

## Urban-Air Port unveils major brand partnerships to unlock new-age travel retail experience as flying taxis become a reality

3 years ago



Urban-Air Port, the UK-based developer of ground infrastructure for air taxis and autonomous delivery drones, announces multiple new partnerships with leading retail and Food & Beverage (F&B) brands to deliver a “world-class” customer experience at the world’s first hub for flying taxis and delivery drones – Air-One – due to open in Coventry this April.

The site – backed by the UK government, Supernal (Hyundai’s advanced air mobility division) and Coventry City Council – will form a blueprint for over 200 similar sites planned by Urban-Air Port across the world in the next five years as air taxis and autonomous delivery drones become a reality.

The partners – including Anatomie, Bottega S.p.A, Eurest (part of Compass Group), LG Business Solutions, Mother and Paul & Shark – have teamed up with Urban-Air Port to help deliver its vision of creating a destination for travellers to discover and engage with brands in new ways while visiting the company’s innovative vertiport hubs. The all-new consumer offering will fall under the company’s new retail and F&B brand, ‘Urban-Air Choice’.

Ricky Sandhu, Founder and Executive Chairman of Urban-Air Port, said: “Once complete, Air-One – the world’s first fully operational hub for flying taxis and delivery drones – will spark into life an entirely new world of affordable, zero-emission and congestion-free travel. However, this is not just about getting from A to B, it’s about the journey itself. Air-One is so much more than a landing pad for flying taxis and delivery drones. It will deliver a world-class interactive customer experience – one that can be replicated right

across the world as we build our network of over 200 sites globally. The partnerships announced today with some of the biggest brands in retail and F&B – and the investment made by them to participate in the launch of Air-One – represent a huge vote of confidence in our future vision and the opportunities it will bring for consumers and brands alike.”

The urban air mobility market is forecasted to grow by 9% annually, reaching US\$1 trillion in the next 20 years<sup>[i]</sup>. Commercial flights are expected to begin this decade, including Supernal’s flying taxi which enters commercial operations in 2028. According to McKinsey, some flight operators could see passenger numbers reach 70,000 per day as early as 2030<sup>[ii]</sup>, while Urban-Air Port predicts its global passenger numbers could reach up to 28million a year in the next five years, creating an enormous new market for retail and F&B, that will be worth millions of dollars (US) for brands and partners as the network of Urban-Air Ports expands. UAP’s vertiports will provide the essential ground infrastructure to support this new market, transforming the way goods and people are transported around urban areas and hosting a never-before-seen retail experience.

Urban-Air Port has amassed a group of like-minded brands to deliver this future-facing customer experience. These include:

- [Anatomie](#) – Hybrid fashion brand and pioneer of Luxury Athleisure which is carried in over 400 stores globally including resorts, spas and airports. Its performance sportswear, engineered for comfort, focuses on reducing the carbon footprint of travellers and will be showcased at Air-One.
- [Bottega S.p.A](#) – Produces and sells award-winning Italian food and beverage products in more than 140 countries and in some of the world’s most recognised duty-free shops and airlines. It will be showcasing its products at Air-One.
- Eurest, part of [Compass Group](#) – The largest contract foodservice company in the world, employing over 500,000 people globally. Eurest will be Urban-Air Port’s operating partner for the on-site café, applying the company’s expertise to help develop the menu.
- [LG Business Solutions](#) – Providing on-site technology in public spaces such as interactive screens that will host brand campaigns and bring products to life for consumers in new and highly interactive ways.
- [Mother](#) – A UK-based leader in ‘smart vending’ technology, providing a best-in-class unmanned retail experience. Mother’s equipment will be used to provide products on demand and even act as ‘click & collect’ collection points at future [unmanned drone hubs](#).
- [Paul & Shark](#) – a sustainability-focused luxury Italian clothing brand with over 28 stores worldwide. At Air-One, it will be showcasing its fashion lines and sustainability projects as well as displaying furniture made from recycled textiles.

Morag Freathy, Managing Director, Eurest – B&I division of Compass Group UK & Ireland: “We’re really excited to be collaborating with Urban-Air Port on the revolutionary Air One project. As a business, we’re all about breaking boundaries and leading the way on what the future of hospitality can look like, with sustainability at the heart of all that we do. We can’t wait to get started working with such a forward-thinking company.”

## A VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF RETAIL

Urban-Air Port has a clear vision to unlock a future ‘lifestyle retail experience’ that integrates retail

effortlessly into travellers' physical journey from A to B via a unifying smartphone app. This single app will enable travellers to plan their journey, engage with brands associated with Urban-Air Choice and seamlessly integrate with other forms of transport. For example, someone could rent an e-scooter, travel to an Urban-Air Port, take an air taxi across a city, order a coffee on route and have it waiting at an Urban-Air Café at their destination, all controlled from the palm of their hand.

Each Urban-Air Port passenger lounge will be an entirely new type of space. A fraction of the size of a traditional airport terminal, it will create a unique retail experience by exposing consumers to brands in novel and engaging ways, such as interactive screens and virtual/augmented reality technology, rather than permanent bricks and mortar shops. The approach enables brands to remain agile, hosting interactive campaign-specific content at opportune times, rather than expensive long-term shop fronts. This enables them to engage the right audiences, with the right messages, in the right place at the right time.

All brands and products will also be accessible through Urban-Air Port's app, meaning the retail experience extends further than just the customers' visit to the physical site. Consumers then have the option to order products directly to their homes or even have them delivered via drone to their local Urban-Air Port or CityBox drone delivery hub [[image here](#)], or ready to be 'vended' by Mother's smart vending machines using a collection code.

This vision is being spearheaded by two leaders in the travel retail and F&B industry. Keith Hunter, Chief Retail Officer, has both led and consulted on retail operations for major transport hubs and leisure brands including Alpha Airports Group, Warner Leisure Hotels, and Qatar Airways. Nicholas Goddard-Palmer, Chief Hospitality Officer, is a fellow of the Institute of Hospitality and brings over 25 years of experience including as CEO of Delhi Duty-Free and Vice President of F&B at QDF for Qatar Airways.

Keith Hunter, Chief Retail Officer at Urban-Air Port said: "Urban-Air Port's vertiports are unlocking an entirely new sector within the travel industry – zero-emission electric air mobility. With that comes the opportunity to develop an entirely novel consumer experience, an experience that allows people to interact with brands and services like never before and – through our app – continue that experience beyond the terminal. This gives our customers absolute flexibility and control over every aspect of their journey and any services they require, perfectly complementing their lifestyle needs. It's a phenomenal opportunity for consumers and brands alike."

Nicholas Goddard-Palmer, Chief Hospitality Officer at Urban-Air Port, said: "Coventry is just the start. With the support of our new brand partners, it gives us the platform to showcase what can be delivered in this new forum and opens the door for a whole new world of retail and F&B by creating unique experiences across the Urban-Air Choice suite of services, which is key to the delivery of our non-aeronautical strategy."

Urban-Air Port continues to receive huge interest in its retail and F&B offering and looks forward to adding new partners.

*Image credit: Urban-Air*