline

**Business Travel World Awards 2006**

Best Long-haul Business Airline

**Cargo Airline of the Year Awards - Air Cargo News**

Cargo Airline of the Year - Virgin Atlantic Cargo  
Best Cargo Airline to North America - Virgin Atlantic Cargo

**Air Carrier International - Air Cargo World**

Award for Excellence - Virgin Atlantic Cargo

**2006 US Awards****Business Traveler's Reader's Choice Awards****Best Business Class in the World**

Best Premium Economy

**Forbes**

Best Business Class

**Conde Nast Traveler**

Top Business Class on Transatlantic Routes

**Skytrax 2006 World Airline Awards**

World's Best Business Class Lounge

**North American Travel Journalism Association**

Best Foreign Airline

**Travel & Leisure World's Best Awards****Conde Nast Reader's Choice Awards**

Virgin Atlantic scored in the top 5 out of all airlines for both of these awards

**2005****DBA Design Effectiveness Awards**

Industrial Product - Upper Class Suite

**Business Traveller Awards**

Best Premium Economy Class

**New Media Age Effectiveness Awards 2005 - Travel Category**

Virgin Atlantic Web site redesign

**Lighting Design Awards**

Transport Lighting - Upper Class Suite

**Air Transport World Awards**

Passenger Service Award

**International Forum (IF) Design Awards**

IF Product Design - Upper Class Suite

**Cargo Airline of the Year Awards - Air Cargo News**

Best Cargo Airline to North America - Virgin Atlantic Cargo

**Air Carrier - Air Cargo World**

Award for Excellence - Virgin Atlantic Cargo

**2004****Wallpaper Design Awards**

Most Life Enhancing Item - Upper Class Suite

**BSME Awards - Editor of the Year**

Michael Jacovides - for Carlos

**TTG Awards**

Best Long Haul Scheduled Airline

**Travel Bulletin Awards**

Top Leisure Scheduled Airline

**Business Traveller Awards**

Best Premium Economy Class

**Magazine Design Awards**

Best Design Magazine of the Year - Carlos

Best Use of Illustration - Carlos

Best Designed Customer Magazine - Carlos

**IDEA Awards**

IDEA Gold Award - Transport Design - Upper Class Suite

**Red Dot Awards**

Best of the Best high Quality Design - Upper Class Suite Interior

Best High Quality Design - Upper Class Suite

**ID Annual Review Awards**

Best in Furniture - Upper Class Suite

**Group Travel Awards**

Best Airline for Groups

**The Design and Art Direction Awards**

Transport Product Design - The Upper Class Suite

**The Guardian Travel Awards**

Best Business Airline

**Communicators In Business Awards**

Internal Online Publications - Verb Online

**Design Week Awards**

Industrial Product Design winner - Upper Class Suite

Editorial Design winner - Carlos

**Business Travel Awards**

Best Long Haul Business Airline

**Travel Weekly Awards**

Best Transatlantic Airline

**Recruitment Advertising Awards**

Graduate / trainee – Engineering Apprenticeships  
General Appointments – Hairdressers ads  
Hospitality / Travel / Leisure – IFBT ads

Best Cargo Airline to the Far East - Virgin Atlantic  
Cargo

**Cargo Airline of the Year Awards - Air Cargo News**

Best Cargo Airline to North America - Virgin Atlantic  
Cargo

## ***Richard Branson: biography & background***

### ***Founder and President of the Virgin group of companies***

Richard Branson was born in 1950, and educated at Stowe School, where he established a national magazine called Student at the age of sixteen. He started a student advisory service centre aged 17 to help young people. In 1970 he founded Virgin as a mail order record company and shortly after opened a record shop in Oxford Street, London. During 1972, a recording studio was built in Oxfordshire where the first Virgin artist, Mike Oldfield, recorded "Tubular Bells" which was released in 1973.

The first album of the newly created Virgin records went on to sell over 5 million copies. Over the years many household names, including Genesis, Phil Collins, Peter Gabriel, Simple Minds, The Human League, Culture Club, Janet Jackson and The Rolling Stones helped make Virgin one of the top six record companies in the world. The equity of Virgin Music Group – record labels, music publishing and recording studios – was subsequently sold to the Thorn EMI in 1992 in a US\$ 1 billion deal.

The interests of Virgin Group had now expanded into international "Megastore" music retailing, book and software publishing film and video editing facilities, clubs, travel, hotels and cinemas through over 200 companies in 29 countries.

Virgin Atlantic Airways, formed in 1984, has become the second largest British airline and operates a fleet of Boeing 747 and Airbus A340 aircraft to a network of 30 destinations worldwide. The airline was founded on the concept of offering a competitive and high quality Upper Class and Economy service. The airline is now the holder of every major travel award.

Since 1985, Richard has also been involved in a number of world record-breaking attempts. In 1986, his boat 'Virgin Atlantic Challenger II', rekindled the spirit of the Blue Riband by crossing the Atlantic Ocean in the fastest ever recorded time. This was followed a year later by the epic hot air balloon crossing in 'Virgin Atlantic Flyer' which was not only the first to cross the Atlantic but was the largest ever flown. In January 1991, he crossed the Pacific Ocean from Japan to Arctic Canada, again breaking all existing records with speeds of up to 245 miles per hour. Between 1995 and 1998 Richard Branson and Per Lindstrand and Steve Fossett made a number of attempts to circumnavigate the globe by balloon. In late 1998 they made a record breaking flight from Morocco to Hawaii but their dream was shattered by bad weather before a Swiss team successfully circumnavigated the globe early in 1999.

In 1996 Virgin Group launched Virgin Express, a short-haul airline based in Belgium offering a low cost, no frills service and flying within Europe. Virgin Rail operates two rail franchises and is engaged in a \$3.2 billion fleet replacement programme to create one of the most modern rail networks in the world with high speed tilting trains already in operation. In 1999 Virgin entered into the telecommunications business launching Virgin Mobile and in 2000 low cost airline Virgin Blue was launched in Australia, both of these companies have subsequently floated. The Virgin Group today comprises over 200 independent companies, with combined annual sales of some \$8 billion and total employees of around 35,000.

Sir Richard Branson recently announced that the Virgin Group has entered into an agreement to licence the technology to develop the world's first privately funded spaceships dedicated to carrying commercial passengers on space flights. Virgin has formed Virgin Galactic, a new company, which will become the world's first commercial space tourism operator.

In the 1999 New Years Honours list Richard Branson received a knighthood for his 'services to entrepreneurship'.

Richard is married to Joan with two grown children, Holly and Sam.