

THE KIWI & THE CONDOR - MARK II

Thomas Manning

As a New Zealander who has done business in Argentina since 1990 and as a past Vice-President and long-standing director of the Latin America New Zealand Business Council, I write in an auspicious week:

In late December 2014 I waxed lyrical in the Herald about how a canny little New Zealand Kiwi had valiantly wooed a majestic Andean condor and been invited into its jealously guarded nest.

I was writing then about the just announced partnership between Air New Zealand and Aerolíneas Argentinas to code-share on the transpolar Oceania route and last Tuesday the Kiwi landed at Ezeiza in the form of an Air New Zealand 777-200 making its inaugural flight from Auckland.

Air New Zealand's arrival was momentous not only for directly connecting Argentina with New Zealand and beyond with fast connections to Australia, Pacific Islands and Asia but also because on the same day [AirlineRatings.com](#) awarded them, for the third year in a row, its "Best Airline in the World Award" for in-flight innovations, record-breaking financial performance, operational safety, environmental leadership and staff motivation.

Air New Zealand's code-share partnership with Aerolíneas is an inspired arrangement for both airlines as it enables Aerolíneas, which pioneered the Oceania route over 30 years ago but ceased services to New Zealand in 2012 and Australia in 2013, to re-establish its presence in Oceania and conversely gives Air New Zealand access to South American markets.

The inaugural flight was followed with a celebratory gourmet Gala Dinner at which guests were entertained with Maori Kapa Haka performers, leading New Zealand vocalist Stan Walker and Tango dancers.

Air New Zealand's Chief Strategy, Networks and Alliances Officer Stephen Jones in his welcome address paid tribute to Aerolíneas' management and acknowledged that without their goodwill, foresight and sterling assistance, the new thrice-weekly transpolar flights would not have been possible.

Stephen Jones pointed to the presence at the event of senior Argentine officials and business leaders and of the high-level New Zealand delegation led by the New Zealand Associate Minister of Tourism, Paula Bennett; Air New Zealand Board Chairman, Tony Carter; Tourism New Zealand Chair Kerry Prendergast and famed All Black Richie McCaw as evidence of the importance with which the transpolar flights are being viewed by the government, business and sporting establishments of both nations.

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Hasta
 12 cuotas sin interés
 en Aerolíneas Argentinas



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One measure of Air New Zealand's commitment to the transpolar route has been the investment of 100 million New Zealand dollars to replace their 777-200s' cabins with the latest interiors and technology to guarantee travellers' comfort and well-being during the extended intercontinental flights.

Tourism New Zealand is predicting 30,000 South Americans will visit New Zealand in the coming year and Argentine tourism authorities are expecting as many, if not more, New Zealanders and Australians to visit Argentina and the Southern Cone in return.

Air New Zealand has timed its route expansion into South America with great precision as the Super 18 Rugby season kicks off next February, the Rio Olympics start in August, and world leaders and their entourages, including New Zealand Prime Minister John Key, will travel to APEC in Peru in November.

Aerolíneas and Air New Zealand both deserve congratulations for their perspicacity in forging an alliance which not only makes commercial sense but which will also strengthen and accelerate the growing fraternal and business ties between Argentina and New Zealand and I wish them every well-deserved success.



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Grupolndalo



NOTE: The writer Thomas Manning is a New Zealand businessman active in Argentina for over 25 years, a founding member, former Vice President and long-standing director of the Latin America New Zealand Business Council and a regular Buenos Aires Herald correspondent on South Pacific trade, aviation and political matters.