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## **The NEOPLAN Skyliner is celebrating an anniversary: 50 years of the double-decker touring coach**

**On 26 April 1967, the first NEOPLAN Skyliner rolled off the assembly line. Since then, the world's first double-decker touring coach has experienced an eventful history.**

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- **Konrad Auwärter developed the world's first double-decker touring coach 50 years ago**
- **Since then, almost 5000 NEOPLAN Skyliners have been sold**
- **The seventh generation has been continuing the success story since 2012**

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In the spring of 1967, the young Konrad Auwärter astounded the coach world with his thesis. A double-decker for touring? Unimaginable at the time. Yet the younger son of Gottlob Auwärter truly believed in his concept and turned the first NEOPLAN Skyliner into a reality. To prove its suitability for everyday use, he drove the 12 metre-long coach from Stuttgart to Brussels. "At that time, nobody believed that it was at all possible to drive a double-decker on the motorway without it tipping over. But we soon convinced the doubters otherwise," remembered Konrad Auwärter at the anniversary event, where he opened a new display case in the MAN Bus Forum. "From 1969 onwards, renowned transport companies opted to use NEOPLAN Skyliners, for example Götten in Saarbrücken and TRD-Reisen in Dortmund."

And the NEOPLAN Skyliner knew how to impress. The founder of the double-decker touring class cannot only look back over many years of

MAN Truck & Bus is one of Europe's leading commercial vehicle manufacturers and transport solution providers, with an annual revenue of some 9 billion euros (2016). The company's product portfolio includes vans, trucks, buses/coaches and diesel and gas engines along with services related to passenger and cargo transport. MAN Truck & Bus is a company of Volkswagen Truck & Bus GmbH and employs more than 35,000 people worldwide.



tradition, but also to great popularity among its customers - to date, almost 5000 NEOPLAN Skyliners have rolled onto the roads throughout the world, offering passengers a unique dimension in luxury coach travel. This worldwide fleet includes some particularly striking examples, such as the quad-axle Megaliner or the articulated double-decker Jumbocruiser. And many customers also had specific plans for the NEOPLAN Skyliner: for example, the double-decker from Germany was used as a 15 m quad-axle coach at Cape Canaveral, as a shuttle for a casino in Philadelphia and as a mobile home for a pilgrimage by an Arab royal family.

“The team bus that we built in 1995 for Formula One World Champion Keke Rosberg was a particularly emotional creation for all our colleagues in the factory. Rosberg visited the factory himself several times to add additional definitions to this vehicle. The highlight was the stainless steel roof deck with fold-out railings. It was the highest level of bus architecture! The employees were very proud of that bus,” explains Auwärter.

The NEOPLAN Skyliner is now in its seventh generation, yet has lost none of its attraction, as proven by its numerous awards. For example, last year saw the bus take home the IBC Award (International Bus Competition) and the sustainability prize from busplaner, a magazine for bus and group travel companies. Even the NEOPLAN design is legendary and has been lauded with internationally renowned awards on several occasions in the past. Equally high were the demands placed on Stephan Schönherr, MAN Head of Design Bus, and his experienced design team in designing the seventh Skyliner generation.

Clear lines and sharp edges in glass and sheet metal are combined with uncompromising aerodynamics that set new standards in the touring coach premium class. The consistent lines, the award-winning “Sharp Cut” design from NEOPLAN, form the basis for the Skyliner shape and identify the double-decker touring coach as a member of the current NEOPLAN family. This new interpretation sees traditional design features such as the forward-thrusting window frames harmoniously combined with new style elements such as the diamond cut in the upper side windows, modelled taperings towards the rear on both sides and a striking front end.



And the success story continues: Alongside its use as a luxury touring coach, the NEOPLAN Skyliner is winning over more and more transport companies and communities as a suitable vehicle for intercity use. With Class II accreditation, this coach offers enormous passenger capacity with a high level of comfort, for example on express coach connections between rural regions and regional centres or as school transport. The highest level of safety and economy are guaranteed thanks to the various assistance systems available, such as emergency brake assist, lane guard system, the MAN fatigue detector AttentionGuard, adaptive cruise control, the MAN topography-based cruise control MAN EfficientCruise with the EfficientRoll coasting function and electronically controlled Comfort Drive Suspension.

This much is clear: the NEOPLAN Skyliner is nowhere near being confined to the scrap heap.

P\_Bus\_EOT\_Skyliner50-01.jpg

Caption:

On 26/04/1967, the first NEOPLAN Skyliner rolled off the line. Since then, the fifth generation has been brought to market.

P\_Bus\_EOT\_Skyliner50-02.jpg

Auwärter travelled from Stuttgart to Brussels in 1967 to prove the everyday suitability of the double-decker touring coach.

H\_KonradAuwaerter\_2017.jpg

Caption:

The visionary and his coach: as part of his thesis in 1967, Konrad Auwärter developed the world's first double-decker touring coach, the NEOPLAN Skyliner.