

## *Flying in sterilized air*

In the flight simulators of the ProToura Group, members of the public can also control an Airbus. SteriWhite UVC air purifiers from Dr. Höhle AG.



As the engines rev up, the plane begins to vibrate and the 80 ton vehicle begins to move. After a short acceleration, the Airbus A320 takes off and pushes the pilot back into their seat. It is their first flight – at least in the cockpit. But nothing can happen. Next to the ‘student pilot’ sits a real Lufthansa pilot with decades of experience. The flight takes place in the simulator. The city skyline far below is just a projection of the landscape generated by a computer, and the cockpit is shaken and tilted by hydraulics in response to the steering movements. "More than a hundred thousand guests have already experienced this," says Walter Drasl. The veteran was once a navy pilot and then a Lufthansa flight captain for many years until an eye condition ended his career as a pilot. That was 25 years ago. At that time, Drasl had an idea: why not open up Lufthansa's flight simulators to non-professionals as well? When no training is taking place, the 15 million euro simulators were just sitting idle. His former employer agreed, and so Drasl founded the ProToura Group, which today consists of three companies: ProFlight offers flights in one of Lufthansa Aviation Training's 51 simulators, encompassing aircraft from an MD11 to an A380. 100% adrenaline, 0% kerosene is the promise. The second brand Flugsimulator.com operates three of its own A320 flight simulators in Bremen, Hamburg and Berlin.

## A SteriWhite Air for every cockpit

The corona pandemic has hit the company less hard than others. There may not have been any simulator flights during lockdown, but customers continued to book. Vouchers are particularly popular as birthday presents. All flight simulators have been open to the public again since July 2021, and the vouchers are now increasingly being redeemed. The organizational team dealt early on with the question of how to maintain the highest hygiene standards. Drasl emphasizes that there are no legal requirements, but we still want to send a message to the guests: We take hygiene seriously and we take care of your health.

And so Flugsimulator.com has purchased air purifiers from Dr. Hönle AG, with the investment coming from their own funds and from a state-backed fund promoting hygiene measures. A SteriWhite Air Q115 now sits in each of the original A320 cockpits. There are also other products from the SteriWhite Air range, namely the Q330, Q600 and Q900, which are used in the foyers and meeting rooms, where pilots prepare the guests for their flight. With their sleek design, the SteriWhite Air fit very well into the cockpit and work almost silently. The air purifiers from Dr. Hönle do not contain any mechanical filters, rather they remove germs with UVC technology. If UV radiation with a wavelength of 254 nm hits viruses, bacteria and mold spores, they are inactivated and thus rendered harmless. The high disinfection performance of UV radiation has been scientifically proven for decades and has also been extensively proven for coronaviruses. A risk of infection with SARS-CoV-2, but also with other pathogens, can be safely and efficiently minimized by UVC disinfection of air and surfaces.

## Virus-free in five minutes

The air purifiers from Dr. Hönle are very effective: They circulate the air in the cockpit once in five minutes and free it from viruses and other germs. Virologists have calculated that you have to be exposed to the pathogens for at least 15 minutes to become infected with coronaviruses. Because the control levers and seats are also disinfected after each flight, infection is practically impossible. "You can feel the good air quality when you step into the cockpit," says Drasl. "In this way we give our guests security and a good feeling."

Despite his 72 years, Walter Drasl is not yet thinking about retiring. Next up is the opening of a new flight simulator in southern Germany. The space offers such as flights in weightlessness in Russia are also being expanded. And then there is Drasl's own pet project: the Flight Kids Academy. There, 12 to 14-year-olds go through a three-year program in which they learn theoretical knowledge about flying and topics such as meteorology, electronics, physics and geography. The teens then apply what they have learned in the flight simulator of an Airbus A320. Drasl: "The youngsters are enthusiastic and it's great fun for me." And they are protected. Because the SteriWhite air purifiers also ensure a safe environment when the youngsters are learning.