CHECK OUT THE CANADIAN AIRLINER THAT'S TRYING TO CHALLENGE BOEING

News / Manufacturer

Bombardier Aerospace announced late last week that Delta Air Lines agreed to order 75 of the company's C Series airliners in a deal worth up to $5.6 billion. Shortly after the deal's announcement, Bombardier flew one of its C Series demonstrators down to Delta's Atlanta headquarters for journalists and the airline's staff to get a closer look.

Although Bombardier has been a global leader in business and regional jets, the C Series is the first product from the Canadian airplane to compete against Boeing and Airbus in the mainline market. The decision to enter the market with the C Series was a major financial gamble for Bombardier, with a program price tag of $5.5 billion. Since its inception more than a decade ago, the aircraft has been beset by a series of development delays and slow sales.

Last year, the airplane maker was forced to write down $4.4 billion and take a $1 billion bailout from the Quebec government. Even as it struggled to close a sale, Bombardier was credited with

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building an aircraft that's one of the most capable on the market today — besting rivals Boeing and Airbus in terms of efficiency and ability.

With the Delta order, Bombardier has not only found a US launch customer for the C Series, but it has the blockbuster deal it needed to validate the attractiveness of aircraft to other prospective buyers. The Bombardier C Series enters service later this year with Swiss International Air Lines.

Here's a closer look at the airliner:

Bombardier offers two version of the C Series: a 130-seat CS300 and a smaller 108-seat CS100.

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Delta opted for the smaller CS100, but expect the airline to switch some of its order to the larger jet down the road.

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According to Bombardier, the C Series' greatest selling points are its efficiency and cabin comfort.

A major contributor to the Bombardier's efficiency is its lightweight aluminum and composite body.

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In addition, its pair of Pratt & Whitney PW1500G geared turbofan engines are some of the most fuel efficient on the market and help make the airplane 15% cheaper to operate than aircraft currently in production.

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According to Bombardier, the C Series also emits 20% less carbon dioxide during operation and is the quietest airliner on the market.

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In January, former Delta CEO Richard Anderson cited the airplane's engines as a major reason for the airline's interest in the C Series.

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With a range of more than 3,500 miles, the CS100 allows Delta to operate routes its smaller jets had not been able to reach before.

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Step inside the Bombardier's cabin and you'll find a surprisingly spacious interior for a relatively small 108-seat aircraft.

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Up front are the CS100's business-class seats.

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Look toward the back of the plane and you see the CS100's five-abreast seating configuration in economy class. That means there's only one middle seat per row as opposed to two per row on the rival Boeing 737 and Airbus A320 family jets.

In addition, Bombardier claims that the C Series' windows are 50% larger than its rivals.

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In the cockpit, the C Series features five large, 15.1-inch displays. Here's Capt. Steve Paradis, who helped fly the plane down to Atlanta from Montreal.

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