



PRESS RELEASE

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The Spirit of Dubai arrives in Paris - Pioneering airship flies past the Eiffel Tower and Versailles -

The Spirit of Dubai, one of the largest commercial airships in the world, has arrived in Paris on its unique journey from London to Dubai. The airship will take in the city's most famous landmarks including the Eiffel Tower and Palace of Versailles today (25 November 2006), before reaching the world's newest landmark, The Palm Jumeirah.

After flying down the River Thames in London and over landmarks including Big Ben and Buckingham Palace, the Spirit of Dubai flew over the White Cliffs of Dover, crossed the English Channel, then flew over the cities of Calais and Amiens before arriving at the Pontoise airfield outside Paris.

The Spirit of Dubai will continue its journey taking in landmarks such as the Colosseum in Rome, the Acropolis in Athens and the Pyramids of Cairo before arriving in Dubai for the New Year to celebrate the opening of The Palm Jumeirah, the world's latest landmark.

Manal Shaheen, Nakheel Director, said: "Paris is not only renowned for its beauty and world famous landmarks, but of all the destinations we will visit France has by far the richest history of airship travel. It was more than 200 years ago that Jean-Pierre Blanchard crossed the English Channel for the first time in an airship and we are proud to follow his legacy with the *Spirit of Dubai*."

"The Palm Jumeirah welcomes its first residents at the end of this year, and we believe it will become the world's newest landmark; in a similar manner to the Eiffel Tower, an icon that embodies the city's pioneering spirit."



In 1783 the first successful manned balloon flight took place, when Pilatre de Rozier and the Maequis d'Arlandes took off from the Palace of Versailles in a tethered hot air balloon. In 1852, Henri Giffard, a French engineer and inventor, created the world's first passenger-carrying airship which was equipped with a steam engine.

The first fully controllable free-flight was made in 1884 when 'La France', a 170 foot long, French Army owned airship flew 8km in 23 minutes, aided by an eight and a half horsepower electric motor.

The airship in France can even be credited for the Cartier wrist watch. In 1901, Santos-Dumont entered a competition to fly from the Parc Saint Cloud, do a figure of eight around the Eiffel Tower, and return back to the Parc in less than 30 minutes. During the flight he could not take either hand off the controls, and was unable to check the time on his pocket watch; his friend Louis Cartier came up with the solution: a watch with a leather band and a small buckle – the wrist watch. Today, a watch is still sold under the "Santos" name by Cartier

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