



DUBAI 2015: SPIRIT RISES IN UAE

News / Events / Festivals



A new form of air transport for the UAE, which will add a further boost to the nation's booming tourist industry, will be launched at the **Dubai** Airshow today.

Captain Khaled Ahmed Al-Ansari will introduce '**Spirit** of the Emirates', a **UAE** national project to develop an airship as a tourist attraction.

Airships are classified as 'lighter than air' aircraft and mix lift, generated by helium gas, with small engines to drive and manoeuvre.

Historically, airships were able to fly more than 1,500 commercial trips between Europe and America, where they carried over 34,000 passengers before aeroplanes dominated the route.

Al-Ansari said the Spirit of the Emirates would glide quietly and elegantly at 1,500 feet over the most important tourist sites across the Emirates.

"It will be a safe and environmentally friendly airship that gives a feeling of floating over the clouds through the use of massive windows that allow passengers vast uninterrupted views of the ground," Al-Ansari said.

The creative liveries on the new airship come from French designer, Happy Design Studios,

whose founder, Didier Wolff, has been responsible for a number of the special liveries seen at shows – and in the air – over the past decade.

The platform will also feature advanced technology, including satellite connectivity – the 14 passengers will have tablets loaded with augmented reality programs to enhance the tours with information about the different sightseeing highlights.

The airship will have its own ground station, developed by Dubai-based White Space architects, and brings to fruition a plan that started some 12 years ago.

Passengers will be able to move freely inside the cabin after take-off.

Al-Ansari anticipates more than 20,000 guests per year will fly on the new airship.

08 NOVEMBER 2015

SOURCE: ARABIANAEROSPACE

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