



Mabuhay miles

Philippine Airlines marks 70 years of service—and keeps growing on the wings of new Boeing jets *By Kathrine Beck*

Board a Philippine Airlines flight anywhere in the world and you're already experiencing Filipino traditions of hospitality and *bayanihan*—community spirit, cooperation and camaraderie.

Airplane interiors feature a tranquil coastal theme, inspired by the nation's islands and blue Pacific waters. Philippine culture is expressed through a combination of native Malay traditions with Spanish, American, Chinese and Arab influences: Economy class is called Fiesta Class, and business class is Mabuhay—what Filipinos say to welcome guests.

Philippine Airlines plays a vital role in its home country—a large archipelago with more than 7,000 islands, where roughly one in 10 jobs is supported by travel and tourism. The airline also connects many overseas Filipinos with family and friends back home,



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PHOTO: PHILIPPINE AIRLINES

and it's an increasingly important carrier in the fast-growing Asia Pacific region.

This month, the airline celebrates its 70th birthday. It first took to the skies on March 15, 1941, using a Beech Model 18, with daily flights between Manila and the highland city of Baguio.

In 1946, Philippine Airlines became the first Asian carrier to cross the Pacific, operating a Douglas DC-4. That trip from Manila to Oakland, Calif., launched a long partnership between the airline and Boeing's heritage companies. Philippine Airlines also was the first Southeast Asian carrier to serve Europe, with flights, by May 1947, to Rome, Madrid and London.

In the early 1960s, the airline entered the jet age on the wings of a Boeing 707. Now its Boeing fleet consists of five 747-400s and two 777-300ERs (Extended Range). And it has four more 777-300ERs on order, with two scheduled for delivery in 2012 and two the following year. With the addition of the 777-300ER to the fleet, Philippine Airlines will enhance its trans-Pacific service with a wider, more comfortable cabin, an advanced passenger entertainment system and greater fuel efficiency, beginning with the Manila-to-Vancouver route this month and other trans-Pacific routes in the very near future.

“Philippine Airlines’ 70th birthday comes at a great time for the airline as it introduces new services and equipment upgrades,” said Rob Laird, vice president, East and South Asia Sales for Boeing Commercial Airplanes.

After seven decades of pioneering achievements, Philippine Airlines has earned its nickname “Asia’s First.” Today, the airline serves 25 cities in 14 countries, as well as 20 domestic destinations. It is scheduled to introduce new routes such as Manila-to-Delhi as part of its route expansion program.

“We’re very proud of our heritage and we’re committed to enhancing our service for today’s passengers, including the addition of new efficient Boeing airplanes to our fleet,” said Jaime Bautista, the airline’s president and chief operating officer. ■

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PHOTO: (Above) A Philippine Airlines 777-300ER (Extended Range). GAIL HANUSA/BOEING