



CATHAY GETTING CLOSER TO FIRST A350 DELIVERY

News / Airlines



Completion of Cathay Pacific's first Airbus A350-900 is into the home straight, with the aircraft's first flight test on Easter Friday (European time).

Airbus said the aircraft, MSN 0029, which currently wears the test registration F-WZFX and is expected to take B-LRA once handed over to Cathay, made its maiden flight on March 25.

"The aircraft will now enter the final phase of production including cabin completion, further ground checks and test flights before being prepared for delivery in the second quarter of the year," Airbus said in a statement.

Cathay said at its full year results announcement on March 9 the first of 22 A350-900s on firm order would be delivered in May.

The delivery date had previously been set down for the start of 2016, but was believed to have been pushed back due to delays with the production of seats and toilets, according to media reports.

"The first Airbus A350-900XWB aircraft is scheduled to be delivered in May 2016," Cathay said in its calendar 2015 full year results.

"Twelve of these aircraft are scheduled to be delivered in 2016. The first of two Airbus A350

simulators was delivered to the airline in May 2015.”

“The new Airbus A350XWB aircraft will have new cabins, seats and entertainment systems.”

The A350-900s, to be configured with business, premium economy and economy, were expected to be used initially to Europe, with Hong Kong-London (Gatwick) to commence in September. Auckland was also due to transition from the A340-300 to A350-900 in 2016.

All of Cathay’s 22 A350-900s on order were forecast to be delivered in 2016 and 2017, the airline’s full year results showed, while the 26 of the larger A350-100s also on order were expected to arrive in 2018 and beyond.

Airbus chief executive Fabrice Bregier said in January the Toulouse-headquartered manufacturer hoped to deliver some 50 A350s in 2016, as production rates increased from the 14 frames delivered to the likes of Finnair, Qatar Airways, TAM and Vietnam Airlines in calendar 2015.

Singapore Airlines became the fifth A350 operator and second in Asia Pacific behind Vietnam Airways in March.



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