It's 24 years old this year, but the Boeing 777 airplane is still going strong -- it's one of the aviation manufacturer's best-selling models and is used by airlines across the world.

But, after nearly quarter of a century of flying, the first 777 has made its final flight -- to an aerospace museum in Arizona, where it'll see out its retirement as a top travel attraction. The prototype 777-200, call sign B-HNL, rolled off the production line in 1994, eventually entering commercial service for Hong Kong's Cathay Pacific airline in 2000.

Over the years it's clocked up 20,519 flights for Cathay. That's a whopping 49,687 hours of flying time.

The venerable airplane was taken out of service in May 2018 and, after Boeing and Cathay agreed on the donation, it touched down in Tucson on September 19 to begin its new life at the Pima Air & Space Museum
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Design feat



This is the original Boeing 777 airplane, now heading to the Pima Air & Space Museum in Arizona. Courtesu Cathay Pacific Anouncing the deal, Boeing paid tribute to Cathay's role in developing the long-range airplane -- the world's largest twin-engine jet and one of the first to make use of fully digital fly-by-wire controls.
Cathay was one of the airlines that weighed in with design advice during the 777's development, alongside key international carriers including British Airways, All Nippon Airways, American Airlines, Qantas, British Airways, Delta Air Lines, Japan Airlines and United Airlines.

"Cathay Pacific has been instrumental in the tremendous success of the 777 program," Boeing's Commercial Airplanes President and CEO Kevin McAllister said in a statement. "The airline contributed greatly to the airplane's original design and has been one of its biggest ambassadors ever since."

It flew with Cathay Pacific from 2000 to May 2018.

Courtesu Cathay Pacific

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Boeing is currently working on a new edition of the 777 -- the 777-9 is scheduled to take off by 2019. The 777 series is widely acclaimed for bridging the capacity difference between smaller jets and the likes of Boeing's 747 jumbo.

"Our 777-200 aircraft have served us exceptionally well over the last two decades, and as we progressively retire these over the months ahead, we eagerly look forward to welcoming the state-of-the art 777-9 aircraft into our fleet from 2021," says Cathay Pacific Chief Executive Officer Rupert Hogg.

Hogg said the original 777 "holds a very special place in the history of both our airline and that of commercial aviation."

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