

Behind Lufthansa FOX: deSter engineers restaurant-quality service inflight

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deSter designed a compact cake stand integrated into the service trolley to enhance inflight dessert presentation

For years, the aviation industry has looked to fine dining for inspiration. Chef partnerships, curated menus and elevated plating have all played a part in reshaping passenger expectations. While much attention has been given to what is served onboard, far less focus has been placed on how it is delivered.

This is where the next chapter of inflight hospitality is being written. The real shift is not about bringing restaurant dishes into the cabin. It is about integrating restaurant operational logic into the inflight environment. With [Lufthansa FOX](#), this transition becomes tangible, and the engineering behind it tells a more compelling story than the menus alone.

At its core, restaurant quality is not defined by ingredients alone. It is the result of a finely tuned system where timing, temperature, workflow and presentation come together seamlessly. Translating

this into an aircraft cabin, with its spatial constraints, safety requirements and service complexity, requires more than inspiration. It requires engineering.

Heating up culinary standards

In a professional kitchen, proteins and accompanying components are rarely finished at the same temperature or at the same time.

“Managing each element precisely is a basic discipline of restaurant cooking. Replicating that discipline in the air has historically been one of the hardest problems to solve,” Daniel Knies, Senior Category Director at [deSter](#), tells *PAX International*.

For Lufthansa FOX, deSter developed a steel casserole designed specifically for onboard use. Working closely with [gategourmet](#) and the culinary concept developed by Chef Johann Lafer, the brief was clear: proteins such as fish or meat must reach the passenger in optimal condition, without compromise from accompanying components requiring different heat treatment. The casserole's construction allows each element to be heated separately, preserving texture, flavor and presentation.

“The result is a Business Class main course that feels deliberate and considered, rather than reheated,” Knies says. “This is precisely the kind of operational mechanism the industry rarely discusses. Chef partnerships generate headlines. The engineering that makes those partnerships executable in the air does not. FOX changes that.”



Daniel Knies, Senior Category Director, deSter

Dessert as a service moment

Restaurant dessert service is rarely just about the food. It is about presentation, visibility and the sense that something special is being offered. In most inflight environments, that moment is compressed into a functional transaction.

To address this, deSter designed a compact cake stand that integrates directly with the service trolley. Despite its space-efficient footprint, it transforms how fresh cakes and desserts are displayed in Business Class. For seated passengers, the selection becomes clearly visible, turning the choice into part of the experience. For cabin crew, it supports smooth handling and a more confident, elevated presentation.

“The dessert moment becomes a highlight rather than a closing formality,” says Knies.



The Lufthansa FOX tray table setting

Expanding choice through smart trolley design

Restaurant operational logic is not exclusive to premium dining. The discipline of offering structured choice, efficiently delivered, applies equally in Economy Class.

In the FOX program, deSter developed a dedicated drawer attachment for the service trolley that increases meal capacity while expanding the options available to passengers. Where crew could previously offer two main course choices, they can now offer three. The attachment is engineered to support crew workflows while at the same time, improving organization and reducing handling complexity during peak service periods.

“More choice for passengers. Less friction for crew. Both outcomes stem from the same design decision,” explains Volker Klag, Design Director at deSter.

From visible luxury to engineered experience

Passengers may not see the casserole construction, the cake stand geometry or the trolley drawer configuration. But they feel the difference: a protein that has retained its texture, a dessert selection that feels curated, a service rhythm that flows without interruption.

“This is where premium differentiation is actually built. Not through isolated touchpoints, but through integrated systems that deliver consistency at scale,” says Knies.

As part of the broaderategroup ecosystem, deSter brings the design and engineering expertise to translate culinary ambition into operational reality, across every cabin and every service moment.

Lufthansa FOX offers a clear signal of where the industry is heading. The future of inflight hospitality will not be defined by inspiration alone. It will be defined by execution. And in that shift, the integration of restaurant logic into the aviation ecosystem becomes a powerful driver of both experience and value.

“The most memorable service often feels effortless. What FOX demonstrates is that this effortlessness is the direct result of thoughtful design, precise engineering and a deep understanding of how great service is actually delivered,” Knies shares.