



RICHARD BRANSON IS BRINGING US THE NEXT SUPERSONIC PASSENGER AIRCRAFT

News / Manufacturer, Personalities



On Tuesday, the founder of Virgin Group is joining forces with Boom— an aircraft production startup — to unveil the XB-1 Supersonic Demonstrator, a prototype supersonic passenger airliner.

The aircraft will reportedly provide 3.5-hour flights between New York and London for the "affordable" price of \$5,000.

Creating affordable supersonic flight has been on Branson's radar since the turbojet-powered Concorde retired back in 2003.

"I have long been passionate about aerospace innovation and the development of high-speed commercial flights. As an innovator in the space, Virgin Galactic's decision to work with Boom was an easy one," Branson said in a press release. "We're excited to have an option on Boom's first 10 airframes. Through Virgin Galactic's manufacturing arm, The Spaceship Company, we will provide engineering and manufacturing services, along with flight test support and operations as part of our shared ambitions."

Boom learned from the Concorde, and with the aim to build a "safe, fast, and pleasant to fly" aircraft, was able to create a supersonic design that travels 2.6 times faster than current jetliners. Unlike the retired Concorde, the Boom design requires no afterburner, which significantly improves fuel economy.

Mike Boyd of Boyd Group International, an aviation consulting firm, described the Boom airliner as a core part of the intercontinental airline fleet, explaining, "Travelers are hungry for faster flights and airlines will be excited for a differentiated and profitable option for their premium travelers."

With hardware from General Electric (engines), Honeywell (avionics), Tencate (carbon fiber), and composite structures fabricated by Blue Force, the XB-1 is the world's fastest civil aircraft ever made.

In case that wasn't impressive enough, the aircraft will provide its 45 to 55 passengers with spacious seating on each side of the aircraft's aisle, along with a personal window and overhead bin — the stuff of dreams.

Rendering of an XB-1 interior.

Image not found or type unknown

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Along with Blake Scholl, chief executive officer and founder of Boom, Branson plans to unveil the XB-1, nicknamed "Baby Boom," at Centennial Airport in Denver, Colorado, later this evening.

Scholl and Branson have high hopes for the supersonic airliner, and Scholl even noted that "60

years after the dawn of the jet age, we're still flying at 1960s speeds."

He explained, "Concorde's designers didn't have the technology for affordable supersonic travel, but now we do. Today, we're proud to unveil our first aircraft as we look forward to first flight late next year."

The first XB-1 flight is set to take place later in 2017, so you still have ample time to get pumped.

19 NOVEMBER 2016

SOURCE: MASHABLE

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