

If you cannot view this email, please view our [web version](#)



## SUCCESSFUL SPACESHIP TWO ROCKET MOTOR TESTING

28th May 2009:

Virgin Galactic today announces the successful completion of the first phase of tests of the rocket motor that will propel space tourists, scientists and payloads into space.

In the desert of southern California, Virgin Galactic's key supplier Scaled Composites and its subcontractor SNC (Sierra Nevada Corporation) have successfully completed the first tests of the innovative rocket motor that will propel space tourists, scientists and payloads into space. The hybrid Nitrous Oxide system being used is the largest of its kind in the world and it will send Virgin's customers up into sub-orbital space at speeds over 2500 mph (4000kmh), to heights over 65 miles (110km) above the Earth's surface, before the spaceship descends back down through the atmosphere using its pioneering feathered re-entry system.

Sir Richard Branson, founder of Virgin Galactic said: "As Virgin Galactic gets ever closer to the start of commercial operations, we are reaching and passing many important and historic milestones. The Virgin MotherShip (VMS) Eve, the first of our amazing, all carbon composite, high altitude WhiteKnightTwo launch vehicles, is flying superbly. SpaceShipTwo, which will air launch from Eve, is largely constructed and awaiting the start of its own test flight programme later this year."

The rocket motor burns for a very short period of time because the spaceship is launched from VMS Eve in the upper atmosphere, rather than from ground level. This means much less fuel is required, and the fuel burn is more environmentally benign than the solid rockets used in most ground based systems.

While the rocket motor is extremely powerful, it is also completely controllable. This system can - if necessary - be shut down at any time, allowing the spaceship to glide back down to land at a conventional runway. This is a significant feature in the overall safety of the Virgin system for human space flight.

Sir Richard continues: "Less fuel and clean fuel all add up to a space launch system which will be completely unprecedented in its low environmental impact compared with current space flight. The spaceship's carbon footprint for each of its passengers and crew will be about a quarter of that for a return trip from London to New York, demonstrating again the extraordinary benefits that new technology can bring to the quest for clean transportation."

"We believe space is on the cusp of a new industrial revolution. Virgin Galactic's mission has always been to transform the safety, cost and environmental impact of access to space. Not just for passengers, but also for a range of important scientific purposes, and to send small satellites into orbit. The world's scientific community is united in recognising that making better use of space will be vital to mankind's ability to manage the huge future challenges of life back here on Earth."

The rocket motor will continue a series of exhaustive tests, and the spaceship itself will start flight testing later this year. The testing programme for the rocket, the spaceship and VMS Eve will be extensive.

To view broadcast quality footage of the tests, along with the full interview with Sir Richard Branson please visit [www.virgingalactic.com/rocketmotor](http://www.virgingalactic.com/rocketmotor).

To view on YouTube click [here](#)

For any other enquiries, please contact Bite PR on [virgingalactic@bitepr.com](mailto:virgingalactic@bitepr.com) or phone the switchboard on +44 (0)20 8741 1123.

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Privacy Policy](#)

Virgin Galactic

Company Registration Number: 5802809. Registered in England & Wales.  
Registered Office: The School House, 50 Brook Green, London W6 7RR.