

SQ380 TRIP REPORT

by Ingmar de Kegel

By popular demand, I shall hereby start the trip report(s) of the A380 inaugural.

The evening before, **Iangoodwin** had made arrangements for a meeting and so **Luke, SteveTas**, myself and some others gathered at the Swissotel The Stamford in Singapore to meet each other F2F for the first time over some Singapore Slings.

Had just arrived from FRA on SQ325 (delayed bec of heavy winds at FRA resulting in only 2 runways out of 3 being available) and because of the early flight the next morning we didn't make it late.

We agreed to meet the next morning in the lobby at 4.30 am in order to catch a cab to the Airport.

During the night I got 5 phonecalls from newspapers and radiostations back in my home country asking for coverage/interviews of the flight. This resulted in me only sleeping for more or less one hour.

Anyway, it was soon enough "morning" and time to head down to meet the others. Upon entering the lobby, I noticed a lot of people were checking out as well. It proved to be members of the press who had been invited by SQ to be on the first flight.

A guy in a suit approached me, said good morning, introduced himself as the PR manager of SQ in the UK and said that I could go to the table to the left to pick up my presskit & ticket.

I explained him that I was in fact a paying passenger (it's always funny to tell someone you "won" an auction) but that I was interested in the presskit

He told me that those unfortunately were reserved for members of the press and he wished me a pleasant flight.

Soon enough **Iangoodwin** showed up (**Luke** and **SteveTas** were already there) and we were about to go and call for a cab when we realized that the special SQ bus for the press was already standing outside.

I went up to the SQ chap again and asked if we could go with them. He said to check with the lady at the press kit table and so I did.

The lady was very friendly and said: "sure, hop on, guys!" (she later on even offered us some water or juice on the way to the airport).

We were soon at the airport where people had already started checking-in. Everybody was full of enthusiasm and the press was everywhere, taking interviews,

filming and taking photographs.

After we were issued our boarding passes, we were invited to stand in front of a wall full of "first to fly A380" logo's where pics were taken and our addresses checked. This should be for a special stampsheet to be sent out to our home soon.

After that, we went through immigration and to the gate holding area F31 for security check and the breakfast buffet.

The room soon filled up with people and became quite packed in the end. Pics were taken, some speeches and cheques donated to the charities benefiting from the auction.

Soon it was time for boarding and first Suites, Business Class and PPS members were called, followed by Economy passengers in zones.
3 aerobridges were in use.

Upon boarding, everybody started taking pics and checking out the whole interior of the aircraft.

In our seat, there was a pillow, a blanket and a goodie bag (cfr pics of **Derek**) and in the seat pocket, there was a special version of the KrisWorld magazine (cfr my pics).

Was assigned an aisle seat (no possibility for seat requests in advance or at check-in), with a fellow passenger next to me and nobody in the window seat. The window seat didn't have a goodie bag either!

It proved that seat would remain empty and my seatmate asked me if I would like to sit by the window since he preferred sitting by the aisle anyway... Needless to say I almost jumped over him to the window seat. A great thank you to him for letting me sit by the window.

The safety video started to play as we pushed back, but I was so fascinated about what was going on outside that I forgot to watch it!

As we pushed back, I noticed that lots of people were standing at the windows inside Changi airport catching a glimpse of our big fella. The Silkair A320 at the gate next to us was dwarfed by the wing of our A380 just like a father who's standing next to his child and gives it a pat on the shoulder.

The Rolls Royce Trent 900 engines spooled up and we started our short taxi to the runway. Was interesting to see the A380 lining up in between normal traffic at Changi.

We were almost instantly cleared for take-off and people started clapping and cheering as soon as we started our take-off roll. It is indeed true that the noisy level of the engines is inferior to that of the 744 or the 77W.

You almost couldn't feel the movement and the A380 gently took the skies under even more cheering and clapping!

The usual announcement was made that seatbelts should remain fastened as long as the light etc, followed by another announcement that the personal certificates and Champagne would be distributed soon!

After the seatbelt sign was switched off, people started moving around, travelling between the 2 decks, in and round galleys, down to the crew rest area etc, all followed by press running up and down the aisles...

I felt a bit sorry for the crew because it was hard working for them that way, but they remained all cheerful and kept on explaining how things worked etc.

Special edition menu's were distributed featuring an Asian and a Western option for lunch.

Meanwhile, champagne corks popped and the crew started distributing it, followed by a box of canapés.

More champagne followed (in fact it was always readily available in the galleys or by the crew).

The personal certificates were handed out to each passenger

Lunch was served (one of the very few moments most of us remained seated) and the flight went on smoothly. Captain Ting informed us about the trip and gave some more information about the aircraft and its engines and thanked us for being on the flight.

Captain Robert Ting and Mr Chew Choon Seng walked through the cabin and talked to the passengers and posed for pics. Mr Chew is really a nice guy. He was all smiles and it showed that he was so proud of his new baby. Passengers thanked him because of the decision to buy the aircraft.

Earlier that morning, during the speeches at the airport, Mr Chew told that the A380 was now the way to go for SQ and that the 744 was a thing of the past.

Because he was standing in front of 2 passengers for quite some time chatting with other passengers, Mr Chew said sorry to those 2 pax and one of them just replied; "nah, don't bother, it's your plane anyway"

After more drinks, talking with fellow pax and travelling between the 2 decks, Captain Ting came back on the PA announcing that Sydney Air Traffic Control had granted permission for a low fly by over the harbour. Everybody was cheering upon that announcement, but in the end, the flyby didn't happen because of low hanging clouds.

We were already on our initial descend when the refreshments were served and the crew had to work hard to serve all passengers, do the cleanup afterwards and preparing the cabin for landing.

Despite the weather being not so good, the A380 gently touched down at SYD, where

lots of ground staff welcomed it.

We taxied to the gate and came to a full stop.

After the seatbelt sign was switched off, everybody got up to prepare for deboarding. At that moment, an announcement was made that it would take a few more minutes to open the doors because it was the first time the A380 was docking at SYD and as a result the ground crew was extremely cautious with the bridges so as not to damage the plane. All went well and we got off and into the airport where Mr Chew and SQ staff were lined up thanking us once again for being on the flight, after which were presented with a copy of "The Sydney Morning Herald" with on the front page: "THE FUTURE LANDS IN SYDNEY TODAY".

Passengers then moved onwards to immigration, baggage claim and customs inspection, ready to go downtown to their hotels or back home.

A truly remarkable experience had come to an end, to be an ever lasting memory for all those onboard.

A special thank you to Airbus for designing and building the A380, to SQ for buying it and organizing the event, to the fellow passengers and crew onboard and all those on the ground involved in any way with this event, for their enthusiasm in making this trip what it was: simply fabulous!