

ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST

THE INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE OF DESIGN

MAY 2008

THE GREAT DESIGN ISSUE



On Cloud Nine

JUAN PABLO MAGANO/COURTESY EDÉSE DORET INDUSTRIAL DESIGN, INC.



No one would deny that flying first class—with its complimentary bubbly, acres of legroom and frequent coddling by cooing flight attendants—is anything but splendid. And yet even the most well-taken-care-of fliers can be heard complaining about air travel and the brutal toll it takes. No matter how nice it gets up there, they lament, it can't beat the comforts of home, or even a decent hotel room.

Edése Doret respectfully disagrees. But then again, he would: The designer has carved out a niche for himself as a creator of airplane interiors so luxe and elegant that passengers are happy to hear the pilot announce they'll have to circle the airport a few more times before landing.

Doret's clients have included African oil conglomerates, the Kuwaiti air force, heads of state and even a major Las Vegas hotel hoping to build a casino in the sky. With clients so varied, he must re-

ABOVE: The private Airbus A380-800 jet that Edése Doret designed "has a modern, loftlike interior with a superyacht feel," he says. **RIGHT:** In the grand lounge, a teak wall, displaying a model of the owner's yacht, separates the theater from the conference area.



WITH A NOD TO THE LOFT, AN AIRBUS JET REDEFINES TRAVEL

Interior Design by Edése Doret Industrial Design/Text by Jeff Turrentine







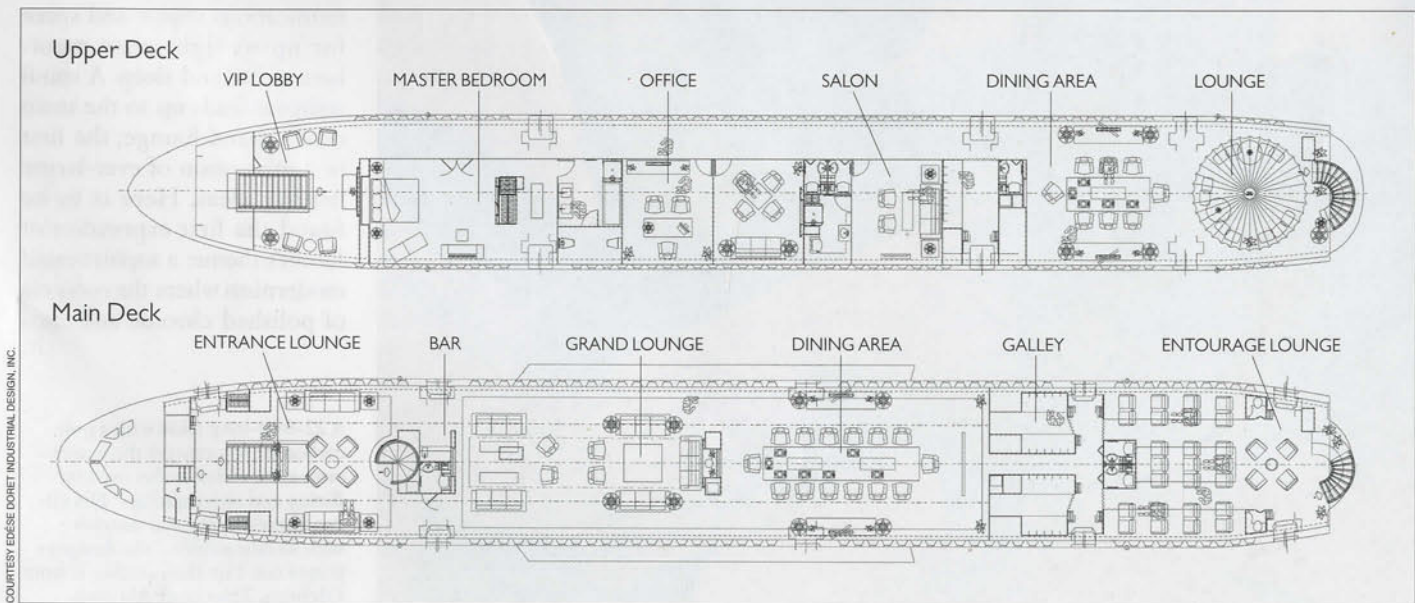
main stylistically flexible and prepared to push envelopes of all kinds. But one recent client, an international businessman living in the Middle East, requested a look for his private Airbus A380-800 that the Manhattan-based Doret had no trouble imagining.

He wanted, in essence, a loft—aloft. His wish, says Doret, “was to have a uniquely modern, minimal interior. After going through many layout options, we decided to create an open plan for the main deck, similar to a New York City loft, with elements from yacht and marine interiors.”

The client uses the plane as an office, a venue for entertaining and a home in the sky, often simultaneously. Thus the design needed to convey several things at once: a seriousness of purpose, for when clients were on board; a sense of relaxed style, for when meetings were over and it was time for fun; and—hardest to pull off in an airplane—opportunities for privacy and escape, for when the client or his guests had had enough work (or play) and just wanted some sleep.

Passengers board via what Doret calls “an Air Force One” air stair connecting the tarmac to the plane’s lower lobe, inside which are the plane’s communications center and space for up to eight crew members to eat and sleep. A spiral staircase leads up to the main deck’s grand lounge, the first in a procession of ever-larger seating areas. Here is to be found the first expression of Doret’s theme: a sophisticated modernism where the coolness of polished chrome and ano-

A 22-foot-long table with a polycarbonate top centers the conference area, which is also used for dining and entertaining. “The client wanted a minimal interior with Arabic accents,” the designer points out. The chair leather is from Edelman. Television, Abt.com.





ABOVE: "The entrance lounge is a transition point between the lower lobe and the upper deck," says Doret. The staircase leads to the private spaces. Custom-made lamps are on the tables. Edelman leather on B&B Italia swivel chairs and sofa.

OPPOSITE: The floor plan shows two of the plane's three levels, with public spaces situated on the main deck. ABOVE RIGHT: Sofas and a pair of glass-topped low tables are grouped in front of a flat-panel screen in a viewing area. Television, Abt.com.



The design needed to convey at once a seriousness of purpose and a sense of relaxed style for when meetings were over.

dized aluminum is balanced by the warmth of teak, leather and wool.

"All that wood helps keep one grounded," says Doret, without a trace of irony. Indeed, the abundance of white in the main cabin might temporarily frighten a passenger into thinking he'd stepped off a plane and into a cloud. Thus is the teak-paneled floor soothing on several levels.

A traveler accustomed to even the nicest first-class cabin in a commercial airliner might be forgiven for not wanting to move from one of these swivel seats or either of the long divans upholstered in celadon-shaded leather. That would be a mistake, as on the other side of the spiral staircase is the grand lounge—actually two lounges, the first conceived of as a casual theater, the second as an informal conference room.

Beyond this is a more formal conference room, which

comfortably seats 14; remove the laptops and stacks of paper from the table and credenzas, replace them with chef-prepared food and drink from the galley, and you've gone from business meeting to dinner party in minutes. "Originally the tabletop was going to be completely clear, but we opted for a surface that has more depth. It reflects light back up to the ceiling, which creates a kind of harmony between the two." On the uppermost level, Doret has given his client a master suite, plus a pair of guest rooms, a private office and a family dining room with a galley of its own.

In a way, Doret must serve two masters: his client and the Federal Aviation Administration, whose regulations about what can and can't be done on an airplane are absolutely non-negotiable. The designer takes great pride in the fact that none of his airplane interiors are the same, even though when you're

dealing with a giant cylinder, the layouts are necessarily going to be similar.

When asked to name some sources from which he took his design cues for this project, Doret cites his iPod. It's the sort of comment that sounds, upon hearing it, too glib to be true. How could something as large as an Airbus A380-800 be compared to something as small as a handheld MP3 player? But there's something to it. Like the now ubiquitous music-playing gadget, the plane's interior is all about clean-lined elegance and an intuitive design logic that makes it instantly accessible.

"I got my iPod at about the same time I got this project," says Edésé Doret. "I was trying to come up with a concept for the interiors, and I just kept looking at the iPod and admiring how simple it was." Good design comes in all shapes and sizes. □



ABOVE: "The entrance lounge is a transition point between the lower lobe and the upper deck," says Doret. The staircase leads to the private spaces. Custom-made lamps are on the tables. Edelman leather on B&B Italia swivel chairs and sofa.

OPPOSITE: The floor plan shows two of the plane's three levels, with public spaces situated on the main deck. ABOVE RIGHT: Sofas and a pair of glass-topped low tables are grouped in front of a flat-panel screen in a viewing area. Television, Abt.com.



The design needed to convey at once a seriousness of purpose and a sense of relaxed style for when meetings were over.

dized aluminum is balanced by the warmth of teak, leather and wool.

"All that wood helps keep one grounded," says Doret, without a trace of irony. Indeed, the abundance of white in the main cabin might temporarily frighten a passenger into thinking he'd stepped off a plane and into a cloud. Thus is the teak-paneled floor soothing on several levels.

A traveler accustomed to even the nicest first-class cabin in a commercial airliner might be forgiven for not wanting to move from one of these swivel seats or either of the long divans upholstered in celadon-shaded leather. That would be a mistake, as on the other side of the spiral staircase is the grand lounge—actually two lounges, the first conceived of as a casual theater, the second as an informal conference room.

Beyond this is a more formal conference room, which

comfortably seats 14; remove the laptops and stacks of paper from the table and credenzas, replace them with chef-prepared food and drink from the galley, and you've gone from business meeting to dinner party in minutes. "Originally the tabletop was going to be completely clear, but we opted for a surface that has more depth. It reflects light back up to the ceiling, which creates a kind of harmony between the two." On the uppermost level, Doret has given his client a master suite, plus a pair of guest rooms, a private office and a family dining room with a galley of its own.

In a way, Doret must serve two masters: his client and the Federal Aviation Administration, whose regulations about what can and can't be done on an airplane are absolutely non-negotiable. The designer takes great pride in the fact that none of his airplane interiors are the same, even though when you're

dealing with a giant cylinder, the layouts are necessarily going to be similar.

When asked to name some sources from which he took his design cues for this project, Doret cites his iPod. It's the sort of comment that sounds, upon hearing it, too glib to be true. How could something as large as an Airbus A380-800 be compared to something as small as a handheld MP3 player? But there's something to it. Like the now ubiquitous music-playing gadget, the plane's interior is all about clean-lined elegance and an intuitive design logic that makes it instantly accessible.

"I got my iPod at about the same time I got this project," says Edése Doret. "I was trying to come up with a concept for the interiors, and I just kept looking at the iPod and admiring how simple it was." Good design comes in all shapes and sizes. □