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Foreword

This time around, among other adventures, *EVA* catches up with a London-based bespoke charter broker, Cypriot FBO and two classic lines of US piston aircraft, while examining Africa's careful progression into business aviation and revealing the piloting ambitions of an extremely determined Irishwoman. It's a global line up for sure, neatly summarising, by chance, the worldwide reach of business and executive aviation.

But these are not the features that brought home to me the true extent of the industry's reach. As Hurricanes Irma and then Maria left trails of damage and tragedy, I soon became aware that colleagues working in FBOs and manufacturing plants, crewing aircraft and providing services were intimately involved and more than one concerned email left the editorial office.

Before, during and after those storms, business aviation has and continues to demonstrate a very real service to society, beyond its contribution to commerce and the global economy. Fuel providers and FBOs worked hard to evacuate people and aircraft ahead of the hurricanes, then hunkered down, ready to continue the evacuation and service humanitarian relief aircraft once they'd passed.

Far ranging is also a term accurately applied to the industry's multiple disciplines. Sure there are airframes and engines, avionics and IFEC, but how many of us have ever given aircraft coatings a second thought? Who knew that mustard is a perennial hazard to cabin surfaces and all that glitters is not necessarily gold – it might well be diamond crystal paint!

PAUL E. EDEN
Editor | paul@evaint.com
 Tel: +44 (0) 1945 585557

JAMES SHERIDAN
Chairman
 james@evaint.com

PARVEEN RAJA
**Publisher
 & Business Development Director**
 parveen@evaint.com

SOHAIL AHMAD
Sales Executive
 sohail@evaint.com

LUCY DUFFY
Sales Executive
 lucy@evaint.com

TOM WILLIS
Journalist
 tom@evaint.com

YASMIN LYDON
Events Coordinator
 yasmin@evaint.com

SHOBHANA PATEL
Head of Finance
 finance@evaint.com

SHELDON PINK
Creative Director
 sheldon@evaint.com

EDITORIAL CONTRIBUTORS
 Margie Goldsmith

Address changes and subscription orders to:
 circulation@evaint.com
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US entrepreneur and philanthropist Sheila C. Johnson focuses on the arenas of hospitality, sports, TV/film, arts, education, women's empowerment and community development. As CEO of Salamander Hotels and Resorts, a hospitality company she founded in 2005, Johnson oversees an ever-growing portfolio of luxury properties, including three of the top golf resorts in Florida; a new property, Henderson Beach Resort, also in Florida; the equestrian-inspired Salamander Resort & Spa in Middleburg, Virginia; and the newly-opened luxury NOPSI Hotel in New Orleans. In spring 2018, Johnson will open her company's second city property, Hotel Bennett in Charleston, North Carolina.

Johnson is also Vice Chairman of Monumental Sports & Entertainment, and President and Managing Partner of the Women's National Basketball Association's (WNBA's) Washington Mystics. She is the only African-American woman to have ownership in three professional sports teams, her portfolio including the National Basketball Association's Washington Wizards and the National Hockey League's Washington Capitals. She serves on the executive committee of the United States Golf Association, is a partner in Mistral, the maker of fine bath, body and home products, and launched her own collection of luxury scarves, inspired by her travels around the world. She has served as a judge for Ernst & Young's World Entrepreneur of the Year Award, been named among the Top 50 of America's Richest Self-Made Women in *Forbes Magazine*, and co-founded WE Capital, a venture capital consortium to empower female-led enterprises. She also serves on the board of the Greater Washington Partnership, a centre for commerce and innovation.

A long-time powerful influence in the entertainment industry, Johnson was a founding partner of Black Entertainment Television (BET), served as executive producer of four documentary films, and helped finance *The Butler*, directed by Lee Daniels and distributed by Harvey Weinstein. She serves on the board of governors of The New School, Parsons School of Design, New York; is a member of the Leadership Council at Harvard Kennedy School's Center for Public Leadership; and is a board member of the Jackie Robinson Foundation and International African American Museum, Charleston, South Carolina.

Johnson served as global ambassador for CARE, which combats global poverty by empowering women, and was a member of Accordia Global Health Foundation's International Council, fighting infectious disease in Africa; in recognition of her humanitarian efforts she was honoured with the Eleanor Roosevelt Val-Kill Medal. An accomplished violinist, Johnson received a Bachelor of Arts in music from the University of Illinois.

Born in Pennsylvania on 25 January 1949 to a neurosurgeon father and an accountant mother, Johnson moved 14 times before completing high school near Chicago. She has two children and lives with her husband, Judge William T. Newman Jr., in Middleburg, VA, where *EVA* caught up with her.

In high school, you became an accomplished violinist and received a full scholarship to study music at the University of Illinois. During college, you became engaged. Tell me about your fiancé.

His name was Robert Johnson and I married him junior year in 1969, during the Vietnam War. He was in a reserve unit because they needed more minorities, then he went off to boot camp. I finished my senior year, and when he returned, we moved to Princeton. I taught music at two schools and after he graduated from

Princeton, we moved to Washington, D.C. where I taught at Sidwell Friends School and he took a job with the Corporation of Public Broadcast.

Your husband secured a \$500,000 investment and together you co-founded your own highly successful cable TV network, Black Entertainment Television. Why did you sell the company?

Bob decided he didn't want to continue running the company. BET was devoting more of its airtime to music videos, and as videos grew increasingly sexually explicit, I became disenchanted. There was a lot of head butting on which direction the network was going. I thought that it should answer to the African-American voice. And then our marriage fell apart and I wanted to move on.

In 2005, you founded Salamander Hotels and Resorts. How did that happen?

I was sitting on cash, ready to rebuild. I always loved travelling and staying in fine hotels, especially in Europe... I was like: "I could do this". When a door opens and you can see the direction in which you want to go, walk through that door. I bought a 340-acre plot bordering Middleburg, Virginia for a good price. I'd been in the town since 1996 and it was financially struggling. I'd bought a gun shop, which I gutted and turned it into Market Salamander, with a chef's working kitchen. I brought in chefs and we worked with the farmers, sort of the Martha Stewart approach. It's still up and running and doing very well.

The town of Middleburg couldn't keep retailers, but I did a feasibility study and put a business plan together and decided to build a resort. I met with the town council to show how this could work and the money that could be made. Nothing had happened in the area in more than 150 years and some fought me. I hired top hotel business people and we put it together. It took almost 10 years and was a powerful lesson



I told the chairman,
“You can get a ‘twofer’:
a woman and an African-American.”
And now I’m vice chairman



SHEILA C.
JOHNSON
Loving Life & Loving People



When a door opens and you can see the direction in which you want to go, walk through that door

in perseverance, but really believing in my vision and making it work has been worth it. The resort has been hugely successful as a bipartisan meeting place, somewhere for huge corporate groups and a segue into aviation. We had no place for private jets to land, so put together a company called ProJet Aviation and secured the Winchester Airport, providing a private jet facility we could link to the resort.

How often do you fly privately?

All the time. I had a GIV since I travelled to Europe a lot, but sold it because I wasn't using it as much and the maintenance cost so much. Now I have a Piaggio, which I fly all the time and also charter out.

When you charter, which charter operator do you use?

I brought in Jet Linx, which is a national company. They brought in an extra fleet of planes, since I could broker that kind of deal using other planes, rather than holding onto a costly huge plane that was going to have repairs every year. I thought this was a good way of reinvesting, selling the GIV and keeping the Piaggio.

Why do you fly privately?

It's the only way I can get things

done. I have to visit my hotels – coming up on seven now – and I take my senior executive team on the plane. It really is a time saver. We can get more done flying privately, because commercial planes often get held up in airports and we lose a day, sometimes two days and it's easier for me to take the team with me so we can get it done in one day and fly right back.

How much would you say you fly privately in a typical year?

Over 600 hours.

And has your private flying changed in the last year compared to the year before?

Yes, because we've taken on more hotels so I have to fly more.

And how do you expect it to change in the year ahead?

I am also the vice chairman of Monumental Sports so I own sports teams in Washington and I take the plane to those games too.

Do you ever fly the team?

No, I'm not allowed to. In the WNBA we are not allowed to have them even set foot on the plane.

Do you remember the first time you flew privately?

Yes. I was with NetJets for about 20 years and I flew all the time, especially during the BET years. We had 250 to 400 hours with NetJets.

If you were going to move or upgrade from your existing aircraft, which model would you most likely move to?

Possibly a Falcon, because I like the size. It's a little larger than what I have and I could probably carry a few more people and go to the West Coast without having to refuel.

When you're visiting a new destination, do you leave the decision of which FBO to use to your flight ops team or pilot, or do you have your own preferences?

I have my own pilots so I leave it up to them and our flight ops team.

Do you have a preference for onboard catering on longer flights, or do you leave that to the team?

We have a wonderful catering service that I link to the private service – you start connecting the dots. Whenever I fly, whether it's short or long, if I need food,

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I stop by our market, where we've got all packaged foods and menus. I tell them what I want and I bring it on.

How much of a concierge service do you expect from your flight department as far as hotel accommodation, if you are not staying in your own properties, and other logistics are concerned?

Being in the hospitality business, we know general managers of many hotels across the country so I can make arrangements for my staff no matter where anyone is going. We handle the flight information and my flight ops people have a driver waiting to take me to the hotel; the hotel takes over from there. I'm also involved with the United States Golf Association, so we fly to the US Open and do all our flight ops activities through my office.

Does a third party manage the aircraft for you?

No. We have a management team on property, while our maintenance is done in Florida.

When you put your aircraft out for charter, are you happy with the numbers of hours being delivered per year?

Absolutely. The problem is that I use it so much, sometimes it can strain the charter and so I like to work very closely with Jet Linx. Sometimes I'll know my schedule for a full month and we give it to them, but I have first right of refusal. If someone does want it and I really need it, I have to find them an alternative.

Does an aircraft management company manage your plane?

My pilots take care of everything and Jet Linx helps us.

How close an eye do you keep on the expenses? Do you scrutinise bills?

I have three CFOs that work for me privately. They go through everything and

are in constant contact with Jet Linx. We keep track of all of that.

Who does your aircraft maintenance? Which company?

Jet Linx pretty much handles everything in-house.

And which FBO executive handling companies do you use around the world?

I believe Jet Linx has about 100 planes under management, with relationships nationwide. We go pretty much wherever they tell us to.

Is being the vice chairman of Monumental Sports & Entertainment, and majority owner of several sports teams an investment opportunity, or have you always been a sports lover?

I've always been a sports lover. I was a synchronised swimmer before Title IX, and ran a little track in high school. In college, I found that I couldn't do as much in sports, except become a cheerleader and I was the first African-American woman to be a cheerleader at the University of Illinois. It was something very unusual for the College of Fine and Applied Arts, because they'd never had a cheerleader who played the violin.

After selling BET, I was offered the opportunity of a lifetime, one that women never get: a chance to buy the WNBA Washington Mystics. I said I needed to see the financials because I knew the WNBA teams had been struggling. The Mystics had been one of the first teams to enter the WNBA and to bolster the summer franchise, I went to my attorney and said, "I don't just want to own the women's team, I'd like to be an owner of all three Washington teams and I want to be a significant owner, not a penny more or a penny less than any of the other majority owners." I told the chairman, "You can get a 'twofer': a woman and an African-American." And now I'm vice chairman.

It's been terrific because since I bought

the Mystics, we now have women owners. And you're starting to see women minority owners in other basketball franchises. I think this has really opened the door to thinking that instead of being on the bench or behind it, we can be there in front of the bench. Certainly it's a struggle, but we're doing better, and if you think about the NBA 20 years ago, they were struggling too. If we hang in there and keep fighting for women in sports, it's going to get better.



What do you have left to do?

To continue growing the Salamander brand. I've got two kids, even though they're adults, I'm still there for them, and I've got a husband who's absolutely extraordinary, a chief judge and an actor.

I understand your new husband goes back to your divorce. When you approached him at the bench after your divorce and asked him if he remembered you, what did he say?

He said, "I've never forgotten about you." And I said, "Have you ever been married?" He said, "I've always been in love with you."

What's your passion?

My passion is creating things, like

great hotels. But I also have a passion for films. I produced *The Butler* and I've done four documentaries. I started the Middleburg Film Festival and we've helped bring so many arts to this town, including Shakespeare. We're creating and being transformational in areas that just weren't here. I think it takes a special person to see where the holes are that can be filled and I'm creating a better life for myself and my family, and the people around me.

What does leadership mean to you?

It means integrity, character, not being afraid to take risks, being an example to the people you are managing and trying to inspire by leading a life that is joyful and peaceful. It's also about being a real example of a person with integrity and character.

As an African-American woman, how do you deal with the rampant racism that surrounds us?

By not being a shrinking violet! I've had issues, even at the resort, where I've had to put out fires from people that have gotten drunk. I have a very diverse employment team and I have people of colour, people from different races and socio-economic backgrounds that come to the resort. There have been a few unfortunate patrons that have made some very nasty, racial comments and I've had to step in and diffuse that, and let them know I will not tolerate it, not in my establishment.

Trying to create the resort I ran into all sorts of horrible racist comments. I just put myself in their shoes and tried to educate them to be better people. I often think these racist adults have grown up in a social circle so narrow that they have just not been able to understand and experience that there are good people of all nationalities out there and we have to learn to get along. We cannot live in silos. That's not the way this country is evolving.

You could easily retire. Is there a reason that you don't?

I've never sat still my entire life, and I can't see me doing it. I'll probably die sitting at my desk or at the basketball court. I love life and I love people and I have never been more at peace or more happy in my life. ■







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The Grander Way From Biggin

Launched little more than two years ago, Biggin Hill's London HeliShuttle recently expanded with the addition of a new Leonardo AW109 Grand, bringing its available fleet up to six aircraft. A fixed fee of £2,300 (plus VAT) secures the six-minute helicopter transfer from Biggin to Battersea's London Heliport and includes onward chauffeured car service to any destination within the M25. There's at least 40 minutes and, given the realities of London traffic, potentially considerably more time to be saved compared to even a relatively trouble-free drive into London.

Opposite:
The short walk
from jet to
helicopter at
Biggin Hill.

Andy Patsalides, London Biggin Hill's Marketing Manager, admits: "I'm really amazed at how many flights we're doing – five or six a day in some cases. I was originally a little sceptical, but of course, what people are buying is time.

"In most cases people book their helicopter at the same time as they book their flight into or out of Biggin Hill. Bookings direct through the London HeliShuttle website and via Castle Air, which operates the service for us, are exceptions.

"But we've had several cases where customers have learned of traffic or weather issues affecting the drive



London HeliShuttle AW109 at Battersea's London Heliport. Both via London Biggin Hill.

into London when they're just 25 or 30 minutes out and requested a helicopter. We have the aircraft and crews here and we've always managed to have the helicopter waiting in position ready for them. So it's also an on-demand service; the key point is that the helicopters and pilots are already at Biggin Hill. It makes for a really resilient product and with six dedicated helicopters, people are confident they'll be able to get one."

Most flights are into Battersea, but Falcon London Heliport (previously Vanguard), convenient for the City, Canary Wharf, O2 and Excel, is a standard alternative. "Most people want to go to Battersea, but if they want to go to a private site we can do that too. Importantly, because we include the car service from London Heliport, the operator always knows where the principal is, it's always under Biggin's control." Essentially, the jet arrives, the door opens, there are passport and other formalities to clear and then it's less than a 10-metre walk to the open door of the waiting AW109 helicopter and swiftly on to London.

Grand Capacity

With six AW109s available the London HeliShuttle offers guaranteed capacity, especially with the return trip to Battersea taking so little time. "It's rare for me to see more than two or three tail numbers operating in a day, because they come back quickly, ready to take the next passengers." On the other hand, should a customer want to fly further afield, taking a helicopter away from Biggin for an extended period, the new Grand provides additional cover.

"We recently had a customer land and then decided they'd like a helicopter to take them to their factory. It's impossible to bring the helicopter and crew into action immediately, so you just have to be straight with people and explain the situation. But it was ready in 15 minutes and they still made a massive time saving compared to driving."

Castle Air, operating the HeliShuttle on Biggin's behalf, employs the AW109 as its aircraft of choice, since it's a major distributor and maintainer of Leonardo's helicopter range. Its presence at Biggin Hill also enables the airfield to offer the larger Sikorsky S-76, however, while access to the off-airport Starspeed fleet opens up the possibility of accessing a variety of Airbus Helicopters, Bell and further Sikorsky machines. "But virtually all our flights are with the AW109. It's a very stylish, Italian helicopter..."

Patsalides describes HeliShuttle as a game changer, noting its popularity with US customers as evidence for his lofty claim. "We were recently at a couple of shows in the US and we realised just how much the service is valued. Our American friends know how easy it is to transfer from Biggin into London. In fact the service is so valued, the fee no longer seems important, it's the six minutes into Battersea that people look at. They do it once and they're hooked."

The same fee applies whether the helicopter takes one or a maximum of six passengers, "... but it's a very rare day that we have six people in it. It's really comfortable with up to four, but usually it's just one or two people and passengers love it. The crew always offer headsets even though the cabin's quiet, but by the time you've taken off and looked out of the window you're in London, so there's not really time for a productive conversation!

"I think we'll see further expansion next year, perhaps with the AW169 or AW139 if that's too big, although I don't see the fleet growing in number. It's all about looking ahead, offering something new and not resting on our laurels." ■



Design in Detail

A great business aircraft cabin should be welcoming, comfortable, entertaining, relaxing, personal and universal. Achieving such greatness is tough, especially in a tightly regulated industry where weight is a perennial concern and customers may have very strong ideas on their ideal cabin, or none at all

The reality is that executive aircraft are depreciating assets and operators concerned about reselling are more likely to err on the side of caution in the cabin creation process. Those seeking a more individual look might delve deeper into the catalogue or request something bespoke, but detail design is often the key to a unique configuration.

Christi Tannahill, senior vice president Interior Design and Engineering, Textron Aviation, says individuality and detail design are more important

than ever for the Citation range: “We’re seeing a shift, particularly in our large jets, where customers are requesting customisation in their interiors, often as an extension of their office, yacht or homes. In larger cabins, like the Hemisphere’s, more design elements and details can be achieved and our designers are acutely aware of the scale and proper form and function appropriate for the space. We continue to offer selected palettes of interior options to ease the design process for some customers, but manufacturing our own components allows us the flexibility to meet the needs of those who want to completely customise their interior.”

Embraer’s Vice President of Interior Design, Jay Beever has taken stewardship over several dramatic design concepts, not least for the Lineage, where the SkyRanch One and Kyoto Airship successfully challenged the boundaries of contemporary design thinking. They were concepts on a grand, perhaps outlandish scale, but Beever was never under the

A traditionally crafted lid covers cabin controls in the Legacy 450. The coloured insert under the lid is easily changed.

Embraer Executive Jets



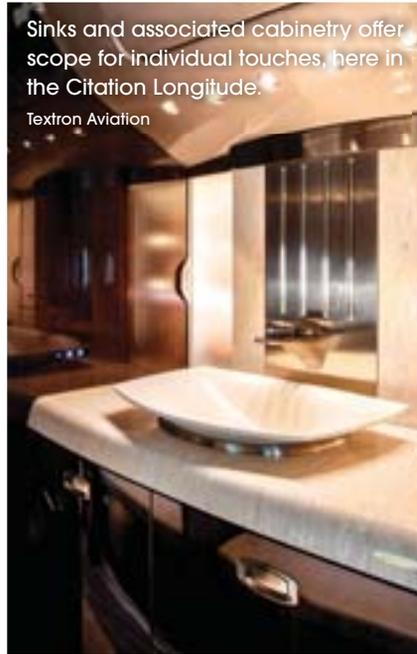
illusion that customers would subscribe to them in their entirety.

For him they're catalogues of possibility to be dipped into, mulled over and adopted as the customer chooses, since at Beever's insistence, every feature of every design had to be a real, certifiable possibility. And while the Lineage made a spectacular canvas, the attention to detail design inherent in SkyRanch One carries over into every Embraer cabin.

Like Textron, Embraer is able to meet much of its cabin manufacturing requirement in house, ensuring control over the product and maintaining attention to detail no matter how unusual or subtle a customer decides to be. Unlike Cessna, however, which has been in the bizjet business since the 1970s, the Brazilian OEM is a relative newcomer. Beever doesn't deny

Sinks and associated cabinetry offer scope for individual touches, here in the Citation Longitude.

Textron Aviation



that its earliest cabin efforts weren't always the best, but the issues were recognised and decades' worth of craftsmanship and design knowledge brought in to ensure Embraer's cabins compete with the very best.

Aesthetic Inspiration

For Beever, much of a cabin's individuality is in the detail. His overriding belief that technology should be there to serve rather than becoming a feature in itself has led Embraer's designers to devise creative solutions, including the upper tech panel that activates when it detects the motion of an approaching hand and USB ports hidden beneath traditionally crafted lids, making a feature of the container rather than the tech, while always keeping the latter close at hand.

Fabric fold-up Hangar Doors

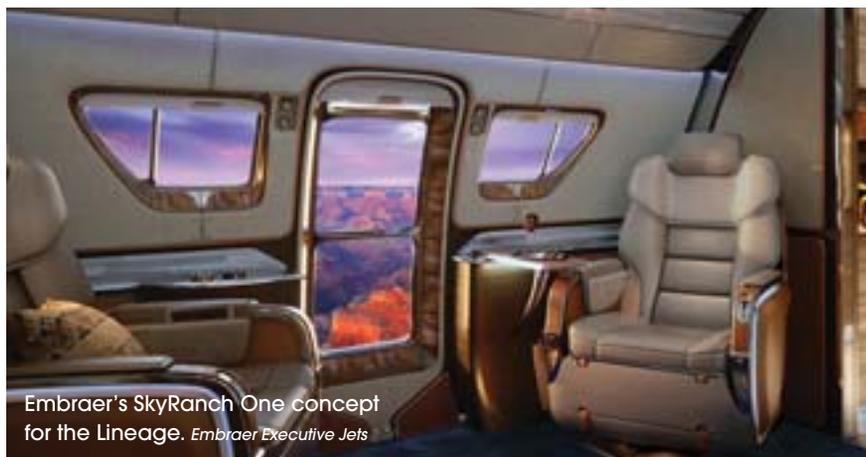
 An advertisement for Championdoor hangar doors. The main image shows a large hangar with a white fabric fold-up door partially open, revealing a small white aircraft inside. The hangar has 'ADVANCED' written on its side. The background is a bright sky with clouds.

Weathertight and insulated fabric fold-up doors. The most reliable hangar door choice from Arctic areas to scorching hot climates.

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Booth 1900

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championdoor.com



Embraer's SkyRanch One concept for the Lineage. Embraer Executive Jets

It's in those details that individuality is also easily and usefully expressed. Fabric, carbon fibre or veneer inserts in lid undersides for example, add unique, luxurious touches to every cabin but are easily changed when an aircraft is sold on or its décor revised.

Alongside the details, however, major choices in fabrics and materials make the big-picture difference to a cabin and though manufacturers offer a wealth of choice, some customers bring along their own ideas. "Aesthetic inspiration and cabin comfort comes from endless sources including fashion, textiles, architecture and the automotive world, just to name a few. The artistic elegance of a timepiece, or even the texture and colour block of a handbag might be the spark for the look and feel of an aircraft interior design," Tannahill says.

"Our team of highly skilled designers works individually with customers to align with the branding of a company, the tastes of an owner, or the operational needs of a flight department. From our showroom, we work directly with customers to select everything from fabrics, leathers, carpets and wood veneers to granite counter tops, to complete each unique configuration."

Embraer's customer centre offers its Legacy and Lineage customers a staggering choice of fabrics, veneers, colours and styles of which, Beaver reckons, only a small percentage have ever been selected. But the palette is there

nonetheless, presenting real possibilities to customers who may not see quite what they want, but might be inspired to help Embraer create it.

Thanks to Textron Aviation's recently acquired Interiors Manufacturing Facility, Cessna's ability to offer customers the flexibility to customise their cabinetry and fittings is greater than ever. As an example, Tannahill notes: "Our aircraft fixtures and sinks are routinely custom designed and, in recent years, fit the cabinetry contours and refreshing style of the interior."

This in-house flexibility also facilitates quick response to new design trends, whether from inside the industry or without: "Current trends include sideledge beverage holders and device storage integrated into one functional and accessible feature adapted to the modern needs of the passenger, while table improvements include ease of operation, with self-closing mechanisms, while the table leaf glides gently and quietly back into the sidewall," she says.

Tannahill has also noticed changes in how customers look to achieve cabin ambience, even as Cessna seeks to progress the state of the art. "Our design team is always researching and developing innovative new designs and finishes, and we continue to incorporate new materials throughout the cabin. Enquiries frequently focus on cabinetry finishes and fabrics/leathers that are highly durable, while maintaining luxurious and unique



textures. Composite veneers are also gaining acceptance in many models, owing to their consistent results in grain pattern and stain absorption."

Lighting the way

As recently as five years ago, LED lighting was the latest, greatest cabin technology, and cabin designers were busy exploiting the possibilities of its low weight, low energy consumption and minimal heat output. Today it's the industry standard and designers are turning their attention to cabin materials that work best under LED illumination. Conversely, cabin windows have simultaneously become larger and natural light more prevalent, fuelling interesting new possibilities.

Tannahill sheds light on Cessna's take: "Natural and ambient lighting play an important role in cabin design. Our designers select and place finishes strategically for optimum lighting effects for working, through to relaxing accents and reflections. Visually enlarging the cabin space for daytime and night flights also plays a role in the design balance. For example, the Citation Longitude

Fifteen large cabin windows flood the Citation Longitude's cabin with natural light. *Textron Aviation*

cabin features 15 extra-large windows that fill the cabin with sky and light, enhancing the feeling of spaciousness. But it also provides an exhilarating view when the passenger simply wants to sit, relax and think.”

threads woven throughout? “Most finishes can be incorporated on any of our jet products and adapted to proper locations to fit the specific model,” Tannahill explains. “The fabric and leather qualities are just as luxurious and durable, but the

large jets tend to have more detail touches owing to the additional size and scale.

“For example, carbon fibre cabinetry detailing and veneer are used on the M2, but can be used on the larger jets as well.

Embossed or woven leathers and fabrics are used on any product, from the super-midsize Citation Longitude to the M2. The differentiator becomes apparent in our larger jets, where a thicker pile-height custom carpet or a stone floor tile can be used and still meet weight goals for performance.” ■

Our designers select and place finishes strategically for optimum lighting effects for working, through to relaxing accents and reflection

Cessna's bizjet range is broad, extending from the seven-passenger M2 up to the three-zone Hemisphere, due to enter service in 2020. Does the variation in cabin space and configuration these aircraft offer pose Cessna's designers a significant challenge, or are there common



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PHENOMENAL

Luck & Perseverance

Danni Stoney's Bizjet Odyssey

Pilots in executive and business aviation are a dedicated, driven bunch of individuals. Many come into the industry after military or commercial careers with thousands of hours of jet flying behind them, while for relatively few, executive flying was an original calling. Typically, though, there's aviation in the family, often way back in the family, and flying is in the blood.

Not so for Luxaviation UK Phenom 300 captain Danni Stoney. Unexpectedly bitten by the flying bug in her teens, she's founded a sparkling career in executive aviation and is loving every minute. EVA caught up with her in a car somewhere between Salzburg, where she'd parked the jet, and Munich. "I'd had no thoughts about aviation at all when my parents, stuck for what to get me, bought me a flying lesson for my 15th birthday. And that was it. I absolutely loved it. I came down eyes wide open and couldn't think of anything better to do in the world. I was hooked!"

The sky-struck teenager was the first in her family to consider aviation as a career, "I think my dad had a flying lesson once and maybe my uncle went solo, but that's it." By the age of 17, Stoney had her PPL, making her the youngest pilot in Ireland, only to find herself looking at an industry in decline across the board. "So I





went to university to study mechanical engineering.”

At the University of Edinburgh she joined the local University Air Squadron, one of a network of units across the UK, run by the Royal Air Force to offer youngsters looking for a serious way into flying the opportunity to progress into military service or the wider world of aviation. “I was lucky enough to continue my flying there while getting my degree,” Stoney says, without mentioning the fact that again she excelled, winning a Royal Air Force Flying Excellence Award.



I was willing to work at anything that would keep me in the industry and making contacts.

When Stoney graduated in 2006 the military was also in decline and many budding aviators, especially those with newly won engineering degrees, might have sought alternative careers. “I looked at it in the long term,” she recalls. “Going into commercial aviation, whether the airlines or business aviation, seemed the best path. I was willing to work at anything that would keep me in the industry and making contacts.”

Through bloody-minded perseverance and a big helping of luck, she found a position with CAE in April 2009, working as a Boeing 737-400 simulator panel operator at Oxford Aviation Academy – a very ground-based take-off to a flying career. The Oxford job paid dividends later in 2009, when she learned of an operations and flying position across the airfield with FlairJet, a new aircraft management and charter company.

“I was really lucky to find out about the opportunity. It involved operations, which I’d started doing, and flying, and it was at Oxford, where I already was. It’s how I got into business aviation, which wasn’t something I knew much about, although it had always intrigued me.”

FlairJet introduced both the Phenom 100 and 300 into European service, beginning operations with the smaller jet early in 2010 and the larger, swept-wing Phenom 300 around 12 months later. Not only then did Stoney find herself in a new job, but also on a new aircraft, although it wasn’t all flying.

“When I began training on the Phenom I was the only one who hadn’t come from an established flying career. After me, a few more followed the same path, but looking back I think I was something of a trial case; I



didn't realise at the time because I was just so excited to have a job!

"A lot of the time I'd get the initial quote, then quote for the flight, plan it, deal with the catering and everything else then fly it; I've dealt with everything apart from the accounting. Customer service is a massive part of it and it can be extremely rewarding – I really enjoy being able to interact with the passengers and provide a bespoke service. I think the experience has made me an all-round better business aviation pilot."

Progressing from Phenom 100 to first officer on the Phenom 300, Stoney moved jobs to London Executive Aviation, now Luxaviation UK. In November 2016 she was promoted to captain and continues to build experience in the role. So what impression has the Phenom made?

"I love the Phenom and I'll always have a soft spot for it, I think you do for the first jet you fly. The 100's fantastic, the 300's even better. They're very similar from a cockpit point of view, but the 300 has longer range and great performance. And it's got the ramp presence of a much larger aircraft, with the proper staircase and swept wing, and it's really spacious inside. Perhaps in hindsight, Embraer might have called it something other than Phenom..."

Stoney has built her career on hard work and dedication, embracing opportunities as they arise, rather than attempting to follow a path. She therefore came to business flying with no preconceptions, so what is it that makes the job worthwhile?



I love the Phenom and I'll always have a soft spot for it, I think you do for the first jet you fly.



“When you see all the hard work from sales, operations, ground staff, brokers and ourselves paying off, there’s real satisfaction. We also fly to lots of amazing destinations, places I would otherwise never see. I’ve taken the Phenom up near the Arctic Circle in Canada, to Cameroon and into tiny airfields I’d never even heard of before. They all make for great days for completely different reasons.

“I don’t think you understand business aviation until you’re in it. It’s a completely different industry. I’ve learned so much, I’m still learning and I’ll continue to learn, especially since passengers, destinations and regulations change all the time.

“I’m really enjoying command on the Phenom 300, but in future I’d like to move on to a larger aircraft to increase my worldwide experience. But I’m very lucky that although the Phenom 300’s range is about 2,000 miles, I’ve managed to take it to Africa, Canada and the Middle East – I’m branching into worldwide, I’d just like to go further!” ■



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FUEL... And So Much More



Fuel is a fundamental requirement, regardless of aircraft mission, origin or destination. Its provision involves a complex industry, branching out to include the obvious – pipelines, bowlers and brokers – and less so – loyalty programmes, trip support and training.

Headquartered at Ann Arbor, Michigan, Avfuel is among the industry’s major fuel players as Joel Hirst, Vice President of Sales, explains: “We’re involved in fuel supply distribution from refinery to wing tip. This means we touch the aviation fuel supply infrastructure from the moment the fuel leaves the refinery, to the moment it’s pumped into the aircraft.

“Our supply department has relationships with more than 90 refiners. It arranges for fuel to be delivered from a refinery to one of hundreds of fuel supply terminals via pipeline, truck, barge or rail car. Then, our 24/7/365 logistics team arranges for FBOs and airports to receive fuel from a supply terminal via Avfuel road vehicle or common carrier. From there, the FBO or airport receives the fuel in its storage system. Fuel is subsequently moved from the storage tank into the refuelling equipment from which it is eventually pumped into the plane.

“Our 650+ Avfuel-branded FBOs sell the fuel we supply them, but we also supply fuel to unbranded FBOs and airports. Our contract fuel customers can receive

Avfuel Contract Fuel at more than 3,000 global locations where we have special arrangements in place to service them.”

The company fuels business and executive operations, large and small, through a variety of options. Jonathan Boyle, Vice President of Contract Fuel, notes: “Our commercial fuel operations serve larger customers, including corporate aircraft fleets. They benefit from retail, contract, bulk, domestic and international fuel supply, credit services, fuel quality assurance support, trip planning through Avplan, payment transaction processing, and fuel management programmes.

“But many corporate flight departments, large and small, take advantage of our Avfuel Contract Fuel programme. They use the Avfuel Pro Card to receive competitive pricing on fuel at more than 3,000 locations and they benefit from individualised attention from Avfuel Contract Fuel staff for a better fuel price. The card enables flight departments to streamline transactions, charging everything aviation related – fuel and ancillary services – to one account for one invoice. There are no annual or transaction fees and online systems simplify account management.

“FBOs benefit from the Avfuel Contract Fuel programme with zero processing fees on fuel purchases and access to a network of thousands of flight departments on the programme. Our Contract Fuel staff work extensively with branded FBOs to attract prospective flight departments, connecting with operators on their behalf.”

The AVTRIP loyalty and rewards

programme is another popular Avfuel offering. Pilots sign up for free and receive points every time they fuel at one of more than 500 participating FBOs. Boyle says the scheme includes: “... new, tiered silver, gold and platinum membership, further rewarding pilots for their loyalty with more lucrative benefits based on the number of FBOs they visit or the amount of fuel they purchase. Pilots simply let customer service representatives [CSRs] at participating locations know they’re an AVTRIP member to receive points; if they don’t have their card, the CSR can find their account on the Avfuel FBO Dashboard.”

Business Lines

Boyle mentions Avplan, an apparently non-fuel service offered by a fuel supplier. It seems something of a digression from the core business, but also points to a crucial Avfuel’s identifier – the company sees itself as an aviation facilitator way beyond filling tanks. “It’s a classic case of customer challenges creating business opportunities,” Marci Ammerman, Vice President of Marketing, says. “Through more than 40 years of business, we’ve spent a great deal of time with our ear to the ground, listening to the needs of FBOs and flight departments, then adding to and fine-tuning our services.”

“Some of our business lines, including Avplan international trip support and Avsurance aviation insurance, came about through smart, timely acquisition. Others, including Avfuel Contract Fuel and

AVTRIP, are home-grown lines developed in response to pilot and FBO feedback.

“More listening led to further discoveries, leading to an ever-increasing number of solutions. We became a branding partner offering customers a full suite of aviation services.”

It’s a sentiment echoed by President and CEO Craig R. Sincock. “Historically, companies that provided fuel and branding at airports also supplied automotive fuel at corner gas stations, and pilots purchased fuel directly from FBOs at a posted price. The services necessary to support FBOs and the underlying infrastructure of delivering fuel and services to the aircraft are people and capital intensive, requiring constant attention.

“This substantial resource investment caused many fuel suppliers to examine their return on investment, and to refocus on refining and exploration, leaving the heavy lifting of ‘downstream’ activities to companies specialising in aviation fuel distribution with the flexibility to proactively provide solutions – like Avfuel. Next, advanced aircraft and technology created a case for flight departments to request many more automated processes, including digital price and invoice files, credit services and so on, daunting tasks for busy FBOs.”

Added Value

Ammerman explains how Avfuel’s aviation expertise runs deep. “Avfuel is an OEM for its refuelling trucks and handles all 700+ pieces of equipment out of its 33,000sqft shop, for instance, while the AVTRIP loyalty programme is managed in-house, a full team of professional marketers plans and executes personalised marketing tactics for Avfuel Network locations and we developed the online Avfuel Training System (ATS) for our network.

“Because these operations are in-house, people from different departments are able to communicate by walking down the hall, or bumping into one another in the kitchen, not just on the phone – it provides a streamlined experience for our customers.

SAFETY AND ASSURANCE

Safety is always a primary concern where fuel is concerned, while operators need reassurance that the fuel filling their aircraft tanks is to standard. Avfuel Marketing Manager, Buffy Muth says: “In response to an industry-wide push for standardised safety practices, Avfuel developed its online Avfuel Training System.” It’s typical of the company that ATS emerged as far more than a fuel safety programme, designed to deliver exceptional service at manageable cost.

“Understanding that some FBOs simply couldn’t afford the steep cost of training programmes priced per seat – especially with regular employee turnover and recurrent training needs – Avfuel developed its learning management system as a cost-effective solution for its network. Each FBO, large or small, needs only one subscription to cover every employee in its operation.

“The ATS is designed to complement

We collaborate, we share experiences and we adapt. For instance, our sales and marketing teams work hand-in-hand to heighten visibility and attract business to our FBOs’ ramps. Our supply and logistics teams work tirelessly to provide reliable fuel supply, even during special events and weather emergencies – situations they handle on a daily basis.”

And weather emergencies seldom come greater than those posed by Hurricanes Irma and Maria. As they ravaged the Caribbean and moved up into Florida, Avfuel launched its well practised storm response procedures. “In the case of major storms, Avfuel’s supply division works with logistics to find available fuel before, during and after the storm, working around refinery or terminal closures. Logistics communicates frequently with customers in and surrounding the storm’s path, helping provide proactive and reactive supply.

“Proactive supply helps ensure FBOs receive fuel to evacuate passengers and

FBOs’ hands-on training initiatives. With video tutorials, proficiency tests and supplemental training guides, it offers a learn-at-your-own-pace format ideal for both new employees and recurrent training.”

The ATS includes the Avfuel Rampside Training (ART), Avfuel Customer Service Training (ACST) and Avfuel Front Counter Training (AFCT) programmes.

Muth continues: “Avfuel also offers its branded FBOs free, in-person FAA-Approved Part 139 Fire Safety and Fuel Quality Assurance Training for Supervisors, while its in-house quality assurance team is available 24/7/365 to help branded FBOs with fuel quality assurance questions and enquiries. These offerings help assure both our FBOs and the corporate flight departments that visit them that the fuel and services they receive are safe and dependable.” ●

planes, keep tanks heavy for stability during storms and sustain operations for medevac and helicopters, relief efforts and their tenants’ return. This means repositioning tanker trucks across the country to haul fuel where it is most needed.

“To better know which customers to contact, logistics works with Avplan Trip Support’s meteorologists to stay abreast of the storm’s path and discern which customers may need support with a shift in trajectory. This is an around-the-clock effort with additional staff on hand for increased support. These divisions communicate with Avfuel’s marketing department to communicate special fuel considerations to the network in the aftermath of the storm.

“In addition, Avfuel’s quality assurance team is available to help assess damage to fuelling equipment or fuel integrity after the storm, so safe operations can resume; this may require our refuelling division to arrange for loaner equipment as necessary.

Working closely together, each division and business line can more efficiently keep customers fuelled up so they can remain focused on the truly important job at hand: sustaining relief efforts, and keeping employees, passengers and planes safe.”

Back and Forth

Looking back over more than 40 years in the business, Sincock says: “Fuelling the business aviation world has changed immensely. When we started, there weren’t contract fuel or loyalty programmes. These came about from changes in the market landscape, and needs creating opportunities for FBOs and fuel suppliers. AVTRIP was the first pilot loyalty programme in the industry and now there’s a whole slew of them. Each of these business segments serves their purpose, but ultimately the marketplace decides what’s of value. Over time, it’s weeded out those business models that couldn’t survive, effectively shaping the current landscape.”

And what of the future, with new fuels and perhaps alternative energy sources on the horizon? Hirst reckons: “The best thing Avfuel can do is continue to listen and adapt. The industry will undoubtedly change as new regulations and technologies are introduced. We don’t know what it will look like in 50 years, but we do know that Avfuel will continue to be whatever its customers need. That’s why, with a commitment to industry development, we created Avfuel Technology Initiatives Corporation.

“It was founded in January 2012, with a mission to further industry advancements, including bio and renewable fuels, on several fronts, and create no-lead avgas replacements, domestically and internationally. In addition to the development of these products, Avfuel Technology Initiatives Corporation thinks through the logistics of market introduction to help ensure a new product is sustainable, reliable, competitively priced, and fairly accessible in order to guarantee success with market introduction.” ■



FLIGHTWORX FUEL SERVICES

AVFUEL’S business scope is huge, but the market is broader still. London Stansted-based Flightworx includes a Fuel Services division supplying customers globally. Its business is very different to Avfuel’s, yet it provides a service on which its clients are no less dependent. Fuel Manager James Kossick (above) explains: “We’re an independent, unbiased aviation fuel reseller. We shop for fuel, for any client, anywhere in the world. We work hard to offer our customers the lowest prices we can, examining options at every location to see if there are different supply lines available. Even where there’s only one, several resellers might be operating and we aim to bypass the reseller for our client and go direct to the supplier.”

Common sense suggests that where an FBO sits on a major commercial airport, millions of gallons of fuel are being delivered to and uploaded from the facility and economies of scale ought to make fuelling a Learjet cost-effectively a simple procedure. Apparently not... “Customers often stick to a supplier, especially if they’ve been with them for a long time, or use the local supplier just for convenience. But the market is competitive and there are other options. Many clients come to us not to take fuel, but to seek quotes and alternatives for a particular location.”

And Flightworx’s advice isn’t only good for securing cheap fuel. Sometimes it identifies the best source at an airfield, which may not be the cheapest. “Fuel can be booked from a direct supplier, for example, but because its primary business is commercial, business aviation has to wait until the airliners are fuelled. However, the FBO might have its own fuel truck, which may be available at additional cost. If the passenger simply can’t wait, we can switch their fuel supply to the FBO, provide a new quote and have them refuelled and away to meet their slot.”

Flightworx is also there to ensure customers are fairly billed and remedy issues, preferably before they reach the client. “Our quotes highlight the elements of a fuel price, including base price, fees, taxes and their validity. We also note any one-off fees, since every location has its own fees.

“We go through everything on the invoice and if we find a discrepancy between what we think we should be charged and what we have been charged, we’ll dispute it before it reaches the client. We pride ourselves on our accurate, transparent billing, but on the rare occasion something slips through, if the client comes back to us with a query within a standard seven days, I immediately to the supplier and find the solution.”

On the occasions when a client orders fuel in advance, Flightworx quotes at the best price available at the time of the order, then monitors prices at the uplift location and re-quotes nearer the time to reflect the best price on the day.

Its ability to react to changing rates is therefore fluid, but fuel quality is an area over which it has no control. Like all resellers, Flightworx must rely on local regulations and good practice to ensure fuel quality, but if a customer calls in with a complaint, Kossick’s team is there to help.

“We had an incident where we had two drums of fuel delivered into a remote location in Africa. The pilot called to say one drum was damaged and the fuel contaminated. I went back to the supplier and refused payment for the battered drum.”

Interestingly, fuel is but one aspect of Flightworx’s offering. It also offers a variety of trip support services and Kossick reckons this broad portfolio enables best pricing for its customers across their trip, taking into account fuel costs, hotel rates and other factors. So if fuel isn’t available at an attractive rate at a location, there are often savings to be had on other services. ●



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FOS PACKAGES

The three ARINCDirectSM FOS options include comprehensive functionality and connectivity, beginning with the Essential package. Designed for small fleet operators, it provides reduced access to the operations and crew schedule, post-flight and technical support modules.

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- Aircraft Data, featuring aircraft types, aircraft rates and costs, and aircraft logbook
- Charter quotes, featuring standard quote reports and additional costs
- Crew data, featuring crew aircraft qualification and crew logbook
- Passenger database
- Import utility, featuring fuel prices, no fly/selectee list and custom imports
- Aircraft and crew scheduling, featuring worldwide airports, FBO, transportation, catering and hotel vendor database, worldwide names and places database, flight and duty time limitation alerts, aircraft performance data and limitations warnings, time and distance calculator, vendor database and standard trip and aircraft reports.

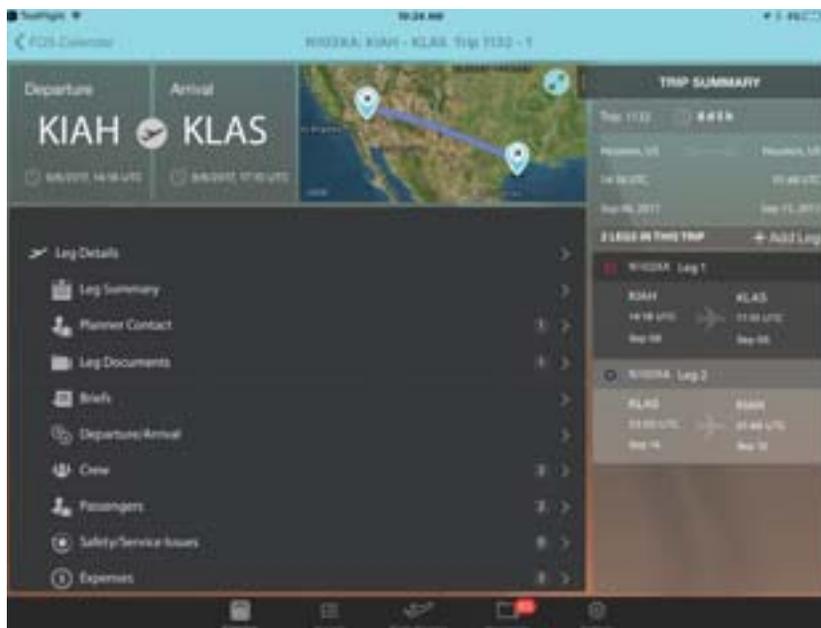
The post-flight functionality includes flight logs and expenses, and standard manually-run reports.

The Professional package offers unlimited access to all the functionality listed above, plus comprehensive additional capability, including quoting/invoicing and reporting. Enterprise adds even more functionality and, crucially for the large flight departments at which it is aimed, licences for as many as 250 mobile devices. ●

Flight Operations SYSTEM

Connectivity, mobile devices and remote hosting have revolutionised flight operations, with easy, global accessibility, near real-time updating where connection allows and interfacing with a broad variety of MRO and other software systems. Rockwell Collins' offers the ARINCDirectSM Flight Operations System (FOS), a comprehensive suite capable of simplifying complex planning operations and providing users with a variety of access options.

The system is available through Essential, Professional and Enterprise subscription, optimised for companies of increasing size. James Harvey, Senior Manager of Technical Support, ARINCDirect Flight Operations System, explains: "Each can be hosted by the customer or include application hosting in Rockwell Collins' secure data centre. The first year of FOS subscription includes implementation and consulting by application and industry experts. Each package also offers a number of days of on-site training at the customer facility, or on one of our dedicated courses. The subscription packages offer different options to include mobile licenses as part of the subscription or ad-hoc for smaller operations."





How do flight operations personnel typically access FOS and is it available through mobile devices? Is it updatable in real time and how are the rights to input/change data managed? Is the product cloud based?

FOS is a native application that resides on a server either in the customer's facility, with a third party hosting provider, or in Rockwell Collins' secure data centre. When hosted, flight operations personnel can access it through any internet connection. In partnership with Stellar Labs Inc, we're in the process of developing a web-based, next generation scheduling software in the cloud. Our new approach with Stellar Labs makes this possible by creating a cloud-based global system that supports fast, robust and highly secure collaboration at every level.

Today, business aviation data is stored in thousands of traditional, disparate systems. The new platform will eliminate that issue by leveraging Stellar's cloud infrastructure and replicated data centres, and the industry benchmark features of FOS.

Rockwell Collins' FOS mobile is a native iOS application for both iPad and iPhone. It allows personnel to view flight details and/or submit important information to the core application. When an internet connection is not available, the offline mode queues messages to update when connectivity is restored.

Does FOS interface with MRO management software? Does it feed logged issues back into the maintenance schedule?

FOS has an interface with most of the major MRO providers. This allows users to view, track and submit maintenance items from both core FOS and the mobile application.

FOS appears to provide a complete trip support facility for crew and aircraft, including crew scheduling data, hotels, transportation and more. Is this comprehensive data management facility also available for passenger information?

FOS can track a whole host of passenger information, including schedule, hotel, transportation, costs and more.

Text weather reports, NOTAMS and security warnings are also available through FOS. From where is the data sourced and is it available everywhere?

Weather and NOTAMS are available through the ARINCDirect flight planning software, which is provided and analysed from a variety of sources. It is a global database and can be provided for locations all over the world.

Can the system be interfaced with systems from other vendors – the WSI products from The Weather Company, OASES from Commsoft, for example, or an ERP system?

FOS currently has native interfaces with more than 80 third-party providers to include maintenance, flight training, charter marketplace, fatigue risk management, safety management systems, fuel and more. Our highest level of integration is with our ARINCDirect subscription services, providing document management, trip support services and flight planning. FOS offers the flexibility to export data in a number of formats compatible with internal customer or third party external systems. ■

Skylink

Serving Cyprus



Skylink Services operates the only Cypriot FBO, at Larnaca, with a 1,600m² Executive Terminal accommodating up to 80 passengers, alongside a 400m² Heads of State Lounge, run on behalf of the Republic of Cyprus. The company's reach extends across the island to Paphos, but here it offers only executive aircraft handling, with no lounge facilities.

Established in 1998, the Larnaca facility has become a leader in the region, begging the question as to why Skylink Services has yet to open a Paphos FBO. Managing Director George Mavros explains: "The original decision to operate an FBO in Larnaca and not to expand our presence at Paphos was driven by the number of flights. For executive aircraft, Paphos has always been an alternative airport. There are no ministries or governmental offices nearby, so it mainly serves passengers holidaying in Paphos. But we're

now in negotiations with the government and airport authorities to establish a smaller unit there."

With business increasing steadily year on year, the Executive Terminal was opened in 2009. Skylink's confidence as traffic grew was bolstered through official assistance as "...the government put its trust in our services and authorised the terminal as an entry and exit point to the Republic of Cyprus."

Meanwhile, the Larnaca operation supports aircraft from 426 executive, private and military operators worldwide. It makes for a varied customer base: "Some have fleets exceeding 30 aircraft, while the private operators may have only one or two. We're also listed by 90% of flight planning companies, with customer databases reaching thousands of commercial and non-commercial customers."

Skylink Services is proud of its ability to handle everything from the smallest executive jet up to a Boeing 747 or Airbus A380 VVIP aircraft, although Mavros reckons size is largely unimportant:

“The ground handling infrastructure for a Learjet or a 747 doesn’t change dramatically since the procedures are similar; the only thing that’s different is the equipment. Our staff are trained to deal with all aircraft types and cater for the needs of every customer.”

The Heads Of State Lounge is something Mavros is clearly very proud of and the company notes on its website how previous visitors have included His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI in 2010, while the lounge was used extensively during when the Republic of Cyprus held the rotating EU Presidency in 2012. “It offers three separate rooms, the Presidential Lounge, a space for the presidential delegation and a security lounge for the presidential security

detail, including full interior and exterior CCTV access. The Heads of State Lounge also has a podium and live link for TV transmissions.”

It might be easy for this important component of the Skylink package to take precedence, but Mavros insists: “Skylink offers all its customers the heads-of-state treatment. We start with the red carpet at the steps of the aircraft and offer a fleet of executive vehicles, including the Mercedes S-Class, BMW 7 Series and Mercedes Viano, in executive configuration, to transport them to the Executive Terminal.”

Skylink is looking with considerable optimism towards the future, a bold outlook given the instability and conflict in the Middle East and North Africa. Cyprus

has also seen its fair share of refugees changing the perilous voyage across the Mediterranean, while coalition forces use the military base at Akrotiri intensively for ongoing combat operations. All things considered then, aren’t these tricky times for a Cypriot FBO? Not according to Mavros: “We’ve had no disruption to our operations owing to tensions in the region. If anything we’ve had an increase of traffic from aircraft repositioning here from neighbouring countries for security reasons.

“Our staff and management pride themselves in providing the most efficient service, guaranteeing discretion and treating information gathered from our operators, passengers and head’s of state with confidentiality. I believe that’s the main reason our customers prefer us.” ■

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MUSTARD STAINS & Diamond Crystals

Above: AkzoNobel's range includes the unique Sun King Diamond Coating, here on a Global Express.

Jean Boulle Luxury

Background: The ultra-matt Suede Coating from Mankiewicz.

Mankiewicz

“An airplane might be sitting on the tarmac in 50°C heat, then minutes later it's flying at altitude and the air temperature's -50°C.

It's expanding and contracting, but the paint doesn't break. Then it sees UV exposure, closer to the sun than pretty much anything else ever gets, and resists damage. And on top of all that, it looks great!” So enthuses Julie Voisin, Global Marketing Manager at Sherwin-Williams Aerospace Coatings.

She makes an interesting point, since unless it draws attention through special design, bright colours or unusual effects, an aircraft's external finish is typically something taken for granted. Executive and VIP aviation liveries have traditionally been conservative, historically perhaps to the point of blandness – a white aeroplane with a modest brown cheatline is unlikely to set pulses racing.

Yet for many travellers anonymity is among the key attractions of executive aviation and there are real benefits to parking a white jet on a ramp loaded with white jets. There is also the case for keeping your colour scheme conservative so as not to create a repainting headache for a future buyer, especially if resale value in the relative near term is important.

Nonetheless, there is a trend towards more ambitious corporate and personal aircraft finishes, promoting a brand, identifying a company or simply expressing individual creativity. Customers are looking for bespoke colours and dramatic design, and the paint manufacturers are responding with a startling palette of hue and effect.

Voisin reports: “There is a group in the business jets sector looking for a way to express their brand. We've had celebrities wanting to say ‘Hey, this is me, this is my brand!’, and a couple of NASCAR drivers also expressing their brand. For others it's just personal choice.”

Founded in Hamburg, Germany but operating globally, Mankiewicz has an aviation division producing specialist exterior, structural parts and interior paint products. The airlines are among its largest customers, and their desire to differentiate between brands has driven colour and effects development. Etihad Airways uses a ‘full-body mica’, for example, which is equally applicable in the VIP business, but how does a company capable of producing paint in sufficient quantity for an Airbus A380 fleet also produce a cost-effective bespoke solution for a business jet?

Stefan Jacob, Sales Director Aviation in Germany, explains: “We manufacture at our affiliated companies worldwide and we're able to match colour shades at many locations, making samples available promptly. We

have a department dedicated especially to this task, its experts creating colours to satisfy the individual wishes of every customer.”

Matching an aircraft finish to that of a favourite car is a common theme. An automotive paint is unsuitable for the harsh environments of flight and aircraft ground operations, but colours can be precisely matched, as Roger Soler Palau, Segment Manager – Speciality Coatings at AkzoNobel explains: “We can either match a colour upon request, or help the customer choose by providing a standard set of colours. We recently completed a project in Germany where the customer was a passionate sports car enthusiast and his aircraft livery included several shades to recreate the exact silver colour of one of his cars and the carbon fibre used within it. Using only the colour name and car model we accessed the exact colour master and recreated it in an aerospace paint within a few days, thanks to our strong presence in the automotive segment.

“The other colours in the design came from a standard set called Color Universe, which we’ve designed for aerospace and yacht applications. It contains a standard selection of almost 10,000 shades covering the most popular in the automotive industry. They are real colour samples chromatically ordered and complemented by a view tool app and a pocket-size colorimeter for designers and painters. Through this, we provided the seven colours needed for the German project, matched exactly to the samples provided.

“Our wide presence in aerospace, automotive, yachts, decorative coatings and other areas eases the task, since colour information and some technologies are shared and enable the production of small quantities for individual aircraft applications. We produce coatings on a ‘building blocks’ concept, using pigment dispersions that provide the colour and the resin matrix that delivers the performance and durability for each requirement. The system is very flexible and allows the production of hundreds of thousands of colour variations with only a few dozen building blocks. It means we can realistically manufacture quantities from a quarter gallon up to 2,000 gallons.”

Sherwin-Williams also prides itself on its ability to match customer requirements. “It’s something we’re really good at,” Voisin says. “We get customer samples everyday, asking us to match a favourite car, shoe, tie or carpet colour, a variety of materials are submitted for us to colour match. Either locally or through our worldwide distributor network, we then produce that colour and support the customer throughout the scheme’s life. We keep a digital library of colour standards so that we can reproduce the colour exactly, anywhere in the world, at any time.”




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Warja Borges at Unique Aircraft agrees there's greater interest in more colourful schemes for business jets, except where owners are concerned over resale values, but says the same is generally not true of VVIP machines, where those that aren't anonymous are finished in a fleet livery. Having said that, it was she who designed the dramatic scheme unveiled on the 737BBJ demonstrator at EBACE earlier this year...

A customer will often have an idea for a scheme, but... "In the case of the BBJ, I was given free reign to sketch my ideas. The process then is to put them into Photoshop and add some colours. I send my ideas to ACA, a local company specialising in 3D aircraft visualisation, so we can them from all angles. That's the view that I send to the customer.

"With this project I learned how much is involved in applying the scheme from the computer onto the real aircraft; it's really complicated! RUAG did the work at Oberpfaffenhofen. They're known for their quality application of really complex schemes. They used massive plastic masks, with perforated lines in them following the lines of my drawings. The masks are taped onto the base coat as accurately as possible, and then used to mark dots onto the surface. Tape is then applied along the dots to mask the area for painting. It's real craftsmanship!"

"And if you're using pearlescent or metallic colours, the application method is really important for consistent appearance. Everything is sprayed by hand, and a different person applying the finish will result in a different appearance."

Diamond Crystals

Manufacturers typically offer very high gloss finishes, along with special effect coatings, nonetheless designed to withstand the exacting demands of aerospace application. Palau says: "AkzoNobel developed a technology for the automotive industry that changes a coating's colour depending on viewing angle and this is now available to aerospace customers as a non-standard offering in the Alumigrip range."

The technology is exciting and the effect dramatic, but as Borges says, success relies on careful application. "These very special effects require the correct equipment and heightened painting skills for a good result, especially on larger surfaces. The degree of colour change can also be modulated and the more dramatic the change required, the more challenging the application. We've been working with an OEM customer to offer these coatings for large fuselage areas and the process will be available very soon."

Working with Jean Bouille Luxury, AkzoNobel has also developed the extremely unusual Sun King

Modern base coat/clear coat processes enable precise finishing and high-gloss effects. This Falcon was painted with Sherwin-Williams products.

Sherwin-Williams Aerospace



Earlier this year, Flying Colours Corps applied a complex scheme as the culmination of a major refurbishment programme for a privately owned 2003 Global Express. Speaking about the project at EBACE, Executive Vice President Sales & Marketing Sean Gillespie revealed: "There was quite a bit of design beforehand, plenty of tweaking with our designers and the customer's designers. We had lots of ideas for the honeycomb, which is all painted – the only area not painted is the fin, which is a full decal. We looked at airbrushing but felt it was too extensive and touching up after the fact might be an issue.

"It was stencilled out and every honeycomb taped by hand before painting. Keeping the honeycomb regular around the curves of the nacelles was a real challenge, but two guys managed to do all the taping in around a week, constantly moving from side to side to check everything matched. Taping the fuselage was also tricky – you're going to really notice one wrong line – and the customer wanted the scheme to curve down to match the nose profile. Then, at the last minute, he wanted honeycomb adding to the door... in the end it worked out really well!" ●





Diamond Coating. Jean Boule Luxury has a long heritage in the diamond industry and perfected a proprietary technique to create a natural gem diamond coating suitable for anything from a luxury car to a super yacht.

Transferring the coating to the aerospace industry was a challenge that forced AkzoNobel not only to meet the demands of the finish itself, but also to define the means of its application. Palau explains: “Diamond is the hardest material and it’s not easy to handle either, especially in the range of microns we use. It’s also relatively dense and we had to find the right balance of ingredients, particle size, concentrations and production method so that a proven aerospace paint could ‘hold’ the diamonds in suspension, not pose too much of a challenge to the painters and meet standard aerospace requirements once applied.

“Now we’ve delivered Sun King for aerospace, yacht and automotive. As a proof of concept we painted a Global Express and completed smaller areas, including stripes and logos. The effect as light catches the diamonds is impressive. It’s a very special finish.”

Interior Finishes

Mankiewicz’s catalogue includes a wide variety of interior coatings, but Jacob notes that its entire colour palette is available in interior and exterior products, as is a large selection of mica and metallic effects. “Paint systems used for interiors increase the perceived quality of surfaces,” he says. “By meeting the demands of wear and chemical resistance for the aircraft’s lifespan, they also ensure durable quality.

“Textile-effect paints, including the ALEXIT Suede Coating, are used whenever a bridge is needed to interface with textiles – like carpets or leather – in the cabin. It produces an extremely matt, warm and unreflective surface. It’s particularly relevant in the cockpit of commercial aircraft, creating the most matt finish available and preventing dazzling reflections, but in the context of a VIP or business jet it could be used anywhere in the interior.”

Conversely, ALEXIT FST Metallic BaseCoat is capable of producing a high-gloss metallic finish and is typically applied to seats, cabinets and monuments. A two-layer system, its base coat contains metallic pigments. A clear varnish is applied over the metallic base and may be selected for different grades of finish, from matt to high gloss. In addition to specific colour and metallic effects, the finish can also be further customised, since the shinier the varnish the more intense and

deep the colour shades. In addition to its aesthetic properties, the clear coat seals and protects the base coat pigments, prolonging their life.

The Mankiewicz range also includes ALEXIT FST Antimicrobial Topcoat. “This special paint prevents bacteria from growing and continues doing so for years. Bacteria are otherwise quite comfortable in an aircraft with a full climate control system, and the product offers important advantages for commercial and VIP aircraft.”

Application

Painting aircraft was once a toxic, environmentally unfriendly affair, but developing technologies in application and paint formulas has helped the industry clean up its act. Jacob notes: “Mankiewicz has had water-based interior products in its portfolio for decades, for standard interior top coats and most design effects. Not only are these safer than solvent-based paints to apply, but they’re also more environmentally friendly. It means a drastic reduction in the solvent footprint of operators and since we were the first to offer water-based interior coatings we have experience under every imaginable condition.”

Sherwin-Williams’s Julie Voisin echoes Jacob’s thoughts on environmental performance. “We still sell a product that we created in 1977. But it’s evolved to reflect industry efforts to reduce solvents and emissions. The industry has also modified primers to reduce their chrome content.”

She explains further fundamental changes. “About five years ago the industry moved into a base coat/clear coat ‘wrap’ technology. Basically, all the colours are applied and then a clear coat goes on top. It’s opened the door to more exotic schemes, achieved in shorter timescales.” The base coat/clear coat process also applies to white aircraft of course, so has the application of white actually improved compared to a decade ago?

Voisin responds: “I wouldn’t say the white’s got better, but we can implement the process faster. An airplane typically has detail striping and since you’re then applying multiple colours, the base coat/clear coat technology results in an improved finish. The process also brings some UV advantages with the improved ‘wrap’ overall.”

Mustard Stains

Paint’s aesthetic qualities are obvious, but its most critical function is as a safety device, protecting airframe structures on the outside, on the inside and everywhere in between. Voisin reckons around 30% of an aircraft’s paint goes onto structures a passenger



will never see and another 30% onto cabin and cockpit areas, for which Sherwin-Williams offers its JetFlex Elite and Soft Swade coatings. Challenges in the cabin, include scratch and stain resistance and, she says: “Two of the really difficult things we look at with staining are coffee and mustard. There are also the flammability regulations, which are very strict.”

Areas hidden from the passenger – wing ribs, the interiors of avionics bays, undercarriage components – are painted purely for protection and may never be painted again in the aircraft’s lifetime. “Corrosion protection is important and special paints are employed,” says Jacob. “The conditions paints are exposed to are very different depending on their area of use and so are the coatings themselves. Paints for structures have to cope with hydraulic fluids and corrosion, exterior paints must withstand extreme changes of temperature, jet fuel and immense UV exposure, while interior paints resist difficult substances, including mustard and cola, and withstand collisions with luggage. Last but not least, they must also comply with the strict technical requirements of the aviation authorities as they relate to FST [fire, smoke and toxicity] and heat release.”

Cleaning, de-icing and other fluids also affect aircraft finishes, but hydraulic fluids are particularly aggressive. Voisin says: “The clear coat protects the paint finish from hydraulic fluid. It’s not common for an aircraft to be cleaned after every use, but even so, it’s surprising that few of the cleaning products are as aggressive as hydraulic fluid.

“We do a range of tests, including one where we leave a particularly aggressive hydraulic fluid on the paint for 30 days to make sure it doesn’t eat through. We also test against jet fuel, de-icing and cleaning fluids. Business jet customers want their aircraft to remain as pristine as possible and the clear coat also helps with minor repairs.” Even the most resilient finish is likely to change in shade a little over a period of years, but the clear coat can often be repaired after a minor knock or scrape, removing the need for colour matching.

In another aspect of paint that customers seldom realise, while the clear coat is protecting the finish, the coating system is protecting the exterior metals and composites of the airframe, a far more important job than simply looking good. “The reality is that the paint’s there to prevent corrosion. That’s its critical function, since even today, most of an aircraft still comprises aluminium. That’s why we have a complete system of paint that protects the metal, then a base coat that looks good and a clear coat on top.”

That said, composite materials are finding ever-wider application in business aviation – the 787 BBJ airframe is almost 50% composite for example – and these materials pose their own finishing challenges. “When you paint it, it shows a weave, like a very tight chequerboard, as the paint is absorbed. So with composites, instead of worrying about corrosion we have to ensure the weave is properly filled before we attempt to get that typical glass-like finish on top.”

Colouring the Future

There will always be a requirement for anonymity in executive and VIP aviation, but the technology, will and enthusiasm are there for operators to adopt spectacular finishes and the first truly dazzling schemes are now emerging. AkzoNobel’s Roger Soler Palau reckons: “Individual/corporate aesthetic requirements are increasing and liveries are becoming more complex in shape and colour. Technology is advancing to facilitate that, but also to adapt to new lighter substrates and revised regulations, and greater process time efficiency for painters, as well as including new functionalities like self-cleaning, and increased durability and colour retention.

“The industry is changing very quickly. Robotic painting is already a reality at some OEMs and we’ve adjusted our paint to suit, while our state-of-the-art chrome-free primers give longer-term protection from corrosion, and new coating techniques to improve speed and transfer efficiency are already in advanced testing with the OEMs. 3D-printed parts will also become more common and require a new coating technique. It’s very exciting to see the bright future that’s coming to aviation!” ■

Background:
ALEXIT FST Metallic
BaseCoat from
Mankiewicz.

Embraer’s new Legacy 650E demonstrator was painted using AkzoNobel’s Alumigrip 4400 Basecoat and Alumigrip 4450 Clearcoat.

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Connecting With CONNECTJETS

Gabriella Somerville established ConnectJets in 2009 and remains owner and sole director of the company. Her launch timing, on the face of it seemingly less than

ideal given the economic turbulence of the era, was, she says, more by default than design. “I’d always planned to start a business of my own, preferably in aviation, but the circumstances at the time meant I had to bring the plan forwards.

“I’d sold my chalet in the Alps so I had the seed capital, which was appropriate to use, rather than investing it in the banks in 2008 and 2009. Most people would say the business aviation market was slightly distressed, but at the same time I saw great opportunities. So we took the bull by the horns and launched – it turned out to be the best timing possible!”

ConnectJets continues with its original aim, finding alternative solutions in the business jet market, originally looking at distressed fractional options, leasing and jet sharing, and other cost-effective proposals that would enable people to fly privately. Since then, the market has changed dramatically and Somerville’s initial vision has changed with it.

“You can never sit on your laurels in aviation. You have to keep an eye on the market, listen to your customers, adapt and continuously improve your product. We started out primarily working on charter and leasing products, which were very apt for the 2009-11 period. But then we moved into aircraft sales since we could see the market growing in certain sectors.

“So the business has diversified and broadened, but we always endeavour to create a turn-key solution for our clients. They tend to be inherently loyal. They may start off chartering from us and then we create the next step for them, through leasing, fractional or outright purchase. What we’ve tried to do is create a platform that satisfies every flight requirement with a tailored solution.”

Customer service is a key driver in maintaining client loyalty and it begins with a customer’s first ever charter. “The customer service element of a charter trip is your shop window to show what you can do and how well you

can do it. It’s not always easy, because there are many permutations and you’re working with operators around the world, sometimes with different standards. So we use a preferred operator list and we’ve worked on a number of tours and assignments where detail is the absolute key.

“I think we’re more of a bespoke broker because we offer a tailored Savile Row service that’s focussed on the individual customer. And we work with partners to improve the customer experience further. Many years ago we worked with a sommelier for an inflight wine tasting so we could offer the best wines that fared well at altitude, based on the fact that customers had said the business jet inflight experience was a little dull. The sommelier continues to work with ConnectJets to ensure we provide the best wine to our clientele, along with an aviation nutritionist, who provides our health conscious

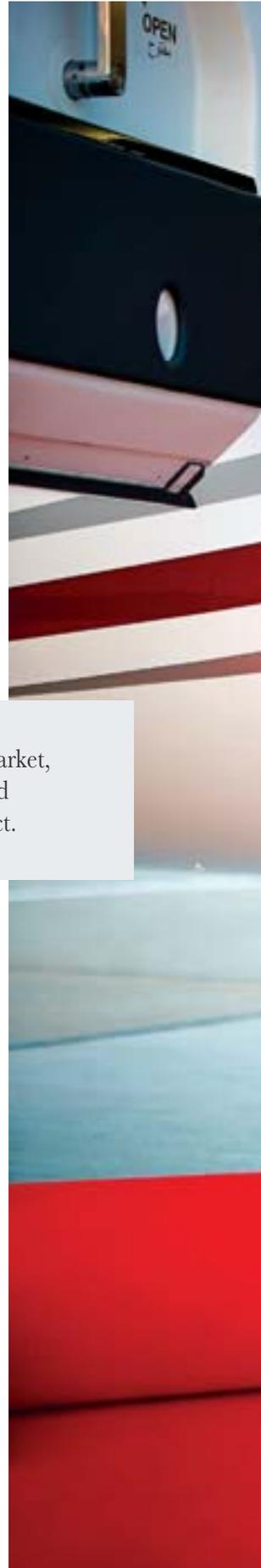


You have to keep an eye on the market, listen to your customers, adapt and continuously improve your product.

clients with alternative solutions.” The service even extends to the ground. “We offer seamless service from the aircraft and off to their final destination.”

ConnectJets preferred operator list meets the standards it expects for its clients, while the company adds to the experience and ensures service levels. For the future, Somerville says she wants ConnectJets to move away from being solely a broker and expand its offering to jet management. At the moment, ConnectJets is a broker for aircraft charter sales, leasing and pre-owned sales, on top of which, it has an agency agreement to sell the Piaggio Avanti EVO in the UK and territories.

The company’s charter offering extends to helicopters, which Somerville reckons is part of the service its clients expect. “It’s no problem to work on the helicopter side and all of my rotary clients also use fixed wing. It’s a way of keeping the client in house and offering them a one-stop shop for all their needs. It’s another way of creating a seamless travel experience for the entirety of their journey.”





Gabriella Somerville
and the Avanti EVO.

All Paul Cordwell/ConnectJets

The company also advises on the best means of transport for a particular route, whether fixed wing, rotary or a combination. “Clients will ask if they should use a helicopter or fixed wing. Sometimes we prefer a fixed wing because we think the destination might expose the client to issues in getting in because of weather, other times we’ll recommend a helicopter. I think they’re quite comfortable trusting us to give good advice and supply the most appropriate solution.

“It’s rare for us to arrange a helicopter outside the UK, although we’ve operated a couple in Africa. It tends to be clients who’ve flown in from the US, Middle East or Africa for polo, shooting or other sporting events in the calendar. The agility of the helicopter to land virtually anywhere, with permission, also makes it ideal for the corporate wanting to visit multiple points in the same day.”

Charter, ConnectJets style, is obviously a flexible, tailored service, made more so by the company’s genuine willingness to assemble bespoke packages. “A great example of this is the work we did with a group of clients who were collectively looking to travel to the Monaco Yacht Show. They were happy to fare-share with passengers they didn’t know, so we looked at putting together a couple of flights where people paid for their seats individually. Is there a huge demand for it? Not really. Private aviation is about the end user having autonomy for their flight, but there are occasions when these things work. It goes back to accommodating the client and if we can do it we will. If we can’t, we’ll say so.”

Future Management

The move into aircraft management is major, but Somerville sees it as a natural extension of the business. “What typically happens is a customer uses us for charter and may eventually go on to purchase an aircraft. They say to me, ‘Gabriella, I’ve known you for eight years and I’d rather place my aircraft with you than somebody I don’t know.’ But I have to let go of that relationship and introduce them to an operator, although we normally manage the new relationship to a degree because they like us to have a hand in it.

“With a managed fleet we’d also have complete autonomy over every element of the service on every trip. At the moment we’re subject to operators and as much due diligence as we do, sometimes we are let down. However, I think service levels in the European market are much higher than they were ten years ago. It’s when you go into emerging or less mature markets that you have to be very careful about who you choose to operate your aircraft.”

Over ConnectJets’ relatively brief history Somerville

has seen dramatic change. Now, she says, she has concerns. “It’s a very competitive market and I worry that we’ve almost exhausted price as the primary reason for somebody to book an aircraft. I think it should be about service levels still at a competitive price, but not one that jeopardises the sustainability of an operator or broker. As a company we carry out the required due diligence on each operator we engage with, it’s paramount in a market that is still relatively young in certain parts of the world.

“I still have concerns that we’re backing too much on price amongst the brokers, that it’s become a price war. Some of the brokers are charging almost zero commission in order to win a client – which subsequently creates a false economy and will not serve the customer or the industry in the long term. Competition is good, but we need to work on a level playing field, as they do in the yachting industry. As an industry I think we need to be careful how we promote business aviation – we are all here to create sustainable businesses and see growth in our sector. If we continue to heckle the operator to reduce their pricing, I fear we will see corners being cut and a number of smaller companies going out of business. We need to be careful to promote business aviation as a safe option, along with all its benefits, without focussing on price.

“During my 30 years in aviation I’ve seen both commercial and business operators take a mighty fall when they’ve endeavoured to gain market share by cutting their prices – this is not sustainable, aircraft are expensive to fly and manage – fact. I think as brokers we have a responsibility to educate the client and duly advise what a fair and reasonable price is in the current market. They will thank us for it in the long term because they’ll continue to have choice from both the small and large operators.”

These are bold comments, and expressing the opinion and living up to it could well be difficult. Has Somerville ever refused to place a charter client with an operator because the offered price was too low? She thinks for less than three seconds before recalling: “There have been two occasions where, in my opinion, I believed the operator could not be making adequate margins for the prescribed trip to cover the DOCs and variables. Ultimately, one of those operators went under; I was glad I’d made that decision and so was my client.”

Avanti Time

Piaggio’s Avanti is undoubtedly a head-turner from the outside and Somerville says it offers surprising space on the inside, but is ConnectJets selling any?



“The customer service element of a charter trip is your shop window to show what you can do and how well you can do it.”

Paul Cordwell/ConnectJets

“Yes, we are! We completed the sale of an Avanti EVO to a UK customer in May and I believe we’ll close the sale on another one, if not two, by the end of the year. The turboprop market is growing, I think because of the economics, plus the Avanti EVO has many great attributes.

“It’s perfect for flying into small airfields. Its light weight means it doesn’t attract the onerous operating requirements of aircraft within the same category since it falls under part-NCC requirements for private owners. Potential buyers look at its operating capabilities and direct operating costs and see it’s a smart choice. But above all, its an extremely comfortable ride, with a very broad cabin, 5ft 9in tall and 6ft wide – it’s a midsize jet cabin in a light jet category and at a light jet price – the perfect European aircraft.

“When we took the dealership over, the Piaggio Aerospace name wasn’t well known in the UK, so we created a targeted PR campaign and permeated the market, and it has worked. I call it ‘seed time and harvest’, you sow hard for a good 18 months and then you start to see the harvest with increased interest and recognition. Piaggio Aerospace has also hosted a wonderful PR campaign and this has helped tremendously, we work hand in hand.

“Over the last six months we’ve received several calls about the aircraft, and demand and interest continue to grow. The industry stats tell us that turboprops are among the fastest growing segment in the market – the turboprop is seeing a revival.”

Although she says ‘never say never’, Somerville seems not to have aspirations to add other types to her dealership portfolio. On the other hand, she says she has eyes looking firmly abroad, since it’s time for ConnectJets to expand. “We’ve been asked many times through the years if we’d set up a brokerage in another country. We’ve survived as a small, bespoke agency for nine years and I’ve always kept the brand to the UK, but now we’re exploring some opportunities that have come to us. It could mean a small expansion and an international presence in a couple of places. It would give us additional exposure to those markets, with a local ConnectJets representative on the ground. I will be travelling to those countries in the next two or three months to explore the possibilities.” She hopes to announce something in that timescale. ■

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Famously known as the Model 172, the Skyhawk is exemplified here by the Turbo Skyhawk JT-A, powered by a 155hp Continental CD-155 turbocharged diesel engine.

Piston Plaything or Corporate Prop?

In October 1924, a group of what today would be regarded as entrepreneurs established the Travel Air Manufacturing Company. Among its leadership, Clyde Cessna withdrew in September 1927, initially forming Cessna-Roos, which became the Cessna Aircraft Company that December. Its first production machine, the Model A, was a high-wing cabin monoplane, successfully setting the format that still serves Cessna so well today.

Another of the Travel Air founders, Walter Beech departed in 1930 to concentrate on his Model 17 Staggerwing. A high-speed cabin biplane designed with corporate flyers in mind, it was among the very first effective business aircraft. He and his wife Olive established the Beech Aircraft Company in April 1932, finding premises in Wichita, Kansas, where Cessna had by now also set up home.

After almost a century of innovation, challenge and corporate reshuffling, both continue under Textron Aviation ownership, where the long-term rivals are complementing each other perfectly. The Cessna piston range begins with the Skyhawk and reaches its ultimate expression in the TT^x, while Beechcraft offers the low-wing Bonanza G36 single and Baron G58 twin. All are thoroughly modern aircraft, but do they really have a role in business aviation? *EVA* spoke to Doug May, Vice President of Piston Aircraft, Textron Aviation, to find out.

Piston aircraft might be considered ideal for training and pleasure flying, but overlooked as efficient business tools. Yet the TT^x boasts an exceptional combination of range, performance, avionics and comfort. What does it offer the business or corporate flyer?

The beauty of our piston line is that there's an aircraft for every mission,

whether training, business or pleasure. Cessna's high-wing products range from the Skyhawk 172, the number one training aircraft, to the Turbo Stationair HD. Our Beechcraft product line offers the Bonanza G36 and the twin-engine Baron G58 for more versatility.

As for the TT^x, it's an aircraft truly designed for the pilot, for superior handling and performance, and it's equipped with Garmin G2000 avionics. And the TT^x is incredibly efficient, burning less fuel than its nearest competitor and getting you to your destination faster, making it ideal for business and pleasure.

Many TT^x operators clearly find it optimised for their mission, but is it also a natural starting point for those progressing through the Cessna range as their ambitions and businesses grow?

The versatility of the TT^x enables a wide variety of mission possibilities, with features including a certified TKS Ice

Protection system and utility-category certified airframe.

We offer a variety of solutions for customers looking to move up through our product line as business and travel needs grow. We absolutely see them step up to turbine ownership from the TT^X and our other piston products. The Citation M2, entry-level jet to the Citation family, is designed for single-pilot operation and equipped with Garmin G3000 avionics, so it's a natural transition for TT^X customers looking to step up into an aircraft with more speed, range and payload.

The TT^X is also a logical entry point for customers wanting to step up into a Denali turboprop in the future. Like the M2, the Denali will feature Garmin G3000 avionics, offering an easy transition from the TT^X's G2000 suite. We've certainly seen interest in Denali from our piston customer base.

With sidestick control and comprehensive avionics, the TT^X offers an impressive package and exciting flying experience. But does its high technology require a greater level of pilot training/experience than might have been the case in the past, or do



The Skyhawk offers a great foundation and, with the similarities in avionics, there is a natural transition to the next model, be it a TT^X, Skylane or Bonanza.

pilots graduating from, say, a glass-cockpit Skyhawk, find the progression quite natural?

We advocate for thorough training whenever transitioning to a new model, but most pilots find there is a natural progression through our piston line. The Skyhawk offers a great foundation and, with the similarities in avionics, there is a natural transition to the next model, be it a TT^X, Skylane or Bonanza. There's always a bit of an adjustment when moving to a faster aircraft, but for most pilots, that challenge is part of the fun.

Connectivity is almost as important as comfort to many business flyers. With its 1,270nm range the TT^X is no stranger to long flights, so what does its cabin offer?

The TT^X offers XM weather and radio datalink for weather information and digital audio entertainment in the cockpit. There's also the Garmin GSR-56 Iridium

satellite data transceiver option, through which pilots and passengers can access on-demand weather information, text communications and other data sharing capabilities. These include two-way text messaging on the ground and in the air.

The TT^X has a 25,000ft service ceiling. What's passenger comfort like at cruising altitude and what about cabin noise levels?

While the TT^X is not pressurised, it does offer state-of-the-art safety, with a CO₂ detector and pulse oximeter to monitor pilot blood-oxygen levels. An integrated oxygen system with a 77cuft oxygen bottle, four masks and cannulas is standard, while as an additional safety feature, the G2000 avionics system alerts the pilot when climbing through 12,000ft.

The aircraft's inflatable door seals keep the cabin tight from air leakage, greatly reducing noise. The cabin is therefore quiet and passengers don't need to wear

Power for the TT^X comes from a 310hp Continental TSIO-550-C.



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The Stationair seats a pilot and five passengers in some comfort.

headsets, although the aircraft is equipped for them if passengers desire.

Cessna's offering includes the Skyhawk training/pleasure aircraft, the Stationair utility machine and Skylane, an entry-level business aircraft, while the Beechcraft Bonanza is a high-performance six-seater ideal for business and touring. All four have been available for decades – do Garmin avionics and other modern systems bring them fully up to date?

The Skyhawk is world renowned as the trainer of choice and represents the aircraft most active pilots learned to fly in, while the Turbo Stationair HD is a utility aircraft capable of hauling 1,623lb of useful load and has seating for six. The Skylane offers a roomier four-seat configuration, perfect as the next step in transitioning from learning to fly in a Skyhawk, or offering increased range and payload for pilots travelling with friends or colleagues. The Baron and Bonanza are great options as business aircraft with their levels of comfort, seating for six, speed and overall performance.

The next-generation Garmin avionics modernise the aircraft with improved

graphical interface, more powerful software, higher resolution displays, added functionality to improve situational awareness, and optional wireless technology that significantly enhances ease of operation for the pilot. ADS-B In and Out come as standard, and the avionics package offers optional wireless database and flight plan loading.

Cessna no longer builds piston twins... Why?

Cessna twin piston production ended in the mid-1980s. With the merger of Cessna and Beechcraft, and the formation of Textron Aviation, we now have the twin-engine Beechcraft Baron in our portfolio, a perfect fit to round out our versatile piston product line. ■

The Stationair's G1000 Nxi avionics suite.



Into Africa

L launched in May 2012 'to represent the interests of Africa's aircraft owners, operators, and suppliers to the business aviation community in a single voice', the African Business Aviation Association (AfBAA) is holding its first ever African Business Aviation conference and exhibition (AfBAC EXPO) at ExecuJet Africa's Lanseria International Airport FBO between 29 November and 1 December. Inevitably modest in size compared to the better established business aviation shows, AfBAC EXPO will nonetheless offer visitors a one-day conference on 29 November, followed by a two-day exhibition and static display. And with up to 16 hours of workshops available, and ExecuJet showcasing several of the 50 or so aircraft it offers for charter from its South African facility, visitors are unlikely to be disappointed.

African Promotion

Since 2012, AfBAA's membership of ten founding organisations has grown to around 120, including large corporate and international companies. Among them, they offer services ranging from FBO, charter brokerage and aircraft sales, to operations and MRO, ground handling and more. From the outset the intention was to support the industry as a whole, especially since business aviation is still relatively immature in Africa and in need of infrastructure improvement.

Real signs of progress from AfBAA's



point of view include the launch of a training committee, a major focus for the region. Traditionally, Africans who can afford to go abroad for their education tend to take jobs abroad, leaving the continent short of skilled workers. It's a problem exacerbated in sub-Saharan Africa, trained individuals tending to migrate to other regions where salaries might be orders of magnitude higher.

Security and safety, for passengers, crew and aircraft are the focus of

Clockwise from top left:

Nigeria's EAN operates around 20 aircraft.

ExecuJet Africa's Lanseria is hosting AfBAC EXPO 2017.

Bestfly won its air operator certificate from the Angolan authorities in 2015.

Tarek Ragheb, at left, AfBAA's founding chairman, with Rady Fahmy, its CEO. *Paul Cordwell/AfBAA*

another committee, as the growing association has identified the important areas on which its attention should be focussed. Both committees have made tangible progress, but on a much larger scale the AfBAA is promoting business aviation as a valuable capability to African industry, in a region where it tends to be inaccurately linked only to governments and VVIP flying. Efforts are continuing to educate civil aviation authorities and governments themselves, showing them business aviation as a facilitator that generates further business.

Conferences and events are important for bringing AfBAA members together and spreading the word among other local players. At the association's regional symposium in 2015, for example, African Union representatives recognised the need to look beyond the airlines and towards business aviation. With four regional symposiums and a conference behind it, AfBAA launched AfBAC EXPO at this year's EBACE and plans it as an annual event.

Promoting business aviation to an African audience is but once aspect of the challenge, however. For the industry to have real effect, operators and passengers flying into Africa need guarantees that their persons and assets will receive safe passage. There are real security and regulatory concerns, but these by no means apply to all 54 of Africa's countries. The most active areas, including Angola, Cote d'Ivoire, Nigeria and South Africa, have particularly focussed on safety, while AfBAA has nurtured programmes that educate crews in dealing with security crises on the ground.

Yet infrastructure and MRO facilities are still lacking. Decent runways are scarce over much of the continent and where they do exist, lighting and basic facilities may at best be unreliable and at worst missing. In terms of MRO, the African business aircraft fleet includes many airframes coming up for two or

three-year checks, work that will mostly take them out of Africa for lack of facilities.

Aircraft Ownership

Gathering statistics and hard data on African operations and aircraft ownership is a particular challenge. A look at Nigeria, for which reasonably accurate figures do exist, reveals around 165 operational jets, of which only one is on the national register. Operators tend to avoid local registry because it may cause insurance premiums to inflate and render financing difficult to arrange, leaving much still to do.

For the future, AfBAA is working to encourage business aviation into and within the continent. Eight out of the world's ten fastest growing economies are in Africa and their prosperity encourages external business. Those visitors need to travel internally, for which the continent's convoluted airline networks are less than ideal, leaving huge scope for private aviation. In many ways, the tradition of bush flying, reaching otherwise inaccessible regions by rugged piston-engined or turboprop aircraft, is likely to merge into business aviation; indeed, turboprops are finding a ready market in a somewhat blurred bush/business scenario.

Look back two decades and Africa's skies were populated by a preponderance of older aircraft, typically withdrawn from Western fleets and soldiering on with dubious airworthiness. That situation is already changing, with the popularity of modern turboprops where accessibility is an issue, and jets. In Nigeria, for example, operators that acquired smaller equipment, maybe Learjets, just a few years ago, are now progressing onto Challengers and even Global Express-type aircraft. The African business aviation landscape is changing. It has a huge journey yet to travel, but at least it is walking in the right direction, at pace, and no longer crawling. ■



ASIA

Deer Jet, Sanya and Haikou, China

Deer Jet has been granted IS-BAH accreditation for its FBOs at Sanya and Haikou, the first organisation in China to be awarded the certificate.

Deer Jet has been operating FBOs in the country since 2008 and has facilities at Sanya, Haikou, Shenzhen, Changsha, Xian, Nanning, Guilin, Hangzhou and Tangshan.

EUROPE



TAG Aviation, Geneva, Switzerland

TAG Aviation hosted *The Caps Collection*, a summer exhibition of contemporary art by local street artist Joule Champod, at its Geneva FBO.

Adeline Varéon, Marketing and Communications Manager, TAG Aviation Europe, said: “We are delighted to have the opportunity to collaborate with Joule Champod. TAG has always been keen to further its strong links with contemporary art and particularly when we can help promote the works of a Geneva-based artist who shares the same roots as the TAG brand.”

Signature, London Luton, UK Signature Flight Support’s Elite Class Service at London Luton private jet terminal is now operational, having been announced at EBACE.

Luton is the second London destination to support the service, with the Gatwick facility having recently celebrated its fifth anniversary.



News On The Move FBO Round-up

Signature Elite Class enables passengers to avoid the commercial terminal and depart from Signature FBOs. Customs and immigration, and security screening are performed at the FBO in exceptional privacy.

Evie Freeman, Managing Director for Signature Flight Support’s Europe, Middle East and Africa division stated: “Customers can now enjoy an elite-class experience normally only available to those using private aircraft. It removes the stress of transiting the commercial terminal and our staff can accommodate passengers’ needs in a world-class manner. We are excited to bring back the glamour to commercial air travel and we look to continue to expand this service in the future.”

London Biggin Hill, UK Biggin Hill’s London HeliShuttle service has expanded with the addition of a sixth Leonardo AW109 Grand.

MIDDLE EAST

Gama Aviation, Sharjah International Airport, UAE Gama Aviation, based at Farnborough Airport, UK, has signed an agreement with Sharjah International Airport to build and operate a \$30-million, 430,600sqft private jet terminal.

Replacing an existing FBO, the new facility marks further investment in business and private aviation by the Middle Eastern airport operator, as more traffic moves away from the congested areas around Dubai.

NORTH AMERICA

ACI Jet, John Wayne-Orange County Airport, California

At the beginning of August, ACI Jet officially opened its FBO at John Wayne-Orange County Airport, California.

The company operates three other FBOs in California and was awarded the lease for the most recent in January. The facility has undergone a \$600,000 refurbishment in which three conference rooms and four private meeting spaces were added.

ACI Jet also provides ground handling and aircraft management, charter and maintenance services.

Republic Jet Center, Farmingdale, New York Signature Flight Support has announced the official transition of Republic Jet Center, Farmingdale, New York to Signature Select.

With more than 100,000sqft of combined hangar and office space, the facility is the largest operator at Republic Airport. The FBO offers the only FAA Part 145 Repair Station on site, providing MRO support for most modern aircraft types.

MFC Aviation Services, Canandaigua Airport, New York Canandaigua Airport in the state of New York is undergoing operational changes as MFC Aviation Services takes over its FBO’s handling from Canandaigua Air Center.

The latter is focusing on its MRO operations, while MFC will oversee the FBO between 0700 and 1700 daily.

The Ontario County Industrial Development Agency is overseeing new development at the airport, with plans to break ground on a new 3,600sqft hangar.

Northstar Aviation, Theodore Francis Green International Airport, Rhode Island

Northstar Aviation, which operates FBO services at Theodore Francis Green International Airport, Rhode Island, now has on-site customs for pilots and passengers.

Paul Smith, Northstar's general manager stated: "This was a big step to better serve the international

community. It opens up possibilities for our FBO and guests by helping us serve their needs more efficiently."

Million Air, Syracuse Hancock International Airport, New York Steel has gone up for a new FBO close to the main entrance at Syracuse Hancock International Airport, New York.

Million Air will operate the \$10-million FBO, reportedly including an 11,000sqft terminal and 28,000sqft hangar. Features will include a passenger lounge, coffee bar and conference room, while aircraft storage, fuelling, ground handling, cleaning and other services are also planned.

The FBO is scheduled for completion by March 2018.

Orion Jet Center, Miami Opa-Locka Executive Airport, Florida Atlantic Aviation has entered into an agreement to purchase the assets of the Orion Jet Center FBO at Miami Opa-Locka Executive Airport, Florida.

"We are pleased that the team at Atlantic Aviation continues to expand the network of fixed base operations with quality facilities like the Orion Jet Center at OPE," said James Hooke, chief executive officer of Macquarie Infrastructure Corporation, Atlantic Aviation's parent company.

"South Florida is one of the fastest growing general aviation markets in the US and the acquisition of one of the largest FBOs in the region is expected to provide Atlantic with substantial network benefits."

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Orion Jet Center founder Leonard Abess said: “Through the hard work and dedication of our staff, Orion Jet Center has experienced unprecedented growth since opening in 2009. Atlantic Aviation is well positioned to continue the success we have enjoyed. We look forward to our ongoing involvement in the transformation of the airport as we develop the remainder of our leasehold.”

Cutter Aviation, Colorado Springs Airport, Colorado
Cutter Aviation has opened a new FBO at Colorado Springs Municipal Airport. Its FBO operation at Colorado Springs began in August 2006 with the purchase of the existing Discount Fuels FBO. Cutter’s expansion results from increased FBO



Cutter Aviation, Colorado Springs Airport, Colorado



Signature, Seattle Airport, Washington
Signature Flight Support has opened an FBO at Boeing Field/King County International Airport, Seattle.

The \$11.5-million, 6,250sqft facility includes business rooms and a full-service customer desk. A system for storm water management has been installed in cooperation with Boeing Field County Airport and the King County Water and Land Resources Department. A hangar is planned for the future.

The FBO is Signature’s second in the Seattle area, alongside the BBA Aviation-operated facility at Seattle Tacoma airport. ■

activity and growing fuel sales.

The company leased eight additional acres for its mountain retreat-themed executive FBO terminal and state-of-the-art 62,000US gal fuel farm. Cutter purchased a 23,000sqft hangar adjacent to the new FBO in 2015.

Stuart Jet Center, Witham Field, Florida

Stuart Jet Center has broken ground on an extension to its FBO at Witham Field, South Florida.

The extension will see Stuart Jet Center add two hangars as the busy winter 2017/18 season approaches. The hangars will total 50,000sqft and be able to accommodate aircraft including the G650 and Global Express.

From early 2018, Stuart Jet Center will also offer US Customs facilities at Witham Field.

Francis Aviation, New Mexico
Francis Aviation recently announced John Stuart as its new Vice President in an effort to ‘accelerate growth’.

He will be instrumental in remodelling an existing FBO in Las Cruces and help lead expansion as its customer base grows.

Meridian, Hayward, California
Meridian has appointed Carlos Rodriguez as General Manager of its Hayward FBO in Hayward, California.

Rodriguez was previously operations manager at the same FBO; in his new role, he will oversee day-to-day operations. Launched in October 2016, the FBO is looking forward to further growth under the new appointment.

Leading Edge, Redmond Municipal Airport, Oregon
Leading Edge Aviation, parent company of Leading Edge Jet Center, has purchased Butler Aircraft Services and will take over its FBO at Redmond Municipal Airport, Oregon.

Leading Edge is now the airport’s sole FBO operator.

Quest Aviation, Aberdeen Regional Airport, South Dakota
Kevin Braun of Quest Aviation, the FBO operator at Aberdeen Regional Airport, South Dakota, has been granted permission to create a private 1,091ft turf runway on Quest property adjacent to the airport. ■

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