

Flying Car Inventor Stefan Klein Joins Buzz Aldrin, Richard Branson in Aviation Hall of Fame

Slovak engineer and AirCar co-creator recognized for more than three decades of pioneering work in aviation and transportation

SALZBURG, Austria — September 7, 2026 — Professor Stefan Klein, Slovak engineer, transportation designer, aviator and co-founder of Klein Vision, has been inducted into the Living Legends of Aviation Hall of Fame at the [European Living Legends of Aviation Awards at Scalaria](#) in Salzburg — recognized for turning the flying car from a century-old dream into a certified, working aircraft.

Klein joins an international community of aviation pioneers that includes Buzz Aldrin, Jeff Bezos, Harrison Ford, Sir Richard Branson and Bertrand Piccard. He was inducted alongside the 2026 European honorees, including ESA astronaut Thomas Pesquet and Flying Bulls chief pilot Raimund Riedmann.

The recognition honors Klein's more than 30-year career spanning engineering, transportation design and aviation, culminating in AirCar — a roadable aircraft that transforms between road and flight configurations in less than two minutes.

"For me, the flying car was never a fantasy. It was a design and engineering problem," said Stefan Klein. "I wanted to prove that it was possible to build one that was safe, reliable, practical and beautiful."

Actor, aviator and fellow Living Legend of Aviation Morgan Freeman served as Master of Ceremonies at the event and highlighted Klein's achievement:

"Aviation has always belonged to dreamers — but only a few dreamers turn the impossible into something that actually flies. Stefan Klein is one of them. He imagined a car with wings, spent years engineering it, and then took it into the sky himself. Stefan didn't just dream about the future of flight. He flew it."

AirCar's most-watched moment came in 2023, when it appeared on Amazon Prime Video's *The Grand Tour: Eurocrash*, driving down a public motorway before transforming and taking off. Host James May's reaction to the landing became one of the show's most-shared clips:

"That car has landed... Very rarely am I lost for words, but I'm lost for words. It's not just a flying car, it did drive here. It arrived by road. It drove down the motorway — and then became an airplane."

Klein has spent more than 30 years working across automotive and transportation design, engineering and aviation. He established the Transport Design department at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava and developed research and design projects with major automotive manufacturers including Audi, Volkswagen, BMW, Ford, Renault and Skoda.

He has designed more than 20 types of vehicles, including motorcycles, buses, locomotives, electric vehicles and specialized machinery. His aviation experience includes more than 1,200 hours in powered aircraft, more than 3,000 hours in gliders, and hundreds of hours as a test pilot. He holds 12 patents related to AirCar's transformation technology.

"A vehicle has to work technically, but it also has to inspire people. Beauty and function are not opposites," Klein said.

What's Next for AirCar

Klein Vision co-founder and longtime ESET co-founder Anton Zajac, who has been involved in AirCar's development from its early stages, reflected on the honor:

"Most people who say 'what if a car could fly' stop there. Stefan built one and flew it himself — repeatedly. This recognition belongs to that persistence. But building AirCar was the first challenge, not the last. The next is making flight as intuitive as driving: an AI-native glass cockpit, autoland, and eventually full autonomy — so the aircraft does the flying and the human just enjoys the view. Safety comes first every step of the way, which is why even this version already flies with a ballistic parachute. We're targeting Q1 next year to bring that vision closer to reality."

AirCar operates as a conventional aircraft from paved or grass runways rather than relying on vertical take-off infrastructure. The research prototype has completed more than 170 flight hours and more than 500 landings, and received its Certificate of Airworthiness in 2023. Klein Vision is now advancing the production configuration, developed with a 280 HP Adept Airmotive aviation engine and a projected range of up to 1,000 km (approximately 620 miles).

About Klein Vision

Klein Vision is a Slovak technology and engineering company founded in 2017 to develop new forms of transportation that combine road and aviation capabilities.

High-resolution images and voice recording of Morgan Freeman from the induction ceremony are available [here](#).

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