

747: Creating the World's First Jumbo Jet and Other Adventures from a Life in Aviation

By Joe Sutter, Jay Spenser

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747 is the thrilling story behind "the Queen of the Skies"—the Boeing 747—as told by Joe Sutter, one of the most celebrated engineers of the twentieth century, who spearheaded its design and construction. Sutter's vivid narrative takes us back to a time when American technology was cutting-edge and jet travel was still glamorous and new. With wit and warmth, he gives an insider's sense of the larger than life-size personalities—and the tensions—in the aeronautical world.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly
As leader of the Boeing company's design and engineering team that created the 747—the world's first wide-body, twin-aisle airplane—Sutter had perhaps the best overall view of all aspects of the 747's development in the mid 1960s. This engaging look at the technical, political and corporate forces that clashed over the 747 adds important details to Clive Irving's 1993 *Wide-Body: The Triumph of the 747*. Sutter's descriptions of the furious pace his team had to maintain proves his assertion that the 747's development process closely resembled that of aviation's colorful early days. It is fascinating to read that while the 747 later became Boeing's crowning achievement, with variations of the plane continuing to remain popular during the past three decades, various Boeing executives during the '60s "were taken in by the enticing vision" of supersonic transports like the Concorde, and Sutter had to fight "every step of the way to get the 747 designed, built, certified, and into service." 8-page b&w photo insert, 20 b&w photos throughout, not seen by *PW*. *(June)*
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From Booklist
The chief engineer of the 747 here recounts his experience designing one of the most iconic airplanes in aviation history. At pains to dispel the perception that the humpbacked behemoth was a one-man show, Sutter mentions many colleagues as he relates a process that partook as much of intra- and intercorporate diplomacy as of nuts-and-bolts engineering. Indeed the narrative dynamic arises from the interaction of technical problems with the nonengineering concerns of the Boeing hierarchy. The company was in deep financial trouble at the time of development (1965-70), as its supersonic transport project hemorrhaged money. Pressure on Sutter was intense both to expedite the 747 and slash costs; in the book's climax, Sutter faces down the executives' demand that he fire thousands of his engineers. Sutter's story also revels in the intuition and technical precision that resulted in the 747's distinctive appearance and capabilities. Replete with energetic anecdotes from Sutter's non-747 life, this memoir will fascinate fans of aviation. *Gilbert Taylor*
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Review
“As magnificent and soaring as the big bird itself, Joe Sutter’s true story is . . . fascinating.” (Homer Hickam, author of Rocket Boys)

“Sutter had perhaps the best overall view of all aspects of the 747’s development in the mid 1960s.” (Publishers Weekly)

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