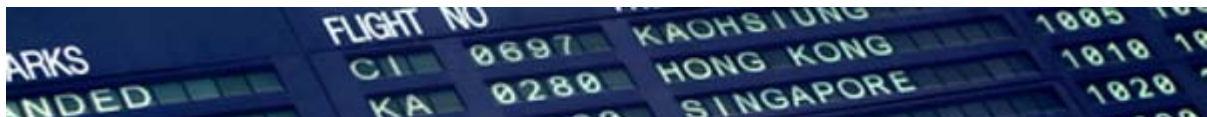


## Frequent Flyer news released on December 15, 2009

Continental is going to introduce a new top tier level above the existing Platinum Elite level for its **OnePass** members in 2010. Qualification for this Presidential Platinum Elite level is, however, not mileage based, but based on spending on *Continental*. Currently, 30,000 US\$ of annual spending have been fixed as threshold. Next to a highest upgrade priority, the main advantage is the complimentary Presidential Plus *MasterCard*, which also encompasses a complimentary participation in the lounge programme Presidents Club. As the credit card is only available in mainland US, all other members receive 25,000 bonus miles instead - what makes the new elite level far less relevant to those members. More interesting for all members is certainly the news that four systemwide upgrade certificates for flights with Continental or *Copa* are awarded at 100,000 status miles per year. They are valid at all fares without co-payment and also transferable.



Air Berlin recently celebrated the fifth birthday of its **topbonus** program and has some interesting offers in its sleeve in this context, but also unrelated to it. For instance, all award flights with *Air Berlin* in Economy Class are discounted by 50% for bookings until January 10 and for travel from January 04 to February 28. Moreover, members in Germany receive 6,000 bonus miles for opening up a free private checking account with Germany's largest bank and the new partner *Postbank*. And also the promotion by *Sunny Cars* is worth mentioning as one gets 2,500 bonus miles here for bookings made until December 31.



BMI British Midland has introduced two important enhancements to its **Diamond Club**. On one side, there is now - as with British Airways - the possibility of a family account, enabling up to eight family members to pool their miles. Even staff can be included. On the other hand, miles can now finally be used for upgrade awards on BMI flights, too, albeit only at higher priced tickets. But although BMI is member of the Star Alliance, there is no mention whatsoever of introducing the Star Alliance upgrade awards any time soon (cf. below)...



Some news at the three alliances is already predictable for 2010: *TAROM* and *Vietnam Airlines* will join the SkyTeam alliance in June 2010. Star Alliance expects *Air India* to join in June, too - what should, however, be taken with some caution since initially, May 2009 was already announced. Further planned additions are *TAM*, *TACA* and *Aegean Airlines*. Once more, Star Alliance has also announced that upgrade awards should be introduced across the alliance in 2010 - a ritual, which has regularly been repeated for a couple of years now.

*Shanghai Airlines* is expected to leave Star Alliance as part of its merger with *China Eastern* before *China Eastern* could eventually join **oneworld**. Also Russian carrier *S7 Airlines* is working towards joining **oneworld**. The big unknown, however, is what will happen with **oneworld** member *Japan Airlines*: Next to **oneworld** partner *American Airlines*, *Delta Air Lines* would like to invest into the ailing carrier, too - but that would lead to a change to SkyTeam without any doubt. Last but not least, also Brazilian airline *Go!* is going to announce its alliance choice shortly, whereby the final decision will be between SkyTeam and **oneworld**.



Online hotel ratings have been en vogue for some time - Jet Airways' idea is thus relatively obvious, but one has to have it first nevertheless. **Jet Privilege** members, who complete hotel ratings over *Tripadvisor*, receive miles for their ratings in function of the number of ratings. A minimum of three ratings per quarter qualifies for 500 miles per quarter. The credit increases to 1,000 miles for seven or more ratings. With ten ratings, one participates moreover in a prize draw under which five times 5,000 miles are to be won each quarter.