

A New Perspective



In conversation with Jane Poynter and Taber MacCallum, Co-Founders of Space Perspective, an innovative company offering the chance to journey into space.



Florida seen from 100,000' above earth

At Milton Group, a key part of our mission is to educate current and future thought leaders on making a difference; Space Perspective offers an aligned, yet alternative approach through which we can achieve this shared purpose, by providing its travellers with the ability to view the planet through a completely new perspective.



Jane Poynter and Taber MacCallum, lead designers in the Biosphere 2 program, are offering the chance for 'Explorers' to take a gentle six-hour journey into space in a pressurized capsule powered by a space balloon. They spoke to Nadine Manji about their vision. Science and education are at the core of this program - scientists, educators and students are invited to perform ground-breaking research via these flights. Research conducted could shed light on the greater workings of the world's climate and air-systems, vitally supporting and facilitating efforts to mitigate against our currently unsustainable way of life.

We believe that Jane and Taber's Space Perspective aims are wholly in sync with our own - to reiterate both the importance and vulnerability of Earth, and inspire conservation and sustainability as the foundations of future action - as they both say, 'We must see it to really believe it'.

Space Perspective is an incredibly futuristic program - can you tell us a bit more about the thought and purpose behind it?

Humans have always sought higher ground to look over the next hill to seek a broader horizon and gain a new perspective. Now we can take to the ultimate high ground space. From up there, the Earth's curved horizon lies below us. From up there we know that the blue sky we see from the ground is not infinite - that our home planet turns in the black void of space. Astronauts tell us that from that perspective comes the realization that we all inhabit this beautiful Spaceship Earth together as a singular human family living in and relying on our global biosphere.

The global challenges we encounter today require us to have a global view, which this space perspective enables. Human spaceflight has an extraordinary ability to inspire people of all ages, to speak to our inner child and challenge us to reach for an audaciously bright future.

Space Perspective is dedicated to making spaceflight accessible to as many people as possible so they too can have the transformational experience of witnessing our home planet in space.

Could you tell us a bit more about the technology involved in this program?

Spaceship Neptune rises gently and smoothly above 99% of Earth's atmosphere where it glides along the edge of space. The pressurized capsule holds eight passengers and a pilot, who can relax in a shirt-sleeves environment. It is the only zero-emissions spacecraft, using space balloons instead of rockets to propel the capsule to space. The space balloon technology has been flown by NASA thousands of times, allowing us to offer a gentle and comfortable voyage. Instead of hurtling up against gravity as rockets do, Neptune smoothly launches to space at about 12 mph, the speed of riding a bicycle. The entire flight is approximately six hours in duration: two hours to reach the edge of space, two hours at full altitude and two hours to descend. There is a refreshments bar, toilet, and Wi-fi to connect with loved ones on the ground throughout the mission. The interior is roomy enough to walk around, hold events, and even transmit a concert, conference or classroom from the edge of space.

Throughout your career, you have both been involved in some amazing initiatives - including Biosphere 2. What have your past



Spaceship Neptune is the only zero-emissions spacecraft, using space balloons instead of rockets to propel the capsule

experiences, and their outcomes, taught you about the world's finite resources, and our relationship with these?

My experience living and working inside Biosphere 2 for two whole years led me to founding Space Perspective with another crew member, Taber MacCallum. Biosphere 2 was a three-acre hermetically sealed prototype space base with a rainforest, savannah, desert, ocean, marsh, farm and human habitat, where the eight of us recycled our water, air, and grew all our food. We could see the edges of our world and knew that whatever we had inside was all we would have for the entire time we lived inside. We built an unbreakable bond with our biosphere that we inhabited. This is akin to the experience Astronauts have when seeing Earth from space. They see its finiteness, the surprisingly thin skin of atmosphere, and that all life as we know it lives on that planet. Like us inside Biosphere 2, they are keenly reminded that our world is interconnected. If this is not your world view before going into space, or living in an artificial biosphere, or living surrounded by nature here on Earth, it becomes so. It changes you.

Our Space Perspective Operations Center

is on NASA Kennedy Space Center, where the future of space travel is forged every day. And yet it is also a wildlife refuge where I routinely see bald eagles nest, and traffic stops to let deer cross. This symbolizes a future where humanity fulfills our dreams of an abundant world enabled by technology, while living deeply embedded with nature.

Milton Group's work is focused on the conservation based-tourism realm, as Space Perspective is similarly exploring and creating the space tourism realm. Do you see a future of overlap between our two realms - where Milton Group's sustainability aims, to ultimately emphasise and execute our role in protecting the planet, converge with Space Perspective's and your own future objectives?

Yes, absolutely. Gaining a space perspective has been shown to significantly increase involvement in environmental and social causes once astronauts return from space. And that change lasts a lifetime. So too, we hope that our Explorers will return from the experience on Spaceship Neptune energized to do more for our human family and our

planetary biosphere. We plan to help them do that through partnerships with organizations such as Milton Group. We hope that for some people, their voyage to space is the beginning of a new journey on Earth.

Relatedly, what are the key objectives for the guest experience onboard, and how do you aim to achieve a long-term, embedded learning experience amongst Explorers, as opposed to mere ticket sales, with those who travel with Space Perspective going on to share and make outcome-based contributions in their own lives?

We are offering a potentially life-changing experience of the space perspective rather than selling tickets. We are curating the pre-flight experience, as well as the flight itself, around that experience. While there is no real training needed to board Spaceship Neptune, we will help our Explorers prepare for their flight so that when they finally get to the edge of space they can take in the beauty and create memories with those who fly with them that will last forever.

“
We want to take you to the edge of space to experience what scarcely anyone has – the perspective of Earth as a planet.
”



Spaceship Neptune rises above 99% of Earth's atmosphere where it glides along the edge of space

We apply OnePlanet Sustainability Principles across our projects, to measure and inform our impact. Their company name is founded on the emphasised idea that we only have 'OnePlanet' to revive and protect to guarantee our future. How do your own views align or challenge this?

Spaceflight holds up a mirror to us on Earth. It exemplifies sustainable living, as a space base or spacecraft must hold to certain principles of sustainable living. Everything is recycled on long duration space missions and energy consumption is always minimized. Spaceflight also puts Earth in a cosmic context. We have not yet found life elsewhere in the universe, so we must act as if Earth is the cradle of life. Yet, we are able to leave this profoundly hospitable planet and import resources from elsewhere in our solar system such as asteroids, or expand our home to include the Moon and Mars. Becoming a multi-planetary species is important for exploration and discovery. But since the Moon and Mars are profoundly inhospitable to life, Earth will always be our home planet to love and protect.

Who are the other key stakeholders in this mission, and what in your opinion has motivated them to effect change via Space travel?

The other major companies working to make private space travel a near term reality include SpaceX with its orbiting Crew Dragon capsule; Virgin Galactic with its suborbital spacecraft; Blue Origin with a short suborbital flight; and Axiom, offering stays on the International Space Station. They are all rocket-based flights. The space industry has been driven by passionate people who have the dream of taking humanity higher and farther than we could ever dream possible. Space travel is in some ways no different from travel anywhere – it offers a journey into the unknown, to experience wonderful and rare things, and to return home different from when we left.

What's next for Space Perspective?

We are starting our test flight campaign this spring. We will fly a full-sized unpressurized capsule through the entire flight profile from launch, up to the edge of space and back to touchdown. We are now starting to offer people the opportunity to book their flight onboard Spaceship Neptune. Our very first flights, Legacy Flights, are named to honor the heritage of those who have gone before and to celebrate those heroes who expand our knowledge and work in space today. It is an exciting time for human spaceflight, and we are lucky and honored to be part of creating the history of tomorrow.

thespaceperspective.com

[@spaceperspectiv](https://twitter.com/spaceperspectiv)

[@thespaceperspective](https://www.instagram.com/thespaceperspective)