

# Seating roundup: Spacious and sophisticated seating throughout 2021

This is a special feature from *PAX Tech's* [December APEX Long Beach 2021](#) digital edition, on [page 32](#).



Recaro CL6720 cabin

With signs of an industry recovery comes a push from seating companies to complete retrofits, bring new products to market and confirm airline customers. Since September, [Recaro](#) and [Geven](#) have announced seating orders from major airlines [Air China](#) and [Air Dolomiti](#), respectively. These are just the latest in a string of projects from the two companies making headlines throughout 2021.

## Launch customer for Recaro

Asia Pacific is expected to be an important contributor to industry recovery and airlines seem to be preparing for the uptick. [IATA](#) reported that airlines in the region showed the most significant capacity recovery in September compared to other regions – and this can be “largely attributed” to the partial return of China domestic capacity following the lifting of several travel restrictions that had been implemented due to outbreaks in August.

In September, Recaro Aircraft Seating [announced](#) that Air China would be its launch customer for the CL6720 seat. The airline has an order of 10 shipsets for its A350 aircraft.

The CL6720 Business Class seat was first introduced to the market in 2019. The mini-suite feel of the seat is created through the smooth sliding doors, high-quality finish and ambient lighting. Ergonomic features include numerous comfort positions, a six-way adjustable headrest, premium foam technology and a 1.98-meter bed length.

Sustainability was at the forefront of the design process for the Business Class seat, which resulted in

the CL6720 being the lightest seat in its class by 10 to 20 percent and can help lower CO2 emissions. By finding innovative ways to lengthen the seat's life cycle with the use of high-quality and durable materials, the CL6720 supports airlines in their pursuit of reducing the industry's carbon footprint. Recaro received the [Focus Open Special Mention Award](#) for the seat in July.

"Lightweight design is not just a matter of using sophisticated materials. Lightweight starts with the concept," Markus Höllerer, Head of Strategy and Products at Recaro Aircraft Seating, told *PAX Tech* in a [September Q&A](#).



Markus Höllerer, Head of Strategy and Products, Recaro Aircraft Seating

The company collaborates closely with research institutes and suppliers to develop new materials and processes. The CL6720 seat is the "consequent way to invest into the development of high tensile strength aluminum alloy accompanied by reduced costs by respecting the 'green footprint' and also in the development of usable and suitable magnesium alloys," Höllerer says.

Air China and Recaro collaborated to customize the seat to enhance comfort and functions. It is designed from the perspective of passenger demand and experience, reads the September release from Recaro.

In addition to the CL6720 Business Class, Air China has selected Recaro Premium Economy seat PL3530 and the Economy Class Seat CL3710 for the A350.

[Qatar Airways tapped Recaro](#) for its new CL3810 Economy Class seat. Starting at the end of 2022, 20 shipsets of the seat will be installed on the A321neo fleet. And, the seating company is equipping [Aeroflot's](#) Airbus fleet with more [than 50 shipsets](#) of the BL3710 Economy Class seat and CL4710 for Business Class.

Recaro also unveiled in September its new [building complex](#) in Schwaebisch Hall, Germany. The €50million (US\$59 million) investment was designed with a KfW-Effizienzhaus 55 standard and was constructed with sustainable materials. From energy-efficient solar shades to district heating integration, the facility was built to improve the end-use of energy.

### **Geven Essenza for Air Dolomiti retrofit**

[Air Dolomiti](#), the Italian Airline of Lufthansa Group, announced October 7 that it has selected the Geven Essenza seat model for its retrofit program on 15 Embraer aircraft. The order is for 15 shipsets on the E195 fleet.

The seats will feature exclusive and dedicated trim and finish matching the design scheme of Air Dolomiti. In blue and turquoise eco leather dress cover, high literature pocket, recline up to three-inches and ergonomic seat cushion, Essenza will “represent the perfect and sophisticated solution for enhanced passenger comfort,” reads the release.

The Economy Class seat design maximizes living space and comfort for passengers while minimizing maintenance costs for airlines. Seats will be installed starting December 2021 until March 2022.

The primary structure design maximizes shin and knee clearance and optimizes weight, at 10.4 kilograms for a fully dressed seat. It offers generous arm-to-arm width greater than 18.3 inches. The seat also incorporates two innovations in its main structure on the backrest and the bottom cushion. The backrest is made of a single piece of carbon fiber with both structural and aesthetic functions. There are no additional fairing or plastic shrouds, so only the foam and the cover are added, resulting in fewer parts to be managed and reduced weight to be carried. The same philosophy has inspired the bottom cushion that is installed directly on the seat beams via Velcro and performs both structural comfort functions allowing easy inspection and maintenance activities.

“The lower weight of Essenza RJ will allow to reduce fuel consumption with a benefit on costs and environmental impact,” said Marzio Caneva, Vice President Technical Operations at Air Dolomiti.

The cooperation between the companies started in 2017 with [Deutsche Lufthansa](#), [SWISS](#), and [Austrian Airlines](#).

### **British Airways upgrades Club Suite with Collins Aerospace**





British Airways is upgrading its Business Class passengers to the Club World experience, installing the popular Club Suite seat with help from Collins Aerospace

[British Airways](#) announced at the end of October plans to enhance its 777 aircraft with seating from [Collins Aerospace](#). The agreement upgrades Business Class passengers to the Club World experience, including installation of the popular Club Suite seat, Club Kitchen updates and new cabin configuration.

Club Suite was first rolled out in July 2019 on the airline's first A350 and since then has been installed on the 787-10 aircraft. The seat offers direct-aisle access, a suite door for greater privacy, and flat-bed seats. The seat also features storage, a vanity unit and mirror, Wi-Fi, 18.5-inch inflight entertainment screens, high-definition gate-to-gate programming, and PC/USB power.

“When we launched our Club Suite product, it was a huge hit with our customers who loved the privacy the new seat offers,” said Sajida Ismail, Head of Inflight Product for British Airways, in [the release](#). “We are focused on the rollout of this product and other cabin enhancements to ensure we deliver on our commitment to provide the very best British quality, style, and comfort.”

Collins will perform full-cabin integration work, engineering design, test and approval – along with program management and third-party supplier approvals. Some of the modified aircraft are already flying, with the upgrades expected to be complete by the end of 2022. The retrofitted 777s will operate from London Heathrow.

As part of the upgrade, the airline’s Club Kitchen is also getting a makeover with new Club chillers and built-in storage for snacks, drinks, and other refreshments, allowing passengers to help themselves.