

A Chinese farmer couldn't fly a plane, so he built one

October 26 2018



The full-scale replica of the Airbus A320 built by farmer Zhu Yue is now nearly finished

When a Chinese garlic farmer's dream of flying an airplane didn't pan out, he decided to build one instead.

The full-scale replica of the Airbus A320 built by farmer Zhu Yue is now nearly finished, permanently taxied on a short piece of tarmac surrounded by wheat fields in northeast China.

Zhu didn't finish middle school, and started out farming onions and garlic before moving on to welding work in a factory in the small city of Kaiyuan.

Last year he realised he may never be able to fly a plane.

"I hit midlife and realised I couldn't buy one, but I could build one," he told AFP.

He has invested his savings of more than 2.6 million yuan (\$374,000) into the project that began with a toy model of an Airbus 320 shrunken to one-eightieth its original size.

With that he measured dimensions, studied online photos, and with a heap of mistakes, crafted the fuselage, wings, cockpit, engines and tail. He used 60 tonnes of steel.

Five fellow aircraft enthusiasts-cum-labourers have helped speed the project along.

"On the one hand they're earning money, on the other they're fulfilling dreams, accomplishing things," Zhu said.

The homemade Airbus will not be flying any time soon. Zhu has decided to turn it into a diner.



Five fellow aircraft enthusiasts have helped Zhu Yue speed the project along

The plane's latest additions are a self-made cockpit outfitted with replica flight instruments and a stair car for getting aboard.

"We will put down a red carpet so every person who comes to eat will feel like a head of state," Zhu said.

On board the A320's customary 156 seats have been turned into 36 first class chairs for customers, Zhu said.

He is not yet sure if he will serve hamburgers and French fries or regular Chinese food that the locals may prefer.

Parked not far from the interstate, Zhu is hopeful the plane will soon fill up with hungry passengers.



Zhu has decided to turn his Airbus replica into a diner



Zhu measured dimensions, studied online photos, and used 60 tonnes of steel to make his replica

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Citation: A Chinese farmer couldn't fly a plane, so he built one (2018, October 26) retrieved 20 April 2024 from <https://techxplore.com/news/2018-10-chinese-farmer-couldnt-plane-built.html>

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