

Sir Richard Branson All Fired Up With Latest Rocket Motor Test

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Eve--named after Sir Richard's Mom. Credit: Scaled Composites LLC

Virgin Galactic owned by Sir Richard Branson completed a successful test on May 28, 2009 of its hybrid nitrous oxide motor designed by Scaled Composites and a subcontractor Sierra Nevada Corporation. The innovative hybrid motor is the largest of its kind in the world and offers safety features including a kill switch allowing the spaceship to glide back to Earth and perform a conventional runway touch down.

The Virgin Galactic model dubbed, SpaceShipTwo is being built by aerospace expert, Burt Rutan owner of Scaled Composites LLC.

As one might expect, Rutan and Branson have come up with a highly efficient and extraordinary design for their [space tourism](#) spacecraft. SpaceShipTwo will launch after reaching the upper atmosphere after

detaching from the mother ship called Eve. The hybrid motor uses nitrous oxide and according to Sir Richard does not contain harmful toxins as solid rockets used by the [space shuttle](#). Another advantage of the [upper atmosphere](#) launch is the cost savings for fuel.

The SpaceShipTwo has a capacity to carry six space tourists and two pilots into suborbital space at speeds up to 2500 mph and soar about 65-miles above the Earth. The expected ticket price is \$200,000 per passenger and currently there are 300 space tourists on the waiting list. Testing on SpaceShipTwo will begin later this year.

Scaled Composites is located in Mojave, California. Paul Allen provided major funding for the SpaceShipTwo design that went a long way to garner the \$10 million dollar Ansari X Prize. The Virgin Galactic team is fired up and ready for GO.

Sources:

Scaled Composites LLC, www.scaled.com
Virgin Galactic, www.virgingalactic.com

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