Who says a plane has to fly to be any good?

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The Airbus A320 seems to be in the news every day. New route between Chongqing and Ho Chi Minh City to be operated by Airbus A320. Spring Airlines' entire fleet of 77 all Airbus A320s. Airbus assembles four A320s a month in Tianjin, five a month by 2019 and six by 2020.  
Airbus delivered 176 A320s to China in 2017 and their senior executive accompanies French President Emmanuel Macron on a state visit to China looking to sign a $10 billion deal for 100 more.  
Everybody it seems wants an A320 Airbus.  
Aviation buff Zhu Yue, a 40-year-old resident of Kaiyuan in China's northeastern province of Liaoning, wanted an Airbus A320 too. So the former peasant farmer turned welder and motorbike mechanic decided to build his own.  
Working with five friends they studied airplane models and technical drawings and months later, secured a site and set to work on the full-scale replica in October 2016.  
"I want to make sure the plane is created with finesse and be the best A320 model in China," he told Reuters.  
Zhu's replica has the exact dimensions of the real thing - an overall length of 37.57 meters, wingspan of 35.8 meters and 12-meter height.  
It also has model jet engine turbines that rotate and a simulated cockpit.  
The "plane" is being built at a factory in an industrial park in Kaiyuan (Zhu knows the owner).  
As of this month, Zhu had spent $158,810 of his savings on the project and used 40,000 kilograms of steel. He hopes to finish it by the end of the year and keep the price tag under $317,620, or 2 million yuan. (Real Airbus A320s sell for about $99 million).  
Zhu and his friends have been live-streaming the project on two Chinese video sites and have drawn more than 200,000 viewers. He claims the coverage motivates them to work harder.  
Some viewers said they were touched by Zhu's spirit in pursuing his dream. Others fault him for what they see as self-aggrandizing hype.  
"In order to build the plane, I spent over 800,000 yuan," he said in response to the critics. "These are my life savings. Some people say I am promoting myself in a sensational way, but who would spend so much money and time doing so?"  
He's building the plane because it's been his dream since childhood, pure and simple.  
"I was a farmer before and later engaged in different businesses," Zhu said. "I just wanted to realize my dream now that I am richer."  
"Right now I just want to finish it," he said.  
What then? Zhu said he plans to turn it into an aviation-themed restaurant or a hotel. Configured for flight service, the A320 seats about 236 passengers. Without seats, it's a pretty big space.  
Two characteristics of the Airbus Zhu will not be copying are its range of 6,150 km and payload of 16.6 tons. He realizes transporting the hefty model could be a problem.  
Exercising admirable due diligence, reporters from Beijing Youth Daily asked officials at the Kaiyuan City Administration for Industry and Commerce about the feasibility of actually starting a restaurant in a full-scale model airplane sitting on the ground in an industrial park.  
The state has clear laws that to open a business a legitimate site is needed and applying for a business license requires valid documentation of property rights, they learned. "If a single aircraft is used, it cannot be used as a place of business," they were told.  
If the restaurant idea doesn't work, it certainly wouldn't be the first time a snarl of red tape kept a good idea from taking off.  
Zhu said maybe he'll just turn his plane into his dream home."Think about it," he said. "Others are entertaining friends and they're all in a house. I'm entertaining friends in a plane. It just feels good."

http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201804/26/WS5ae16b4ea3105cdcf651aa9b.html