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Thai Airways International (THAI) today received the 100th 777 produced by Boeing -- a 777-200 named "Pattani" in honor of its namesake, a southern province in Thailand. An early-morning delivery ceremony took place in front of the airplane amid the elegance of Thai classical music and dance.

During the delivery celebration, the nose of the airplane was decorated with a 20-foot (six-meter) garland of pink and purple orchids, a symbol of THAI's famous "Royal Orchid Service" Airline services, such as "Royal Orchid Plus," and airline programs, such as "Royal Orchid Holidays," also make use of the orchid theme. The carrier's airplanes are distinguished by their brilliant orchid, rose, gold and white paint scheme featuring a stylized orchid on the tail.

The 100th 777 produced by Boeing is the seventh of 14 777s -- eight 777-200s and six 777-300s -- ordered by the Bangkok-based airline. The 777-300, a stretched version of the 777-200, is the world's longest commercial jetliner and is capable of carrying 20 percent more passengers than the 777-200.

THAI took delivery of its first 777 in March 1996, distinguishing the airline as the first to operate the 777 in Southeast Asia. This airplane entered revenue-generating service the following month.

Powered by Rolls-Royce engines, THAI's newest 777-200 will begin service in November 1997, flying between Bangkok and Singapore; Bangkok and Osaka and other regional routes.

Launched in October 1990, the first 777 was delivered in May 1995. As of September 30, 25 airlines worldwide had placed 335 orders for 777s. Since its launch, the Boeing 777 family has captured more than 65 percent of the market for airplanes in its class.

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