



Reach for the Skies: Ballooning, Birdmen, and Blasting into Space

Richard Branson

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One of the world's most famous business leaders (and a well-known avian fanatic) explores the pioneers of flight.

Bestselling author and billionaire entrepreneur Sir Richard Branson has always been obsessed with the skies. To promote a new Virgin Airlines route, he became the first man to water ski behind a blimp. His Virgin Galactic venture will soon offer ordinary people the opportunity to experience spaceflight aboard the first commercial spaceliner, SpaceShipTwo.

In *Reach for the Skies*, Branson examines the history of aviation over the last two hundred years, putting the spotlight on trailblazers such as:

- *Tony Jannus, who made the first ever commercial flight over Tampa Bay, Florida, in 1914.
- *Leo Valentin, the "bird man" who jumped from 9,000 feet wearing a pair of wooden wings in the 1950s.
- *Steve Fossett, who broke 130 world records in planes, balloons, and airships.

The pioneers of flight-not just the world-famous Wright Brothers, but also lesser known visionaries and dreamers-made it possible for any of us with the desire and the commitment to reach for the skies ourselves.

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