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**VIRGIN GALACTIC CELEBRATES NEW ERA OF WOMEN IN SPACEFLIGHT AS
FEMALE CUSTOMER BECOMES
600TH FUTURE ASTRONAUT**

This Milestone Falls Amidst Anniversaries of the First Females to Travel to Space



LONDON – Sir Richard Branson, founder of the Virgin Group and Virgin Galactic, today announced that the company’s 600th future astronaut is Marsha Waters, the owner of an accounting services company based in Blackpool, United Kingdom. Marsha, 42, embodies the next generation of women in space: private individuals who are passionate about experiencing space travel for themselves. Sir Richard and Marsha are pictured here at [The B Team launch](#) in London on June 13. Marsha first took an interest in Virgin Galactic in 2010 and has been following its progress ever since.

“I’ve always been fascinated with space and often wondered whether space travel would ever be a possibility for people like me, especially in my lifetime,” Marsha said. “After watching Virgin Galactic’s [supersonic test flight](#) at the end of April, I thought “this is it” and made the decision to purchase my ticket to space while I still had the chance. It’s a big step and a major financial commitment for me, but I know it will be the most exciting, worthwhile adventure I will ever embark upon.”

This milestone coincides with two significant anniversaries relating to women who have made a substantial impact on the world through space travel. Valentina Tereshkova, a retired Soviet cosmonaut, made history

on June 16, 1963 when she entered into low Earth orbit, giving her the title of “first woman to have flown in space.” Sally Ride followed her lead on June 18, 1983 and became the first American woman to enter space.

[About Virgin Galactic](#)

Virgin Galactic, owned by Sir Richard Branson’s [Virgin Group](#) and [aabar Investments PJC](#), is on track to be the world’s first commercial spaceline. To date, the company has accepted more than \$70 million in deposits from Future Astronauts around the world. The new spaceship (SpaceShipTwo, *VSS Enterprise*) and carrier craft (WhiteKnightTwo, *VMS Eve*) have both been developed for Virgin Galactic’s vehicle fleet by Mojave-based [Scaled Composites](#). Founded by Burt Rutan, Scaled developed SpaceShipOne, which in 2004 claimed the \$10 million Ansari X Prize as the world’s first privately developed manned spacecraft. Virgin Galactic’s new vehicles, which will be manufactured by Virgin Galactic in Mojave, Calif., share much of the same basic design, but are being built to carry six customers, or the equivalent scientific research payload, on suborbital space flights. The vehicles will allow an out-of-the-seat, zero-gravity experience with astounding views of the planet from the black sky of space for tourist astronauts and a unique microgravity platform for researchers. The *VSS Enterprise* and *VMS Eve* test flight program is well under way, leading to Virgin Galactic commercial operations, which will be based at [Spaceport America](#) in New Mexico.

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