

Solar plane on global trip arrives in Arizona

May 3 2016, by By Matt York



Pilot Andre Borschberg sits in the cockpit of the Solar Impulse 2, as his son, Teo Borschberg, prepares the solar powered plane at Moffett Field in Mountain View, Calif., before dawn Monday, May 2, 2016. The plane took off from California for Arizona to resume its journey around the world using only energy from the sun. The Swiss-made Solar Impulse 2 left Mountain View south of San Francisco shortly after 5 a.m. Monday for an expected 16-hour trip to Phoenix. (Karl Mondon/The Mercury News-Bay Area News Group via AP)

A solar-powered airplane landed in suburban Phoenix Monday night after a daylong flight from California—the latest leg in its around the

world journey using only energy from the sun.

The Swiss-made Solar Impulse 2 arrived in the suburb of Goodyear, just to the southwest of Phoenix, shortly before 9 p.m. PDT.

Pilot Andre Borschberg called the 16-hour trip "a beautiful flight," after stepping from the cockpit.

"It was a special flight; not a long flight," he added.

The aircraft took off from Mountain View in northern California shortly after 5 a.m.

It began its globe-circling journey last year, and flew from Hawaii to the Silicon Valley last week.

After Phoenix, the plane will make two more stops in the United States before crossing the Atlantic Ocean to Europe or northern Africa, according to the website documenting the journey.

For several minutes after arriving, Borschberg remained aboard as powerful winds buffeted the aircraft, forcing the ground crew to hold down it down with straps.

"Sometimes it is more difficult to handle the airplane on the ground than in flight," he told reporters later.

Video from cameras aboard the aircraft as well as on the ground at the Goodyear airport showed the Solar Impulse as it flew through the night sky enroute to its safe touch down southwest of Phoenix.



Andre Borschberg, left, and Bertrand Piccard, right, embrace Monday, May 2, 2016, before Borschberg pilots the next flight of the Solar Impulse 2, the solar-powered plane, at Moffett Field in Mountain View, Calif. The plane took off from California for Arizona to resume its journey around the world using only energy from the sun. The Swiss-made Solar Impulse 2 left Mountain View south of San Francisco shortly after 5 a.m. Monday for an expected 16-hour trip to Phoenix. Piccard had flown the plane from Hawaii nine days ago. (Karl Mondon/The Mercury News-Bay Area News Group via AP)

Hours earlier, shortly after takeoff, Borschberg used his phone to snap

photos of the sun coming up along the horizon. Then he prepared for media interviews and made breakfast plans.

"I'm heating up water for coffee," Borschberg told his ground crew. "A nice Nescafe."

His co-pilot, Bertrand Piccard, also of Switzerland, made the three-day trip from Hawaii to the heart of Silicon Valley, where he landed last week.



Pilot Andre Borschberg sits in the cockpit of the Solar Impulse 2, as his son, Teo Borschberg, prepares the solar powered plane at Moffett Field in Mountain View, Calif., before dawn Monday, May 2, 2016. The plane took off from California for Arizona to resume its journey around the world using only energy from the sun. The Swiss-made Solar Impulse 2 left Mountain View south of San Francisco shortly after 5 a.m. Monday for an expected 16-hour trip to Phoenix. (Karl Mondon/The Mercury News-Bay Area News Group via AP)

The Solar Impulse 2's wings, which stretch wider than those of a Boeing 747, are equipped with 17,000 solar cells that power propellers and charge batteries. The plane runs on stored energy at night.

The two legs to cross the Pacific were the riskiest part of the plane's travels because of the lack of emergency landing sites.

"We have demonstrated it is feasible to fly many days, many nights, that the technology works" said Borschberg, 63, who piloted the plane during a five-day trip from Japan to Hawaii and who kept himself alert by doing yoga poses and meditation.



In this April 23, 2016 file photo, Solar Impulse 2 flies over the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco at the end of its journey from Hawaii, part of its attempt to circumnavigate the globe. The next leg of the solar-powered around-the-world flight is scheduled to start from Mountain View, Calif., Monday, May 2, 2016, at 5 a.m. PDT, bound for Phoenix.(AP Photo/Noah Berger, File)

The crew was forced to stay in Oahu for nine months after the plane's battery system sustained heat damage on its trip from Japan.

The single-seat aircraft began its voyage in March 2015 from Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates and made stops in Oman, Myanmar, China and Japan.

The layovers will give the pilots a chance to swap places and engage with local communities along the way so they can explain the project, which is estimated to cost more than \$100 million and began in 2002 to highlight the importance of renewable energy and the spirit of innovation.



In this April 23, 2016 file photo, Solar Impulse 2 flies over San Francisco at the end of its journey from Hawaii, part of its attempt to circumnavigate the globe. The next leg of the solar-powered around-the-world flight is scheduled to start from Mountain View, Calif., Monday, May 2, 2016, at 5 a.m. PDT, bound for Phoenix.(AP Photo/Noah Berger, File)



In this April 23, 2016 file photo, Solar Impulse 2 lands at Moffett Field in Mountain View, Calif., completing the leg of its journey from Hawaii in its attempt to circumnavigate the globe. The next leg of the solar-powered around-the-world flight is scheduled to start from Moffett Field Monday, May 2, 2016, at 5 a.m. PDT, bound for Phoenix.(AP Photo/Noah Berger, File)

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