

Riyadh Air and PriestmanGoode integrate Saudi culture and landscapes into interior design

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Riyadh Air aircraft will feature an exclusive 28 Business Class seat setting, including 24 Unity suites and four Unity Elite front-row suites

[Riyadh Air](#), Saudi Arabia's newest national airline, may well consider itself a digital start-up, but in wanting to disrupt the aviation industry it has clearly paid attention to the subtle hard and soft product touches that define a premium international airline.

Ahead of launching scheduled global services later this year, the airline has unveiled the interiors—a nod to Saudi artistry and Salmani architecture—which will grace its intended fleet of 69 787-9

Dreamliners.



Osamah Alnuaier, SVP of Marketing and Corporate Communications, Riyadh Air

As Osamah Alnuaier, SVP of Marketing and Corporate Communications tells *PAX Tech*, “At Riyadh Air, every journey is an invitation to experience the spirit of Riyadh with its vibrant culture, dynamic landscape and bold vision for the future. Nowhere is this more evident than in our Unity Business Class cabin, where a bespoke design meets genuine hospitality with an obsessive attention to detail of function, finishes and finesse.”

While Safran’s Unity seat may be at the heart of the cabin, the interiors incorporate the airline’s signature Canopy Twist design inspired by traditional Saudi motifs, thoughtfully reimaged for the modern guest. Warm lighting, tactile finishes and a cocooning comfort create an atmosphere that feels both welcoming and sophisticated reflecting the generosity and warmth of modern Riyadh, according to Alnuaier.

“There is a subtle elegance to our design that reveals itself with every look.”

Foundational design



Ben Rowan, Director, PriestmanGoode

The airline worked closely with London-based design agency [PriestmanGoode](#) to execute this vision. Ben Rowan, Director, tells *PAX Tech* that it was clear from the very beginning of the program that the Riyadh Air team wanted to push boundaries with big ambitions—“a departure from the norm,” he says.

The project was atypical for the multidisciplinary team, which would take an existing brand identity

and translate it from 2D to 3D across different surfaces and touchpoints.

“In this case, there was no legacy in terms of brand,” explains Rowan, who says that the design language for both the interior and other brand aspects was initially inspired by the team’s research trip to Riyadh. The trip would prove critical in building the foundation of what would become the design approach and principles for every subsequent phase in the design process.



Riyadh Air’s primary brand colors comprise lavender, symbolizing Saudi Arabia’s springtime landscape where lavender blossoms carpet the desert

“Being present in the home of the airline allowed us to experience and capture the vibrant colors of the desert sunset and ever-changing light,” he says, describing how Saudi landscapes inspired the visual elements of the cabin. “We were also very inspired by lavender as both a color and unique cultural reference that played a significant part in our development of materials and lighting.”

Riyadh Air’s primary brand colors comprise lavender, symbolizing Saudi Arabia’s springtime landscape where lavender blossoms carpet the desert. The hue represents the Kingdom’s generosity and authentic hospitality. At the same, indigo in the airline’s livery and branding evokes the elegance of twilight skies and the dynamic energy of the city. The “R” in the logo is inspired by an aircraft window, representing Saudi Arabia’s window to the world, and symbolizing the movement of a bird’s wings in flight, a powerful nod to the elegant curves of Arabic calligraphy.

Supporting colors include sunset peach and sky blue, reflecting the depth and warmth of the desert at dusk and the future-looking ambitions of the airline overall, respectively. Underscoring this modern look are iridescent finishes, allowing some surfaces to slightly shift in color as the light in the cabin changes. The aesthetic complements the dynamic and transformative nature of both the airline and the Kingdom.

Rowan says that whilst the agency had creative freedom to design from a blank slate, the Riyadh Air team also wanted to customize every possible detail.

Distinctly Riyadh Air

Rowan says that the design process for the airline's interiors was about taking a platform product and pushing to make the outcome unique for the airline, integrating cues to the culture and heritage of Riyadh, while presenting a modern aesthetic.

"Balancing these cultural references with practical functional requirements was a challenge, as was ensuring the brand vision translated effectively into physical materials and forms within the cabin," he explains.

Alnuaier picks up the narrative: "From the signature motifs etched into suite doors to the seamless integration of our brand colors throughout the cabin, every element has been chosen to immerse guests in the Riyadh Air story. Materiality is key, and we have deployed the luxurious materials from soft wall coverings to metallic latches, to creamy leathers."

As Rowan explains, the Business Class suite allows for a unique, elevated passenger experience, with innovations such as dual dining and sociable front-row seating that caters both to business and leisure travelers.

"The bespoke materials, lighting design and ergonomic features combine to create an environment that feels modern yet rooted in local culture. This cabin sets a new benchmark for premium air travel and helps Riyadh Air establish a distinctive and aspirational identity on the world stage," he says.