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Six of the best: Crystal Cabin Award winners wow industry

Nearly 200 invited guests from the aviation industry witnessed six winners collect their snow-white trophies at last night's Crystal Cabin Awards at Hamburg's prestigious Atlantic hotel.

Prizes for innovative products and concepts in the field of aircraft cabins were awarded to Elektro-Metall Export, Lufthansa Technik, Recaro, Thales, The IMS Company and Munich University of Applied Sciences. A total of 52 entries from 10 countries were whittled down to 21 for the final round of judging.

"It is often said that allowing for variation in body posture poses a difficulty in airplanes, but the finalists have proven that this is not necessarily the case," said Prof Dr Peter Vink from the Delft University of Technology in the Netherlands, a member of the judging panel.

Awards were presented in the following categories:

- Entertainment and communication, won by The IMS Company for its RAVE IFE system
- Industrial design/interior concept, Recaro for the slimline BL3520 seat
- Passenger comfort, Recaro, for the Air New Zealand SkyCouch
- Greener cabin, health and safety, Elektro-Metall for non-touch lavatory waste flap
- Material and components, Lufthansa Technik for its galley lighting system
- University category, Munich University of Applied Sciences, for its 'Airgemonic' interior design concept



Baby you can drive my Ka – Thales vice-president Stuart Dunleavy

Take it as red: Thales has the XWB-factor

BY MARY KIRBY

Superfast airborne connectivity will be available on board the Airbus A350 XWB now that Thales has secured linefit offerability – and a launch customer – for its Ka-band satellite-based communications solution.

The connectivity will be supported by Inmarsat's forthcoming Global Xpress Ka-band aeronautical service, which is expected to be available around the 2014 timeframe. But Thales is committed to providing the necessary equipment to airlines at the 2013 entry-into-service of the A350.

The firm says it is able to begin testing service against existing Ka technology. "The Inmarsat tech-

nology and satellite constellation is based on far more standard components from Boeing than previous satellite constellations. So what they've done is they've taken the existing line of satellites and they're accelerating the delivery of some of them for Inmarsat," says Thales vice-president of marketing and customer proposition Stuart Dunleavy.

"This means as an avionics company Thales has been short-listed as a provider of avionics for Ka band and that means we can begin testing against existing Ka technology which is already flying today. So it's not like [Inmarsat's L-band-based] Swift-Broadband where you only had one platform to test against and

you had to wait for that to be available."

Thales' connectivity technology path includes offering Swift-Broadband-supported solutions today, but graduating to Ka-band as soon as Global Xpress is ignited. "We're choosing to do this because we need a solution that is global, economically stable and gives the bandwidth the customers need. That's why we're firmly in line with the Global Xpress Ka-band," says Dunleavy.

Thales is well advanced in developing its in-cabin Wi-Fi/GSM network solution, having partnered with TriaGnoSys for the platform, which is designed to be service provider and satellite communications neutral.