



BRAZILIAN ‘VALUE CARRIER’ AZUL GOES LONG-HAUL WITH FULL-FLAT BUSINESS BEDS, SKYSOFAS

News / Airlines



Brazil's **Azul**, which can be regarded as the Brazilian equivalent of JetBlue, recently launched their new A330 cabins, which include Azul Xtra (a fully fledged **Business** Class cabin), Economy Xtra (including the infamous **SkySofa** product) and a standard Economy cabin.

Now flying to Orlando and Fort Lauderdale (Miami) from Sao Paulo's Viracopos airport, Azul's A330s will eventually be rolled out to potential new destinations such as New York and Madrid.

Designed with a short lead time by UK based design agency Tangerine, the cabins manage to encapsulate the Azul brand by adapting off the shelf products, and working with the manufacturers to change colour, finish and trim. As an added element of customisation, a walk up-bar has been introduced into one of the galleys to create a social space, and area to allow passengers to stretch their legs.

“Our focus for the project was to rapidly customise a catalogue version of Stelia's Solstys business class seat and create a bar from a galley. Importantly we had to design and develop all of the colour, material & finish for the seating and cabin, to work on both the A330 retrofit and A350 line-fit aircraft.” said Martin Darbyshire, CEO of Tangerine.

Full-flat beds in Business

In Business Class, passengers are provided with all aisle access in a 1 x 2 x 1 seat configuration, with an identical hard product to those found on Etihad, Air Berlin, Iberia, Thai just to name a few. The seats convert into a full 79" flat bed and offer a 16" screen.

Considering Azul hadn't offered a Business Class or long-haul product before, creating a new product from scratch could have been seen as a tricky task. "Working closely with Azuls' brand team we were able to co-work and quickly define the right way to build on Azul's colour palette, moving it into a more sophisticated positioning. Patterns were developed that connect to well-known icons of Brazil, such as the pattern of tiles from Copacabana beach in Rio de Janeiro, used subtly to add a Brazilian zing to the cabin." said Tangerine's Derbyshire.

Tangerine says it focussed most of their efforts on the premium cabin. "Our involvement with the Economy Plus and Economy seats was limited, it involved selecting the colours for the ultra-leathers to be used on the seat covers, and other finishes, in order to distinguish the two cabins. Inevitably, given the pace of the project and the small quantity of seats, flexibility was restricted. But Azul still committed to the Sky Couch version of the Economy seat from ZIM." continues Darbyshire.

Sky Sofa

Azul's 'Sky Sofa' is an adaptation of the Air New Zealand product, which can also be found on China Airlines, the difference being this is the first time we've seen a 4-across 'Sky Sofa', offering a full-length bed in comparison to the three-seat versions found on China Airlines and originators Air New Zealand.

In Economy, passengers are treated to a 9" touchscreen and 31" seat pitch, whilst passengers seated in the white seats (Economy Xtra) will have an extra 3" of seat pitch.

On-demand ordering of F&B

Azul has picked Panasonic Avionics' eX3 system for its in-flight entertainment offering, and says all seats on its A330s come with personal USB and power ports. The system – in a similar move to Virgin America – also allows passengers to order food and drink from their seat using the in-seat TV, with the choice brought to the seat by the cabin crew.

Whilst many carriers offer seat-to-seat chat, it's surprising to see so few airlines allowing passengers to order dining options at their seat. We believe there is a valid future for such an onboard on-demand offering.

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