Top 5 best-sellers in commercial aviation history

Find out about the five best selling commercial aircraft the world has ever seen. A clue: Safran is present on board all of them!

1 – The Boeing 737

The 10,000th Boeing 737 rolled off the production line in Renton (WA) on March 13, 2018. A world record which made it into the Guinness World Records. And the production of this best-seller undergoing a ramp-up: Boeing took 40 years to manufacture 5,000 of the aircraft, and only an additional 12 years was required to exceed the 10,000 mark! Today, 47 aircraft in the 737 family leave the plant every month. Boeing has an order backlog comprising a further 4,600 aircraft.

The first 737 took to the skies for the very first time in... 1967. The 737 family comprises ten models; the fourth generation, the "737 Max", entered into service in 2017: it is powered exclusively by the LEAP-1B engine by CFM… it also features an array of systems and equipment manufactured by Safran. More than 85 Boeing 737 MAX aircraft are currently in operation.

2 – The Airbus A320

Airbus produced the 8,000th aircraft in the A320 family (the A318, A319 A320 and A321 single-aisle jets, as well as the -neo variations) in February 2018. The A320neo rolled off the production lines in Tianjin and was delivered to Air China. As at end-February 2018, a total of 8,029 aircraft had been delivered.

The first A320 was put into operation in 1988, more than 20 years after the first Boeing 737 was delivered.
The A320 is currently manufactured in four countries: France, Germany, China and the United States. Airbus could potentially have manufactured 15,000 of the A320 in the 2020s! The aircraft manufacturer is currently producing 50 aircraft a month, which is said to reach 60 aircraft a month in 2019.

Almost all of the Group’s companies are present on board the aircraft – for example, the LEAP-1A engines are manufactured by Safran Aircraft Engines, the wiring by Safran Electrical & Power and the landing gear by Safran Landing Systems – without forgetting Zodiac Aerospace which provides the passenger seats, galleys, inserts, oxygen systems and slides, among other things.

3 – The Boeing 747

More than 1,500 of the Boeing 747 aircraft were produced (1,543 aircraft have been delivered at last count), a symbolic milestone which was officially made in June 2014. The aircraft is manufactured in a plant in Everett (WA). The first aircraft with a wide fuselage (for transporting up to 467 passengers) was unveiled at the Paris Air Show in 1969. Nicknamed “Jumbo Jet”, the aircraft was, for a long time, the largest commercial transport aircraft, before the A380 entered the picture in the 2000s. The Boeing 747 was also highly successful in the transportation of goods, Heads of State— the most famous being Air Force One — as well as rock stars – like the famous heavy metal group Iron Maiden, whose lead singer, Bruce Dickinson, is also a seasoned pilot and flies their aircraft called “Ed Force One”.

4 – The Boeing 777

Boeing delivered the 1,500th “Triple Seven” aircraft in July 2017, 23 years after its maiden flight. A total of 1,534 aircraft had been delivered as at December 31, 2017. An incredible performance for a super-jumbo, long-range, twin-engine (the biggest in the world), twin-aisle jet that can transport between 300 and 550 passengers. The program will go in a new direction in 2020 with the launch of the 777X series, which is expected to enter into service in 2020. Since August 2017, the production rate for the 777 (one of Boeing’s most profitable models) has slowed down to 5 aircraft a month.

Several Safran companies provide equipment on board this aircraft, to learn more take a look at Safran on board.

5– The Airbus A330

Since 1991, a total of 1,393 of the long-range, medium-capacity A330 aircraft have been produced. A total of seven aircraft is currently being produced every month. A re-engined A330neo took to the skies for its maiden flight on October 19, 2017 in Toulouse. The production of the A330-800 began in fall of 2018. Safran is involved in this new program, notably as the exclusive engine nacelle supplier. Furthermore, Safran supplies the landing gear, wheels and carbon brakes, wiring and other electrical systems. Aero Gearbox International, a joint venture between Safran Transmission Systems and Rolls Royce, supplies the power transmission system for the Trent 7000 engine manufactured by Rolls-Royce.
developed by Goodrich-Messier, a joint venture between Safran Landing Systems and UTC Aerospace Systems.

For more information about the systems and equipment provided by Safran for the first two aircraft of this top 5, please consult the "Safran on board" pages.