

Video Clip: How Acumen's Mint cabin design for JetBlue enhances privacy and comfort

Acumen Design Associates' Mike Crump, Daniel Clucas and Catherine Barber share the inspiration and design processes behind the JetBlue Mint cabin refresh

[JetBlue](#) announced a major refresh to its Mint service in [late-November](#) and in February launched its new A321neo Business Class cabin alongside its official designer partner [Acumen Design Associates](#). Featuring the new Mint Suite and Mint Studio, the A321 will commission JetBlue's anticipated flights to London starting this summer. A layout with fewer seats will debut on a limited number of flights between New York and Los Angeles this year.

Regardless of how much time is spent in the cabin, customized full flat seats from Thompson Aero Seating, free Wi-Fi and calming color schemes offer privacy and comfort for passengers returning to the skies.

Seamless living in a busy world

Determined to become immersed in the brand, the Acumen team spent time at JetBlue's New York headquarters and flew the existing Mint cabin.

As first-time flyers with the airline, the free inflight Wi-Fi was a "big wow," for the Acumen team, Mike Crump, Brand Experience Director at Acumen tells *PAX Tech*. From this, the concept of seamless living began to materialize.

"We were trying to work ourselves in these [cabin] environments - on projects, on proposals for other clients and things like this - and we were starting to think about how we might use this space in a different way," he says. "Those insights were the lynchpin to the project. The need to be able to multi-task, to stay connected, to do so many things at once, and to integrate your lifestyle into the service onboard."



The Mint Suites designed by Acumen Design Associates offer many charging points, two headphones sockets, a personal device holder and a wireless charging zone, all thoughtfully placed to suit everyday life

Acumen redesigned the Suites to feature intelligently placed charging points for personal devices, two headphone sockets, a dedicated phone/tablet holder and a wireless charging zone. It incorporates multiple large and easy-to-clean flat surfaces where passengers can eat, work, read and relax while staying connected. The Mint cabin offers clever stowage options, including a laptop drawer, compartment for personal items, shoe and under-ottoman storage, and a nightstand with a bottle holder. The stowage near the window has a perforated lid to see into the cubby so that passengers do not forget anything when disembarking.

This avoids the common pain point of having to throw everything into one stowage compartment when a meal is coming or when it's time to lay back and relax, explains Daniel Clucas, Senior Designer and Project Lead at Acumen. Eliminating the need for passengers to modify their behavior because of the surroundings builds on the feeling of seamlessness between ground and flight, he explains.

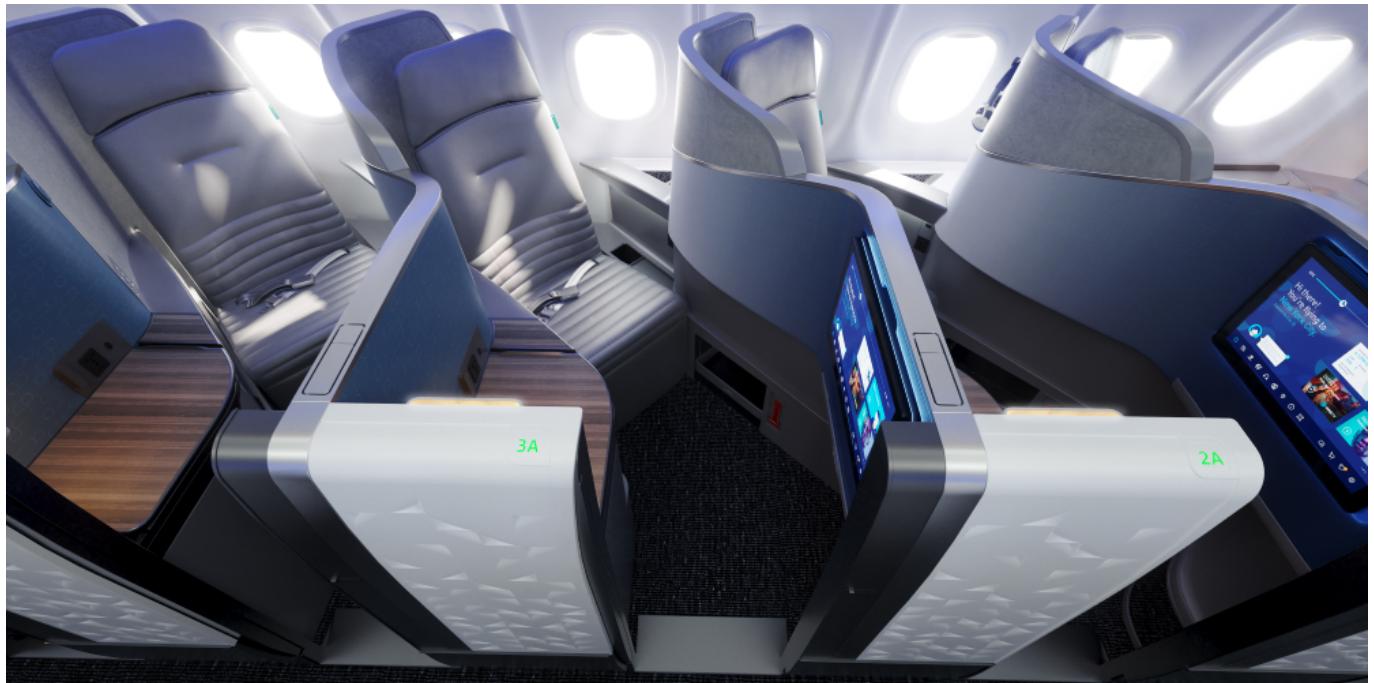
"Everything has a space. When you're sleeping, everything is [near] you, like in your bed," Clucas says. "Again, you're not having to compromise and put your phone up on a ledge where you can't see it to keep it plugged in. So that intuitive placement of these things was very key."

Sweet seat

Acumen customized the [Thompson Aero](#) VantageSOLO seat – chosen by JetBlue in 2016. Every seat has direct aisle access and sliding privacy doors. There are 24 Mint Suites, configured in an inward-facing herringbone layout. The two-front rows are known as Mint Studio, offering the most space in a premium experience from any U.S. airline with larger seats. These modifications are now a core part

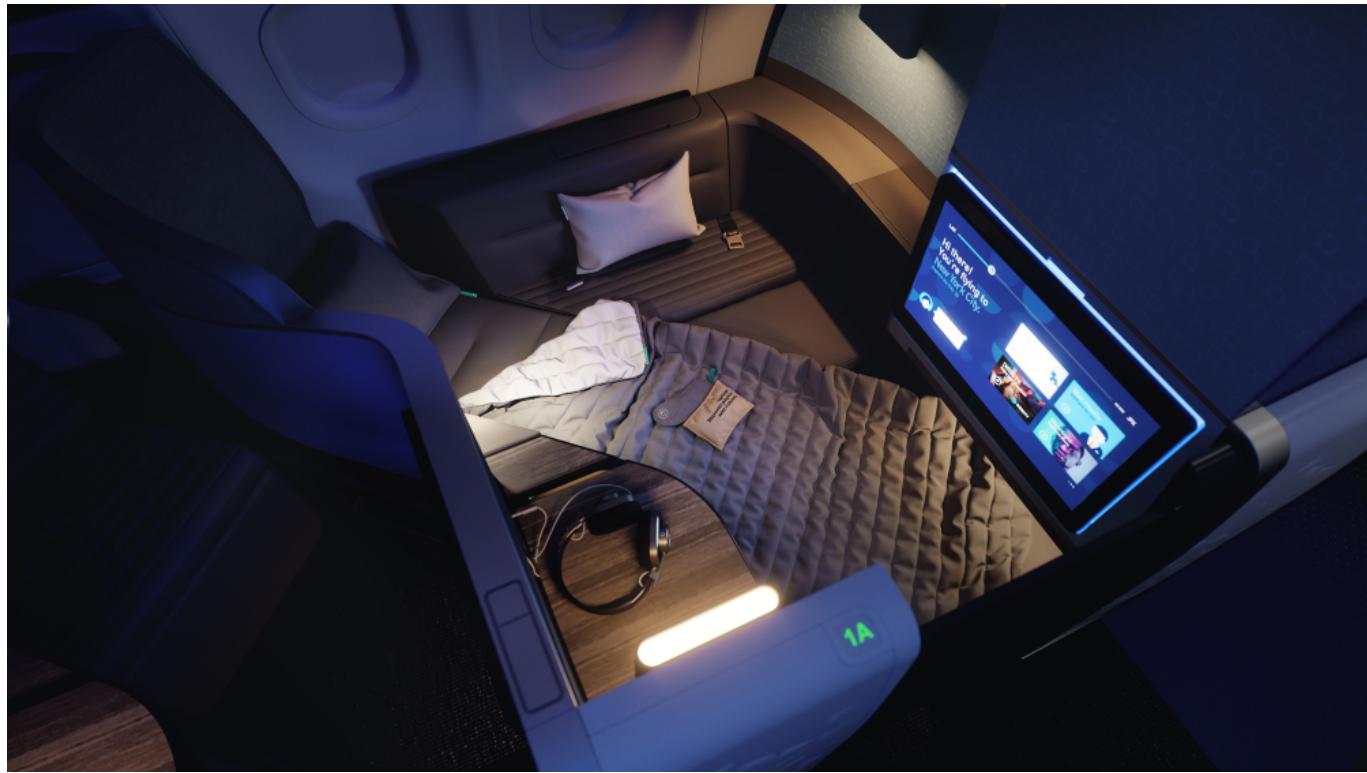
of Thompson's platform seat product.

Direct aisle access at every seat adds a sense of privacy and social distance, building passenger confidence in the age of COVID, Clucas says. Beyond this COVID-convenience, it also brings sophistication, since passengers do not have to climb over one another when making their way to the aisle, he adds.



The Mint Suite offers direct aisle access for every passenger

The front two rows, which house Mint Studio, was traditionally used for additional cabin storage. By reclaiming this space for the passenger, JetBlue is able to offer more space and privacy. It features a sliding door, an integrated closet and a vanity mirror, a 22-inch pivoting IFE display, a second side table, and a bonus guest seat and tray table for guests who want to dine together. In the Studio, the sofa seat can be dropped, extending the bed surface and giving the customer the largest lie-flat bed of any U.S. carrier.



Mint Studio offers the largest lie-flat bed of any U.S. carrier, with mattress from Tuft & Needle

New York, but in the sky

Acumen uses color, material, finish (CMF) and lighting to wrap the seamless living concept into JetBlue's signature New York style.

"A lot of it was about functionality, but equally it was about thinking about the way a modern lifestyle informs the environments you expect to have around you," says Catherine Barber, Head of CMF at Acumen. "Referencing those residential and hospitality environments builds and reinforces that feeling that you're being looked after and cared for and that you're in a safe and relaxing space."



Acumen Design Associates use different textures, finishes and mood-lighting to create the feeling of a being in a premium class for JetBlue's Mint cabin. Pictured here is Mint Studio

To achieve this, Acumen played with texture contrasts. Soft suede wraps around the seat; denim-style carpet; stylized concrete and wood finishes throughout the space. The inner walls of each Mint Suite feature a distinct, contemporary pattern inspired by JetBlue's brand language, while the Suite doors incorporate a bold, pressure-formed Mint pattern.

The customizable mood-lighting can be brightened and dimmed, and adjusted between 'awake' and 'relax' color schemes. The designers also worked closely with JetBlue to enhance the 'welcome space' where passengers board. It features LED strip lights and graphics to create a soothing environment from the first step into the cabin.

Rather than having all smooth, textureless surfaces, mixing different textures and colors helps add personality and creates the feeling of being in a premium class, Barber says.

The unveiling of the new Mint service also includes refreshed onboard products and services from a range of collaborators, including comfort items and food service from the [Delicious Hospitality Group](#), [Tuft & Needle](#), [Wanderfuel](#) and [Master & Dynamic](#).