

# Aircraft *interiors* INTERNATIONAL

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# flyingfish

**BRIEF:** Challenged by a client to design a unique interior for his new A320, Jean-Pierre Alfano, creative director of AirJet Designs, was looking for a little inspiration. Ideas were thrown around, but when the client mentioned a recent scuba diving adventure, it spawned a dramatic idea – an underwater-themed aircraft.

**DESCRIPTION:** Underwater motifs? Fishy DVDs to make TVs look like fish tanks? All that was a bit obvious for Alfano, whose ambitions took him far beyond, with a real tropical fish aquarium as the centrepiece of the cabin. The aquarium is in the middle of the aircraft, just over the wing box, thus addressing weight and balance certification requirements, as well as creating a dramatic divider between the dining and lounge areas. The tank is mounted on a credenza, into which it can be lowered using motors, for cleaning and maintenance. The unit also houses the lighting, filtration, heating and feeding features. Of course, there are issues with taking a large tank of fish airborne, so the aquarium has been designed to withstand flight turbulence loads and changing cabin pressure during flight, and a specially designed watertight canopy and cover prevents any spillage.

The aquatic theme is continued throughout the aircraft, with coral motifs on the valances, a wool and silk hand-tufted carpet with circular blue forms mimicking waves and water ripples, and composite seat shells that have an iridescent, metalised mother-of-pearl finish – like a shell.



**VERDICT:** It's amazing to see a fanciful notion developed to such an extent. Some designers would have implemented elements such as the patterns and finishes, and it still would have looked great and met the brief, but to take an idea such as an aquarium, and to engineer it to achieve certification, is inspiring – from both a designer and client perspective. The aircraft is scheduled to be completed in mid-2015 – complete with tropical fish livery.



#### CONTACT

Airjet Designs  
Tel: +33 531 615 186  
Web: [www.airjet-designs.com](http://www.airjet-designs.com)