



jetBlue®

TERMINAL FIVE JFK

T5

TWA Flight Center

The TWA Flight Center opened when New York International Airport at Idlewild was a symbol of the Jet Age, and each major U.S. airline serving the airport built and operated its own individual terminal. Although each airline attempted to surpass the others in building design, the most acclaimed of these terminals was TWA's Flight Center. This innovative structure, which was styled to

This detail shot shows the Saarinen building as it appears today, with the new terminal visible behind it. Gensler's architects designed a low profile and angular shape to complement rather than compete with Saarinen's curvilinear design. The left side of the terminal includes a "tip up" that echoes the Saarinen building's profile. (Ben Wang)

JetBlue Takes 5 at JFK On October 22, 2008, JetBlue opened its new Terminal 5 at JFK International Airport. This building sits directly behind the landmark TWA Flight Center, the architecturally acclaimed landmark designed by noted architect Eero Saarinen, and opened on May 28, 1962. This new 635,000 square foot, 26 gate Terminal 5 was designed by the Gensler architectural firm and built in collaboration with Turner Construction Company, Arup, DMJM Harris/AECOM and Rockwell Group. Because it sits directly behind the Saarinen building, JetBlue says the new terminal "interprets the iconic TWA Flight Center for today's jet set" adding that the "low profile and angular shape complement rather than compete with Saarinen's curvilinear design."

look like a giant concrete bird, won several awards and is now a registered New York City landmark. For almost four decades, this terminal served as the New York base for TWA's famous fleet of red and white airliners.

TWA outgrew the Flight Center and expanded into the vacated National terminal in the early 1980s. But by 1996, after several years of financial losses, a downsizing TWA reduced its number of

JFK flights and retreated to the Saarinen building, which by then had been re-named Terminal 5. By the late 1990s, the former National terminal, now called Terminal 6, was only used by a few flights each day.

Enter JetBlue

Enter David Neelman, who announced a proposed new airline in February of 1999. Neelman realized that



Above: Terminal 5 construction began on December 7, 2005, and the building's structure was taking shape by October 14, 2006, when this photograph was taken. To the left is a small remnant of TWA's "Flight Wing Two," one of that carrier's gate areas that was demolished to make room for the new terminal. To the right is A320 N526JB, its JetBlue paint having been stripped. This aircraft would go on to fly for Air Berlin and Blue Wings as D-ANND. (Bill Hough)



Left: Terminal 5 features excellent views of JFK's taxiways and runways. Here, A320 N746JB, one of several with special "Jetting to T5" titles, passes the end of the concourse on Taxiway Alpha. (JetBlue Airways)

JFK International Airport had a lot of excess capacity during much of the day, as well as an under-utilized terminal. The carrier, using the working name "New Air," placed an order with Airbus Industrie for a fleet of A320s. The contract included 25 firm orders, 25 options and purchase rights for 25 additional aircraft. Furthermore, JetBlue arranged to lease seven more A320s. The aircraft are configured with 162 coach seats featuring DirecTV satellite televisions in each seatback. Originally, the airline planned to charge passengers \$5 to view the television; however, after a couple of

months, the charge was dropped.

Naming the airline took a few more months and involved much deliberation. Rebecca Johnson, writing in *Travel & Leisure*, reported that Neelman's staff was opposed to "geographic descriptions such as Southwest or Northwest or made-up words like Acela or Acura." Some of the names considered and rejected included "Zoom," "Civilization," "Yes!," "Home" and "It" (for "Idlewild Transportation"). Other name candidates included "Taxi," "Egg" and "True Blue." Johnson reports that the latter name was selected but that

Thrifty Rent-A-Car owned the name. Shortly thereafter, True Blue morphed into JetBlue.

On September 16, 2000, the newly named airline was awarded an exemption for 75 slots at New York City's JFK International Airport after it promised to offer low fare service to underserved upstate communities. JetBlue's first A320, N503JB, was unveiled to the media and employees at JFK International Airport on Saturday, December 4, 1999. JetBlue's fleet was the first to be equipped with satellite televisions at each passenger seat.



Terminal 5's bright check-in area features plenty of natural light. Passengers may use one of 40 traditional ticket counters and 65 self service kiosks to check-in for flights. (JetBlue Airways)



Terminal 5 is almost complete in this view looking west showing the terminal's proximity to Runway 13L/31R. Beyond the runway is JFK's north cargo area and Hangars 3/4/5, the famous "triple hangars" built in 1950. (JetBlue Airways)

JetBlue obtained its Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity on February 3, 2000, and the first flight took place on February 11, with the carrier's second A320, N504JB, operating from JFK's Terminal 6 to Buffalo. After speeches by New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani and New York Senator Charles Schumer in BUF, the aircraft returned to JFK and then operated a round trip to Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

JetBlue's mix of friendly employees, reasonable fares and excellent service proved to be a hit with New York travelers, and the airline aggressively expanded during the early 2000s. As the airline expanded, Terminal 6 was partly renovated, including \$7.5 million of capital investment for improvements which included wider roads, new ticket counters, refurbished restrooms, new baggage systems and enhanced shops and restaurants. Despite a temporary drop in demand that followed the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, JetBlue rapidly expanded its New York operation and announced that it was the largest airline at JFK in September of 2004, by which time it was

outgrowing Terminal 6. Accordingly, on August 4, 2004, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (the airport operator and manager) announced that it and JetBlue would build a 640,000 square foot, 26 gate passenger terminal directly behind the TWA building, which had been vacated and closed in late 2001 after American Airlines acquired TWA. (See May/June 2002 issue of *Airliners*.)

At the same time, the Port Authority also announced that it would work with the Federal Aviation Administration, the New York State Historic Preservation Office and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation for the rehabilitation, restoration and adaptive reuse of Terminal 5. Port Authority Executive Director Joseph J. Seymour said, "We're excited to usher in a new era at JFK with this project, which will preserve and protect the stunning TWA Flight Center that is such a fundamental part of the airport's past, while we also employ good business sense to meet our future needs. And we're pleased to be joined in our endeavor by JetBlue Airways, whose tremendous growth has helped support the overall success

of the entire airport community."

A New Terminal 5

Construction on the new Terminal 5 began on December 7, 2005, when New York Governor George E. Pataki and New York City Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg presided at a groundbreaking ceremony with Port Authority and JetBlue officials. Over the next two and a half years, the 635,000 square foot terminal rose on a 72 acre site on the eastern corner of what used to be called Terminal City. The new terminal is located directly behind the Saarinen terminal and connected to it via the two renovated "flight tubes" that once led to the now demolished TWA "Flight Wing" gate areas. A new roadway serving the new building curves behind the old terminal, allowing for direct curbside access. A pedestrian "Sky Walk" connects the terminal with JFK's "AirTrain" system and a recently constructed 1,500 space parking garage.

Gensler designed Terminal 5 from the ground up for the post September 11th travel environment. The main lobby has 65 e-ticket kiosks in addition to 40



traditional ticket counters. Passengers being dropped off may also use one of the two skycap areas each containing six curbside check-in counters. When renovations are complete, passengers will also be able to enter via the Saarinen terminal, which will be equipped with check-in kiosks. The new terminal features dramatic views of the Saarinen terminal from the “Sky Walk” and check-in hall. The terminal was also built with current security procedures in mind. According to JetBlue, the 340 foot wide security checkpoint area is designed to accommodate up to 20 lanes. Currently, the airline indicates that the 15 lanes currently in use adequately support the present operation and that additional lanes can be added if capacity increases. The checkpoint features soft rubber flooring for passenger comfort and has a 225 foot long “revesting” bench where passengers can organize their personal belongings after security.

After clearing security, passengers enter the 55,000 square foot marketplace

containing 22 restaurants and 25 retail stores. There is one 4 foot grandstand and one 2 foot platform for passengers to sit, eat, work, relax and watch people. The gate areas feature touch screen monitors with a 60 item food and beverage menu. Meals can be delivered directly to customers – an airline industry first, designed and operated exclusively by OTG Management. The large gate areas feature ample seating, a free Wi-Fi network and excellent airside views. Arriving passengers will claim their baggage in a lively, open and comfortable space with Panelite along the length of the back wall, bright orange tops to the baggage carousels, a light well and floating ceiling panels.

On August 23, 2008, JetBlue conducted a full scale test of the new terminal when it invited 1,000 frequent flyers to test the terminal’s check-in, baggage and security procedures. “We partnered with the Greater Toronto Airports Authority on this,” explained Bryan Baldwin, JetBlue’s Manager of

Corporate Communications. “They coordinated our drills and tests. As a customer service company that happens to be an airline, we hold ourselves to a high standard when it comes to the customer experience. No matter what happened around the world with new terminal openings, we did everything in our power to plan, prepare and train so that our transition from T6 to T5 would be a success.” The invited “passengers” checked bags, passed through security and pretended to board flights. “We are pressure testing this new facility to make sure there is a much improved ground experience once we open,” said JetBlue’s CEO Dave Barger.

JetBlue introduced Terminal 5 to the media on September 22, 2008, when the airline hosted a celebration that featured an appearance by JetBlue founder David Neelman. Elected officials, representatives from the Port Authority, business partners and invited guests were also on hand to dedicate the new terminal. JetBlue had an A320 and an Embraer 190

on display, but the real star of the show was NC18137, an old Lockheed 12 painted in TWA colors and flown in from California for the occasion. Also present were the “Clipped Wings,” an organization of former TWA flight attendants, who presented a fashion show of vintage TWA uniforms. The celebration also included an appearance by the world famous Radio City Rockettes.

Despite the successful dedication, JetBlue announced a few days later that the actual opening date had been pushed back from October 1, 2008, to October 22, 2008. Bryan Baldwin told *Airliners* that moving the opening date allowed additional time to ensure that the carrier’s retail, food and beverage partners completed the work necessary to open the terminal with all customer service elements in place. “All operational systems were tested and ready for customers on October 1, but the retail and dining elements needed a little more

time to complete construction and inspections,” Mr. Baldwin said. “We decided not to open our new home terminal at JFK without these important elements complete as inviting our customers to experience less than 100% of the beauty and convenience of the building would have been counter to our brand.” However, “T5 was still opened six months ahead of schedule. The original construction plan targeted February 2009 as the open date,” he added.

Finally, on October 22, 2008, the terminal opened with the arrival of JetBlue Flight 358 from Burbank at 5:05 a.m. The first departure took place shortly thereafter, with flight 709 to San Juan, leaving at 6:00 a.m. All JetBlue departures from JFK now operate from Terminal 5, as do all domestic arrivals except for those from Cancún, Puerto Plata, St. Maarten, Santiago and Santo Domingo, which continue to arrive at Terminal 4 to clear U.S. Customs and

Immigration. Soon after the terminal opened, JetBlue began dismantling a temporary seven gate building that had been located adjacent to Terminal 5’s gates 22-27, which were blocked by the temporary facility.

JetBlue is pleased with its new home at JFK. “Our award-winning in-flight experience is finally matched on the ground at T5. The terminal offers operational efficiencies that combine with unique design touches to create a positive travel experience. We can’t wait for all our customers to visit,” said Mr. Baldwin. With the successful introduction of its new terminal, JetBlue has ensured that it will continue to be a leading carrier at JFK International Airport for years to come. ✈

Airliners wishes to thank Bryan Baldwin, JetBlue’s Manager of Corporate Communications, for assistance in preparing this article.

The new terminal has 22 food and beverage and 25 retail outlets with a central 55,000 square foot dining and shopping marketplace. This includes nine full serve restaurants, bars and cafes, including the Deep Blue bar and restaurant, which offers the highest quality sushi and Asian specialties from Chef Michael Schulson. This dramatic restaurant, designed by ICRAVE, has an ethereal feel of being in a water environment, complemented by a modern, clean aesthetic. (JetBlue Airways)



JetBlue celebrates TWA

by Bill Hough

When JetBlue organized the dedication ceremony at its new Terminal 5 at JFK, it was aware that the adjacent landmark terminal was a reminder of another famous airline that had called that corner of the airport home for almost half a century. TWA started serving Idlewild in the 1950s. As the airport's Jet Age "Terminal City" was developed in the early 1960s, the airline hired architect Eero Saarinen to design its trademark Flight Center, which opened in 1962. TWA and New York were closely linked for decades with the airline's headquarters being located in Manhattan until 1989. Idlewild/JFK had a major TWA presence up until the end of operations in 2001.

The Saarinen terminal was declared a New York City landmark in July of 1994. After American Airlines acquired TWA in 2001, the terminal was closed while the various parties discussed plans for the site. A bit of a controversy erupted between preservationists who wanted the entire structure to remain as an airline terminal and those who recognized that Saarinen's 40 year old design had become impractical for airline terminal use. Out of these discussions came the current design, where the TWA Flight Center's tubular walkways connect the old terminal with its modern successor; thus providing a symbolic link between the TWA past and the JetBlue present. "Eero Saarinen's Terminal 5 is recognized as an icon of aviation history in New York and beyond," said Dave Barger, CEO of JetBlue Airways. "As New York's hometown airline, we are proud to literally connect the new Terminal 5 to our shared aviation architectural history in Saarinen's TWA Flight Center."

Given this rich history, JetBlue felt that a tribute to TWA was in order and arranged for Ruth Richter-Holden, the daughter of TWA co-founder Paul E. Richter, Jr., to fly NC18137, a Lockheed 12A Electra Junior, from California to New York to participate in the Terminal 5 opening ceremony. The

L12 is a smaller version of the famous L10 Electra, the type of aircraft that Amelia Earhart was flying when she disappeared in the South Pacific in 1937. NC18137 was owned by TWA in the 1940s when Paul E. Richter, Jr., was TWA's Executive Vice-President. The aircraft was the airline's "flying laboratory" and was used for high altitude research and executive transport. In 2005, Ruth Richter-Holden was introduced to the plane when the owner contacted her looking for historic details in order to sell it. Driven by a "faint memory and gut feeling," Richter-Holden purchased the 12A sight unseen and as she explains, "brought her back to TWA."

For the transcontinental flight, veteran commercial pilot and "co-guardian" of NC18137, Captain Curt Walters was pilot in command, with Richter-Holden as co-pilot. The eastbound itinerary from Santa Maria, California, included stops at Winslow, Arizona; Hays, Kansas; Topeka, Kansas; Kansas City, Missouri; Taylorville, Illinois; Columbus, Ohio; and Lancaster, Pennsylvania. The west-

bound flight's route was a slightly modified version of TWA's "Sun Racer" Flight 1 from New York to Burbank, California, with stops in Wheeling, West Virginia; Columbus, Ohio; St. Louis, Missouri; Kansas City, Missouri; Hutchinson, Kansas; Albuquerque, New Mexico; Winslow, Arizona; Bullhead City, Arizona; Burbank, California; and Los Angeles, California.

During NC18137's visit to JFK, JetBlue CEO David Barger acknowledged TWA's impact on commercial aviation while speaking with Ruth Richter-Holden. A number of former TWA employees have gone to work for JetBlue, and the consensus among the TWA alumni at the September 22 event was that a symbolic torch was officially passed from TWA to JetBlue. As Kaye Chandler, in-flight documentary producer and former TWA flight attendant wrote on her web site, "JetBlue credits the expertise TWA employees brought with [them] to the JetBlue success. We are the foundation which JetBlue has built its future. And JetBlue is doing everything right." ✈



On September 22, 2008, JetBlue introduced its new terminal while paying tribute to the pioneering airline that built the nearby Saarinen terminal. JetBlue arranged for Ruth Richter-Holden, the daughter of TWA co-founder Paul E. Richter, Jr., to fly NC18137, a Lockheed 12A Electra Junior, from California to New York to participate in the Terminal 5 opening ceremony. The aircraft attracted a crowd on the T5 ramp while in the distance a pair of JetBlue A320s taxi out for departure past an Emirates 777-300 on the Terminal 4 ramp. (JetBlue Airways)