

No worries, go catch your flight, a robot is parking your car

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Credit: Stanley Robotics

Many air travelers, whether frequent or infrequent, find that boarding, checking luggage and clearing documents at busy airports are not as stressful as one more experience—trying to find a parking space.

Hopefully, this month's debut at an airport in France suggests parking at

airports will be much less stressful. Congratulate a robot named Stan. *Airport Technology* quoted the COO of Stanley Robotics, Stéphane Evanno. "It's a machine that autonomously detects a vehicle, slides under it, lifts it gently by the wheels and moves it to a storage area."

We are not talking about a biped hero grinning at the blue Mercedes. These Stan robots are what James Vincent in *The Verge* described as "essentially self-driving forklifts."

Stan robots made their service debut this month at France's Lyon-Saint Exupéry airport, in an impressive show of robot valet technology at an airport.

How does the robot system work? *The Verge*: Customers park their cars in special hangars. The cars are scanned for [make](#) and model. Stan enters, "slides a platform underneath the vehicle, lifts it up, and carries it away and parks it."

Romain Dillet in *TechCrunch* [said](#) the Stan robots will make your car accessible shortly before you land.

"For the first time in the world, Stanley Robotics' outdoor automated robotic valet system, developed in partnership with Aéroports de Lyon, was presented in operation on Thursday, March 14," the French company said, in a promotional video.

These are completely autonomous robotic valets. They pick up vehicles at a drop off point and park them for passengers in an outdoor car park.

How easy is that? *Airport Technology*: "For many passengers, finding a parking space at the airport is the cherry atop the towering wedding cake of stress that comes with air travel." The Stanley Robotics sounds as if it will remove at least that source of stress.

For those who fly frequently, the minutes saved not having to hunt for a parking space are inviting; more minutes are freed to fulfill any other pre-boarding actions. Environmental impact? Stan gets good marks in being a "green" solution; the battery-driven robots, 100 percent electric, are polluting less than other cars moving around in search of a space.

"The setup includes four autonomous robots and 12 cabins for vehicle drop-off and collection. As the vehicles are deposited within a few centimeters of one another, the innovative system will enable more than 500 vehicles to be parked in P5+, a potential space saving of up to 50%," said Karima Kouidri in *Airport Benchmarking*.

Stanley Robotics had submitted the Stan system to testing.

Dillet in *TechCrunch*: "You can't walk on the parking lot. You just interact with a garage at the gate of the parking. After the door is closed, the startup controls the environment from start to [finish](#)." Stanley Robots is not ignoring the need for human scrutiny, though, should intervention be needed. *Airport Technology*: The team intends to offer "maintenance personnel that can regularly check the technology on-site and perform fixes."

They are also talking about "redundancy solutions in case something goes [wrong](#)."

And then there are contingency plans. For the most part, the company has an easy time to predict incoming lows, as passengers need to book ahead for flights and parking, but there always needs to be a proactive "but." *Airport Technology* quoted Evanno. "We also plan to have some spare robots just to cope with any unexpected event, [such as] too many planes landing at the same time."

The robot group can decrease the number of robots that are needed, or

the size of the car park could be adjusted for use as for other operations.

On the airport side of the business, one does not have to think very hard as to why there might be a business case for the [robot](#) valet parking system. *TechCrunch*'s Romain Dillet remarked how "many airports don't have a ton of space. They keep adding new terminals and it is becoming increasingly complicated to build more parking lots."

The system in operation means the airport can safely park vehicles closer to each other. This in turn could add capacity "in an already full-to-the-rafters car park," as *Airport Technology* put it.

The Stanley Robotics site makes a business pitch to airports as a space-creating solution and in "optimizing parking space." The team said, "An intelligent management software coordinates all of the robots. It also ensures a more pragmatic use of space by arranging more vehicles within a given [area](#)."

What's next? The service is going live on a large scale for passengers in the coming weeks. This is a [strategic partnership](#) with Lyon-Saint Exupéry airport and its owner, Vinci Airports, said *Airport Technology*.

Reports said the company hopes to expand to more [parking](#) spots at the [airport](#) soon.

More information: [www.stanley-robotics.com/solut ... arking-optimization/](http://www.stanley-robotics.com/solut...arking-optimization/)

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