

WTCE issue: Etihad Airways is driven by design

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The Armani/Casa collection for Etihad Airways

Etihad Airways had a tremendous year of design updates and passenger experience upgrades in 2023. As its new fleet of 787-9 Dreamliners takes off in 2024, Etihad is introducing enhanced comfort with more privacy for passengers and a lineup of luxury amenities to be enjoyed during and post-flight.

Award-winning aircraft interiors



Eduardo Matos, Director of Customer Care, Etihad Airways

The airline was awarded the Design Airline of the Year Middle East 2023 award, but it also took home the top achievement from TheDesignAir, the Design Airline of the Year 2023 Global award. Eduardo Matos, Director of Customer Care at Etihad, tells *PAX International*, “We were very proud to receive this prestigious recognition as ‘Design Airline of the Year 2023’ last year. We certainly see this as a testament to the hard work and commitment of our team.”

Matos adds that part of what he believes makes Etihad unique is the emphasis on the passenger experience in all classes. “At Etihad, we see design as part of our DNA, we have always done things a little differently and paid attention to every little design detail that helps to elevate the experience for our guests, regardless of their cabin,” he explains.

Overwhelmingly positive brand feedback



The Armani/Casa textiles include blankets, pillows and a lumbar support cushion that doubles as the mattress for the Business Class lie-flat seats

Etihad has had a monumental year, elevating its brand to further enhance the passenger experience it is already well known for. Major updates to the cabin interiors in 2023 included rolling out luxury amenity kits for Business Class while updating the dining experience for passengers in Economy Class. Etihad introduced its partnership with Armani/Casa for a range of Business Class products and amenities to a positive response. The selection of products includes tableware, blankets, pillows and a lumbar support cushion that doubles as the mattress for the Business Class lie-flat seats.

“The feedback from our guests has been overwhelmingly positive and we know they’re going to love our new Giorgio Armani co-branded amenity kits just as much,” Matos says.

This year, Etihad is partnering with Giorgio Armani again, rolling out its new amenity kits for Business Class, filled with ESPA skincare products. The collab also introduces one of the largest amenity kits in the sky for travellers flying in First Class and The Residence; a Giorgio Armani and Etihad branded large folio bag.

“They are absolutely stunning and a design feature in themselves,” Matos says enthusiastically. “In Economy, we launched complimentary tote bags filled with a hand cream and inflight amenities to take away, as well as holding the blanket and earphones for our passengers to use while they fly.”

These amenities are themed for Etihad’s 20th anniversary celebrations and are currently being rolled out permanently on all flights longer than five hours.

Style and function in Economy

It is not just branded totes that passengers travelling in Economy Class can look forward to this year; Etihad is also revamping its Economy dining experience.

“We’ve coupled style and function with a focus on improving our impact on the environment,” Matos says. “We’ve dramatically reduced the amount of single-use plastic used in our operation. At the same time, we’ve elevated the experience for our guests with a higher quality and more stylish product.”

787-9 fleet takes off in 2024

On the heels of its design wins, Etihad is continuing to elevate its brand in 2024 with new cabin interiors on the 787-9 Dreamliner fleet. The airline received the first three aircraft in February, now entering service. The addition includes impressive upgrades and offerings that look different from what Etihad passengers might have seen in the past.

Matos explains, “The cabin experience we’ve designed gives our guests a wonderful feeling of space and comfort while also adding to their privacy, something which we recognize is important to our guests in premium cabins.”