

Executive & VIP Aviation International

June 2011



**Investor confidence
boosted by
new markets**

**ConnectJets sets out to
change perceptions**

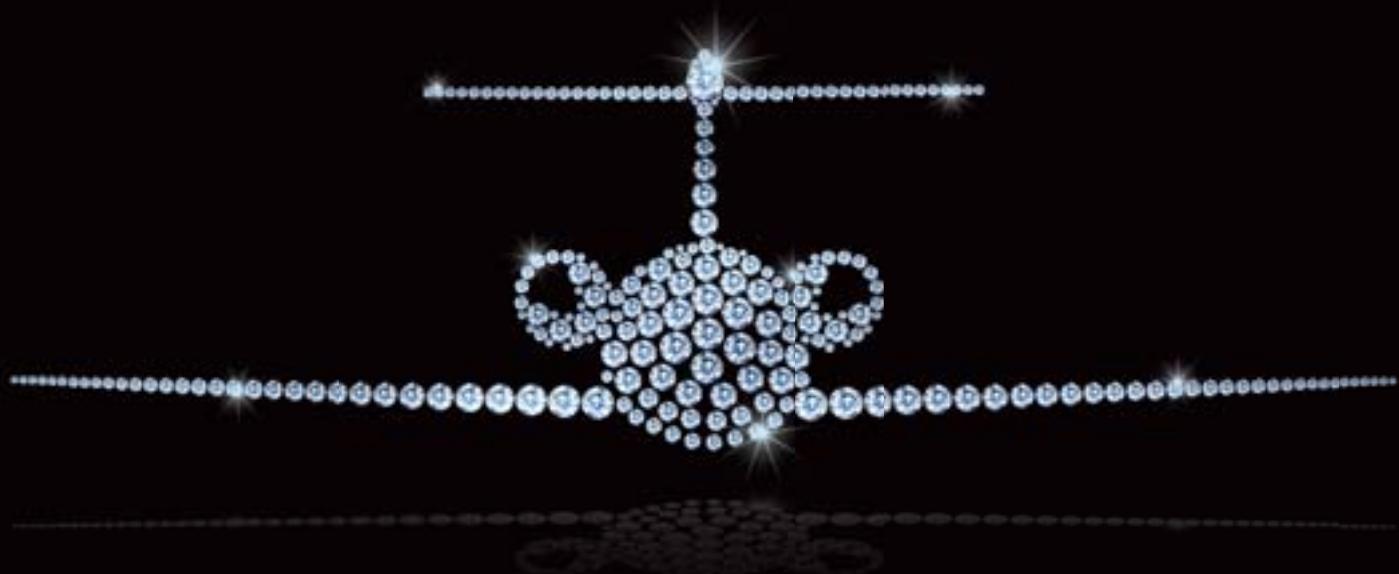
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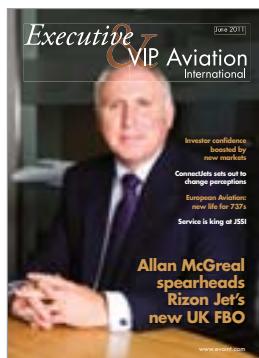
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To engage another level of customer you have to change the message, says Gabriella Somerville, Founder and Managing Director of ConnectJets. She explains to Jo Murray



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<h2>40 London City: convenient and friendly</h2> <p>London City Airport boasts excellent transport links, proximity to a major world class financial centre and is compact enough to soothe even the most apprehensive of traveller. Don Parry reports</p>	<p>CIRCULATION MANAGER Sheila Brooks</p> <p>ISSN 1754-1166</p> <p>PUBLISHED QUARTERLY BY EVA International PO Box 632, Cheshunt, Waltham Cross, EN8 1EG, UK</p>
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<h2>47 Munich Executive Airport: a honey pot for growth</h2> <p>Deep in Bavaria sits Munich Executive Airport. It is located at Oberpfaffenhofen at the site of the former Dornier plant. The FBO is operated by Rheinland Air Service and Thomas Mayr is the FBO Manager. Jo Murray finds out more</p>	 <p>Cover image courtesy of Rizon Jet</p>

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A photograph showing the interior of a private jet cabin. Two cream-colored leather seats with purple headrests are visible. Between them is a light-colored wooden console with a small screen mounted on it, displaying a map or video content. The background wall features large, semi-transparent text that reads "from concept to completion we help you achieve an inspired vision". There are also large windows showing the sky and clouds outside.

Industry round up

Embraer delivers 8 executive jets

During the first quarter of 2011, Embraer delivered eight jets to the executive aviation sector. Of these eight, six were light jets and two were large jets.

Also during this period, the Legacy 650 jet was certified in the US, in February. That same month, Embraer began operations at the new industrial plant in Melbourne, Florida, in the US, which will deliver Phenom jets to the North American market.



Gulfstream supports NTSB

Gulfstream Aerospace Corp has flight-test and engineering department personnel on site in Roswell, NM, participating in the National Transportation Safety Board's (NTSB) investigation of the April 2, 2011 crash of a Gulfstream G650 aircraft.

Immediately following the accident, Gulfstream elected to temporarily suspend the flight activities of its four remaining G650 flight-test aircraft as the NTSB, the Federal Aviation Administration, the company and suppliers work together to analyse the accident. All other certification and production work on the G650 programme continues, and all other activities at the company are proceeding normally.

"We are participating fully in the aircraft investigation," commented Pres Henne, Senior Vice President, Programs, Engineering and Test, Gulfstream, "and will only resume flying the G650 when we and the Federal Aviation Administration are satisfied it is safe to do so." The crash of G650 Serial Number 6002 occurred during takeoff-performance testing.

328 hands over conversion

328 Support Services GmbH has handed over the first of three Dornier 328 jet conversions to Nigerian airline SkyBird Air. The airline, which is the first African customer for 328SSG, accepted the converted 32-seat passenger airliner at the end of February. The conversion and maintenance order, which is worth €14 million in total, will see one airliner conversion and a further two 328DBJ TMs VIP aircraft added to its fleet this year. The newly converted airliner is due to be delivered to Nigeria for the airline's inaugural operations in May, whilst the VIP models will follow in late summer 2011.

Tasking changes at Northolt

Northolt Jet Centre Premier Passenger Service (PPS) has taken over the future tasking function at RAF Northolt. Previously managed by the Royal Air Force, Northolt Jet Centre will mirror the service qualities already in operation at London City Airport Jet Centre.

Northolt Jet Centre will provide a "one stop" booking and coordination service from initial

enquiry to itinerary completion for all aspects of business aviation. Services will include slot booking, ground and passenger handling, customs and immigration clearance, crew accommodation and transport services, delivering streamlined quality service throughout.

Liza Transport: Grand

AgustaWestland has announced that Liza Transport International of Burkina Faso has recently taken delivery of a Grand light twin-engine helicopter. The aircraft will be used for VIP/passenger transport duties. This handover marks the entrance of AgustaWestland in Burkina Faso and expands the presence of the company's helicopters in the Sub-Saharan Africa French speaking region following sales in Congo Brazzaville and Benin.

Liza Transport International is part of EBOMAF Group, focused on public works and housing as well as trade and transport. Headquartered in Ouagadougou in Burkina Faso, the Group operates across the Sub-Saharan region.

CRS Jet Spares: savings

CRS Jet Spares, a business aviation aftermarket parts supplier, has introduced a new plan to benefit operators with unscheduled maintenance requirements. The pay as you need programme is designed to support capable flight departments with (in-house) competent staff. Such a programme eliminates the need for any pay-by-the-hour excessive maintenance charges. This programme is a back-to-basics cost saving solution for aircraft operations that does not allow operational budgeting concerns to dictate standard capabilities and reason. CRS has been supporting Gulfstream, Challenger, Falcon, Hawker and Lear for years and is confident in its abilities to provide quality support that demonstrates cost savings.

Duncan and Signature partner

Duncan Aviation is partnering with Signature Flight Support Corporation's Signature TECHNICAIR in the opening of two new satellite avionics shops in Missouri: one in Kansas City and the other in St Louis. The Kansas City avionics shop is located at Kansas City's Downtown Airport and the St Louis avionics shop is located at the Spirit of St Louis Airport. Both shops are

staffed with fully certified technicians and have full avionics line services and avionics installation capabilities.

"We are excited to provide avionics services in these two busy, corporate airports," says Matt Nelson, Duncan Aviation's Manager of Satellite Operations. "Our avionics services are well known throughout the industry and we are confident that these facilities will be excellent extensions for our avionics and avionics installations services."

JetBrokers sees recovery

JetBrokers Europe, the Farnborough-based European arm of JetBrokers Inc, is experiencing an increased demand for midsize pre-owned business jets. The company has experienced a steady growth of interest since the end of February, reinforcing current reports that optimism is returning to the industry and recovery is beginning to emerge. Currently, JetBrokers is receiving multiple new enquiries every week from po-

tential buyers and vendors with demand largely focused on the midsize jet market.

JetBrokers Europe Managing Director, Tim Barber comments: "The global pre-owned business jet inventory has fallen somewhat in the past 12 months and, as economic recovery strengthens, we expect to see even greater activity in the pre-owned market. Buyers are definitely starting to return, are more optimistic and more ready to commit. Those looking to acquire high quality pre-owned business jets at attractive prices will find some great deals around."

ASM spreads its wings

Aviation Services Management (ASM), one of the Indian region's longest-serving flight support services providers, will launch a Mumbai branch, targeting the growth in high net worth individuals and corporate jet travel. It marks the independent company's second Indian venture, complementing its Goa operation which started in 2006, and will be staffed by six sales repre-



sentatives. India's corporate jet fleet stands at 450 today, and the number is projected to hit 1,200 by 2020.

"We've opened this branch to serve better the 20-plus clients we have in India, and beyond," explains Founder & Managing Director Vito Gomes. "We're targeting the high net worth individuals in India who enjoy in-flight luxuries to and from India, and we're also look-

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Fokker: re-skinning

In recent months, Netherlands-based Fokker Aircraft Services (FAS) has introduced re-skinning to its maintenance, repair and overhaul capabilities. The company is now one of only a few MRO providers in Europe able to offer this important service. A brand-new vacuum applicator was installed in FAS' interior shop last year, enabling Fokker Aircraft Services to easily re-skin the side panels, luggage bins and ceiling panels of aircraft interiors, no matter the size or aircraft type. Any print of certified material can be applied.

"Re-skinning is a much more economical solution for older aircraft than installing a complete new interior," explains Robert Koolen, Fokker Aircraft Services Sales Manager, Airframe MRO. "With so many cost-conscious operators actively seeking ways to prolong the life of their investment, they quickly recognise that re-skinning offers an easy, effective and affordable alternative."

The vacuum applicator is also being used to facilitate Fokker Aircraft Services' VIP completions activities in its Aircraft Conversions and Completion Centre, and is part of the company's overall strategy to increase its back-shop capabilities and enhance its one-stop-shop philosophy. Because the machine is not type-specific, it is already being used at FAS to refurbish Fokker 100s and F28s, as well as Boeing, Airbus, Bombardier and Embraer aircraft.

ing into many other areas where we can provide better services for our clients, such as logistics and operations support."

Jet Aviation: refurbishment

Jet Aviation Singapore has recently completed MRO and FBO facility upgrades to improve customer comfort and appeal, safety and security. Jet Aviation has just upgraded its MRO and FBO location in Singapore to enhance passenger and pilot comfort, to improve its safety and security equipment, and to refresh the interior design and furnishings. The refurbishments included fully refurbishing the entrance and customer lounge, bathrooms, meeting room and pilot's lounge, and installation of a surrounding fence and closed-circuit cameras. In addition, the hangar's roof was replaced and the entire facility was also repainted and fully refurbished. "These refurbishments demonstrate our commitment to providing our customers the highest quality, safety and security standards they have come to expect," says Sebastian Groeger, Senior Vice President & General Manager of Jet Aviation's Asian Pacific division in Singapore.

PRISM safety training in China

PRISM, the Safety Management System (SMS) solutions provider, has completed comprehensive SMS Training for Deer Jet, China's largest charter jet operator and aircraft management company. PRISM delivered an SMS overview to the company's senior executives as well as provided company-wide training for over 300 Deer

Jet employees. Deer Jet selected PRISM's training experts as part of its initiative to integrate SMS into Deer Jet's existing management system. The PRISM team spent eight days on site coaching and actively working with Deer Jet's safety, quality, and operational staff to improve and refine their processes and procedures. This ensures Deer Jet's corporate culture has adequate documentation, implementation and integration of the four components of SMS. The four components include policy and objectives, risk management, safety assurance, and safety promotion.

AJW launches spares service

A J Walter Aviation (AJW) is partnering with Loudoun Aviation, the internationally recognised business jet dealer based near Washington DC, to deliver spares support excellence to the corporate sector. Offering a range of 24/7 AOG, power-by-the-hour, pooling and daily service options, AJW is able to support corporate operators of ACJ and BBJ aircraft, as well as all Boeing corporate conversions. Combined, AJW and Loudoun offer almost a century of valuable experience to provide specialist world class services to owners and operators of larger cabin long-range business jets tailored to their unique flight profiles. These programmes will immediately deliver tangible and measurable advantages. BBJ and ACJ operators are able to benefit from the flexible financial advantages currently enjoyed by AJW's commercial customers across a wide range of support services, and the company's strategic stock held in conveniently located hubs around the world including Miami, LA, Memphis, London, Dubai and Singapore. AJW and Loudoun Aviation will ensure that, with immediate effect, ACJ and BBJ owners and operators can enjoy the buying power and economies of scale that airlines experience.

Embraer agrees co-op with AVIC

Embraer SA has signed a framework agreement with AVIC (Aviation Industry Corporation of China) aiming to implement a Legacy 600/650 production line in China, using the infrastructure, financial resources and workforce of their joint venture company, Harbin Embraer Aircraft Industry Company (HEAI). In the next few weeks, the parties will finalise the details of the project and execute the relevant documentation. Embraer





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and AVIC recognise the rapid growth of the Chinese executive aviation market and are encouraged with the potential of the Legacy 600/650 to fulfil the requirements of this demanding market. Embraer's corporate presence in the PRC dates back from the year 2000, and there are more than 80 Embraer aircraft currently operated in Greater China. HEAI was established in January 2003, and has produced and delivered 39 ERJ 145 aircraft to date.

Genesis: Cessna Citation dealer
Cessna Aircraft Company has announced the appointment of Genesis Aviation of Shanghai as an Authorised Sales Representative in China for Citation business jets. Genesis joins long-time Cessna representative Aviation Supplies in marketing Citations in the People's Republic of China.

"We are thrilled to offer additional avenues for the burgeoning market in China to learn more about the benefits of business aviation," says Trevor Esling, Cessna Vice President, International Sales.

"Because of their work in corporate mergers and acquisitions, they are uniquely positioned to advise growing manufacturing, mining and finance companies, as well as high net worth individuals on the benefits of business jet use and ownership."

Bombardier: Safety Standdown
Bombardier Aerospace has announced that the highly acclaimed Bombardier Safety Standdown is expanding to Asia with the introduction of its first event in Shanghai, China, scheduled to be held at the Le Royal Meridien Shanghai on Thursday, June 9, 2011.

The Bombardier Safety Standdown pioneering approach to safety training provides pilots, aircrew and flight departments with insight into the factors that precipitate errors in judgment and highlights ways to mitigate them. Focusing on the human factors behind safety in the aircraft, the seminar format combines knowledge-based and skill-based training with a line-up of internationally recognised speakers and presenters.

Altaire mock-up on tour

Piper Aircraft's single-engine Altaire jet mock-up is on tour. During May it will be near Wichita,



Oriens Advisors restructures

Oriens Advisors, the 18 month old aviation consultancy specialising in providing support for the full range of businesses associated with the entry level jet value chain, has restructured its management team. Original founder, Edwin Brenninkmeyer, takes the role of CEO at its London Biggin Hill Airport offices. Michael Ricks, also an Oriens founder, becomes Chief Operating Officer responsible for the business operations, along with supporting growth and development of the company both in Europe and further afield. A new role of Chairman has been created and this is filled by Archie Garden, the third founder, who was recently appointed Airport Director at Cambridge Airport. The appointment followed his leadership of an Oriens advisory services engagement for The Marshall Group. Archie remains a Non-Executive director on the board and will continue to support strategic development of Oriens on an ongoing basis.

Kan, at the Great Plains Air Expo in Salina on May 11, and in Kansas City at Johnson County Executive Airport on May 12 for display at both locations by Kansas City Aviation Center. It then travels to Nashville, Tenn, and Destin, Fla, with SouthEast Piper. In June, it will make stops in Georgia, Florida and Massachusetts. It will then stop in Chicago on its way to exhibit at EAA AirVenture Oshkosh 2012 in July. At the end of the year, it will have been on display in 16 states and Canada.

Piper Aircraft's high-performance single-engine very light business jet gives customers a spacious cabin to complement efficient acquisition and operating costs. Piper has committed 175 engineering personnel to the jet programme. De-

tailed design drawings are being released at the scheduled pace and top-level assembly drawings are in progress. First production parts for the first of four conforming articles have been produced and the company is on schedule for first flight of conforming articles in 2012.

Al Bateen posts 18% increase

Al Bateen Executive Airport, the Gulf Region's first and only dedicated private aviation airport operated and managed by Abu Dhabi Airports Company (ADAC), has announced an 18% increase in commercial aircraft movements in the first quarter of 2011 versus the same period last year. The executive airport continues to register high double-digit growth in its commercial traffic from both based and visiting aircraft operators.

Al Bateen registered 15 new visiting aircraft operators in March 2011 alone, whilst based operators continue to take delivery of new aircraft. In March 2011, Al Bateen based Al Jaber Aviation added a fifth aircraft, a Lineage 1000, to its fleet. Falcon Aviation Services (FAS), the largest and longest established of the based operators at Al Bateen Executive Airport, registered a strong increase in Q1 traffic with over 8% growth versus the same period in 2010. In addition to private jet activities, FAS also conducted several hundred, helicopter movements at Bateen across their offshore, private and tourism/charter sectors during the first quarter of 2011.

Cambridge: Air Ambulance

UK's Cambridge Airport is bolstering the full time presence of the East Anglian Air Ambulance (EAAA) service with the new, dedicated operations centre officially opened on April 19, 2011. The "Archie Morson Centre" has been equipped and decorated courtesy of The Marshall Group, and will be at the heart of all EAAA operations in the west of the Anglian region, providing the base for paramedics, doctors and pilots who operate the emergency service.

Citation service facility – Prague

Cessna Aircraft Company has established a Citation business aircraft service facility in Prague at sister company Bell Helicopter's service facility at Prague Ruzyně International Airport. Certificated by the European

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Al Bateen – new FBO Manager

Al Bateen Executive Airport has appointed Pauline Smith to a new role as FBO Manager, effective immediately. Pauline joins from ExecuJet Middle East where for the past three years she has been responsible for the day to day running of its highly regarded FBO facility at Dubai International Airport.

Aviation Safety Agency in February, the centre has already begun performing scheduled and unscheduled maintenance operations. The new Citation service centre, sharing nearly 3,000m² of shop space, is staffed and managed by Cessna.

Cessna is also assembling its second Mobile Service Unit (MSU) for deployment in central Europe to complement the Prague Citation Service Centre. The first Citation MSU, owned by Cessna's Paris Citation Service Centre, was recently positioned in Lyons, France, and covers southern France, Switzerland, northern Italy and northern Spain.

Cessna also recently began construction of a new service centre in Valencia, Spain, scheduled to begin operations in 2012. Cessna opened its first European service centre in Paris in 1997.

StandardAero Falcon 50EX upgrade

StandardAero Business Aviation has announced that it has successfully completed the Rockwell Collins Pro Line 4 to Pro Line 21 cockpit upgrade on a Falcon 50EX business jet. The announcement makes StandardAero Business Aviation the first maintenance, repair and overhaul service provider to successfully complete the retrofit.

Duncan Aviation certifies wi-fi

Duncan Aviation has recently received a Supplemental Type Certification for wi-fi operations in a Gulfstream IV/IVsp aircraft. The certification allows wi-fi access in the cabin for Aircell's Gogo Biz Inflight Internet service.

Raisbeck: 3,000th King Air

Raisbeck Engineering is celebrating a major milestone with the 3,000th Beechcraft King Air to be equipped with Raisbeck Performance Systems. Hawker Pacific, headquartered in Sydney, Australia, installed the systems last January. There is at least one Raisbeck System on 50% of the 6,000 King Airs in operation. This King Air B200C is BL166 and has had an EPIC PLATINUM package installed. The package included Hartzell/Raisbeck power props, ram air recovery system, enhanced performance leading edges, dual aft body strakes, high floatation gear doors and crown wing lockers.

The aircraft is owned and operated by the Royal Flying Doctor Service of Australia, and is the 31st RFDS King Air to have Raisbeck's Performance Systems installed. Hawker Pacific will complete two more RFDS King Air B200Cs, BL167 and BL168 with their Raisbeck EPIC PLATINUM installations by the end of June.

GE Aviation recognised

GE Aviation was recognised with the Corporate Award for Balance at the 37th Annual Lindbergh Award Celebration and Dinner, which took place at the Sun 'n FUN during the 2011 International Fly-In & Expo. The Foundation's Corporate Award for Balance is an honour bestowed on organisations whose concern for the environment and dedication to improving quality of life are demonstrated through their business practices.

Cessna takes 30 orders

Cessna Aircraft Company secured orders for 30 aircraft at the Sun 'n Fun International Fly-In & Expo. "The opening days of Sun 'n Fun were very positive, and while the storm on Thursday interrupted that mood somewhat, the exhibitors and the crowds bounced back to finish the show strong," says Mark Paolucci, Cessna's Senior Vice President of Sales and Marketing. "Cessna took 16 orders for the new Corvalis TTX and 13 orders for high-wing single-engine pistons. Also, a Cessna Sales Team Authorised Representative took an order for a Grand Caravan."

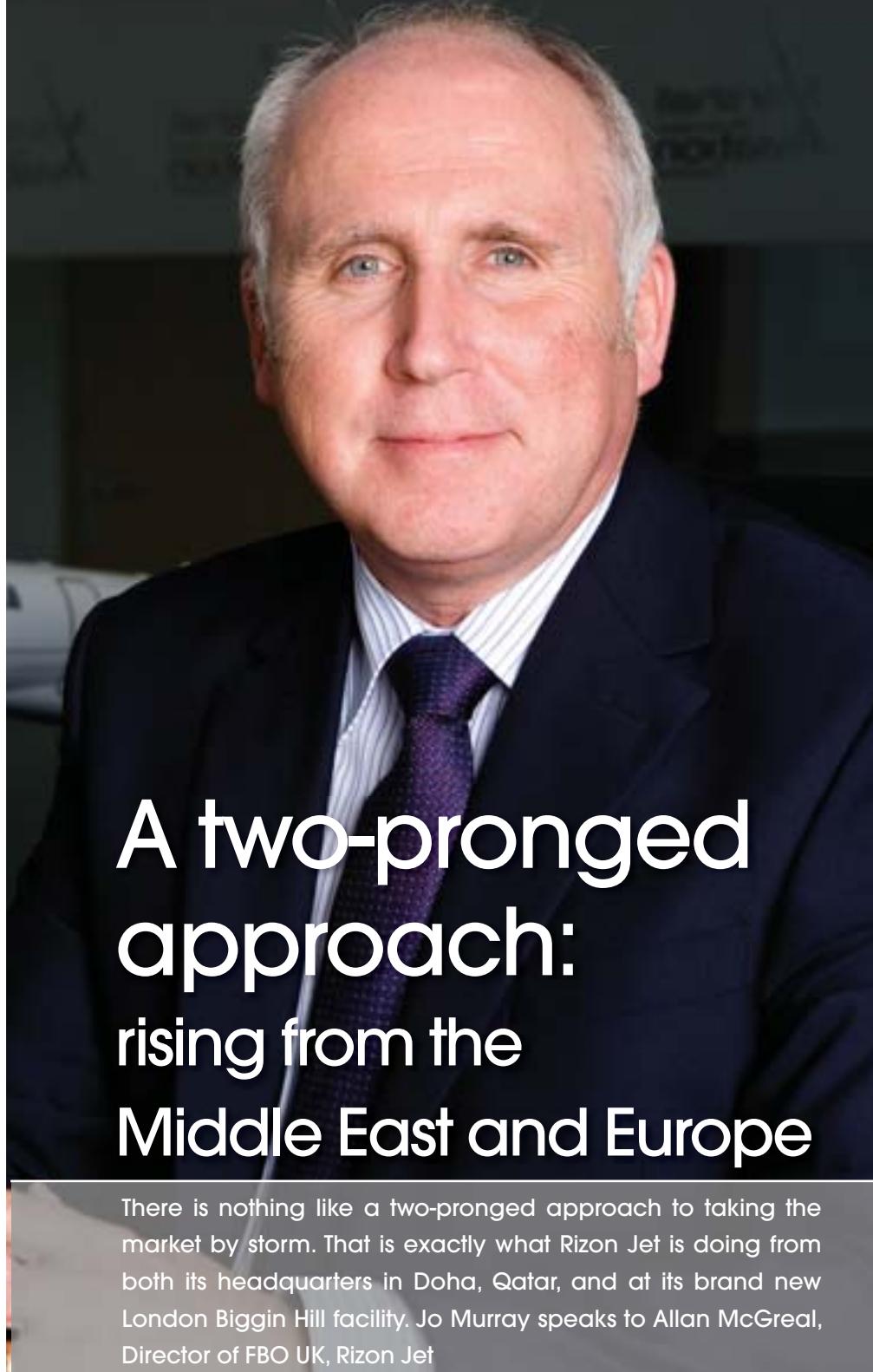
Bombardier boosts network

Bombardier Aerospace has strengthened its aftermarket service network for Challenger business aircraft customers in Latin America by increasing capabilities at its two prominent maintenance service providers in the region. Aerovitro SA of Monterrey, Nuevo Leon, Mexico, has now been named an Authorised Service Facility for Challenger 300 and Challenger 604/605 aircraft, and Aviacion Atlantico Sur SA of Buenos Aires, Argentina, is now appointed an Aircraft-On-Ground Line Maintenance Facility for Challenger 604/605 aircraft.

LEA celebrates 15 years

London Executive Aviation (LEA) is celebrating the company's 15th anniversary, looking back on sustained success through dramatic years for global aviation. Founded on April 1, 1996 with just one aircraft, LEA has rapidly grown to become one of Europe's largest and most respected executive aircraft operators, now flying a diverse charter fleet of 25 jets. Starting out at the company's headquarters at Stapleford Airport, LEA today operates seven bases around London and holds a worldwide air operator's certificate (AOC).

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A two-pronged approach: rising from the Middle East and Europe

There is nothing like a two-pronged approach to taking the market by storm. That is exactly what Rizon Jet is doing from both its headquarters in Doha, Qatar, and at its brand new London Biggin Hill facility. Jo Murray speaks to Allan McGreal, Director of FBO UK, Rizon Jet

London has become a honey pot for Qatari investors and business aviation is no exception. Leading the way is Rizon Jet which is part of Ghanim Bin Saad Al Saad & Sons Holdings (GSSG Holdings), headquartered in Doha with influential Qatari businessman Ghanim Bin Saad Al Saad at the helm. The GSSG Holdings is a large private holding that has over 30 businesses around

the world with a wide range of interests ranging from real estate, manufacturing, engineering, luxury marina developments, automobiles and aviation.

Two sizeable hangars and FBO/VIP Terminal development projects have been undertaken at both Doha International Airport and London Biggin Hill. Both shall be fully-fledged EASA 145 aircraft maintenance facilities, servicing Bombardier and Hawker as well as other

business jets. Talks with several aircraft manufacturers with regards to Authorized Service Center status are ongoing.

The London Biggin Hill Airport facilities comprise a new 130,000m² hangar and FBO/VIP Terminal facility. The two-level FBO/VIP Terminal is designed to international tastes while incorporating the best of Arabic and contemporary European style. The ground floor level of the FBO/VIP Terminal features numerous open seating areas and the mezzanine floor offers enclosed private lounge areas for customers as well as a crew lounge with work stations and a dedicated rest area. Separate prayer rooms for men and women are also being built.

Coincident with the expansion in the UK, Rizon Jet is advancing with a similar sized facility at its headquarters at Doha International Airport, Qatar. Accessible via its own apron and with an airport parking area of approx 5,810m², the facility will have a hangar large enough to accommodate four Global XRS or nine Challenger 604/605 aircraft. It hosts in-house workshops and technical offices covering 1,579m². The 737m² adjacent FBO/VIP Terminal at Doha features five private lounges, an open lounge area with a water feature, indoor garden, duty free area as well as a male and female prayer rooms.

Watching luxury emerge from rough terrain in the Middle East has become a significant spectacle of the last 30 years; seeing the same occurrence in and around London is far less commonplace. One could be forgiven for thinking that London had become saturated with aviation assets over the course of the last three decades, but Rizon Jet has proved there are still gems to be polished and new concepts to be brought to the London market.

McGreal says that the whole Rizon Jet philosophy is based on providing to its customers the best of the Middle Eastern hospitality, a level of service not seen in Europe before – but there is more to it than that. Rizon Jet UK Ltd is not just a portal to the UK; it offers a plethora of opportunity to dwell, be productive and enjoy the facilities and services Rizon Jet is providing. Of course Biggin Hill is also a doorway to London, the world's financial capital.

"The idea is that we offer a true 5 star service, whether people come to it by air or land" (McGreal)

Essentially, says McGreal, Rizon Jet is dedicated not only to perfecting departure and arrival by private jet; but it is also working with the intangible bit in the middle of business aviation – the bit where passengers are often ignored and left to their own devices rather than engaged, served and become part of the commercial *raison d'être* of the organisation.

This concept of increasing and improving the dwell time has a number of consequences. The first is that McGreal is charged not only with ensuring traffic into Rizon Jet's facilities is commensurate with the investment made by GSSG Holdings; it is also imperative that the community around Biggin Hill is invited in to provide services to a wider market than they would normally enjoy and to benefit from an international "passing trade".

"The idea is that we offer a true 5 star service," says McGreal, "whether people come to it by air or land."

Secondly, points out McGreal, when passengers flying into Rizon Jet's Biggin Hill facility choose to stay and transact business *in situ*, the aircraft they own or charter become highly visible to business partners and associates. Essentially, the aircraft becomes part of that passenger's business "profile", demonstrating the lengths that he or she has gone to in order to close that deal, explore new opportunities or simply network. Where else in the world can a man or woman come to the table to complete a transaction with their private jet in full view, almost a party to the deal itself?

"We have to make sure that every aspect of this business speaks to the needs of the market," says McGreal. To this end, apart from the copious facilities already evident at Biggin Hill, the airport has cleared a site for the construction of a hotel adjacent to the FBO, thereby adding a much needed service not only for Rizon Jet's customers but also for the local area.

McGreal is also emphatic that Rizon Jet cannot afford to act in isolation. "We have to think beyond this UK facility which is why Doha is so important," he says, adding that it is already the beginnings of a network. Rizon Jet's management does not exclude the possibility of there being further Rizon Jet facilities internationally over time.

He is also very clear about expected outcomes. Rizon Jet is not just a fabulous FBO/VIP Terminal; it is also a top-end aircraft maintenance outfit with EASA 145 and Qatar maintenance centre accreditations at both locations. "We have to have an integrated model or else we will have to rely on others," says McGreal. "And we have to match these capabilities to our customers' profiles."

Whilst Rizon Jet is emerging as one of the newly formed giants of private aviation, McGreal is quick to support the small business aviation organisations that nurture the market at the smaller end. There is progress in any market and business aviation – hopefully upwards now that the market is improving – exhibits plenty of fluidity.

The actual location of the UK facilities – at London Biggin Hill – is rarely recognised sufficiently for the opportunities it offers the business aviation community. The runway can accommodate an ACJ or BBJ with no difficulties. Landing aids are satisfactory and continual investment is expected in airfield lighting. With a new airport Managing Director on board, there are high expectations of Biggin Hill's ability to absorb significant business aviation traffic coming into London – especially with the 2012

Olympics in mind – but there is also a strong community outreach programme in place to protect the interests of the local populace.

With regard to aircraft management and charter, in the UK Rizon Jet is collaborating with AOC holder Oryx Jet. In Qatar, an AOC was granted in May 2009. In fact, Rizon was the first private jet company in Doha to achieve such status.

A management team has been assembled carefully and effectively so that Rizon Jet is truly ready to roll. Apart from McGreal, Chief Executive Patrick Enz has established a strong international team of business aviation professionals to help run the business. These include: Jackie Nikolajsen, General Manager at the Biggin Hill facility, former Technical Director of ExecuJet Europe A/S (Denmark) in Copenhagen; and Faisal Alam, General Manager at the Doha facility, former Chief Operating Officer at Bahrain-based Delmun Aviation Services.

Right now, McGreal is excited by the "empty page opportunity" that has been presented to him. He says that, in many ways, clients will come to the brand new facility and influence the ways in which it will grow and prosper. McGreal's "empty page" is sure to fill up very soon. ●



“It’s all about the service,” says Seno

Lou Seno is the Chief Executive Officer of JSSI, the largest independent provider of hourly cost maintenance programmes for business aircraft and engines. He has just completed a full year overseeing the launch of the European headquarters in Farnborough, UK, and providing leadership to the JSSI team based there. Jo Murray catches up with him to find out more about JSSI's gateway to Europe

With over 300 clients and more than 400 contracts, Europe is JSSI's second largest market after the US. For years, JSSI had outsourced sales in the European region but, in early 2009, the company took a new look at doing business in the region and decided to establish a European headquarter office.

Of course 2009 was the depths of recession so the new location was definitely not about ramping up sales in a difficult market; rather it was to re-focus JSSI's approach to Europe and to "elevate our level of service here," says Seno, adding that the US and the European markets show considerable discrepancies.

In the US, he points out, there is a prevalence of FAA Part 91 Flight Departments which buy their own aircraft, hire pilots, take on engineers, rent a hangar and then operate the aircraft as part of the business – with JSSI or another organisation providing the maintenance plan.

By contrast, in Europe, that model is very rare. In Europe there is a plethora of aircraft management companies who undertake the same work as a Flight Department on behalf of a corporation. The different approach means that, when JSSI goes in to negotiate a maintenance plan with a European client, it is probably going to be the aircraft owner, the management company and JSSI round the table. The contract is always signed with the true owner but contract-signing activity may be the only direct contact JSSI has with the owner.



Working with JSSI is simple. Under its maintenance programme, JSSI agrees on an hourly rate with the owner but does not perform any of the work itself. Rather, the airframe, engine or both are dispatched to an OEM-owned or OEM-authorised maintenance facility for overhaul or repair with JSSI Technical Advisors monitoring the entire process.

What is confusing to the uninitiated is that JSSI thereby becomes both a competitor and a client to the OEM – most of which market their own maintenance plans to the business jet fraternity. There are GE's OnPoint, Pratt & Whitney Canada's ESP, Williams' Total Assurance Plan and Rolls-Royce's Corporate Care programmes, to name a few – JSSI competes

with them all. The relationship with the OEM is undoubtedly complicated but, at the same time, it is successful. We know that because JSSI is actively courted as a customer by the OEM, points out Seno.

So why would a customer go to JSSI if the OEM is also well placed to offer its own maintenance programmes? Seno responds: "It's all about the service." He points out that JSSI has numerous technical advisors available to the client so that, in effect, JSSI becomes the client's *de facto* Director of Maintenance, with all questions answered and all actions undertaken in sync with the owner of the aircraft, his schedule and his expectations.

"If there is a problem with the aircraft, the operator simply pulls out the JSSI card and talks to someone," says Seno. It is the human touch that makes JSSI successful and this is important now that the pool of business jet owners is so much wider and diverse than the traditional pool of aviators, experts and enthusiasts.

Seno is also quick to point out that JSSI provides a high level of financial security. "The maintenance reserves are deposited into an irrevocable third-party trust," he says. "These reserves are secure and available to pay for maintenance events when they occur. The clients' maintenance reserves are never co-mingled with JSSI corporate funds."

Not only do JSSI's maintenance programmes compete with those promulgated by the OEMs, JSSI also competes with Flight Departments who manage their own maintenance reserves and their own maintenance

**"If there is a problem with the aircraft,
the operator simply pulls out the
JSSI card and talks to someone" (Seno)**

plans. But Seno points out that, in today's cost-aware environment – especially for corporate travel – there is an imperative to be transparent which puts JSSI ahead of the game. All costs are under the microscope today and companies owning aircraft have to be more fiscally aware. Seno says transparency is a selling point for JSSI as it is founded on values of honesty and integrity and establishes hourly rates that are straightforward and based on actual maintenance costs.

In fact, JSSI has put in place a portal through which customers report their flight hours. JSSI is then in an informed position to call each customer and discuss overhaul actions as flight hours increase. "We start you thinking about the event 90-120 days out. We are proactive," he says.

Personal relationships are also imperative to JSSI. In the US there is a prevalence of owner-flyers who manage their business schedules through masterminding their own flights. To date, JSSI has done very well with the owner-

flew Phenom market and has built up significant personal relationships. Seno points out that a significant proportion of these Phenom owner-flyers have grown out of the piston and turboprop markets. They have never written a large cheque for a turbine engine overhaul and are unlikely to start now. JSSI's engine maintenance plans have been a hit with this slice of the market because they manage the maintenance, the cost and the owner's knowledge-base as he moves up into more ambitious aircraft types.

While the Phenom has been great for business development, there are certain assets JSSI will not touch. These assets are basically "old metal" and "oddballs". Anything aged more than 20 years is unlikely to meet the criteria.

Seno is cautiously optimistic about market growth as we move off the bottom of the economic curve. JSSI had a very strong December and he says he is "pretty happy with enrolments" for Q1 of 2011. There is still a long way to go given that a large proportion of JSSI

revenues are derived from US Corporate Flight Departments. He comments that the day after the three senior management teams from the big US car manufacturers flew to Washington in their private jets to ask for financial assistance, corporate flight hours dropped like a stone. There is nothing like bad PR to cause shareholders to crack down on expenditures.

It is a case of "onward and upward" at JSSI. With the European headquarters now in its second year and an Asian office launched in Macau at the beginning of 2011, there is plenty to look forward to as JSSI continues to expand its global presence. Of course Asia is a large-cabin, long-range market and, as Chinese air space opens up, Seno is confident the region offers significant promise.

For now, Seno has plenty to conjure with. Recession brings change in terms of client types, aircraft populations and fiscal attitudes. We may never see another 2008 but we will still see business aviation peaks – it is just not clear yet what they will look like. ●

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Swiss-based Pilatus says living the single life is just grand, and although it will admit that it is working on something new, it will not break the silence about the new addition to the family. However, it is happy to talk about the PC12 and the remaining thorn in its side: The European ban on single engine commercial IFR operations. Phil Nasskau speaks to Vice President, General Aviation, Ignatz Gretener



Single and lovin' it

While Gretener admits that the company still has to come out of a very tough market, he says it is better than two years ago. However, he also says that the company has to make sure that potential customers that did not complete their orders on the PC12 during the downturn know that they could actually be more effective if they bought the aircraft.

He is bullish that the company's aircraft is top notch. "I don't want to be arrogant but we really don't have a weakness. The Pilatus is a very strong product, which we've proved with more than 1,000 deliveries in a relatively short time," he says.

He believes that the main strength is the aircraft's versatility. "It can just do so many things; the competition cannot match it," he

explains. However, in Europe, Gretener believes the ban on single engine IFR operations is costing Pilatus at least 10 sales each year.

"We know there are customers that would operate this aircraft commercially. We have been in contact with a variety of operators, including MedEvac operators, but the fact is the EU still refuses to budge," he says.

For Gretener, he says the situation is very political. "Outside of Europe every region allows single engine turboprops like Socata TBMs, Cessna Caravans or PC12s to work commercially. Accident rates and reports all prove that the aircraft is perfectly safe. It's modern and built to very high standards. The EU seems to have other priorities than allowing such safe airplanes to fly commercially," he says.

That's not to say that Gretener and the rest of the team at Pilatus aren't trying to get this ban lifted. "We have been lobbying and writing letters. In fact, a few years ago at

EBACE, we held a press conference that pretty much complained publicly that the EU is not moving forwards. The authorities have a certain process ongoing, however it is very slow."

Perhaps the biggest frustration for Gretener is the list of happy commercial customers throughout the world. "We have so many international customers who successfully fly the PC12 in all kinds of commercial operations! The ban will be lifted but we just don't know when," he says.

"If you look at the facts, there's just no reason why it shouldn't happen. Everyone else in the world can do it, why won't Europe make the decision. Personally I find it very difficult to understand why an old piston twin can fly over London [commercially] but a modern turboprop cannot," he says.

Aside from the ongoing battle, he says the company is working as always to keep on improving.



"We strongly believe in the local aspect of sales and support, and we've been number one nine times in a row" (Gretener)

For the PC12, North America still represents the biggest market, however Gretener says that, in line with other manufacturers, regions outside of the US are going from strength to strength. He points out South Africa as being perfect for the PC12 because of its ability to utilise bush flying and other unprepared strips. "Not to mention places like South America and Australia has always been a traditionally strong market for us," he says.

Gretener says he believes that Pilatus' philosophy of a strong dealer network and demonstrating the aircraft contribute to sales success. "We make sure to fly the aircraft to fly-ins so we can demonstrate it to potential customers, because in the end you have to fly people in the aircraft. If you can show a customer that by flying a PC12 it is the most efficient way to fly in GA, then he's sure to buy it," he says.

While all of Europe accounts for around 20-25% of total deliveries, Gretener is keen to point out that the Middle East holds potential, even though to date it has only delivered a small number of aircraft there. He says that this is because they are still trying to work on developing the region in line with its strategy. "When we develop a region, we find out who is the best potential local partner and then build up a business model with them where they invest their own money to build up a Pilatus centre for support and sales. Then, after about one to two years, there's local expertise. Right now, we are in the process of finding that local partner," he explains.

However, even with the Middle East's love of big cabin, long range and outright opulence, he still sees a good market for the PC12. "Firstly people might already have these large

"Business is better than perhaps during the crisis and we are seeing more movements, as well as more discussions with customers. I certainly wouldn't say that we're back in the very strong markets of three years ago, but we are seeing a clear improvement. Certainly, there is more interest, and we are seeing more sales than we saw two years ago," explains Gretener.

And with 79 deliveries last year, Gretener reckons "we'll have a decent year if it continues like this", and that the capacity is scalable anywhere between 75 and 100 aircraft per year.

However he still sees the potential to increase the company's market share "through hard work". "We work through a very proven, and experienced, sales and support network with independent dealers all over the world. We are especially working hard to convey what makes the PC12 so special in anything from a flying doctor role to combined cargo to passenger transport to VIP flying," he says.

aircraft, but typically they can't fly them themselves. The PC12, they can. Secondly, it really is a utilitarian workhorse. It can support an organisation by flying materials or flying people into working areas, or even MedEvac, in situations where it doesn't make sense to fly a bigger aircraft."

Naturally, Asia is on the horizon where Gretener says the PC12's ruggedness as a real benefit. "We can see the aircraft flying from a regional airport into the smaller gravel or unprepared strips," he says.

Gretener says that Pilatus' support is second to none as all of its dealers have an obligation to build up their support organisation. He says: "They sell the aircraft to the customer and then take care of it for him. And this is done with local people and expertise; obviously our people help by overseeing somewhat and helping out with technical support and tooling.

"We strongly believe in the local aspect of sales and support, and we've been number one nine times in a row," he explains. That is not to say that the company is resting on its laurels. Gretener says that there are always things that the company can do better. For example, he says, there is constant effort from everyone at Pilatus to improve, from bettering the people that work on the aircraft to periodic recurrent training.

He believes that Pilatus' training philosophy goes hand-in-hand with its local dealer and support network. "We have a service centre manager who visits every service centre and then works on an individual action plan for each centre to help identify areas of improvement for each organisation. We have to make sure that each service centre meets our standards," he adds. ●



GE's billion-dollar baby

For GE's Brad Mottier, Vice President, Business & General Aviation, it has been a good three years. When the parent, GE Aviation, decided to set up a pure GA and business aviation division, it set the lofty goal of \$1 billion turnover by 2020. Now just three years in, Mottier says that the figure is going to be higher

When the division was set up in January 2008, with Mottier at the helm, the goal was \$1 billion. However, he says that because it has already won a lot of business, that this figure is under review. "From where we are sitting today, it is clearly achievable. So naturally we're now going through our growth playbook. What we have today equals \$1 billion.

"Now we are looking to accelerate our plans, and although we probably won't have our new target number until sometime in June, it is not just going to be a little bit more, like \$1.1 billion or \$1.2 billion," he says.

And with that target in mind, Mottier says that the emphasis is on creating business and opportunities. Back in 2008 it had the support work for the CF34 engine found on Bombardier Challenger aircraft, as well as what he calls some legacy products on early Learjets and Dassault Falcons.

Naturally, the amount of work on the CF34 did slow down recently, he says. "But we do see that recovering. Larger cabin aircraft have not had as significant an impact when compared to the medium segment. So I think our sustaining business is pretty well positioned."

The HF120 engine



Part of the \$1 billion in revenue is coming from the joint venture with Honda for the HF120 engine, which he says is moving along well. Mottier says that the HF120 has nearly 1,500 hours of testing on 13 engine builds and is approaching the tail end of the certification process. "We have some tests that still need to run, but these will take place in 2011. We're full throttle ahead to complete our certification."

The engine is flying on the HondaJet already, he says, and so far, the engine is "running beautifully". "The engines are flying on the HondaJet and are exhibiting carefree handling of thrust and are supporting top-level performance and efficiency."

As such, the engine has already demonstrated performance up to altitudes of 46,000ft and at speeds of Mach 0.8 in test cells. And because of GE's military business, it has access to the altitude test chambers where it can control everything from altitude, temperature, pressure and air inlet speeds. Mottier says the company

was that certain on the HF120 that when it ran the first test it was in the altitude chamber. "Competing companies typically run at sea level or local altitude. We didn't," he boasts.

"We're very excited to be on the HondaJet. Honda is a great partner and this is a major game-changing aircraft. It will burn less fuel and fly much faster for a significantly reduced cost," he says. "And making sure that the HF120 has a flawless EIS for the HondaJet is a must for us."

The HondaJet engine is not the only project at the front of Mottier's mind. "The company acquired Walter Aircraft Engines back in 2008 with the sole purpose of moving GE into the small turboprop market. "This was not a size of engine that we had built before. Our strategy was to acquire the proven, robustly designed M601 series engine that was developed during the Soviet era in Czechoslovakia. We would then upgrade the M601 with modern GE aerodynamic, mechanical and material science technologies to make it a very competitive product and offer PT6 customers an alternative where there hasn't been one for many years," he says.

And GE is ready to do battle with Pratt & Whitney Canada's PT6. Mottier says: "Compared to an engine of the same relative horsepower in the PT6, we have the equivalent, or slightly better fuel burn, less maintenance expenses and better temperature margins."

Since GE Aviation acquired the M601 engine, he says, the transformation into the new H80 has been dramatic. "The significant improvements in the power and performance of the H80 engine really speak for the technical expertise that GE has. The M601 featured 2D aerodynamic blade designs, which was replaced with GE's 3D aerodynamic design capabilities that we leveraged from our TechX and GEnX programmes," he says.

Additionally, the H80 engine received some upgraded materials in the engine core which Mottier says saw the starting 840 thermodynamic horsepower in the latest M601 core upped to 1070 with the H80 – without increasing the

"That's a clear indication of the benefit of infusing proven GE technology into the new engine" (Mottier)

core's size. "That's a clear indication of the benefit of infusing proven GE technology into the new engine. It will bring huge benefits to our customers," he says.

The H80 is slated for certification in June, says Mottier. And interest is high. The first application is the Thrush 510G crop-duster, a significantly redesigned version of Thrush's basic PT6-powered aircraft. In the Czech Republic, the H80 was chosen by Aircraft Industries to upgrade



their venerable, M601-powered L410 commuter aircraft. Elsewhere in Russia, Technoavia has selected the H80 for its twin turboprop utility/trainer aircraft. Not to mention that there are plans to introduce the engine into a King Air as an STC engine upgrade conversion. He says that the company is also speaking to a "number" of aircraft manufacturers that are interested in the initial 800shp H80 or a derivative thereof.

Moving on from small engines to the recent announcement that GE has been selected by Bombardier for a GE engine to power the Global 7000 and Global 8000, it is clear that this is a large advancement, because not only will it mark the first TechX core application for a business jet, but it is the first time that GE will deliver an "integrated propulsion system".

Mottier explains that a move to integrated propulsion systems is a clear step forward for improving efficiency and reducing drag. "In the past, the engine has been designed by engine guys to a certain set of specifications. Then the airframe has contracted out the design of the cowling and nacelle to someone else.

"With these products and engineering getting more and more sophisticated, and trying to reduce both fuel burn and emissions, there is a technical synergy, and real benefit, by looking at the engine, the nacelle, the ducting and the mountings as a propulsion unit. For example, some of the structure that we might other-



**The Technoavia Rysachok
Aircraft which will be powered
by the H80 engine**

**The TechX integrated
propulsion system**

wise put in the engine may be more efficient if we move it into the cowling, or switch around other pieces," he explains.

As such, for the brace of new Bombardier jets, GE picks up the responsibility for the entire package and has created a joint venture with AirCelle, called NexCelle, to help work on the parts of the engine that GE typically hasn't touched before. "We are already seeing weight, drag and efficiency improvements," says Mottier.

Clearly GE sees the benefit of an integrated system but Mottier refuses to be drawn on whether this would be the way of the future saying: "some airframers may have a different view".

But while drumming up new business and finding new opportunities to create new products is just one aspect, Mottier is well aware that, previously, the support for GE-powered business jets could have been much better. However, that's no longer the case. "One of the things my team is working on is improving customer product support and the service network. A few years ago, a ProPilot survey of engine manufacturers from a product support point of view would find GE at the bottom of the list," admits Mottier.

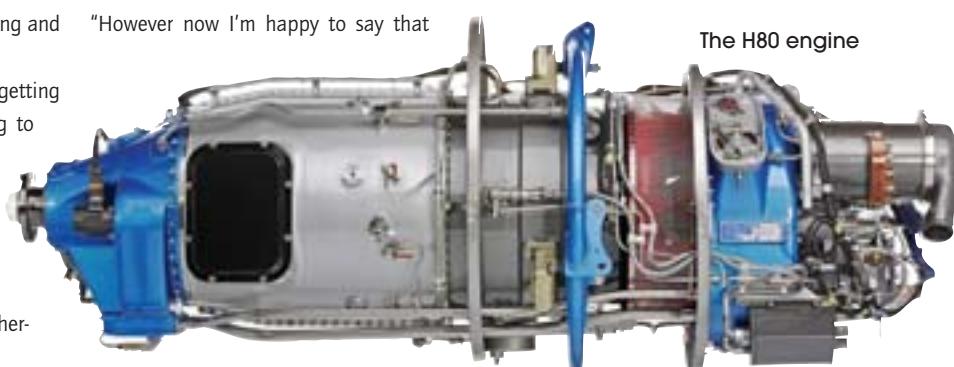
"However now I'm happy to say that

through a lot of effort we have moved up in the rankings. And last year finished second. Naturally we are aiming for top spot."

To make sure that the goal of being rated as number one is achieved, he says there's a dedicated Business and GA Product Support Manager whose job it is to make sure that GE moves up the rankings.

"Product support is critical, especially in this segment. About 70% of operators only operate one aircraft, and they don't have the mechanical infrastructure and technical resources that an airline has. That's why we've learnt that we have to treat each customer as a VIP fleet of one," he says.

Ultimately though, he says that the challenge he faces is that there is more technology that he can leverage from GE's stable, derived from its various other programmes and applications, but it is all about finding the right balance and design philosophy; because designing an engine for a biz jet varies from designing an engine for a commercial airline in terms of how much it is used over a year. However Mottier is bullish and says: "We have a long list of technology that other manufacturers don't have to create the best recipe." ●



The H80 engine



ConnectJets – changing the perception

To engage another level of customer you have to change the message, says Gabriella Somerville, Founder and Managing Director of ConnectJets. She says business aviation is for the aspirational consumer as well as the traditional user. "We have to change perception too," she insists. Jo Murray finds out more

Somerville has most definitely earned her stripes in the aviation world. It is this long, hard-won experience that gives her the clout to state categorically that business aviation has to step out and change its image, to be put to work in this new world economy based on productivity, transparency and efficiency. "We need to change our stuffy image and revise our marketing strategy to reach out to a much wider and diverse audience, of which a huge part remains untapped," she says. "We are missing a number of opportunities, especially in the VLJ market."



Change is already in the air

Aviation has been a dream for Honda since the company was founded over 60 years ago. The first flight of the FAA-conforming HondaJet on December 20, 2010, marked a historic step in Honda's aerospace program and signaled the start of flight testing to support certification of the HondaJet.

To ensure HondaJet's unequaled performance and quality, Honda has recently completed the construction of its state-of-the-art aerospace facility in Greensboro, North Carolina. As Honda Aircraft Company's headquarters, this facility uniquely integrates engineering, manufacturing, sales and support functions as we drive to the delivery of the most advanced light business jet ever created.

See HondaJet's path to completion at EBACE Booth 7021.

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HONDA
The Power of Dreams



Somerville herself has 14 year's commercial aviation experience on her CV. This time was spent at Virgin Atlantic working closely with Sir Richard Branson and then at British Airways. Then came a stint at Bombardier for two years, looking after SkyJet customers and aircraft sales customers. When VistaJet took over the SkyJet operation in 2008, Somerville became Vice President Sales at VistaJet's Farnborough operation.

Amongst all this airline and business aviation work there was a stint in the events world which delivered to her new insights into promotional and entrepreneurial activity. So what prompted Somerville to launch ConnectJets in the Summer of 2009 at the depths of recession?

"ConnectJets was born out of many things. Having been in the industry for several years, I looked at the business as a whole and considered ways to improve the value curve for a client," she responds. "I looked at ways in which we could style new products and solutions, and ultimately provide the client with an entire portfolio of options, offering multiple aircraft types and products."

In essence, Somerville wanted to put the

client back in at the centre of a deal rather than having them experience the bombardment of sales messages from numerous business aviation solutions providers. "This maximises their buying power. We wanted to be there for the consumer – providing the relevant due diligence to supply a solution in-line with their requirement," she adds. "Facilitating this is the sign of a perfect marriage between broker and consumer, whether it's an aircraft sale, leasing, jet membership, private charter, or empty-leg."

As for the timing of the company's launch, Somerville simply states that ConnectJets' business plan mirrored the climate in which it was launched. And having learned from the Branson School of Economics – maintain cash-flow, maximise opportunities, differentiate yourself from the competition and keep small – Somerville was only too aware that success would follow strict financial control and niche product-building for a specific consumer base.

Of course, starting from a very low cost base in tough economic times has its advantages over managing billowing businesses with inflated overheads and high expectations. "We came into the market with the prime op-

portunity to be fresh and innovative," she says. "Now I believe the timing was perfect."

Somerville says there has definitely been evolution in the market itself since it fell off a cliff in 2008. "We have to create and keep creating solutions in line with the clients' requirements which are always changing," she says, adding that the business model has also adapted. "For example, clients exist alongside their iPhones, iPads and Blackberries. It is all about speed and doing business in a smart and efficient way. We are now not only looking at business aviation as a luxury item but also as a smart and efficient business tool. This is why we need to change our message to attract a wide and untapped audience."

All of this is built into the branding and imagery with which ConnectJets involves itself. There is no point promoting business aviation as a productive business tool and then associating it with just one target segment with out-of-reach brands that alienate the business consumer. "If we can create an arena for the non-customer, then we're winning," she says. "Typically, these unexplored or non customers have not been targeted or thought of as potential customers by any players in

"Having been in the industry for several years, I looked at the business as a whole and considered ways to improve the value curve for a client" (Somerville)

the industry, I believe there is an ocean of latent demand waiting to be tapped into."

She continues: "As an industry, I think we need to be looking at how we can change our message to engage the virgin consumer. The business aviation market is still evolving and no longer is it just for the higher echelons of society; it is also about the corporate and the SME."

Of course private aviation is also taking notice – perhaps for the first time – of what airlines with their premium services are offering; certainly the airlines are aware of what is on offer from the business aviation sector as prices increasingly collide. "We have to take a holistic view of aviation. Business aviation is on a very different platform from commercial aviation but they are linked and it is imperative that we understand what the consumer is looking for and where we can work in sync with the commercial sector," she says.

That is all well and good – and it may well be the case that ConnectJets builds a part of its client portfolio partly out of premium airline clients – but that does not distract Somerville from profiling every one of ConnectJets' clients down to the tiniest detail in a very non-airline manner. "We are building a bespoke tailored service – it is not just about functionality," she says. "It is about the journey from before they take off to when they land, the cuisine, the ambience, the wine, their reading material and their well-being; we need to be fine hoteliers at altitude".

This means that private charter delivered through ConnectJets has to meet audit criteria set by ConnectJets. Experience, AOC checking, insurance verification and a safety demonstration all assist in ensuring ConnectJets delivers its promise. "In fact we have a strict service level agreement that we ask the operator to adhere to," she says.

Beyond this, Somerville has also undertaken flying pattern analysis for clients in order to maximise clients' buying power. Jet cards are also on the agenda and a new product in this area is being developed by Somerville and her team. "Again, we are looking at ways in which we can bring value to the client, above and beyond that which is currently on the market," she says. "Then there are aircraft sales which are definitely on the incline and

leasing opportunities – these present less risk and offer attractive price positions for the consumer," she says.

Somerville predicts steady market growth going forward because there are very clear factors that drive customers towards private aviation. "Pandemics, terrorism, security scanning machines, not to mention the pure economics of time, all these factors will encourage the consumer to move over to business aviation," she says. "Operators in Europe, the Middle East and Asia are growing considerably along with ever expanding fleets, which

provide the client with greater choice and a competitive edge on price"

She says: "There has never been a more perfect time for the consumer to engage. Prices are lower and there are plenty of opportunities. The market is opening to a new clientele and the corporate world is coming back. Steady growth is not a bad thing – it is a far healthier climate for the business aviation sector to grow in." Somerville concludes: "Without doubt, business aviation will be a product of the future; it is up to us to shape that future." ●




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Emerging markets boost investor confidence

The last two years have not been the best of times for business aviation. However, a recent *International Corporate Jet & Helicopter Finance Conference* in London suggested that the industry is edging back to better times. Perhaps it is a matter of geographical positioning, with a number of emerging markets that seem set to change the face of business aviation, writes Don Parry



There are marked differences between the commercial airline market and the business jet market that are virtually incompatible in terms of financing.

The airline market is generally predicated on cash structures and is highly disciplined. In contrast, the business jet market is less structured with a wide range of contrasting knowledge and experience.

Luis Pinto, Chief Financial Officer, NetJets, notes that the recession slowed growth and shifted the focus to efficiency and forward planning. NetJets is now increasingly seeing a market derived from ash clouds and commercial airline disruption. Growth has resumed and Pinto considers that there is great potential in several markets such as Germany,

Central Europe and the Balkans, Russia and North Africa; enough to make the majority of European dealmakers cautiously optimistic about the year ahead.

Eddy Pieniazek, Global Head of Consultancy, Ascend, casts his net a little wider, acknowledging that the BRIC (Brazil Russia India & China) collective is not the answer to overcoming all ills just yet but is the one to watch.

In reviewing current deliveries, Brazil is seen as "small is beautiful" with 36 of 57 deliveries being Phenoms, three Mustangs and four CJ2/3s. Russia has only accepted five but they're all for long haul aircraft - Falcon 7Xs, Global Expresses and Challengers. Pieniazek considers that India remains a mixed promise, with 10 aircraft delivered including the G550, Falcon 7X and Global Express all

the way down to Lear 60 and Phenom 100. In the case of China, distance is the key, reflected in 22 aircraft delivered of which seven are Gulfstream 450/550s, three Falcon 7Xs, two Challengers and four Hawker 4000s. The Middle East is simply seen as "bigger is better" with 21 aircraft delivered of which four were Gulfstream 450/550s, five Challengers, four Falcon 7Xs and three Globals.

Pieniazek notes that the average wealth of the 1,000 wealthiest Chinese grew 26% in the last year. This year there are 1,363 Chinese individuals with US\$150 million, compared with 1,000 individuals last year and only 24, 10 years ago. However, the lack of airport infrastructure in China has limited the development of business and general aviation, though more are now being built.



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"Collective is not the answer to overcoming all ills just yet but is the one to watch" (Pieniazek)

High import taxes are a concern and can be more than 20% of the purchase price in some cases. The situation is further exacerbated by the lack of personnel expertise, ranging from flight instructors to FBO managers, engineers and maintenance facilities, brokers and air traffic controllers. Recruiting and building facilities are underway and the government has started to address the issues. How the Government and Military will change their attitudes is very uncertain. However, a start has been made with the recent announcement that China will open parts of its low-altitude airspace to promote the country's general aviation (GA) sector.

Apparently, lower airspace in China will be divided into three sections. These being: areas under control, areas under surveillance and areas where aircraft can fly freely, after reporting their flight plan in advance. Original test points were Pearl River Delta (Southern China), Northeast China and the GA Industrial Park in Xian. The open airspace reform will be initially trialled in Changchun and Guangzhou this year and includes the setting up of lower airspace in controlled airspace that is different to the one that covers the majority of China. Other areas are also now being tested, such as the tropical island of Hainan.

These facts and figures are reiterated by Zhang Bo, Vice President, Minsheng Financial Leasing Company Limited (MSFL). MSFL was set up in April 2008 as one of the first five financial leasing companies approved by the China Banking Regulatory Commission (CBRC) in China. The focus is on GA, the company currently owning 32 corporate jet aircraft and with a declared intention of "vigorous" expansion into the helicopter business this year. The intention is to become the top GA leasing company with plans for rapid expansion of the business jet fleet to 50 aircraft and 20 helicopters.

At the end of 2010, there were 56 corporate Jet and 206 Helicopters in mainland China (excluding military operations). Compared with the development of Chinese economy, Chinese GA is still in the initial stage.

Zhang Bo said the intention to develop Chinese GA is the most important strategy for



**Aoife O'Sullivan, Partner,
Gates & Partners**

MSFL and it has taken on the vital financing role for the GA market. MSFL will provide financing and operating leasing services, such as: aircraft evaluation, importation, aircraft management, consultancy, operational support and disposal. MSFL is willing to develop diversified and multi-level cooperation with all manufacturers of corporate jets and helicopters, sales agents, aircraft management companies and financing institutions, and to promote the development of Chinese GA.

Aircraft ownership is not an easy task. Financial and legal considerations are no places for the feint hearted and expert opinion is vital. This is true of another of the "re-



**William Kelly, CEO,
Milestone Aviation Group**

cession proof areas" – the Middle East. Aoife O'Sullivan, Partner in Gates & Partners, says that prospective vendors should be less afraid of Islamic finance. "In terms of Sharia law, we can't beat them so let's join them," she says.

O'Sullivan points out that UAE courts, for instance, will not honour any provision that is contrary to Islamic Sharia, public policy or other mandatory law in the UAE. Where the UAE courts have jurisdiction they will apply UAE law to the dispute, irrespective of any choice of law provisions in the contract. To Western minds the basic problem in structuring Islamic deals is that payment and receipt of interest is forbidden, though there are other economic similarities with traditional finance. However, it would seem that this does inhibit interest by western banks. O'Sullivan emphasises that there are other ways of doing things; it's a case of restructuring procedures to reflect local interest and a need to compile "customer friendly" contracts that recognise local traditions which include other costs that balance the equation. Perhaps the best advice is to ensure that the prospective vendor has as good a lawyer as accountant.

The importance of India to this corporate jet market cannot be ignored. Alok Wadhawan, Director of Investec – a company with extensive experience in financing both new and pre-owned aircraft for commercial airlines, leasing companies, corporates and individuals – points out that India is now the second fastest growing economy with a GDP growth rate of about 9% per annum. The domestic aviation industry has been growing at over 15% per annum since 2004, with passenger traffic increasing from 16 million in 2004 to over 50 million in 2010. The total number of commercial aircraft in India is about 400 with capacity having nearly doubled since entry of the private airlines in 2003.

Business jets constitute a fast growing market with, currently, 143 aircraft that represent less than 1% of the global business jet market. An indication of future growth can be noted by a market forecast compiled by Bombardier. This implies a compounded growth rate of 13% and a business potential of about US\$8 billion. It is noteworthy that, in India, the business jet is seen as a tool for



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increased productivity, rather than a luxury. Large companies have built landing strips near manufacturing facilities to connect to their businesses. Wadhawan says that flying point to point in a private aircraft to destinations off the scheduled carrier routes will become increasingly common over the coming years. Currently, the market is dominated by corporate ownership, with very few charter companies. Nevertheless, charter is now a fast growing segment and significant demand is expected from this segment in the future.

Such activity can only be healthy if adequately financed and Wadhawan is largely optimistic about the ability of domestic banks

to provide major sources of financing. His view of international bank financing is coloured by the fact that only a few of these banks have been active since the 2008 financial crisis.

The final word must go to William Kelly, Chief Executive Officer of Milestone Aviation Group, who describes his company as a boutique helicopter and private jet lessor, founded just nine months ago and having secured \$500 million in equity to start the business. Milestone is said to be unique in that it is solely focuses on helicopters and private jets and "we have operator backgrounds".

The Milestone product offers finance at

100% of the asset, taking 100% of the residual risk. Kelly stresses that "we are quick and decisive dealing with new/pre-owned and sale-leaseback, short or long term leases, fixed or floating".

Kelly admits that, although the private jet market has bounced back slightly from the lows of the past few years, financing remains scarce. Milestone's focus is on new and near-new large cabin and super mid-size private jets. While finance leases are available on new aircraft, Milestone's 100% financing is very rare. Kelly concludes: "The last downturn taught the market that you can never have too much cash." ●

Citi celebrates: the market is rebounding

Mary Schwartz, Managing Director and Head of Global Aircraft Finance at Citi Private Bank, says that Citi has seen plenty of aircraft trading activity in the last few months. Jo Murray asks her what has been on Citi's agenda since January 2011 and where the market for business aircraft financing is headed

"We've already done as much business this year as we did all of last year," says Schwartz, speaking of the first quarter of 2011. "Last year was challenging. It appeared to us that there were a lot of cash deals - if deals were being done at all. There really were very few sales last year."

She says this year has shown a definite improvement. "Regarding values though, it seems that the bigger, better, newer aircraft have improved in pricing. However, the older aircraft - even the bigger, better, older aircraft - seem to be doing not as well," she says.

Citi focuses on high net worth individuals as a client base but Schwartz is nevertheless aware that there are a lot of corporate buyers coming back into the market too. She is also concerned primarily with whole aircraft although fractional shares are often on Citi's agenda too.

In terms of client scrutiny, Schwartz says: "Of course we want to see their financials to make sure that they qualify for a loan. We want to build a relationship with them - it is truly a question of relationship banking. We're a private bank and we want to have comprehensive relationships with clients where we're able to provide the full range of Citi Private Bank's services to manage their wealth - in addition to meeting their aircraft needs."

When asked if Citi is putting in place complex financing structures, Schwartz responds: "The majority of our transactions are fairly standard.



But if the client has a unique need or desire to do a different type of transaction or term we try to accommodate them."

As for assets Citi simply will not finance, Schwartz says that if the aircraft are too small or too old then the bank may decline a financing. As for other criteria, Schwartz says: "We want to make sure that the asset is well maintained, that it is managed by a good management company, that it is hangared in a safe jurisdiction and we want to make sure that it is insured properly."

As to the incessant aviation and economic cycles, where on the curve does Schwartz put us at present? She responds that realistic and stable aircraft values are still at least a year away - and perhaps even two years. Is this the point at which

the manufacturers will be truly occupied with serious volumes of new orders? "Yes," she responds.

Until the re-entry of the manufacturers as significant suppliers in the aircraft trading market, Schwartz says we will continue to see the pre-owned trading market increase its momentum. "I think the inventory that is currently being traded is pre-owned but it is nevertheless newer pre-owned inventory. However, there are definitely new aircraft orders for the bigger, better, newer planes and there even backlog on certain models."

While we wait for the halcyon days of 2008 to return we can at least be comforted by the upward change in fortunes the market is experiencing during 2011. Schwartz concludes: "The improvement since last year and the year before has been dramatic." ●

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Form follows function at ACJC

Sylvain Mariat is the Head of Creative Design at Airbus Corporate Jet Centre (ACJC). He says that when it comes to cabin interior design, it boils down to satisfying the customer. However, there is no getting away from the fact that form follows function

Mariat is both designer and engineer by training. He understands the balance between aesthetics and function that challenge all cabin designers. "The cabin is very complex," says Mariat. "However, my objective is good aesthetics." He points out that as long as the engineering aspects of the cabin are understood, time is not wasted on creating designs that are just not workable from an engineering perspective.

"We, as creative designers, also have to have the skills to communicate with the engineering teams. We do not always speak the same language," says Mariat. "We, as designers, have to try to improve the technical aspects of the design as well as the look of the design itself."

Mariat has now seen the design process through from the very beginning through to delivery. In fact two Mariat cabins are now about to be delivered. "When I start a project I create a trend board on which there are no images of aircraft; rather the images are of hotels and

house interiors," he says, adding that it is his job to guide the client. He says that also the client tends to know what he does and does not like, he often finds it difficult to express these wants and needs. "My job is to help the customer to choose what is in his mind," he says.

For example, ACJC has recently delivered a private aircraft with VIP interior to a Chinese customer. This particular customer wanted rounded edges in sync with the principles of Feng Shui. This customer, says Mariat, wanted his interior choices to match his culture.

Details are important, but the overall im-

"My job is to help the customer to choose what is in his mind" (Mariat)

pact is what hits you first about a VIP cabin and this is often heightened by appropriate lighting. Mariat explains that ACJC takes cabin lighting so seriously that the interior completion centre uses a mood-lighting designer who specialises in this very area when very complex lighting is requested. "Lighting is a very important part of the design," he says. "You can change or destroy the whole design with the lighting."

He adds that before materials are used, they are tested to see the impact of lighting on them. This enables Mariat to judge how the materials are going to perform under different types of lighting – cool or warm – before they are incorporated into the cabin design.

The materials themselves are at the crux of an interior design. Yes, they have to look good in all circumstances; but they also have to meet stringent fire retardancy regulations and not add too much weight to the cabin. They also have to be appropriately durable and fit for purpose. "This is a very complex area," he says. "When we meet the customer for the first time, they tell us they want materials like they have seen in a hotel or in their own home."

This means that the materials discussed are often not yet tested and ACJC only has a very short time to get them through their testing process. And let's not forget, we are often talking about very short runs of materials that have to go through lengthy processes in order to meet fire retardancy standards, and still look and feel the way the client chooses. This is a tall order.

"There are two tests we have to perform," says Mariat. "The first is a fabric heat test to prove that the fabric can withstand heat for a specific time and there is another heat test performed on the foam inside the seating."

From soft furnishings we move on to the technical aspects of the cabin. Of course today's aircraft cabins tend to incorporate a plethora of entertainment and communications gadgetry, all of which has to be hidden and discrete. "The customer always wants to have installed the latest system available but we have to keep the system invisible. On the one hand, we have to incorporate more and more systems; but on the other, these systems

are becoming smaller and lighter. It is balancing itself out."

Mariat says that ACJC has a philosophy of keeping supplier lists under control, although he often seeks out new suppliers working in the luxury sector that he likes to try out. Ultimately, he says, inspiration for interior designs tends to come from outside the aviation industry. "Often, our customers will talk to us about their yacht or car interiors, so for this reason I visit the Monaco Yacht Show, I go to car exhibitions and I am in contact with automotive designers. We cannot design a VIP cabin as if it were an airline premier cabin – the two cabins are completely different. A VIP

cabin is fully tailor made and a premier cabin is more industrial."

When asked at what point creative design (aesthetics) and engineering (safety) clash and whether Mariat has to talk through these issues with the client, he responds that this is rarely discussed with the client because usually an alternative approach can be suggested that meets both the client's and the engineering department's imperatives.

Ultimately, says Mariat, the secret to VIP cabin design is that form should follow function. There have to be some aeronautics in mind but, ultimately, ACJC's wish is to have a very satisfied customer. ●





Swings and roundabouts

Political instability has swept across the Middle East since the start of 2011, and this has had a knock-on effect on everyone's charter business. Phil Nasskau reports on the swings and the roundabouts one particular operator – Comlux – is experiencing in the charter market and how it is building its fleet despite the volatility

Comlux's President, Richard Gaona, admits that the first quarter for Comlux has been "disturbed". "With the turmoil there has been much less demand for charter, and the Middle East represented a good portion of our charter business, around 25-30%. And it really dropped in February," he says.

However Gaona believes that while the Middle East represents a good chunk of its business, that the company's strategy to not become dependent on a single region, is paying dividends in this particular situation. "The market is still there," he says. "We are mainly doing business from Bahrain and Saudi, and we certainly don't think the market has disappeared. We are not changing our plans."

He says it is interesting to note that, while the Middle Eastern market is dropping, the CIS is coming back. "We are crossing our fin-

gers for these markets to go back to normal. When the Middle East started to pick up, the CIS dropped. And now it seems to be the other way round. In the Middle East we have to wait. Will it be months or years? That we don't know. We do know that people are travelling less," he says.

However, in Europe, he says the market is remaining constant. He attributes this to Comlux's decision to fly bigger jets and fly for governments. "We're also flying more delegations to places like New York, and we are really picking up on that portion of the market."

Gaona admits that times are still tough in the charter market, caused by a combination of higher costs and lower demand. "It is clear that the cost of fuel has increased a lot, by around 10%. And, at the same time, we have a market where demand has dropped and there is more competition. As a result, prices have dropped."

Because Comlux has a presence in different regions, Gaona isn't too worried about the effects of a dropping Middle Eastern market. He says that the strategy now is to "consolidate its business and not lose too much market share. The operators who are the weakest [financially] are the ones that are dropping the prices the most. If they don't drop prices they are going to die," he says.

As part of the consolidation process, he says the company has to make sure that it is not oversized. "You have to make sure you are in several markets, as well as trying all the new markets like China. Additionally you have to make sure you open your eyes and ears to the customers so that you can adapt to the general situation without changing what we've already established so far to become the leader in wide body charter and aircraft management," he says.

Avoiding dependence on one market is

"You have to make sure you are in several markets, as well as trying all the new markets like China" (Gaona)

something that Gaona sees as key. This is not only in terms of the regions it focuses on for charter flights but also in terms of how the company composes its fleet. "Our current fleet is five aircraft, and we are looking for maybe six or seven. Naturally, some of those will be managed aircraft, and this benefits the owner as they get the volume discounts of fleet ownership and also the expertise for flying. We don't like to be 100% for one aircraft segment, and one market," he explains.

On the fleet side, Gaona says the company is set to receive an A320 at the end of April that should have started revenue service at the start of May and is scheduled to be at EBACE - so the company can show off its latest addition. In addition, the company is finishing up the refurbishment of a 767, which will be finished by the end of May and should be available to do AOC work at some point in September. He says: "Nobody else will have an aircraft like this."

Gaona notes the development of both competitive and collaborative behaviour in the charter market. "We have two or three very serious competitors in Europe, and the same again in the Middle East. One day you are a competitor competing for business, and the next day you may not have enough aircraft and you are helping each other out," he says.

"Above all, we have to remain competitive and keep the customers happy. We have to make sure we are there for our customers

and that we aren't too big a company or too small," Gaona says. "Aviation is all about the long term, and that's what we are always looking at. We don't see any particular spots where we need to improve, other than we need to make sure that all areas of our business keep up their service levels," he explains.

The company has eyes on China, as does everyone, and for Gaona it is a promising prospect. "China has a growing economy. It's large in size and has many people. It is certainly a place that is moving towards the business jet mentality, and there are more and more businessmen buying or flying in jets now," he says. However, doing business in China won't be easy. "It is very important to get the right partner in the country. The culture in China is very different to Western culture, and we have to adapt to the Chinese market and their culture. There are lots of companies trying to set up business there, and we are flying there from time to time," he says.

"Sooner or later we will be active in China. We don't know when, but the only thing we do know is that China has time. There are a lot of people who believe aviation is short term. But that's just wrong. It's long term, always. We have to provide quality and safety, and this takes time," he says.

While Asia represents a potential growth region, Gaona says that the company's diversification into completions is helping it weather the current difficulties, mainly because it helps

bring customers into the family. He explains that the completions side of the business delivers the opportunity to potentially operate the aircraft for the customer too. "Then one day these owners will want to buy a new plane, and maybe we can help. It's all part of our long-term strategy," he says. "The most difficult part is to persuade a customer to join your company. Once you have done that, you have got to keep him happy by delivering what he expects and keep him loyal. The day you stop delivering is the day he leaves."

With the recession, charterers have become pickier. "Whereas, before the recession, customers might have treated chartering a jet much like they treated a yacht, now they are being more careful. Careful not throw money out of the window, and this gives us a more competitive market. Obviously this helps everyone improve their business but, more importantly, those that cannot will cease to exist," says Gaona. He also believes that the recession hasn't killed the market; it has just changed the way it behaves. He explains: "The crisis affected the world, but maybe not in the same way throughout different regions. There are places where there are still rich people, but they're not the same type any more. We see everyone counting the costs when they are negotiating."

Gaona concludes that the recession has performed a clean-up of the smaller operators. "This brings more quality," he finishes. ●





Global Flight Solutions: part of the new breed

Out of the former Formula One hangar at London's Biggin Hill Airport is emerging a new business run by a team with long-standing experience. Global Flight Solutions, with Chief Executive Officer Paul Forster at the helm, is part of the new breed of business aviation businesses that are emerging post-recession and engaging with the new opportunities derived from the new landscape for business aviation. Jo Murray reports

The Formula One world has long been associated with private flight. Since July 2010, Bernie Ecclestone's former Biggin Hill storage facility has been in use as a private aviation business - Global Flight Solutions - focused on aircraft sales, management and charter with a number of other services in the pipeline. Both fixed wing and rotary aircraft are on the agenda.

Forster is responsible for putting the busi-

ness together, along with his business partner who stays behind the scenes. Forster himself has 30 years' experience in the business, having started out as a flying instructor, became a commercial pilot and then moved into senior management. Both Cabair Group and Sloane Helicopters is on his CV, along with significant experience in air ambulance work - a scene his eager to re-enter.

Apart from copious office space, an aircraft hangar and a maintenance hangar leased out

to Hawker and Cessna maintenance company Avtech next door, Global Flight Solutions' assets include a Lear 45XR and a Hawker aircraft. An AOC is a hard-won prize and it is this that enables Global Flight Solutions' transition from delivering purely private operations to offering public transport flights.

Through aircraft ownership, sales and management, Forster is in the process of building a charter fleet that includes a King Air, a Citation Jet, two eight-seat Hawkers, a nine-

"People are still looking for deals. There are still some very good deals out there, especially for Hawker aircraft" (Forster)

passenger Learjet, and a Challenger 604 for inter-continental operations. There are also Globals under management but these will remain privately operated. Forster is also re-evaluating the air ambulance market and looking for a way back in, using the Citation Jet as a possible conduit.

What is really encouraging to Forster is the way in which pre-owned aircraft sales have picked up since the beginning of February. He is now recording three or four expressions of interest a week from market players who are truly interested in buying – not just kicking tyres.

When it comes to aircraft values, Forster says: "People are still looking for deals. There are still some very good deals out there, especially for Hawker aircraft." He reports that the corporate world is coming back into the pre-owned aircraft purchasing market if the deal makes sense for the business and if shareholders approve. He refers to a 1993 Hawker, for example, priced at \$2.5 million which is not untypical in the prevailing circumstances. At these prices, if shareholders approve, it certainly seems to make sense to own the asset, after all, it has already taken a hit in terms of depreciation.

And, at this level of pricing, buyers often do not need to approach a bank for financing. Even a brand new interior is probably only going to cost another \$30,000 which, for some, is eminently affordable.

Where banks are involved in the transaction, Forster says they are generally looking for a 30% down payment and enough comfort built into the deal to be sure that the borrower is going to repay. Lending criteria have become stricter, he reports, but they are not so different post-recession compared with the heyday of 2008.

Apart from his fleet, an AOC and long experience, the other factor strongly in Global Flight Solutions' favour is that it is part of the renewed enthusiasm for operating out London Biggin Hill. This is an airport that has lan-

guished in the doldrums for far too long but is emerging as a shining star of London private flight.

Forster is an advocate of supporting the other companies operating on the airport and is enthusiastic about the potential being unleashed at the airport – with more to come over the next five years.

He also points out that owners and operators have become much more savvy during the course of the recession; they are asking many more questions and they require transparent pricing. They are also questioning the choice of airports operated into, the costs associated with those choices and the appropriateness of the services available at those airports.

Forster says that Global Flight Solutions will offer the personal touch, provide a great safety culture and operate by the book. He has a chief pilot on board who has earned his stripes on Concord. There are four other pilots on the payroll and three or four freelance pilots on call. Steve Miller has come over from London Executive Aviation to provide operations management and all flight planning is outsourced in order to control costs.

Business development going forward is also on his mind. Training may well be on the agenda given that the facilities provide copious space for expanded services and the team has this experience to bring in this line of activity.

In the final analysis, Forster says that operating in this market is all about operating at the right time, at the right price and being transparent. He says profits will flow from servicing a large pool of clients rather than dependence on limited revenue streams. He is also confident that the business will be built by the team – not by Forster alone. ●



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James Hardie,
ARINC Direct Business Manager

Think ARINC and think communications

For 80 years ARINC has been providing the aviation industry with the means to communicate. Today, ARINC has developed a major presence in the business aviation world by transposing the knowledge gained in the airline and military sectors to the business aviation world, right down to the "one man; one plane" set up. James Hardie, ARINC Direct Business Manager, explains how ARINC accommodates all sizes of operation and Lee Costin, Director, Satellite Solutions & Cabin Services, talks us through ARINC's satellite communications offering

We are very much an active integrator of the services that enable successful operations,"

says Hardie who leads the ARINC Direct business unit which caters to the business aviation market. "We have built some of our own solutions within the package we offer the business aviation market, we manage the user interface and use this to integrate a

number of third-party applications."

He says that it is this bundled way of approaching the market that allows the necessary synergy to occur for ARINC Direct's customers so that a complex system becomes simple at the user level. "From the moment a pilot or dispatcher considers a flight we can provide valuable information and planning capabilities," says Hardie. "In the air we can update them with the latest information about anything that affects the flight and their passengers will have access to the most

effective communications systems available in the cabin environment. We strive to be as complete a solution as we can."

The team at ARINC Direct is also patently aware that it has to be very active on the front line to support its clients in the field. "We have a 24/7 operations centre housed in Annapolis which assists our customers with day-to-day operations support. We also offer additional high levels of customer support in terms of engineering and troubleshooting, for example in Europe we have three full-time field based customer support managers," he says.

There is local support in ARINC's regional offices in Annapolis (HQ), Crawley UK, Delhi, India, and most recently in Singapore. ARINC Direct has also moved to web-based market support which makes support highly accessible. "But this is also backed up by real people who are genuine experts," says Hardie. "For example, all our Flight Coordinators are FAA qualified dispatchers and there is a training programme to support that. Many of them have some level of pilot training or even commercial pilot licences."

He continues: "We have highly qualified engineers with years of aviation experience both within the ARINC Direct team and in the greater ARINC company. We encourage our customers to use the web to get the latest available information but we also support other means of communication."

As an integrator of its own and third-party services, ARINC Direct has become expert at bundling services. To what extent does the way in which ARINC bundles services accommodate all flavours of operations? Hardie responds: "We try to package services in sensible bundles that meet the majority of the needs of business jet operators. This enables us to plan and budget effectively with our partner suppliers and to offer a well balanced set of services in each package."

He explains that sometimes a customer may not need a service item, or cannot see how he will use it, but often this line of questioning reveals another advantage of being an ARINC Direct customer: they are part of a community of operators. "Every item we have built or added to a package has pretty much been in direct response to a customer request.



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"Wifi access is a prerequisite for the savvy passenger wanting to stay connected while inflight" (Costin)

Our customers give us our best ideas because they know how they want to operate, but they also have a lot in common with each other."

Of course the business aviation market is diverse and fractured and so the personal touch becomes imperative. "It is certainly necessary in order to build trust and be responsive to customer needs," says Hardie. "That is why we have a global sales team and customer support."

Support aside, it is technology that has really made ARINC – as a whole organisation – what it is today and business jet operators stand to benefit from these advances through ARINC Direct. "The investment that ARINC has made in its network infrastructure to support other businesses is the backbone of the connectivity that we can offer to the private jet market," says Hardie. "New technologies are increasingly available to smaller aircraft operators and they are then able to access the same level of data as their commercial cousins."

He points out that private aviation is now leading the way in terms of uptake of Swift Broadband and other cockpit advances, both in new aircraft fit and retrofit. "The lifecycle and the appetite for new technologies is different on private jets, it is a very young fleet, but it is the knowledge that ARINC has built up in the commercial sectors that is a foundation for us supporting these operators," points out Hardie.

He is emphatic that the availability of Swift Broadband connectivity via ever smaller hardware is a huge step change. "It was not that long ago that satellite connectivity was limited by the size of the aircraft, now this technology is available on all aircraft types using a variety of different antenna fits," he adds.

Costin, from the Satellite Solutions division, explains further the levels of service available for passenger communications. "There are a number of services that can be delivered over SwiftBroadband," he says. "The interface in the cabin is able to support Ethernet IP at two levels of service: 'Standard IP' which is a best effort service capable of supporting most IP based applications, (for example web browsing, instant messenger, email etc); however for those applications

that require the highest network performance (such as Streaming Video or GSM telephony) the 'Streaming IP' service ring fences network resources to ensure optimum customer experience."

SwiftBroadband also supports cabin interfaces for a single voice line (although further lines can be supported over VoIP solutions), ISDN and fax.



Lee Costin, Director, Satellite Solutions & Cabin Services, ARINC

Costin continues: "In addition to the different cabin interfaces, SwiftBroadband can be bought in a range of tariff structures to support aircraft operators' needs. These structures vary depending on the class of antenna (High Gain, Intermediate or SB200) and the expected usage pattern for the aircraft or fleet. ARINC is able to talk all customers through these options and make sure they are provided with the most appropriate tariff for their individual situation."

What about flight deck communications? "While flight deck communications do not currently operate over SwiftBroadband they are still very important to consider when selecting cabin communications," responds Costin. Typically SwiftBroadband SATCOM terminals support both Inmarsat SB and Inmarsat Classic for Safety service. This means that the business case is that much stronger for SwiftBroadband than other services that aren't able to support safety services.

He explains that Inmarsat is aiming to make safety services available on SwiftBroad-

band for the industry within the next few years. Costin says: "In short, safety service is going to be available on L-band (the frequency spectrum that Inmarsat Classic and SB operate on) for many years to come, making the return on investment for SB SATCOM equipage better."

Of course the increased adoption rates of the iPad and other tablet computers are changing the way that passengers communicate and are creating increased possibilities for crew connectivity and cheaper inflight entertainment. "Wifi access is a pre-requisite for the savvy passenger wanting to stay connected while inflight," he says. "Connectivity is becoming more and more important; it's no longer a means of differentiation among business jet owner/operators. As with all emerging technologies, what was once an optional extra has now been adopted into the core of the service offering."

Hardie adds: "With Swift Broadband, I see the ease of connectivity to the aircraft taking a new and exciting leap and there will be some interesting developments as a result of this. I am sure ARINC Direct will have a big part to play. We have some ideas about how to make use of this with our iPad App development programme but as always we will be carefully listening to our customers."

So what has it meant for ARINC to be an Inmarsat Distribution Partner for SwiftBroadband now that it is a full year into the partnership? "We are very proud to have been chosen as a SwiftBroadband Distribution Partner," says Costin. "This status has enabled us to develop cabin technologies and offer new applications and products to our customers. It's a very important market for us and we are happy to be able to offer SwiftBroadband."

Returning to the wider picture, Hardie says that the world really is ARINC Direct's oyster. He says that all of the BRIC countries are not only on ARINC's radar but the communications company is already there with sales and support plans to meet the market's needs.

"We feel we are well placed to assist operators wherever they are with the right type of services as proven by our customers all over the world," Hardie concludes. ●



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AIRPORT: LONDON CITY AIRPORT



London City: convenient and friendly

London City Airport (LCY) boasts excellent transport links, proximity to a major world class financial centre and is compact enough to soothe even the most apprehensive of traveller. It is also friendly, thanks to its unique layout and the fact that almost half the staff is locally recruited, ensuring a strong local bond. This is reflected in relations with the local authorities, who work closely with the airport even down to ensuring that new, adjacent buildings are carefully sited and contoured to reduce risk of interference with navigation aids. Don Parry reports

The environmental impact of the airport's operations is also carefully monitored and helicopters are denied access for that reason. All aircraft are parked "nose-out"

on the ramp, so there is no requirement for push back and it also makes for an expeditious departure. Airside vehicles have virtually all been converted to electric traction, over a three year period, reducing both emissions and noise. As a further recognition of local sensitivity, the airport closes at 12:30 hours on Saturdays, for 24 hours, under an agreement with local residents. Not only are there no flights, there is no other noise such as ground equipment running or maintenance tasks. Not only is it an environmental success but a commercial success too, according to a study by York Aviation, one of

the UK's leading, specialist, independent air transport consultancies and a leader in airport economic impact assessments, London City Airport directly contributes over £0.5 billion to the economy each year.

Such attributes would appear to be ideal for business aviation and this has been reflected in the construction of a dedicated Jet Centre in a discreet corner of the airport and has the distinction of being the only fixed base operation (FBO) actually in London. It was completed in mid 2002 and has since been upgraded three times, the last being completed just a few months ago. It is a process that has been eased by the modular design of the building, though refinement and improvements are continuous on-going programmes.

Typically, an adjacent, main, gas pipeline isolation valve occupied an area that could be used

to extend the ramp. The work to reposition this item was completed at the end of last July. The result being 20% more ramp capacity.

Jet Centre Manager, Donie Braddick, leads a highly experienced team, providing a complete corporate aviation package, including flight planning, weather briefings and landing clearances, slot requests, ground handling, flight watch, cleaning, catering, line maintenance, refuelling, baggage and aircraft handling. Customs and immigration clearance is available also, with pre-clearance by arrangement.

When asked how he would describe the aims of the Centre, he replied without hesitation: "Service, convenience and discretion, all of which are achieved by careful attention to detail." Attention to detail ensures that passenger wishes and instructions are carefully monitored to ensure that the experience of using the Centre is

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"Service, convenience and discretion, all of which are achieved by careful attention to detail" (Braddick)



replicated for every visit. On arrival, the necessary security checks are professional and swift, using the standard airport type of screening arch.

Passengers have a choice of five lounges all with full facilities for office work or just relaxing. Each of these is furnished in different styles to suit passenger preference and to mark corporate identity. The design of the building ensures that all main windows overlook the ramp, a ploy that facilitates a seamless passage through pre-flight checks and procedures, with minimal delay. It is policy that the aircraft are parked as close to the building as possible, prior to departure. It is a combination that gives an effect of immediacy to the situation and enhances a rapid, trouble free departure. Similar facilities are available for arriving passengers.

Acknowledging the status and sensibilities of many passengers, the entry and exit areas from and to the car park, are shielded by opaque, translucent screens to inhibit opportunistic, predatory paparazzi.

The demands and idiosyncrasies of corporate aviation place special demands on crews and it is necessary to ensure that they receive the right standards of service and accommodation. The Centre offers a dedicated crew lounge and a crew briefing station, the latter featuring free computer and Internet access, with full weather brief capability. This is adjacent to the flight operations centre, ensuring optimum liaison at all times.

Operationally, London City is famous for its steep flight paths that require certification of the aircraft, additional pilot training and approval of operators by the airport. In practice, this means

that an aircraft must demonstrate proficiency in the 5.5 degree approach and must be able to operate from the airport's short runway of 4,327ft (1,320m) for landing and 3,937ft (1,200m) for takeoff.

New types are continually applying for the necessary approval. Last year the Gulfstream G150 received clearance, offering passengers the advantages of long range and high speed, easily connecting cities such as New York to Los Angeles, London to Moscow or Rio de Janeiro to Santiago.

More recently, Dassault brought a Falcon 2000 to carry out evaluation flights in order to gain approval. Dassault took the opportunity to demonstrate a new auto brake feature that reduces the landing distance of the Falcon series, allowing greater ease of operation into limiting runways. It is said to offer an advantage of some 150ft in landing distance, a very useful performance consideration.

For aircraft that do not yet meet these additional requirements, it is still possible to enjoy the services and handling, offered by the Jet Centre, by using Northolt Jet Centre, at RAF Northolt. This is an extension of London City Airport Jet Centre, providing a convenient gateway to north and west London, including the Thames Valley. With a 5,525ft (1,684m) runway Northolt can cope with a wide range of corporate aircraft, up to and including Boeing and Airbus business jets, with a maximum capacity of 30 seats. Helicopters are also accepted.

Northolt Jet Centre Premier Passenger Service is managed by London City Airport Jet Centre Ltd. All handling and security staff are employed by London City Airport Jet Centre Ltd and the terminal is shared with the Royal Air Force.

From April 1, 2011, Northolt Jet Centre has introduced a "one stop" booking and coordination service on behalf of the Royal Air Force for all aspects of business aviation at RAF Northolt. Northolt PPS will now manage all the visiting aircraft operator's needs; from their initial enquiry through to their slot booking, ground and passenger handling requirements – ensuring a streamlined and professional service throughout.

Braddick comments: "I am delighted to take over management of the airport slot coordination function at RAF Northolt to provide passengers with a single point of contact, ensuring their journey is seamless and stress-free. Whilst the RAF will still have full operation control of their airbase, with our experience and expertise, passengers and crews can expect continued impeccable quality and bespoke customer service tailored to their specific requirements. London City Airport's investment at RAF Northolt has included a recent refurbishment of the crew and passenger facilities to compliment our improved service."

General aviation movements at London City are expected to be in the region of 8,500 for the current year and there is much anticipation regarding the forthcoming Olympic Games, to be held in 2012.

London City Airport will now see an increase in the number of flights, following a High Court rejection, last January, of a plea by a residents group aimed at halting expansion. The decision upholds planning approval granted by the London Borough of Newham, in July 2009, to increase the annual number of flight movements at London City Airport to 120,000.

When asked about future plans, Braddick says: "The future is all about driving the customer service through 2011 to the Olympic Year of 2012. No redevelopment plans for the Jet Centre are planned for the next 18 months. The current building, staff numbers and infrastructure are more than capable of dealing with the anticipated traffic during the Olympics. So, for me, it's just about recognising that London City is a prime location for Olympic landing traffic; it's a matter of being ready and delivering good customer service." ●



My Personal Story

Rosemary Kacungira, Founder, CEO, Equity Aviation

Those who have been receiving our services know Rosemary Kacungira for more than 12 years. Mostly they know me as the name at the bottom of the emails we send each day I receive their request. Some of my clients think I don't have a staff working with me because they see all the emails come from me.... This is the commitment I have to the client! Although I have communicated with many of you over the years, I wanted to take this long overdue opportunity to introduce myself and thank you for being part of my life and for working with you 24/7/365.

I am the founder of Peckair aviation more than 12 years ago and then changed the name to Equity Aviation.

It's hard to believe it's been that long, but it has been an incredible journey so far and it really has just begun in many ways.

I live 37 miles from the airport, north of Dar es salaam, Tanzania in a small town called Mbezi Beach with my two kids Ian and Zoe. When I have time (which isn't very often) I play tennis and do aerobic.

I could not have built this company without the unwavering support of my maid Da Rose. She encouraged me to pursue my dream. I am

blessed to have her support and my family is my cornerstone in life.

I got interested in aviation business through a friend from Nairobi and I started the business by providing security services to the airlines. Many were wondering how a woman could do aviation security! In 2 years I expanded the services up to Zanzibar and increased the number of airlines.

One morning when I was at the airport, I saw a Learjet parked at the terminal and the captain was looking for help how to get catering and do the flight plan... I greeted the captain and assisted him with all the services he wanted at the airport. He advised me to start operating as FBO so I could provide the kind of services I had given to him.

I applied to the Airport Authority to operate as FBO. As you know this is the special services to be provided to the private Jet (VIP, business travelers and owners of planes). To me it is like letting the pilot fly and I do the ground work.

I got good staff focused on FBO and bought all the required equipments for operation. I didn't feel like I was fully prepared to start the business with full system! Did any of you have a similar experience?

Unfortunately, most of the people are trained for handling airlines only. To handle special jet

really needs time and to arrange all the required services to the client you have to love this business. Just imagine landing permits, arrange crew transport, accommodation, catering, security for the aircraft, fuel etc.

The most beautiful part of the job is when the plane is touching down and to be there and see the captain open the door and find Rosemary Kacungira is there waiting....I love this part when captain comes down and says: "Rosemary, nice seeing you here" and I will reply "Welcome to Africa".

When I expanded the services to Kilimanjaro and Zanzibar, planes used to land and ask for Rosemary and found I was not there although I had been communicating with them for 24hrs. Instead my good staff were on the ground waiting for them.

Building Aviation business has been a thrill for me. As many of you know, starting a new business in this market (or any market for that matter) is quite a challenge. I left my printing business of 7 years to security in aviation and FBO in high tech to pursue my passion. Many people thought I was crazy. Maybe I was, but I was determined to build a world class aviation business in East Africa dedicated to proficiency and general aviation safety. ●



A custom designed, executive business jet that, with the addition of winglets, offers a non-stop flight capability from Dubai to London carrying up to 48 passengers, yet does not break the bank, seems to be a tall order. Not so, says the European Aviation Group, it is simply a matter of placing your order

A flexible, executive, business jet

Founded in 1989, the European Aviation Group began with the acquisition of BAC 1-11 aircraft and a substantial spares inventory from the Royal Australian Air Force, by Australian entrepreneur Paul Stoddart. The venture has now grown into a multi-national group of specialist companies, providing a wide range of services to the aviation industry.

Typically those services comprise: aircraft engineering support, aircraft spares and interiors, as well as flight simulator training, aircraft sales and leasing to airlines worldwide. More recently it has introduced a programme of converting ex-airline Boeing 737s into executive configuration, business jets.

Speaking from European Aviation's UK headquarters in Ledbury, Herefordshire, Man-

aging Director, Trevor Whetter, explains that the facility includes a spare parts department, comprising some 500,000 items covering all aircraft types. The company also refurbishes aircraft seats, of which there are currently approximately 10,000 in stock. These are business class standard seats that originated with British Airways and Virgin Atlantic, and various other airlines. The process changes the look of them, as well as applying new foams and fixtures, and leather upholstery to produce a high quality, bespoke seat at an affordable price.

The company's main engineering facility is at Bournemouth, Dorset, UK, which has the capability to modify and repair 737 aircraft up to D Check status and also has a comprehensive paint shop. Bournemouth is also the base for the company flying training school, complete with 737-200, 747-200/300, 727, BAC 1-11

and Sikorsky S61-N helicopter simulators.

Currently, the company is purchasing 737 aeroplanes that have just come out of service with well-established major airlines. These are then converted into a 48-seat, all executive, business class configuration. "We are then selling them on or coming to suitable arrangements with potential operators or buyers of the aircraft," says Whetter.

By April of this year, nine of these aeroplanes had been purchased. Of these, two have already been sold, the company has a letter of intent for a third and there are four more prospective deals. Of the two sold, one is to a UK company and the other to a Middle East customer. Whetter likes to emphasise that all this activity has taken place over a period of just 16 months.

The company is highly flexible and adaptable to suit customer requirements. Typically,

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The aircraft are usually configured in a purely executive passenger configuration but special requirements, such as beds, can also be provided

one private individual wanted to purchase an aircraft and, although he wanted to operate it for himself, he also wanted to generate additional revenue. To achieve a solution, European Aviation teamed with an airline, which placed the aircraft on their AOC, and then marketed the aircraft to attract charter work - a neat, financial solution that contributes to the investment and also helps to defray the operational costs. "To date, we have done one of these in the Middle East and one in UK," says Whetter.

When an aircraft is being converted, all of the interiors and all exterior liveries are totally of in-house design. The interior design features, that Whetter refers to as the "chameleon process". This is a decorative film

Instead there is the offer of hand-held personal devices. This is an easier option rather than the complexity of "plumbing" it into the aircraft, with all the attendant complication, such as certification. However, technology is moving quickly and there have been many enquiries from customers regarding wi-fi connectivity. This is something that the company is currently reviewing and now has various proposals as options on offer to customers.

As an indicator of customer acceptance, one of the finished aircraft was taken to the recent MEBA show in Dubai. There were more than 250 visitors to the aircraft and it proved to be a very successful show for the company. A constant query from the visitors was: "Can the aircraft fly direct from Dubai to

ing upon the type of configuration.

Once completed, the customer can take advantage of a maintenance package deal. Because the engineering organisation has D Check approval on the 737, it can offer comprehensive support for such things as C Checks or adding new equipment or modifications and line maintenance at the Bournemouth facility. The engineering division has the advantage of a very large, spares support sister company and, if operational needs require, flying spanners can be provided. In fact, European Aviation can offer a one-stop shop facility, including assistance with complex documentation, such as aircraft registration.

Although not directly involved, in a commercial sense, customers can be helped to



process, manufactured by Chameleon Products Ltd, that is widely applied in the interior to give the impression of materials such as carbon fibre, wood or even marble. This has proved to be much more durable than using wood veneers, which may crack and the glue deteriorates. This film process, which can be applied to any substrate and has passed all the smoke and toxicity testing, is a very lightweight product. It is even used in the toilets where it transforms the standard, plastic look to a highly effective, simulated wood finish.

The aircraft are usually configured in a purely executive passenger configuration but special requirements, such as beds, can also be provided. The company has done work on these fittings and can carry out configuration changes to suit specialised customer needs. "If they want a VIP aircraft we can do that for them as well," says Whetter.

Whetter confirms that there is no "built-in" in-flight entertainment on the aircraft.

London?" In basic configuration the answer is in the negative. However, a seven-tank fuel system has been developed for the aircraft, as an optional extra, which can offer up to an additional two hours flying time. The additional tankage is mounted in the freight hold, meaning a slight loss of baggage capacity. Although the additional tankage installation is a permanent fixture, it has been designed for the tanks to be installed or removed in just a day and a half. Consequently, once the initial installation work has been carried out, it is equally easy to remove the tanks if operational requirements change or long-range flights are not a regular occurrence.

The complete, conversion work is carried out in two phases. Firstly, the actual physical tasks of gathering materials, seats, interior modification, etc, which takes some three months; then finalising the changes and the very necessary paper work can mean a total time of approximately four months, depend-

recruit flight crew through an introduction to an agency, called GainJet, based in Athens.

When completed, each aircraft commands a different price, depending upon the prospective owner's specification, aircraft history and current maintenance status; some having just completed a D Check and some of the engines having many more cycles than others. The company tries to tailor the aircraft to the required budget. A purchaser may see an aircraft straight out of a D Check, with 5,000 cycles remaining on each engine, yet the customer only intends to fly 200 cycles a year. Whetter emphasises that customer satisfaction is prime "so we can often optimise the price of the aircraft by switching engines around."

The result is a flexible, executive business aircraft that can offer a useful range, backed by an organisation with considerable experience of the 737 and at an average price of \$8-12 million, depending on specification. That has to be a bargain! ●



Munich Executive Airport: a honey pot for growth

Deep in Bavaria sits Munich Executive Airport. It is located at Oberpfaffenhofen at the site of the former Dornier plant. The FBO is operated by Rheinland Air Service (RAS) and Thomas Mayr is the FBO Manager. Jo Murray finds out what it is about this airport, its history and its potential that makes it such a promising option for the business aviation community

The airport is the former production airport for Dornier Aircraft and was in private ownership by the Dornier family for more than 70 years," explains Mayr. By 2002, Fairchild Dornier had entered bankruptcy proceedings and EADS took over the property. EADS then founded EDMO Flugbetrieb GmbH which acts as the airport authority for the airport.

The private airport is situated 25km southwest of Munich City – whereas the publicly owned Munich International Airport is located about 35km northeast of the City. Mayr is at pains to point out that Munich Executive Airport is a totally independent operation that does not rely on the international airport in any way for its business; even aircraft maintenance is available on site.

RAS promotes the airport at Oberpfaffen-

hofen as "Munich Executive Airport", a much easier name to tackle than the names of its location. In terms of facilities, RAS is promoting a very nice set up. There remain all the



old hangars as well as the old production lines now occupied by RUAG. In fact RUAG now has three strings to its bow: first there is the production of A320 family tail parts; then there is the production of the Dornier 228 New Generation aircraft; and finally there is the maintenance organisation for the business jet sector.

Infrastructure itself is also substantial. "The runway is 2,300m long and 40m wide – the ICAO standard – with extended thresholds of about 60m," says Mayr. In essence, this means that almost any aircraft can land there. "We also have an extended operator's licence so that we can operate business flights," says Mayr. "This is a special purpose airport – the special purpose being aircraft production and maintenance as well as scientific flights for the German Aerospace Research Centre."

There is an ILS on Runway 22 and two published departure routes in direction 22. This runway is in use about 80% of the time and

"The International airport is full, the hangars are full and we have enough capacity for operators to make their homes with us" (Mayr)



the rest of the time Runway 04 (which does not have an ILS) takes over.

He explains that prior to the new set up at the airport it was difficult for business jets to make use of these facilities; however, since it acquired its extended operator's licence for business jets a couple of years ago, this has enabled the airport to accommodate business jets up to 25 tonnes. This means that the Falcon, Gulfstream and Bombardier families of aircraft can land there. Just the BBJ and the ACJ are absent.

RAS operates the FBO at Oberpfaffenhofen and can undertake all the usual services apart from refuelling, which is performed by the airport authority on behalf of Air BP. Only RAS

operates an FBO at the airport – there are no other FBO players. It started operations about 18 months ago. "There was no other handling service before we started," says Mayr. "It really was a clean sheet of paper."

He continues: "We started with an office and now we have a public lounge with a TV room. We are now adding two quiet rooms equipped with beds and chairs to relax in. Last summer we installed a garden lounge." About 90% of traffic is business travellers. There is also a general aviation aspect to the airport.

RAS has committed €500,000 investment to date in Munich Executive Airport. This includes VIP cars, tugs, toilet service equipment and a de-icing truck.

"Our next step is to offer the airport and our facilities to jet operators to base their aircraft at Munich Executive Airport instead of Munich International Airport. The International airport is full, the hangars are full and we have enough capacity for operators to make their homes with us," says Mayr. He says that once operators see the airport's handling process and how easy operators gain access to the apron, the advantages will be evident to them.

Of course growth of any business aviation airport has to be managed carefully so as not to upset the local *status quo*. However, the airport's operator licence is in place and the airport is working within the limits set by that licence so the path ahead is clear.

But let's face facts, the bankruptcy of Fairchild Dornier had a devastating effect on the community nearly 10 years ago. This event was a shock for the entire region. Today, the airport is becoming a honey pot for businesses, investors and general economic activity. This all drives job creation and growth. Surely that is positive all round. ●

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