

PERSONAL ITEMS

Aircraft owners can add a real personal touch to their cabins through carefully selected, customized or bespoke flatware, crystal, china, linen and other amenities

Thirty years ago, Jim Dahlgren and Allan Duck established a business to meet the unusual and eclectic demands of a niche market. Today Dahlgren Duck & Associates (DDA) of Dallas, Texas, supplies leading aviation companies with top-end crystal, china, flatware, linens and amenities. It also offers customization and bespoke design services, to help VIP aircraft owners encapsulate their style in their amenities.

Perhaps the need is for functional dinnerware for a busy corporate fleet. "In this instance we would recommend a brand that delivers high quality combined with longevity," says Scott Ritter, CEO at DDA. "The proposal to a private owner may be very different. The interior is likely to reflect their luxurious lifestyle. We would suggest a collection from a luxury brand with customization, perhaps incorporating their initials or family crest."

DDA also has a bespoke design division, run by a dedicated team with years of experience and making use of a network of project consultants, artisans and boutique craftspeople. The company notes that deep knowledge, imagination and understanding of the client are needed to create a rare piece. "Sometimes a customer will come to us with a very specific idea, or they'll have seen a pattern in nature they want replicated in their china or flatware," says Ritter. "Others will come with very broad specifications that require us to research, design and reiterate concepts."

Recent projects include a triangular china and crystal set created to represent three brothers, a flatware design inspired by a shell, and a dinner service inspired by a Moroccan mosque. Fulfilling these requests requires energy, time and obsessive attention to detail. "We seek

Many of DDA's dinnerware products will be showcased at NBAA 2016



out experts for every project," says Ritter. "In some cases there may be one person in the world with the necessary skills."

DDA fosters strong and long relationships with its customers and manufacturers. "We like to think of ourselves as the client's strategic partner in creating an onboard lifestyle," says Ritter. "It is this that has ensured we remain preferred partners with the globe's finest luxury producers and favored suppliers to the world's elite."

Looking to the future, DDA continues to invest in developing its product knowledge, as well as enhancing the client specification, selection, ordering and reordering processes. The company

has introduced technology that enables customers to follow their projects in real time, no matter where they are. "We are staying true to our origins but we recognize that we need to respond to changing market expectations, to modernize luxury," says Ritter. "Today's audience is increasingly made up of digital natives, so we have adjusted our technology to support the delivery of a brand that people want to do business with. We can showcase our product portfolio, capabilities and expertise through technology, and it enables us to interact with clients in a completely new way."

And the cost to personalize your jet? "Typically our clients are more concerned with the quality and the end product rather than the cost," says Ritter. "The value is in the service, expertise and ability to fulfill even the wildest interior dreams. That's priceless for many customers." ✕

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