

SIR BRANSON REVEALS NEW SHIP IN THE SPACE RACE



It has been going on for a number of years: the race to introduce commercial flights into space. Now it seems that the British tycoon, Richard Branson, is set for the largest slice of success for a long while with the launch of his White Knight Two "Eve" craft, which is to serve as a giant mother ship to rockets, which are set to be launched into space in and after 2012.

The maiden voyage for "Eve" is set for just 18 months time. There are, of course, vigorous tests waiting for these technological miracles, yet Branson has certainly made a massive breakthrough.

What must be made clear is that the planned space travel will be far from cheap and Branson will certainly show little interest in the average Star Wars fan. So far, 250 people have paid up to \$200.000 for the privilege of being weightless for around 4 to 6 minutes. The aircraft is so far capable of reaching altitudes of 15.240 meters. The plan for the future is for the aircraft to then release spacecraft out of the earth and away from gravity. So far it can hold 2 crew members and 6 passengers, maybe explaining why such unique trips can make customers dig so deeply into their pockets.

The sub-orbital flights are currently launched from Mojave Desert in California and this is expected to be the venue for further voyages once the spacecraft have been tested and are ready to function in full operation. Branson insists that he is not only motivated by money, yet also by the element of prestige involved in such a massive project. There is one other important motivation: the aircraft is named after his mother, Eve.

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