

# SAVOY

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## DINING ON CLOUD NINE

Forget the questionable in-flight meals at 40,000 feet – for clients of specialist suppliers of luxury amenities for private jets, Dahlgren Duck & Associates, it's all about supping in style at altitude. Jane Stanbury finds out how luxury brands and amenities help tailor-make a bespoke experience in the air

It's well-known that you eat with much more than just your taste buds. The way in which food is presented plays a major part in our eating satisfaction. In fact, a recent study from Oxford University showed that the colour of a plate may affect how you eat, and the weight of cutlery may change your thoughts about the taste of a dish.

Flavour is also affected by altitude, so food presentation becomes even more important when dining in the air. The world's elite jet owners recognise this, and turn to US-based Dahlgren Duck & Associates to enhance their dining experience.

For over 30 years, DDA has been detailing and editing the cabin dining environment. The company provides the world's finest crystal, china, flatware, liners and amenities, from leading luxury design brands, to the international private aviation sector.

"We like to think of ourselves as our clients' strategic partner in creating an on-board lifestyle and image," says CEO Scott Ritter. "For businesses, it allows them to extend their corporate image through to the aircraft, and for private owners, it adds their own personal touch to their on-board experience." DDA has such strong and long relationships with eminent design houses that they're willing to customise their products for the DDA clientele.

"They allow us to integrate a logo, family crest, or even the owner's initials into their products," Scott continues. "They trust us to add style to their established designs, and that's important when you're a leading luxury brand."



However, the jewel in the crown of DDA's services is its ability to create china, crystal and flatware collections that are truly unique. The bespoke design division comprises a one-of-a-kind network of craftsmen and suppliers, which collaborates with a dedicated project team to generate what Scott calls the 'ungoogleable'.

"The interior of our customers' aircraft is a very personal space, so we plan and work with the intention of enriching their experience through provision of breathtakingly stunning pieces," he explains. "We literally produce items that will be displayed in museums one day."

Past projects have included the design and creation of a Champagne flute that lit up to showcase the bubbles as an aircraft took its maiden flight; a dinner service that incorporated mother of pearl inlay throughout; and a silver flatware service that was handcrafted to incorporate a stirrup design, inlaid with Lapis Lazuli. To produce such items requires deep knowledge, imagination and obsessive attention to detail.

"Sometimes a customer will come to us with a very specific idea," adds Scott. "One client chose to emulate the pattern of a shell they found on a beach; another was one of three brothers who wanted to showcase their fraternity through his dinner service. This resulted in the creation of triangular plates and crystal stems.

"Others will come with very broad specifications, which require us to research, design and reiterate concepts. Our concept designers are intuitive; they instinctively know

what clients need, and can go straight to the right source of inspiration." At the same time, the items need to be functional and fit with aviation regulations, which adds several new layers to the complexity of design.

"Quite often, we have to seek out a specific expert, and in some cases, there may be only one person in the world with the capabilities to produce what we need," Scott says. The resulting items can be found on aircraft used by royalty, heads of state, governments, celebrities and the truly elite.

"Our clients really are the one percent of the one percent", insists Scott, adding that, once customers have received their tailor-made aircraft pieces, they're so delighted that they'll often ask to recreate the look across their palace, yacht, private residence, and even executive boardroom. And the price for creating these wondrous pieces?

"Every collection is different, and consequently there's no fixed price tag, plus I would be breaking our strict code of discretion if I was to reveal them," Scott concludes with a smile. "For many, the shared experience with their family and friends on board is what they appreciate most. Those precious moments are priceless."

Head to [www.dahlgrenduck.com](http://www.dahlgrenduck.com) for further information on the services offered by DDA. Jane is a principal at UK-based aviation consultancy Emerald Media, which specialises in business aviation with an international client base. To find out more, visit [www.emeraldmedia.co.uk](http://www.emeraldmedia.co.uk)