SPACESHIPTWO CABIN INTERIOR REVEALED BY VIRGIN GALACTIC

News / Manufacturer

Virgin Galactic revealed the cabin interior of its first SpaceShipTwo vehicle, VSS Unity. Aspiring astronauts and space enthusiasts around the world, now have the opportunity to explore the Virgin Galactic cabin design and spaceflight experience through an augmented reality enabled mobile app, which launches after the live event, and is available to download for free at both the App Store and Play Store. One of the defining hallmarks of the Virgin brand over 50 years, has been the use of inspired and bold design to transform the customer experience. It's an ethos that has been successfully applied across industrial sectors and design disciplines: from aircraft cabins and hotel bedrooms to fitness classes and personal banking.

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Virgin Galactic, in collaboration with London design agency, Seymourpowell, has striven to remain faithful to that tradition by developing an elegant but progressive, experience-focused concept for the cabin of its spaceship. While it has been created to integrate seamlessly with every other aspect of the Virgin Galactic astronaut journey – the cabin is also the design centrepiece; providing safety without distraction, quietly absorbing periods of sensory intensity and offering each astronaut a level of intimacy required for personal discovery and transformation.

The textures, colours and structures within the cabin create an elegance, underlined by purpose which will inspire a sense of confidence in astronauts from the moment they board the spaceship on the day of flight.

Individually sized seats, created using the highest-grade aluminium and carbon-fiber manufacturing techniques, reinforce this sense. The importance of astronaut comfort to optimize performance is accentuated by the use of engineered foam and technical fabrics. Virgin Galactic's partner Under Armour developed the astronaut spacesuits and also the fabric technology featured in the cabin seats. Harnessing insights from more than two decades of maximizing human performance, Under Armour created a 3D knit featuring constructions that map breathability and function into the fabric encasing each cabin seat to provide comfort and mobility during spaceflight.

The color palette of the cabin has been carefully curated so that it complements the architecture of the seat, the cabin itself and spacesuits. The golden metallics resemble luminous desert sands, blues conjure celestial spaces and teals inspired by the ocean ground travelers back to Earth.

Each seat has been engineered to match the dynamism of the flight. A pilot-controlled recline mechanism, optimally positions astronauts to manage G- forces on boost and re-entry and frees up cabin space to maximize an unrestricted astronaut float zone when in zero gravity.

Virgin pioneered mood lighting on its commercial aircraft, and that idea has been translated by Virgin Galactic, into the new era of commercial spaceflight. Multi-color LEDs are concealed within the "Halo" window surrounds and are used to subtly reflect back and therefore elevate, the human responses to each of the contrasting stages of flight. At the pinnacle of the experience, as the

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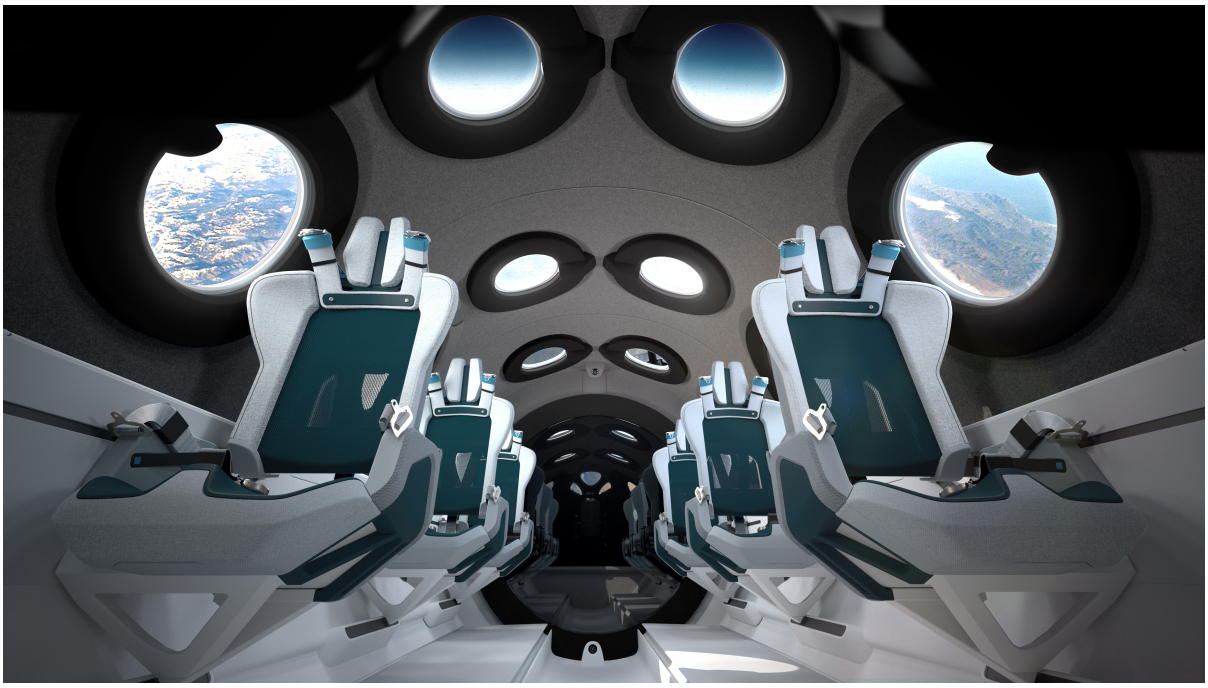
Earth comes into view against the black sky of space, all lighting is extinguished, bringing an instant focus to the profoundly beautiful vista.



Following in the footsteps of another Virgin first, seatback screens provide digital flight data to connect each astronaut to the flight deck. Personal, integrated communication systems complement the screens with a direct connection for each astronaut to the two space pilots.

SpaceShipTwo's cabin was deliberately sized to allow for an out-of-seat weightlessness experience for the astronauts on board. The interior design focusses on this critical part of the experience. Soft cabin surfaces and elements become intuitive hand and footholds, allowing astronauts to explore the cabin freely and fully. The "Halo" surrounds to twelve large windows have soft extended edges, which allow astronauts to perfectly position themselves for 360 degrees of awe-inspiring views, from the infinity of outer space to the beauty of our home planet.

Virgin Galactic's current community of 600 Future Astronauts has always been clear that having photos and videos of their spaceflight experience to share, is of paramount importance. The output from 16 cabin cameras, plus those in the cockpit and mounted externally, will generate high definition output to provide everything from the first Instagram posts, to a beautifully edited and historically significant personal movie.

To further elevate the experience of floating in zero-gravity, the cabin includes a first for space travel, a large, circular mirror on the aft bulkhead which, by adding a tint to the reflective surface, allows astronauts to view themselves weightless while illuminated by the natural brightness of the Earth.

Michael Colglazier, CEO of Virgin Galactic said: "In just my second week as Virgin Galactic's CEO, it is with great pride that I can lead our talented teams in revealing this latest milestone in our journey to space. The spaceship cabin interior is in many ways the design centrepiece of the astronaut journey and what has been created will both facilitate and elevate a uniquely profound and transformational journey for the thousands who will fly. The fascination with spaceflight is universal and Virgin Galactic is here to satisfy it. We are particularly proud to be able to share this latest milestone with millions around the world, particularly during these unusual times. We hope the new app, with cutting-edge AR technology will help bring the dream of space one step closer

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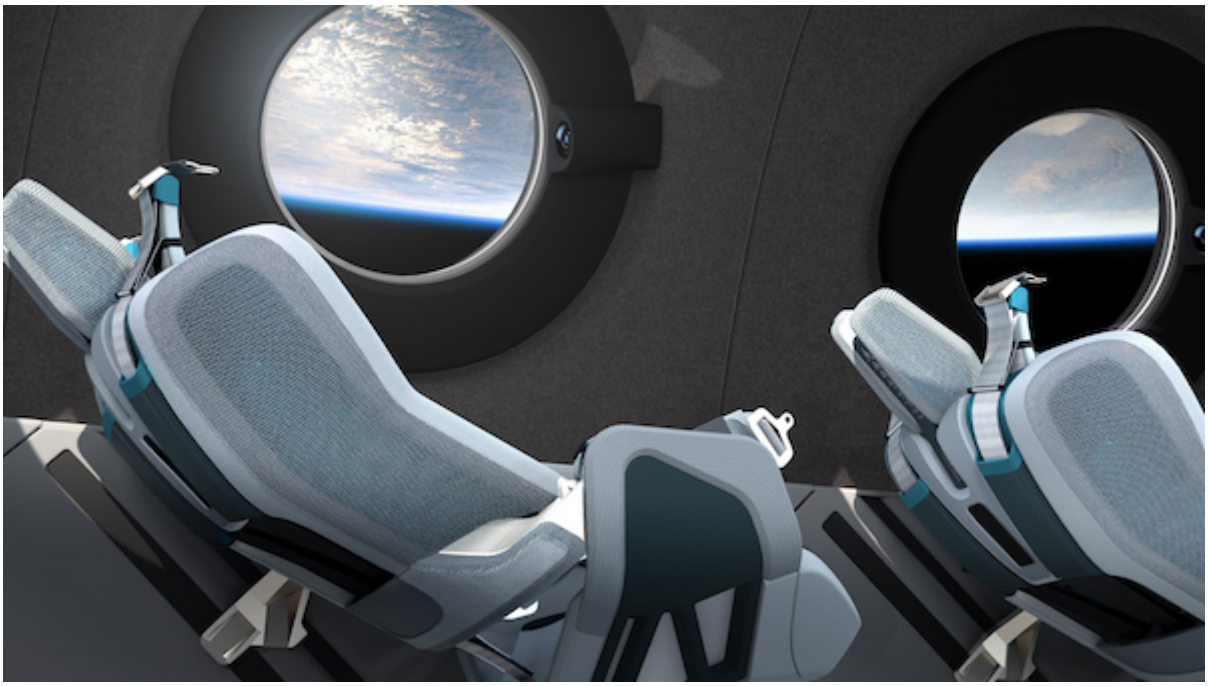
for space enthusiasts everywhere.”

Richard Branson, Founder of Virgin Group said: ‘’When we created Virgin Galactic, we started with what we believed would be an optimal customer experience and then built the spaceship around it. We will continue with that ethos as we expand our fleet, build our operations and underpin Virgin Galactic’s position as the Spaceline for Earth. This cabin has been designed specifically to allow thousands of people like you and me to achieve the dream of spaceflight safely – and that is incredibly exciting.’’

Photos by Virgin Galactic



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