



Frequent Flyer news released on March 16, 2009

Some partnerships seem impossible - the surprise is hence even bigger if they become reality nevertheless. The partnership between British Airways' **Executive Club** and the **Membership Rewards** program of *American Express* clearly belongs to this category. But exactly that has now started in several European and some other countries, enabling members of the Membership Rewards program to convert their points into British Airways miles as of immediate. This leaves only three important tough cases refusing a partnership on the list of American Express: British Airways' **oneworld** partners *American Airlines* and *Japan Airlines* as well as *Lufthansa* - the currently largest programs in terms of number of members in America, Asia and Europe respectively...

Like a child being born to a virgin, *Turkish Airlines* offers all of a sudden a First Class after it recently took over some Boeing 777 aircraft from Jet Airways - and frequent flyers may benefit of it: **Miles&Smiles** members, who use a paid First Class roundtrip to Bangkok, Singapore or Hong Kong, receive immediately the Elite Card, which corresponds to Star Alliance Gold status. Existing holders of the Elite Card see their status extended by two years. At least for the moment being, there is no limitation for the duration of this offer, which is only applicable on flights to the destinations mentioned.

Lufthansa Italia takes off with a sensational award offer: **Miles & More** members can redeem a return flight for only 3,000 (!) miles on its new nonstop flights between Milan-Malpensa and Paris, Brussels, Madrid, Barcelona, Budapest or Bucharest through April 30. This corresponds exactly to 10% of the usual award level. Less pleasant for members in Italy is the news that the continuation of the partnership with *Air One*, which was announced in January, should indeed remain a temporary solution as we've expected: This currently fully integrated partner, which has now merged with Alitalia, will leave the program on March 28.

Admittedly, South American LAN Group was hardly noticed in the past if it came to bad news from the Frequent Flyer world. And now, they're not the first ones either to introduce certain kinds of fees for frequent flyers - but their level beats almost all records: **LanPass** members, who don't book their awards online, now have to pay a fee of up to 40 US\$. And while **oneworld** announced on the occasion of its tenth anniversary last month that it would become the first alliance to offer all frequent flyers an online booking of award flights across all alliance members, this can't yet be seen with LanPass: Only flights on LAN itself can currently be booked online. And if an award flight needs to be refunded, this costs for long haul flights with LAN and for all flights with partner airlines now 25,000 points - the equivalent of an award flight within Chile or Argentina...!

Members of Flybe's Frequent Flyer Program **Rewards4all** can now use only 20 points to redeem a 1-year lounge pass for its 13 lounges in the UK. 20 points are earned after ten roundtrips at a discounted fare or after five roundtrips in the Economy Plus cabin respectively. If you compare this, for instance, to the 50,000 miles a 1-year lounge pass costs with **Aeroplan** - what is a new offer as well -, it can be easily seen that this is indeed an interesting offer, which also manages to add real value to the low cost product of Flybe. Full paying Economy Plus customers always enjoy access to the lounges, including to partner lounges abroad, which remain inaccessible to frequent flyers under the lounge award.