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Lufthansa Restoring Starliner in the US

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The good old days of flight will be returning to the US by the end of this year when German airliner Lufthansa completes the restoration of the Lockheed L-1649 Super Star Constellation. The Super Star Constellation, also known as the Starliner, was the pinnacle of luxury aviation in the 1950's. Originally produced by US aerospace engineering company Lockheed-Martin, the Starliner was renowned for a first-class experience at 30,000 feet.

Once it is fully restored, it will be piloted by a Lufthansa crew and fly across the United States. "The Starliner will then serve as an ambassador of Lufthansa for pleasure flights – not in Europe, but in the US, where the Starliner will remain," Ambassador Peter Wittig said at a dinner honoring the German company.

The restoration of the Starliner has been underway in Auburn, Maine, since 2007. Both German and American engineers working for Lufthansa Technik have taken part in the restoration process, making the project even more of a transatlantic symbol. Shortly after the plane was bought at an auction by Lufthansa, the company invested hundreds of thousands of dollars into the Auburn airport to build a hangar for the vintage beauty. At the first anniversary celebration of the restoration, a team led by Michael Austermeier praised transatlantic cooperation as the reason the restoration continues to go smoothly.

"The 'German virtues' which are highly valued in the USA, coupled with the American pragmatism, are what make this project so successful," Austermeier said. "We work together as a big, multicultural family and for everyone it is a great privilege to be able to take part in this once-in-a-lifetime project."

The Starliner project has also been a unique opportunity for apprentice engineers at Lufthansa. For the first time, they not only have the opportunity to work on a legendary aircraft, they are also doing so in the US. Lufthansa regularly has around 15 apprentices working in Auburn along with 120 permanent