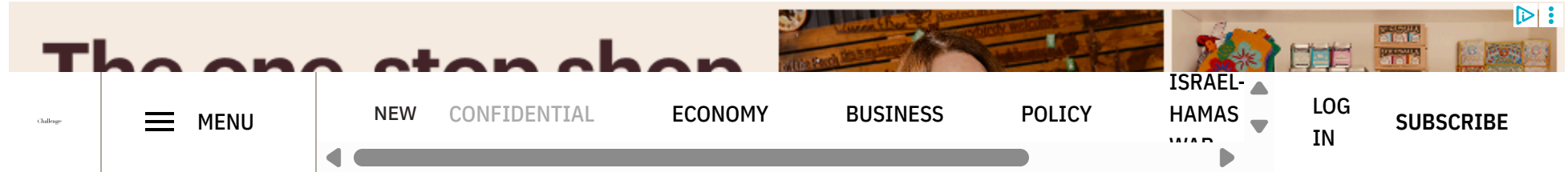


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BUSINESS AERONAUTICS

The A320 dethrones the 737: the secrets of Airbus's "remontada" against Boeing

For the first time in history, total sales of the Airbus A320 have surpassed those of rival Boeing's 737, which was launched 20 years earlier. A closer look at the five masterstrokes that helped Airbus establish itself.

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VINCENT LAMIGEON · OCTOBER 15, 2025 AT 5:22 P.M. · ⌚ 5 MIN READING

And the crown changed hands. After decades of unchallenged dominance, Boeing's single-aisle 737 has just ceded the title of world's best-selling commercial aircraft to the A320 from European rival Airbus. By the end of September, deliveries of the A320, launched twenty years after its rival (1988 versus 1968), had reached 12,257 units, compared to 12,254 for the American aircraft, according to figures released Tuesday.

This curve crossover is most likely definitive. The A320 has an order book of over 7,000 aircraft, compared to 4,350 for the 737 MAX. And Airbus is targeting a production rate of 75 A320neos per month in 2027, while

Boeing is not expected to exceed, in the best-case scenario, 57 to 60 aircraft per month by that date, according to calculations by American consultant Ernest Arvai, founder of the firm AirInsight.

How did Airbus pull off this incredible comeback? The recurring setbacks of the 737 MAX, between quality issues and the deadly crashes of 2018 and 2019 (Lion Air and Ethiopian), obviously played a role. But Airbus also knew how to play the game smartly. A close-up of the European champion's five masterstrokes.

1. A state-of-the-art aircraft from the moment it was released

From the moment it entered service in 1988, the A320 marked a departure from traditional aircraft. Conventional mechanical flight controls, which required a bit of elbow grease from the crew, were replaced by fly-by- *wire* controls, which eased the pilots' workload and allowed for more stable flight. The cockpit was also completely redesigned, with electronic screens replacing analog dials, and mini side sticks (joysticks), inspired by those used in combat aircraft, replacing the traditional central stick.

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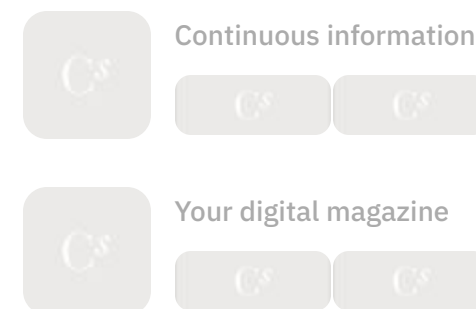
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