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PilotsEYE Austrian 777, Lufthansa A380 & Lufthansa A330

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Introduction



Review by Marlon Carter. Some of you may be

familiar with PilotsEYE while others may be hearing about them for the first time. In a nutshell, PilotsEYE is a new and refreshing DVD/Blu-Ray Documentary that captures the thrill and excitement of flying through the perspective of the Captain and First Officer. This is a very different approach to what we may be use to from other producers, but I can safely say that this is perhaps the best series of DVDs you will come across. The production is worthy of cable TV and you would be surprised to know that these films are shown onboard Lufthansa flights. (Lufthansa

Lufthansa A380 - San Francisco



Highlights

This DVD captures the moment that many of you have been waiting for. Ever since the first flight of the A380 in commercial service, many have dreamed of what it would be like to fly onboard this new queen of the skies. This DVD captures not only the experience of flying onboard this aircraft, but it also captures the extremely rear opportunity to fly in the cockpit of this giant.



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Throughout this DVD we will follow the final flights of Lufthansa's no.1 Captain and Chief Pilot Jürgen Raps. The final flight for JR takes us all from Frankfurt to San Francisco onboard the A380. At the very beginning, JR gives us a briefing on the details of our 10 hour flight ahead. During the departure preparation, viewers will have the opportunity to see a detailed presentation on the checklist items and other checks to be completed prior to pushback. You will be happy to know that the camera footage is not limited to just the cockpit as there are many other cameras that capture the pushback, taxi and departure from the cabin, ramp, tower and runway!

The taxi to runway 25R was very short and while holding for departure, there was quite a treat when another A380 from San Francisco came in for landing on the same runway. The departure from Frankfurt was absolutely majestic as the A380 effortlessly made its way off the ground and before long was smoothly climbing to its initial cruise altitude of FL320. During the cruise portion of the flight there were many highlights worth mentioning.

For example, Captain Raps gives an explanation on volcanic ash and how their route had to be altered which gave them a time savings of 1 hour. While the crew was happy with the much faster routing, the joy was short lived as ATC had to reclear our flight to another route due to a change in the volcanic ash clouds.

Other highlights included the many interesting conversations between the Capt and First Officer. Of particular interest was the Captain's explanation of when he first knew he wanted to be a pilot at the age of 6. During this presentation there were many photos of Capt Raps that showed the progression of his career at Lufthansa which was very inspiring and emotional.

Coming closer to the time of arrival, the crew prepares for the landing by discussing the arrival procedure which takes us over many landmarks such as the Napa Valley, Point Reyes and the Golden Gate Bridge. The views from the cockpit over San Francisco were quite stunning and the various camera views on final and touchdown made this approach one of the best ever seen on a DVD of this nature.

While taxiing to the gate, the SFO airport paid tribute to JR with a water salute. While I thought this was the best tribute to any pilot, I was quite surprised when JR put on his leather jacket and helmet and made his way to the ramp where he was allowed to ride a Harley around the ramp area while waving to airport personnel and other aircraft! For me, this was the best moment of this DVD because it is highly unlikely that you will ever see anything like this again.



During Capt. Raps' stay in San Francisco, he takes us along for a tour of this beautiful city with a sailing trip up to the Golden Gate Bridge and later a dinner party at the Cliff House. The dinner party was quite emotional but nicely showed the strong companionship among the flight crew and their appreciation of JR and



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his long career as a pilot. One of JR's remarks that will resound in your mind after viewing this DVD, is to "Live your dreams and not to dream your life", this statement perfectly captures the way JR lived his life and it is the reason why he has been able to enjoy a 41 year career.

The final segment of this DVD features the return flight to Frankfurt which is also Capt Raps finally flight in his airline career. After all the checks have been completed, the captain taxis out of the gate for the very last time for an almost 10 hour flight back home. The departure was quite a treat because both the passenger and viewers had the privilege of seeing and experiencing the rocking of the wings from side to side as a standard procedure for saying goodbye to an airport.

During the cruise back to Germany there were many light hearted moments between the Capt and Senior First Officer than many of you will enjoy and find quite entertaining. Another highlight was a brief overview of some of the systems onboard the A380 which I am sure everyone will find enlightening. As the flight draws to an end, there is also a flashback series of clips that capture some of the best moments in Captain Raps' career along with comments from many of his colleague which were very touching.

The final landing for JR was also a significant highlight in this DVD. JR was intent on ending his career in style and he did just that when he ever so smoothly landed the A380 back at Frankfurt. The aircraft was escorted to the gate and saluted once more with water from the airport fire trucks. After parking at the gate and completing the parking checklist, Capt Raps bids a final farewell to the viewers as he exits the cockpit for the last time as an airline pilot brining this exciting journey to an end.

Words cannot express how insightful, inspirational and emotional this DVD really is. What I can tell you is that this is one DVD that you MUST see. Apart from the flight video itself, there is also some very interesting bonus material featuring the Airbus factory and simulator training on the A380. All in all I would highly recommend this DVD as it is easily one of the best offering from PilotsEye.

Additional Information

Austrian 777 - Tokyo



Highlights

The DVD starts off with a few clips of the operations at Vienna airport. Shortly after this presentation, our Captain, Capt Fritz Strahammer, gives the viewers a briefing of our flight to Tokyo. This presentation is also nicely complimented with a Google Earth presentation which was very helpful in visualizing the route we are about to fly.



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After all the necessary preparations have been made, we depart Vienna beginning our 11 hour flight to Tokyo. During the departure and cruise there were many scenic views from the cockpit which all will enjoy. During the flight there are also updates given to the passengers & viewers by the flight crew, that entail details on our current location and other information related to the flight. The night time portion of the flight is typically quite, so the captain takes the opportunity to give an enlightening presentation of their "office." This presentation is not very indepth, but it is still very informative to the average enthusiast. A definite highlight of this flight was the stunning sunrise prior to arrival.

Prior to descent, our First Officer gives the viewers an enlightening presentation on how long it takes to become a captain, as well as other interesting facts about being a pilot at Austrian. This presentation was very intriguing and easily one of the most insightful to you aspiring pilots. After the approach briefing, our flight makes its way through the dense layer clouds below to join the arrival for RWY 34R. The landing on Runway 34R was quite thrilling given the fact that the runway is just about 2000m long. While this may seem to be a very difficult landing, the expressions of the faces of the pilots show that it was all a walk in the park.

After an uneventful landing, the crew taxis our aircraft to the gate bringing an end to what can only be described as a fantastic journey. After such a long flight, it is only natural that the crew would not only like to rest, but to explore this intriguing country. During their rest day, the crew embarks on an interesting journey through Tokyo taking the viewers along with them. The tour of Tokyo was not very lengthy, but none the less it is a definitely highlight of this DVD.

After all has been said and done, it is now time for our return flight to Vienna. After pushback and taxi, our 777 swiftly departs for our 11 hour flight back to Vienna. During the climb and cruise portion of the flight, there were many spectacular views from the cockpit of various sites such as Mt. Dvoynaya, Mt. Gora Arsen-yeva and Chabarowsk along with many shots of other aircraft flying past our 777.

With about 9 hours enroute remaining in our flight the captain gives the viewers an update as to the path they have taken thus far, along with the current altitude and other specifics of the flight. The relief pilot also delivers a short presentation about his vital role on long range flights. A highlight of this presentation was an actual demonstration of how the checklist is used in the event of an abnormal situation while enroute and the captain is still resting.

With just a short time remaining, the Captain returns to the flight deck for the approach briefing into Vienna. The scenic views seen on the arrival were quite captivating and pilots in this region are quite fortunate to have such a view each day they go to work. After a smooth landing, we arrived on time at our gate despite the heavy flow of inbound traffic. After a few brief remarks by the Captain, our journey to Tokyo and back has now come to an end.

My overall impression of this DVD is that it can easily be one of the best 777 DVDs out there. Though the language spoken is not English in some portions, there is an option to have English subtitles which is hardly an inconvenience. I would highly recommend checking out this DVD.

Additional Information

Lufthansa A330 - Seattle



Highlights

Our roundtrip journey to Seattle from Frankfurt starts off with a few welcoming remarks from Captain Frank Lunemann. Capt Lunemann and his crew will be flying us onboard Lufthansa's A330 for the 23 flight hours between Frankfurt and Seattle. Most of you may be aware that an A330 is a two pilot operated aircraft. In this instance however, we will have three pilots onboard our long haul flight to Seattle. While the Captain and Senior First Officer Sascha Unterbarnscheidt complete the performance calculations, our third pilot Miriam Pfannmuller, who is also a Senior First Officer is busy on the ramp completing a walk around inspection of the A330.

After all the checks have been completed, our A330 slowly makes its way to the departure runway. During this period, there were many short clips of the activity taking place in both the control tower and on the active runways which is very rare in these types of videos. After the departure, we steadily make our way up to our initial cruise altitude with many fantastic views of Germany along the way. When passing through FL270, our second SFO takes over the right seat for a portion of the flight.

For the remainder of the flight there were many highlights to talk about. While cruising at FL360, the view from the cockpit can only be described as breathtaking. The conversations between the Capt and SFO were also of interest since they discuss many aspects of flying which changes in the airline over the years, life in Seattle. Captain Lunemann also gives us an update on the flight regarding our route and the expected weather on arrival in Seattle. After the arrival he also updates us on our activities to follow which include a tour of the Boeing Factory and Museum of Flight.



Prior to our descent, our SFO Sascha Unterbarnscheidt returns to the cockpit where the approach briefing is then discussed. While most descents and approaches are rather uneventful, this one was not. The A330 has a fuel distribution system where the fuel in the wing tanks will transfer to the inner tanks on both the left and right side of the aircraft. While the left valve opened to facilitate this transfer, the right tank did not and a warning message alerted the crew to this error. If this problem was not corrected, it would have resulted in a fuel imbalance that could jeopardize the safety of the flight. The crew reacted swiftly to solve this issue by "forcing" the valve to open by changing the switch from "AUTO" to "ON".

After the issue with the fuel was sorted, it was now time to make final preparations for the landing in Seattle. The approach itself was uneventful but very scenic with views of KPAE and the surrounding areas in clear view. While the latter moments of the approach saw a few "bumps", the landing on RWY16C was quite smooth bring a satisfactory end to this very long flight.

As mentioned before by Captain Lunemann, the stay over in Seattle takes us on a grand tour of the Boeing Factory and the Museum of Flight. These tours were a spectacular highlight of this DVD and it is perhaps the segment you will remember the most. During the tour of the Boeing Factory, Capt. Mark Feuerstein (B747 Test pilot) takes us on the grand tour of the 747-8 assembly line. During his presentation, you will learn quite a lot about the 747-8F and the hard work that goes into creating one. The details of the changes and differences between the 747-8 and older 747 models are also discussed and I am sure you will find these segments very intriguing. The Tour of the Museum of flight was also very enlightening and I think this would definitely appeal to many of you who have a soft spot for the golden age of aviation.

After a wonderful such a wonderful tour, it was such a shame that it all came to an end so quickly. The following day, we join the crew back at the gate as they prepare for their departure back to Frankfurt. The departure and cruise portions of the flight were much the same as the first with amazing scenic views and an even more so interesting view of forest fires over Canada! One of the highlights that I enjoyed with our return trip was the light hearted conversations among the flight crew. While being a pilot is a serious job, it doesn't mean that the flight crew cannot enjoy each other's company with humorous conversation. Throughout this DVD, the friendly manner of the flight crew shines through and it shows how much fun pilots can have while still being vigilant about their work.

After yet another uneventful landing, we arrive at our gate to bring an end to a fantastic journey with a very entertaining flight crew. In conclusion, I think that this DVD is definitely a keeper and one that you will definitely enjoy viewing. If you do not speak German and you won't mind reading English or French subtitles, this DVD will provide almost 2 hours of fun and excitement.

Additional Information

Summary / Closing Remarks

While these DVD's are in foreign languages, subtitles are provided in English, German and French. It may seem inconvenient having to read subtitles in order to understand what's going on but it really isn't as inconvenient as it may seem. I thought that the editing of these videos was second to none and what made it even more impressive, was the fact that there were camera views from the ground for takeoff and landings. Cameras were also present in the control tower which captured the Air Traffic Controllers as they communicated with the aircraft.

The prices of these DVDs/Blu-Rays are about £17.54 - £18.60 depending on the format you choose. For what you are getting, I would say it is a very fair price given the fact that each DVD/Blu-Ray comes with Bonus material! The overall presentation of these DVDs give you the impression that a major filming company spend months filming and editing to create what I think is the most unique and innovation aviation documentary to date.

If you have never seen an aviation documentary before, I would definitely recommend PilotsEye.

What I Like About The PilotsEye DVDs

- · Breathtaking scenery
- · Stunning and Creative editing
- · Features very unique destinations and aircrafts
- · HD format.
- Numerous Cameras give a thrilling and unique perspective to the viewers of what goes on in the cockpit

What I Don't Like About The PilotsEye DVDs

Nothing



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