RYANAIR REFINES CREW'S BLUE-COLLAR LOOK TO BOOST BUSINESS APPEAL

News / Airlines

Ryanair Holdings Plc unveiled a new range of flight-attendant uniforms that Europe's biggest discount carrier says will bring a subtler look to its aircraft cabins as part of a push to lure up-market travelers.

The uniforms are in a toned-down "royal blue" a shade or two less garish than the "Chelsea blue" previously sported by crew, Chief Marketing Officer Kenny Jacobs said at a briefing in a London cinema where the new creations were revealed.

Ryanair's trademark yellow, introduced by Chief Executive Officer Michael O'Leary a decade ago, survives the makeover in the form of a women's rain jacket, worn mainly outside the plane, a striped tie and neck-scarf, and detailing on the jacket pocket and skirt dart of the female uniform. The attire will be introduced in December, complementing Boeing Co.'s new "Sky" cabins, which will also feature markedly less yellow.

"The Sky interiors, coupled with the new seats, crew in new uniforms, a healthier menu -- overall, that's a very, very different flying environment," Jacobs said. Aircraft bulkheads once entirely

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yellow with a Ryanair logo are also being restyled with images of holidaying families or destinations.

Jacobs said the company has avoided engaging big-name designers for its revamp to help keep down costs. The uniforms were created by Emma Collopy, who graduated from Griffith College, Dublin, in 2014, according to her website.

Milan Base

Ryanair's revamp is part of O'Leary's drive to jettison the Irish carrier's decidedly down-market image and reposition it alongside discount retailers like Aldi and Ikea, perceived as offering a quality product at competitive prices, so that it appeals equally to tourists and business travelers.

The company will extend a policy of flying from more major airports by adding Milan Malpensa to its list of bases from Dec. 1, starting with a single aircraft operating four routes.

Ryanair aims to fly from further primary airports, with a particular focus on Germany, Jacobs said. Europe's largest economy is the "single biggest strategic focus," with the carrier seeking to control about 20 percent of the market within five years, compared with about 5 percent today, he said.

Ryanair will offer more than 150 routes from three London airports next summer, including extra daily flights on 20 services as it seeks to build up the multiple frequencies required by business travelers.

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