INSIDE RYANAIR'S CORPORATE JET: CAVIAR, CHAMPAGNE AND LOTS OF LEGROOM

News / Airlines, Business aviation

Ryanair launched its first customised jet this week, with 60 business class seats and fine dining catering facilities on offer to clients.

Business looks brisk, too. Since its launch, the airline has been flooded with booking enquiries, according to its Head of Communications, Robin Kiely.

"We were inundated with requests not just from corporate bookers and finance companies, but also had a number of wedding enquiries too."

Here's your need to know on the full-frills jet.

How much will it cost?

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The new Boeing 737-700 will be based at Dublin.

Ryanair won't be drawn on the cost of hire, but we understand it will be less than the €10,000 per

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hour that has been reported.

Bookings will be priced on a per-route, per-hour basis, Kiely says, with extras such as catering factored into tailored prices.

What are the seats like?

The customised Boeing 737-700 is configured to feature 60 reclining leather seats in a 2x2 formation. A seat pitch of 48" (or four feet) is substantially greater than the 30 inches typically available on its 737-800s.

What kind of food and wine are on offer?

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At your service: Inside Ryanair's corporate jet

“Whatever anyone likes," Kiely says.

"We’ll be happy to cater for their needs, from standard Ryanair favourites like Lavazza coffee and ham and cheese paninis all the way up to caviar and champagne. We’ll be happy to look at any requirements from the customer."

The corporate jet is not fitted with Wi-Fi, however.

Where is the plane based?

The plane's home base will be Dublin Airport, where it will be operated by Ryanair pilots and cabin crew, but can quickly be transferred to any of the 200 airports the airline now flies to and from throughout Europe, Kiely says.

"Europe is pretty much your oyster," he adds of its six-hour range.

Technically, the Boeing 737-700 is within range of the US East Coast, but transatlantic flights are not an option at this stage because Ryanair's Airline Operating Certificate (AOC) only covers

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Europe (for the time being, at least).

Who will use it?

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Could it be you? Inside Ryanair's customised Boeing 737-7000

In the days since its launch, enquiries have come from both corporate and sporting spheres (they have even had some wedding queries, Kiely says).

The airline already operates charters (Munster Rugby being one previous client), but these are with standard Ryanair planes - and availability is limited in the peak summer period. The private jet is a bespoke, year-round service.

Is this just another publicity stunt?

You could certainly say that.

Ryanair has been wooing the lucrative business market in recent years, and a launch like this guarantees a media splash - even if the revenue will be a drop in the ocean for an airline now operating some 1,800 scheduled flights a day.

There is a logic to it as a niche venture, however. Ryanair has always resisted doing Business Class, but its Business Plus product and group booking facilities signal a thinking that goes way beyond cheap fares and no-frills.

“It makes a lot more sense to talk to these companies directly, and the corporate jet is a strand of that; it sits within the groups and corporate team,” Kiely says.

"Clients will get the comfort and luxury of a business class jet. But because it’s Ryanair, they will have the most competitive rates in Europe.”

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