Virgin Atlantic Airways Orders Two 747-400s

Virgin Atlantic Airways has placed a firm order for two new Boeing 747-400 passenger airplanes, The Boeing Company confirmed today. GE Capital Aviation Services (GECAS) will provide lease financing for the aircraft.

"As our expansion plans continue we need to maintain our fleet with high quality airplanes," said Sir Richard Branson, chairman of Virgin Atlantic Airways. "These re-designed 747-400s are a welcome addition and will help us to deliver exceptional service to our current destinations, and to develop exciting new routes in the future."

Scheduled for delivery in October and December 2001, the new airplanes will bring Virgin Atlantic's total 747 fleet count to 18, of which eight are 747-400s. Both airplanes will be fitted with General Electric CF6-80C2B5F engines.

"The 747 is the most prestigious and recognized airplane in the world, offering the lowest operating cost per seat of any commercial airplane," said Seddik Belyamani, Boeing Commercial Airplanes Group executive vice president, Sales and Marketing. "We are pleased that Virgin Atlantic has made the 747-400 a part of its expansion plans."

The 747-400 continues the 747 family legacy by integrating advanced technology into one of the world's most modern and fuel-efficient airliners. Currently the only model in production, the 747-400 incorporates major aerodynamic improvements over earlier 747 models, including the addition of winglets to reduce drag, new avionics, a new flight deck and the latest in-flight entertainment systems.

The improved and advanced 747-400 delivers more range and better fuel economy than previous models, has a range of approximately 8,430 statute miles (13,570 km), and the lowest cost per seat-mile of any twin-aisle airplane offered by any manufacturer. It has a dispatch-reliability rate of 98.8 percent.

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