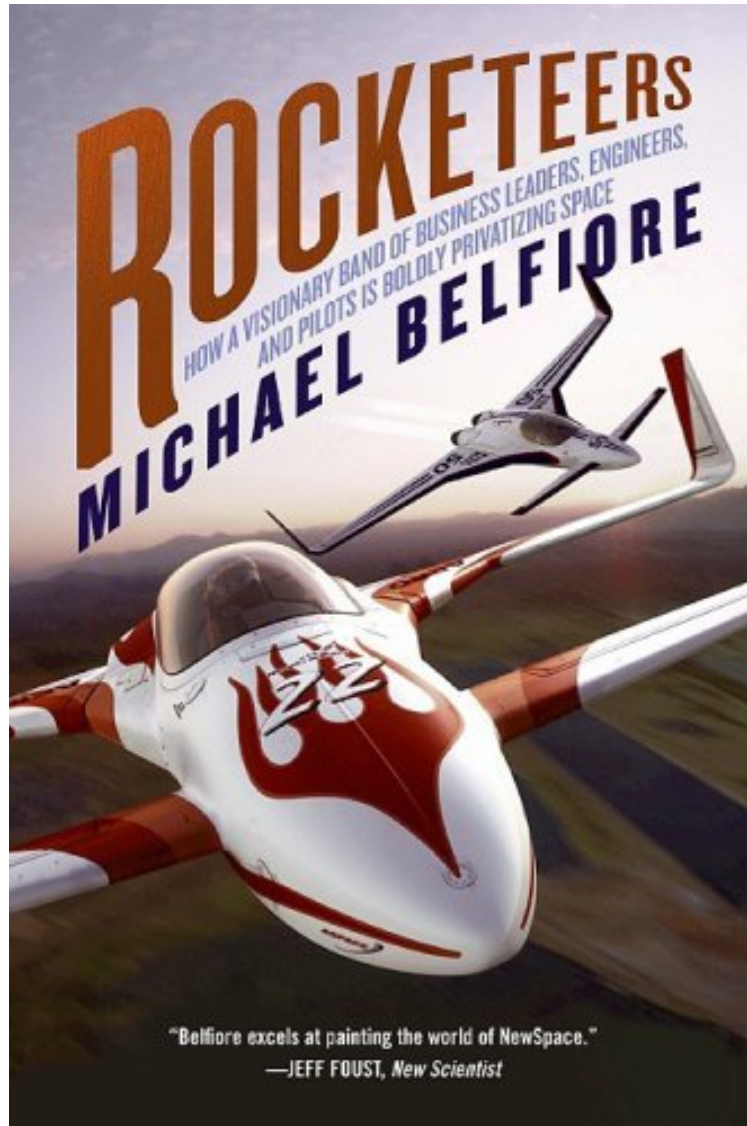


(Pdf free) Rocketeers: Visionaries and Daredevils of the New Sp

Rocketeers: Visionaries and Daredevils of the New Sp

Michael Belfiore

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Michael Belfiore : Rocketeers: Visionaries and Daredevils of the New Sp before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Rocketeers: Visionaries and Daredevils of the New Sp:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. An Inspiring Story By Mark R. Whittington Rocketeers by Michael Belfiore is not so much a history of commercial space as it is a kind of survey of the state of affairs of the same as of about spring of 2007. It suffers a little from the stream of consciousness writing style, jumping from one subject to the other. Nevertheless it is an inspiring story about a small group of entrepreneurs who propose to open the high frontier of space for commerce, and incidentally for everyone who is not a highly paid, highly trained employee of some

government. The subtext of *Rocketeers*, besides the dramatic stories of risk takers and dreamers building their own rockets, is a kind of wistfulness, bordering sometimes on anger on a future that never came to pass. Though Belfiore was busily being born in 1969, the year of Apollo 11, he shares the feeling that many of a certain age has experienced from time to time. It's the twenty first century, and where are those colonies on the Moon and interplanetary space liners we were promised. The reasons that future has not yet come to pass are many and complex, but many people, perhaps overly simplistically, blame NASA. The agency that was once toasted as the organization that took men to the Moon in eight short years is not regularly excoriated as being a bloated, unimaginative, and often incompetent bureaucracy. It is an image, considering what has happened since Apollo, that NASA has helped bring on itself and will have a hard time (some suggest impossible time) overcoming. No matter, say the heroes depicted in *Rocketeers*. If NASA can't bring about the future of a space faring civilization, we shall do it ourselves. Belfiore leaps effortlessly from story to story. Here is Peter Diamandis, who conceived and wrought the X Prize to build and launch into space the first private space craft. Here is Burt Rutan, master builder of air craft who won the X Prize with his SpaceShipOne and thus made commercial space almost respectable. Here is Elon Musk, the South African born Internet magnate who proposes to be the Prince Henry the Navigator of the space age by building his own fleet of low cost rockets as well as a manned space ship in partnership with NASA. And here is Robert Bigelow, the Los Vegas hotel tycoon whose interest in UFOs has inspired him to conceive and start to build the first private space station made from inflatable modules with technology first developed by NASA. And of course no story of the nascent commercial space sector can be complete without a look at Sir Richard Branson, a man who resembles nothing less than an Elizabethan Sea Dog whose Virgin Galactic proposes to be the first commercial space line. Belfiore mentions in passing how even NASA, once very adverse to commercial space, has now embraced the swashbuckling entrepreneurs like Musk and Bigelow as partners and potential providers of services. One curious omission in *Rocketeers* is its scant mention of commercial space efforts that occurred before the winning of the X Prize dating back to the 1970s. All of those early efforts failed for various reasons, but have proven nevertheless to be valuable lessons. The story of Otrag, Beal, the Rotary Rocket, and others deserves to be told. Belfiore ends his book with a perhaps fanciful look at the world of 2034. NASA, once the alpha and omega of space flight in the Western World, is relegated to providing paying passengers to private space station in Low Earth Orbit or (perhaps, though it is mentioned in passing) being part of the crew of a private/public expedition to Mars. The private sector in that year dominates space flight. Real life will probably not match exactly Belfiore's imagination, but one suspects that in certain aspects at least it will resemble it greatly, through no little credit to the people he writes about in *Rocketeers*.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Introduction to NewSpace By A. Rytov This book is a rather basic introduction to NewSpace ideas and people. Private space flight is an exciting subject and if you are new to it, you will probably enjoy the book. Covered in some depth are: the history of XPrize and Peter Diamandis, SpaceShipOne / Scaled Composites / Burt Rutan, Richard Branson / Virgin Galactic, NASA and private spaceflight, SpaceX / Falcon / Elon Musk, Rocketplane, XCOR, Bigelow's orbital hotels, commercial spaceports. However, the author seems to be more interested in telling amusing stories ("...Suddenly Burt Rutan was wide awake, staring into the blackness of his bedroom ceiling. Out of the blackness came a spaceship in free fall... "I've got it" he said aloud...") than in the technical/scientific aspects of spaceflight. It was also disappointing to me that there are very few pictures in the book and those present are not very relevant (e.g. I'd prefer a cross-section drawing of a hybrid rocket motor to the photo of Tim Pickens riding his rocket bicycle). The book was written in 2007, so naturally you won't find there any of the newest advances in the field: the Lunar Landing Challenge (and its participants), the Space Elevator games, the first successful flight of SpaceX's Falcon 1, SpaceX's Dragon capsule, Google's Lunar Challenge. You will find much more detailed and up-to-date information just reading various NewSpace-related news sites, blogs and Wikipedia articles.

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Nice overview By Stephen Balbach Fairly short and easy to read magazine-style investigative-journalistic human interest narrative about some of the exciting people and companies involved in America's burgeoning private space industry: the X Prize, Burt Rutan, Virgin Galactic, Elon Musk, Robert Bigelow and a few others. I thought the best chapters were about Burt Rutan and winning the XPrize, in particular the blow by blow account of all the troubles they had, very edge of the seat; also the backgrounds of Elon Musk and Robert Bigelow. As a journalistic work it is ephemeral and will be outdated (except as a source for later writers) but if your fascinated by the events, people and rocket ships, this is an excellent overview valuable right now, it's still too early to write the history. Belfiore writes for a number of periodicals like Popular Science, Wired, New Scientists, and claims to be one of only a few who are covering this exciting new industry, so he will certainly be an author to watch in the years ahead.

That this story is still unfolding makes it especially exciting to read. These men are still in their workshops, tinkering their way into orbit. David Gelles, FORBES On June 21, 2004, SpaceShipOne, built by aircraft designer Burt Rutan, entered space and ushered in the commercial space age. Investment capital began to pour into the new commercial spaceflight industry. Richard Branson's Virgin Galactic plans to ferry space tourists out of the atmosphere. Las Vegas hotelier Robert Bigelow is developing the world's first commercial space station (i.e., space hotel). These space entrepreneurs, including Microsoft cofounder Paul Allen and Amazon.com founder Jeff

Bezos, now see space as the next big thing. In *Rocketeers*, Michael Belfiore goes behind the scenes of this nascent industry, capturing its wild-west, anything-goes flavor. Likening his research to "hanging out in the Wright brothers' barn," Belfiore offers an inspiring and entertaining look at the people who are not afraid to make their bold dreams a reality. "The commercial space race is heating up so fast you need a cheat sheet to keep track of all the billionaires and gamblers vying to be the first private entrepreneur to blast paying customers into orbit. [Belfiore] does a stellar job introducing an intriguing cast of characters." —Mark Horowitz, *Wired*

"The privatization of space travel is an essential step toward realizing our cosmic destiny. In his engaging, highly readable *Rocketeers*, Michael Belfiore tells the fascinating story of the entrepreneurs who have already made it happen." —Buzz Aldrin

"A riveting, you-are-there account of how this ragtag collection of innovative thinkers, brave pilots, and bold visionaries is launching one of the most exciting new industries in history. Belfiore's eloquent writing and exhaustive reporting really bring this mysterious, secretive world to life." —Eric Adams, *Popular Science*

From *Booklist* Touring the rapidly changing non-NASA community, Belfiore reports on the technology and business plans behind dreams of privately financed access to space. He profiles several companies active in this arena, including one that will be familiar to the news-following public, Scaled Composites. It launched an astronaut into space for a few minutes in 2004, inspiring enthusiasts and attracting paying customers. Just what customers will pay for seems speculative—a brief experience of weightlessness, a vacation in an orbital hotel, a voyage to the moon—so these companies are accordingly varied in their ambitions. Goals seem directly related to those of the company founders, and Belfiore's strong biographical sketches explain the founders' fascination with spaceflight, their rocketry skills (which range from accomplished to, in the case of mogul Richard Branson, nonexistent), and the hands-on work of their employees. Imparting the technical specs of engines and vehicles, Belfiore better describes with his evocation of the visionary euphoria that animates these entrepreneurial daredevils, sealing the deal for fans of space futurism. Taylor, Gilbert

About the Author Michael Belfiore is one of only a handful of freelance journalists covering commercial spaceflight. Born in 1969—the year Buzz Aldrin and Neil Armstrong walked on the moon—Belfiore has always been fascinated by space travel. He lives with his family in Woodstock, New York.