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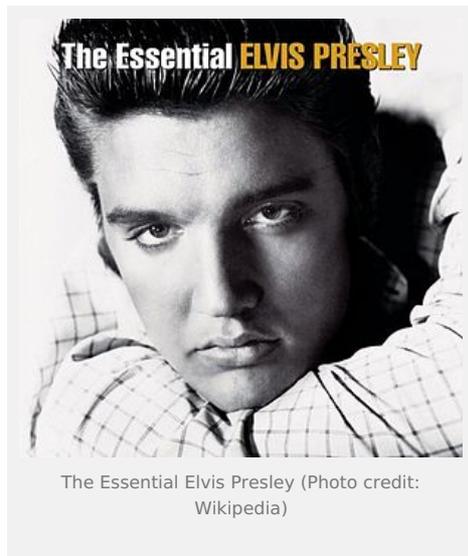
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Delta Convair 880 Became Elvis Presley's Lisa Marie



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Delta [Convair 880](#) Became [Elvis Presley's](#) Lisa Marie

The Lisa Marie : Convair 880 Jet

On April 17, 1975 Elvis bought a Convair 880 Jet, recently taken out of service by [Delta Airlines](#), for the then-substantial sum of \$250,000. After refurbishing, the total exceeded \$600,000. He immediately rechristened it the Lisa Marie.



N8809E Delta Airlines Convair 880 landing at [New York's JFK International Airport](#) May 1970. Aircraft purchased by Elvis Presley.

Earlier Elvis had paid a \$75,000 deposit on a Boeing 707 but the deal fell through. The previous owner had been [Robert Vesco](#), the fugitive financier who had fled to South America after allegedly embezzling hundreds of millions of dollars from international investment firms. Buying his plane would involve some complicated wrangling with the IRS. And Elvis was warned about another complication: If the plane ever landed in any of the countries Vesco was establishing a base in, there was every reason to believe that he might try to seize it.

The Convair 880 had a clean record and would have no problem flying to any country around the globe.

So that's the plane Elvis purchased. The plane was in a hangar at [Meacham Field](#) in Fort Worth, and for months Elvis took great pleasure in flying friends out to check on progress as the interior of the plane was refurbished to his very specific design requirements (he bought another plane to make those trips - a smaller [Lockheed JetStar](#)). Elvis wanted a seating area, a conference room, and a private bedroom on the plane (with space for an in-flight reading library). He picked fabrics, decided on color schemes, chose the on-board audio-visual system, and even Ok'd the gold fixtures in the bathrooms (he counted heavily

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on some aesthetic input from Priscilla, too).

Elvis was especially excited about the fact that the same design team had previously customized Air Force One. The craft slowly came together as an airworthy mix of modern function and Graceland elegance.

Close in size to a 707, the Lisa Marie was customized with plush sleeping quarters, a penthouse bedroom with a custom-made queen size bed, an executive bathroom with gold faucets and a gold washbasin, a videotape system linked to four TVs and a stereo system with fifty-two speakers, and a conference room finished in teak. It could hold a maximum of 29 people, but usually there would be about eight or 10. When the final paint job was applied to the exterior, there was a prominent 'TCB' logo on the tail.



Elvis - Other Airplanes and the first flight of The Lisa Marie 1975 April 17, Elvis buys an ex Delta Airlines Convair 880 Jet for \$250,000. July, While on tour, Elvis decided to present the Colonel with his own airplane, a Grumman Gulfstream G-1, which he bought sight unseen. Elvis had it delivered to the Colonel in Vegas on July 26, but the Colonel didn't really take it the way that Elvis had hoped. 'You've got to be kidding', was his first response. And then he turned it down on the grounds that he didn't need a plane and couldn't afford one.

August 3, Elvis leases a [Fairchild F-27](#) aircraft at \$13,000 a month. August 7, Arrangements are made for Linda Thompson and her friend, Jeannie LeMay, to fly with Elvis' chow, Getlow, to Boston, so that the dog can receive treatment for a kidney ailment. When the dog is too ill to travel on to the [West Boylston](#) veterinary hospital where it is scheduled to be treated, the whole party remains at the Ritz for two days before continuing.

August 15, Elvis cancels the lease on the Fairchild F-27 and buys an Aero Jet Commander for \$508,000. August 27, Elvis enters into an agreement with Omni Aircraft Sales, who will sell the Gulfstream G-1 and Jet Commander that he purchased two weeks earlier.

September 2, Elvis buys a Lockheed JetStar aircraft for \$899,702.60 October 8, Milo High, Elvis' personal pilot takes Elvis and five others on a brief one-hour flight in Elvis newly purchased Lockheed JetStar aircraft. October 9, Milo High flies Elvis and eight others to Dallas and back.

October 21, Milo High flies Elvis' aunt, Delta Biggs, and Mike McGregor to Boston to pick up Elvis' chow, Getlow.

Getlow has been recuperating at the New England Institute for Comparative Medicine veterinary hospital in West Boylston for almost three months. November 10, The Lisa Marie is delivered to Memphis late in the evening, joining the JetStar and a 1966 Dessault-Falcon, which Elvis has bought for an investment.

July 13, 1976 - Elvis trades the Dessault-Falcon airplane, which he purchased in late 1975 as an investment, for a second Lockheed JetStar. The first JetStar aircraft will become the center of a long, drawn-out FBI investigation into what appears to be a sophisticated swindle perpetrated on Elvis and Vernon involving the leasing and refurbishing of the aircraft. The case is not concluded until after Elvis' death.

On April 17, 1975 Elvis bought a Convair 880 Jet recently taken out of service by Delta Airlines for the then-substantial sum of \$250,000. With complete refurbishing the total exceeded \$600,000. He immediately rechristened it the [Lisa Marie](#). But this wasn't just an impulse purchase of some sort of ultimate

flying Cadillac.



Delta N8809E Parked in the freight area Kentucky International Kentucky, March 1967 awaiting replacement of the number two engine. Became Elvis Presley's [Lisa Marie](#), N880EP.

August 16, 1977 - The 'Lisa Marie' was dispatched to Los Angeles to pick up Priscilla. Also onboard were Priscilla's mother, father and sister, Michelle ; Joan Esposito, as well as Dr. Elias Ghanem. When Linda arrived at the airport, Priscilla refused to travel with her so Linda accepted Jerry Schiling's commercial flight reservation and Jerry went to Memphis on the 'Lisa Marie'. Larry Geller and Ed Parker also flew to Memphis on commercial flights. Elvis' father, Vernon, sold the plane in 1978 and it changed hands a couple of times.

The Lisa Marie N880EP at Miami - International - Florida, 1979 When [Graceland](#) opened up to the public in 1982, EPE worked with the owners to try and bring the plane home to Memphis. In 1984, the Lisa Marie was stationed at Graceland. It has remained as one of the compound's most popular attractions ever since, Morgan said in a phone interview from Memphis.



English: Elvis Presley's plane, "Lisa Marie", named after his daughter on display at Graceland (Photo credit: Wikipedia)

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03/02/2015 at 19:39

can't EPE BUY THE PLANES AND KEEP THEM FOR EVERY-ONE ?

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georgevreelandhill2010 says:

08/21/2016 at 19:38

Thanks for this great article.

George Vreeland Hill

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