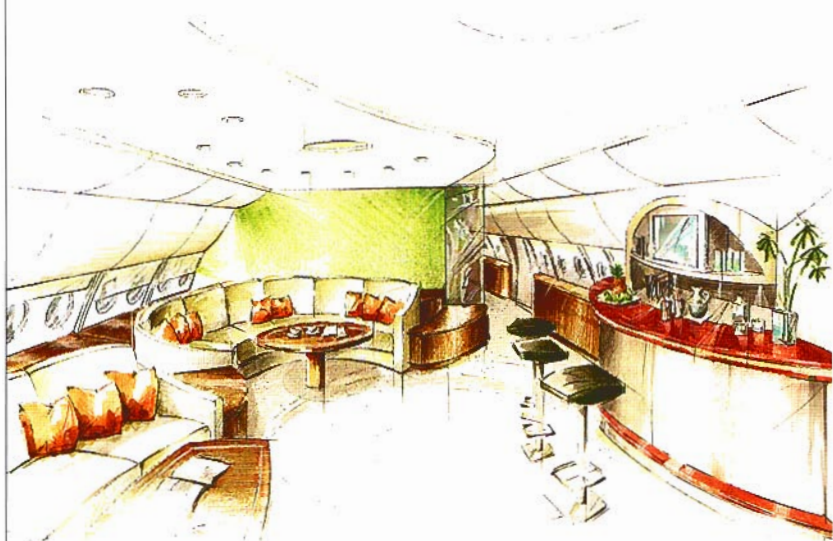


# Magic Bus

When configuring an Airbus A380 for private use, nearly anything is possible.



CLIMB THE STAIRS to the owner's deck of an Airbus A380 converted by German private-jet completion specialist Lufthansa Technik, and you might encounter first a spacious bar and then a full-size galley before entering a gently curving corridor that leads past two ensuite guest bedrooms to the master suite. Here you could find an office, a bedroom, a bathroom, and a gym.

The main deck, which on a commercial airline version of the A380 will hold the majority of the 500 to 800 passengers, will be spacious enough to accommodate a substantial entourage in first-class comfort, or it could be utilized for additional amenities such as a cinema, a medical facility, a conference room, and a sauna. Airbus designed the lower cargo deck to hold the luggage of as many as 555 passengers, so it has ample space for a car or two, or even a small stable of horses. It also could be fitted with a kitchen, a lounge for the crew, or a second, windowless bar.

The A380 is longer, wider, taller, and more spacious than Boeing's largest commercial jet, the 747, which also can be converted for private use. It offers 7,500 square feet of floor space, compared to 1,000 square feet on the largest Boeing Business Jet and 4,000 square feet on Air Force One, the president's 747. With a maximum range of 9,320 miles, the A380 offers nonstop global reach. However, because of its size and weight, the plane will not have access to any regional airports and will be barred from a number of

major international airports.

The first A380 made its maiden flight from Toulouse, France, in April, and airline deliveries are expected to begin next year. Although no one has ordered a VIP version yet, Airbus and Lufthansa Technik expect that as many as 20 will be purchased over the next 10 years, at a price of \$280 million for the basic plane plus from \$20 million to \$90 million for the customization, which will require about a year to complete. Lufthansa Technik, which has been in

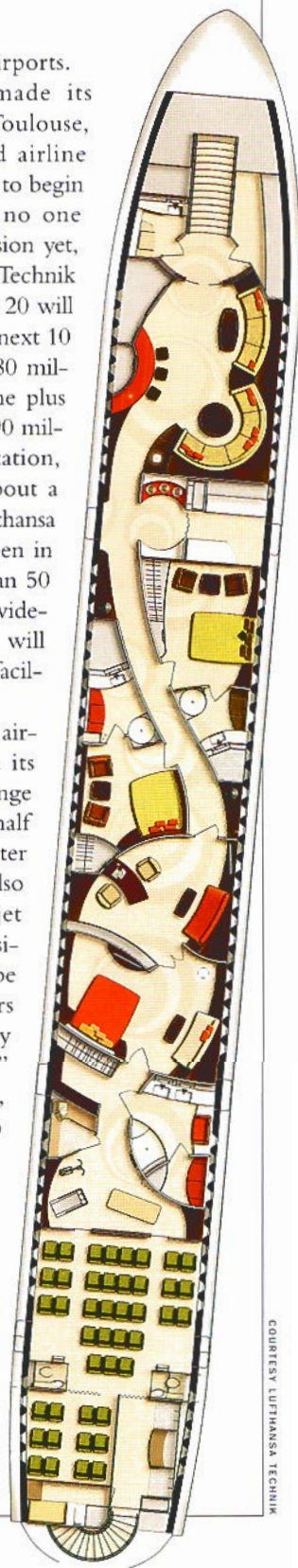
the completion business for more than 50 years and has converted numerous wide-bodied aircraft, including 747s, also will offer crew training and maintenance facilities for the new aircraft.

Boeing, Airbus' chief rival in the aircraft industry, recently introduced its 787 Dreamliner, a jet with similar range but with a cabin that is less than half the size of the A380's. It will not enter airline service until 2008, when it also will become available for private-jet conversion. Boeing Business Jet president Steven Hill expects there will be customers for bespoke Dreamliners and A380s. "The market is certainly much smaller than the BBJ market," he says, "but whatever anyone builds, there will always be individuals who want to be the first to have that airplane for personal use because they can afford it." —MATTHEW STIBBE

Airbus, [www.airbus.com](http://www.airbus.com);

Boeing, [www.boeing.com](http://www.boeing.com);

Lufthansa Technik, [lufthansatechnik.com](http://lufthansatechnik.com)



The top deck of a Lufthansa Technik-designed A380 interior (right) could include a master suite, a pair of guest bedrooms, a galley, and a lounge (above), all connected by a hallway that snakes through the cabin.