

front runners

FEW PARTS OF THE CABIN ARE AS VERSATILE AS THE FRONT ROW MONUMENT. OUR PANEL OF EXPERTS SHARE THEIR IDEAS FOR THE NEXT GENERATION...

BE COCOONED

In considering what his take on a new front row monument design would be, Russell Gillott, design director at the Astheimer agency in the UK explored what was possible within the space afforded, drawing on experience in luxury yacht, home, car and hotel design.

"In the future, we imagine a tailored experience with an individual space that's only available to the front row passengers. We envisage a personalized check-in process, where, via your airline phone app, you can

pre-select your favorite beers, coffee, deli snacks, magazines and newspapers, for example. These will be supplied to your chilled mini-bar when you embark, and are subsequently accessible to you during the flight, at your convenience.

Dedicated storage for clothing and luggage is also incorporated. Front row passengers would benefit from increased privacy, and as such, we have conceptualized an electronic hood that can be deployed over the space to create a truly personal 'cocoon'.

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THE
THIRD
SPACE

"There are many great opportunities for what we call 'third space' monuments, particularly toward the rear of the aircraft," says Hugo Jamson, creative director at New Territory, a London agency that has worked on recent projects such as Airbus A3's Transpose and Zodiac Aerospace's Lifestyle cabin (details of both can be found on our website).

"Creating spaces that provide new destinations for economy and premium economy passengers – something more than just bathrooms or galleys – as places to break out and spend a moment away from the seat. A third space becomes a place to pick up amenity items, magazines, extra blankets, free drinks and snacks, or it could even be transformed into a pop-up offering the best brands of the destination country or region.

"We think this slim monument type would offer a new differentiator for airlines without adversely affecting seat count, showing an elevated care for passengers in the most densely populated part of the aircraft."

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NEW POSSIBILITIES OPEN UP

"If VR and IFE merge, the systems become more personal," states Ross Burns, group lead industrial designer at AIM Altitude. It will be possible for visual content to be projected anywhere in the cabin; sounds will become part of the passenger environment. Removing the need for a physical IFE interface unlocks opportunities such as working-desk areas being increased in size, dual-seating and dining areas becoming possible, and the whole seating zone being opened up – potentially allowing the front row area to command a premium for airlines.

"With real vision, holographic crew members could essentially provide each passenger with their own butler. Dining could change, with the front row monument offering molecular food reconstruction technology, creating food out of thin air and reducing the catering workflow."



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DYNAMIC OPPORTUNITIES

"Monuments are rarely seen as an area for innovation," states Jose Luis Martin-Oar, business strategist at the Mormedi design house in Madrid.

"These elements are mostly used as simple dividers and branding surfaces, and innovation is often limited to finding the lightest and most resistant material.

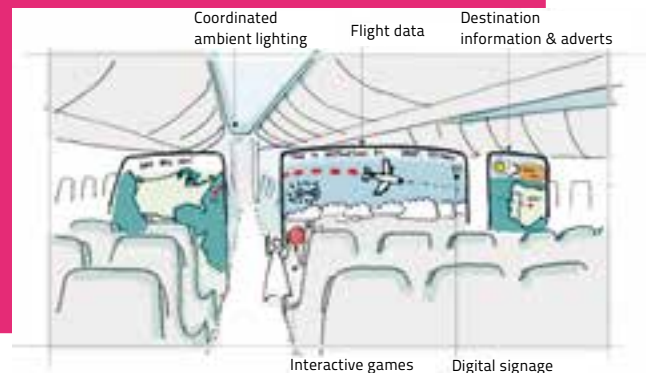
"We believe that with the development of LED lighting and large modular LED displays, these highly visual elements could be used more efficiently and help

airlines to differentiate themselves from competitors, drive sales and enhance passenger experience.

"For full-service carriers, we can see opportunities for brand building by using the displays to create emotional and cultural links to the brand. For low-cost carriers, and the unbundling of services, we see opportunities for dynamic advertising and personalization of services offered by the segmentation of passengers."

Mormedi has also considered passengers, and envisages the displays as being a useful tool for

creating different moods by integrating them with other lighting systems, using them as a communication tool to show dynamic information such as flight data and multi-language assistance, and as an interactive entertainment platform for the front row seats.



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BOLD BRANDING

Because the front-row monument in business class can form a transitional element to the adjoining cabin area in front, this can require close collaboration between the airline, seat manufacturer, IFE supplier, and the architect of the entire cabin.

The real task is to adjust the project to multiple requirements and to remain flexible," states Jakob Verseemann, VP of BFE and retrofit sales at Diehl.

An interesting aspect is branding and projection. With full-height monuments, the module itself can serve as a large projection surface, on which information, advertisements and announcements can be displayed, with no heavy monitors required.

"Aircraft can be branded in the blink of an eye, and corporate branding displayed in the cabin without the need of renovation," adds Verseemann.

"But such projections can also be interesting for the cabin ambience. For example, the pilots' view from the cockpit can be projected to provide a special travel experience to passengers. Also, the cabin's appearance can be adapted to the flight phase. There are unlimited possibilities."



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THE SKY'S THE LIMIT

"Storage, open bar units, cabin dividers, foot stools for business class seats: these are just a few of the multiple roles that front row monuments play nowadays in any given airline cabin product and LOPA," states Cristian Sutter, a cabin design specialist at British Airways.

"However, whether a dedicated bespoke BFE design or a humble catalog SFE space filler, front row monuments are still very much a single-function hard product affair."

In Sutter's view, future front row monuments could be designed to deliver flexible areas that can be easily reconverted to support myriad functions, offering new ancillaries and branding touch point possibilities that meet ever-changing passenger needs and route demands.

His ideas include an inflight pop-up duty-free retail space, and a social area for day flights, with extra casual seating. Another idea is a

monument able to be converted during flight into a more secluded recreational space that would appeal to families traveling together.

"The sky is the limit in unlocking the true potential of front row monuments as shape-shifting wildcards to meet current and future cabin products flexibility demands," he adds. ✖

