ETIHAD AIRWAYS NAMED AIR TRANSPORT WORLD'S AIRLINE OF THE YEAR 2016

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Etihad Airways was last night named **Airline of the Year 2016** by the prestigious US-based aviation industry publication **Air Transport World (**ATW).

Etihad Airways was chosen for the top honour by ATW's editorial board in a highly contested competition, with entries from more than 100 airlines around the world.

The award recognises Etihad Airways' clear vision; its successful organic growth supplemented by a unique partnership strategy; its commercial focus which has delivered net profits in each of the last four years; the rapid growth of its highly motivated workforce; its development of innovative products and services, including The Residence by Etihad; and the airline's strong executive leadership.

Air Transport World Editor-in-Chief Karen Walker said: "I am absolutely delighted to recognise

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Etihad Airways as ATW's Airline of the Year 2016. In a fiercely competitive market where much ends up looking the same, James Hogan and his team prove that you can set your airline apart through innovative thinking, creative customer products and a fierce adherence to delivering against a clear vision. I congratulate Etihad Airways for a most deserving achievement."

James Hogan, Etihad Airways' President and Chief Executive Officer, said: "I am pleased to accept this award on behalf of the 27,000 employees of the Etihad Airways group around the world. I applaud their commitment, dedication and hard work in pursuit of our goal to be the world's best airline." ?ATW's Airline Industry Achievement Awards were created in 1974 to recognise excellence across a broad range of airline operations and are widely considered as the most coveted in the aviation industry. The magazine is based in the United States with an editorial team that reaches across the world.

Daily service to New York

News of the award was announced during a reception hosted in New York last night by Etihad Airways to mark the arrival of its award-winning Airbus A380 daily service from Abu Dhabi to America's financial capital.

Following a carefully planned strategy of organic growth and strategic investments in selected airlines around the world, Etihad Airways has rapidly developed into an airline of choice, setting benchmarks in service and hospitality, with innovation at the core of its business.

Etihad Airways was recognised by ATW's editorial board for "fast but thoughtful growth, consistently delivering against its targets and always thinking ahead."

The airline was also applauded for its "excellent numbers on financials, cargo and safety"; its unique partnership strategy that was paying dividends; a willingness to be bold in equity tie-ups boosting the number over the past 12 months to include Etihad Regional and Alitalia; and its strategy of developing ground-breaking strategic contracts with suppliers.

ATW also spoke highly of Etihad Airways' "consistently diplomatic, dignified and assured response to attacks by US airlines on Gulf carriers" in which Etihad Airways had developed a powerful defence of its business model and strategy. ATW said Etihad Airways' executive team, led by President and Chief Executive Officer James Hogan, had maintained the high road and, in doing so, demonstrated industry leadership beyond the company mandate.

James Hogan added: "There have been attacks on our business model but we have chosen to let our service, our routes and our competitive offer do the talking.

"Etihad Airways is not about being the biggest — it is about being the best. It has been a long road to success but we have shown it is possible to change the aviation landscape. I thank ATW for this award, the most highly-regarded in our industry."

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Mr Hogan said Etihad Airways constantly shifted the goalposts in service and product offerings, as demonstrated by last week's arrival of the airline's first US service featuring its award-winning Airbus A380s, now flying to New York's JFK International Airport. The A380, which made its US debut on 23 November, features The Residence by Etihad — the commercial airline industry's only three-room suite with its own butler. And this week, Etihad Airways opened a new lounge for First and Business Class passengers at JFK International Airport — the airline's second premium facility in the United States — reinforcing its commitment to investing in the guest travel experience on the ground.

Over the past 12 months, Etihad Airways also launched its new Boeing 787 Dreamliner — the first of 71 on order — and inducted the first of 10 Airbus A380 aircraft into its fleet.

A key part of Etihad Airways' unique growth strategy has been to strike equity partnerships with other airlines. This year, it took a 49 per cent stake in Italian carrier Alitalia in a game-changing deal. This added to minority stakes in airberlin, Jet Airways, Virgin Australia, Air Serbia, Air Seychelles and Etihad Regional.

The airline launched six new routes on three continents during 2015 taking its global network of destinations to 116 with a fleet of 120 aircraft. More than 17 million guests are expected to travel on Etihad Airways by the end of 2015, up from almost 15 million last year, while the airline maintains its focus on profitability.

Air Transport World is an authoritative monthly magazine serving the needs of the global airline and commercial air transport manufacturing communities. Its renowned editors have been nominated for nearly every major aviation journalism award available thanks to their balanced coverage of the airline industry and incisive reports on trends.

The Airline of the Year award will be presented at a Gala Dinner at the 42nd edition of the annual ATW Airline Industry Achievement Awards taking place during the Singapore Air Show on 15 February 2016.

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