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EXECUTIVE &  
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**SERGIO AGUIRRE**  
PRESIDENT, GOGO BUSINESS AVIATION

A LEGACY OF LUXURY - RON SORET, AERIA LUXURY INTERIORS  
ADVANTAGE AVIAÂ - GILLIAN HAYES, RICK TILGHAM & MATT SMITH  
DRAGON TALES - DIANA CHOU, DGA

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## ► A note from the editor

Expansion is the name of the game across the Asia-Pacific region, at least that's the message from ASM, Bombardier, DGA, Flying Colours Corp, Gulfstream and Jet Aviation in this issue of *Executive and VIP Aviation International*, which suggests it must be true. That's great news for business aviation users and suppliers in China and beyond, but also for the worldwide community, since business aviation is a true global enabler.

Bombardier and Gulfstream have demonstrated the ability of business aviation to span the world, both OEMs recently completing extraordinary record-breaking flights from Singapore to the US. Meanwhile, they are expanding their APAC service offerings, a theme common to several contributors this issue.

Diana Chou, founder and chairman of DGA, and a veteran of China's business aviation community, perhaps says it best. "I've been involved in the region's business aviation for 20 years, watching it grow from two aircraft to more than 600... We've a long road still ahead, but as an industry we're making headway."



**Paul E Eden**  
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# All We Do Is... Aviation.

**With its AVANCE customers even happier than expected, Sergio Aguirre, President Gogo Business Aviation, is looking to expand its addressable market to global connectivity**

It's always useful to read a little company background before interviewing an industry executive. That's why I was exploring the Gogo Business Aviation website, waiting for Sergio Aguirre, President at Gogo Business Aviation, to call. In fact, I was configuring an imaginary PC-12 for a moderate bandwidth user of email, SMS and voice communications. The website provides a tool for doing just that, free from the jargon and physics that often complicate connectivity.

Satisfied with 'my' PC-12, I was deeply engrossed, configuring 'my' Phenom for streaming movies when the phone rang...

Gogo's online solution-finding tool is simple and straightforward; does it typify Gogo Business Aviation's approach to connectivity? "The reality is that few of us have degrees in computer science and networking, and yet we all have to interface with connectivity. We focus a lot on making technology usable and friendly, creating tools to make it more productive, so that pilots don't have to become IT experts too," Aguirre says.

"Gogo is all about the connected lifestyle and I'd say one of the differences between us and a traditional avionics company providing connectivity is that we take a broader look at it. We see it as enabling the connected life, so it's for work, staying in touch with the family and for leisure."

In the case of connectivity, the enabler needs to work as expected, every time, easily and instantly. In the real world that simply isn't possible of any system and while Gogo prides itself on its service levels, there's a real understanding of the vital role of customer

service and rectification in case of a fault. "Customer service is something you have to work hard at and have to be relentless about. If you work at it consistently over time it gets easier – it becomes part of who you are as an organisation. Our new AVANCE platform is very software-centric and that makes support considerably easier to scale and manage across a broad customer base because, we did the hard work at the beginning, in the design. Now the software makes the operational support side easier, from the passenger, crew, maintenance and support standpoints."

Not unlike Amazon, which created an infrastructure to support its own business, but which also provides web services to many more, Gogo has created a similar scaleable logistical infrastructure. "We've built our software so that we're very easy for other companies to work with, and we're configured to scale our business from the operational and support standpoints. Combine that infrastructure with the software-centric AVANCE product and you can support a customer remotely, without having to send a technician out to open up the aircraft and take out a box, load software, or reconfigure something. Aviation has traditionally been about a 'box', with software in the box; we have a box, but we use our infrastructure to monitor and support the system and change it to suit the customers' requirements."

#### **From the ground up**

Gogo's infrastructure, along with the towers that form the backbone of its North American air-to-ground connectivity network are, of course, ground based. They're part of a huge investment in engineering, IT

systems, real estate and people that enable the company's unique capability. "Very few people think about what happens on the ground, but it's where most of our work is done. It's our redundant, fail safe ground systems, for example, that ensure a customer in the air never knows there was a computer glitch and they were handed from one to another – all the work done to ensure uninterrupted service is completed long before a flight."

Never content with the status quo, business aviation is always looking for the next major advance, the next disruptive influence. Gogo is frequently referred to as a disruptor and, indeed, considers itself so in its own literature, but is there real substance behind the word? Aguirre reckons it's in the company DNA...

"If you go back to Gogo's origins, when the company was called Aircell, we were disruptive from the moment we launched our first air-to-ground network. And every time we've introduced a technology that enables connectivity in a business airplane, we've taken something that's previously been possible only for those with very large aircraft and the deepest pockets, we've exploited a change in that technology or in the market, and made it accessible to all aircraft; we've democratised communication.

"First it was with our voice systems, then our air-to-ground system with broadband. When we introduced our second air-to-ground broadband iteration, we made it available for any aircraft flying in the US, while the only other option was a system costing hundreds of thousands of dollars and many tens of thousands per month to operate. Our system brought broadband to Citations and Learjets, where it had previously been restricted to Globals, Gulfstreams and larger platforms.

"Subsequently, Gogo introduced the first technology that enabled the use of cell phones to make calls from the aircraft. Prior to that, customers had to use dedicated handsets; we

## **SERGIO AGUIRRE**

President, Gogo Business Aviation

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**A 30-year** veteran of the aviation industry, Aguirre joined Gogo Business Aviation in 2007. (all Gogo Business Aviation)

*After more than a decade at Gogo Business Aviation, Aguirre says customer satisfaction remains his primary motivation.*

made it possible for them to use the numbers in their phone's contacts directly.

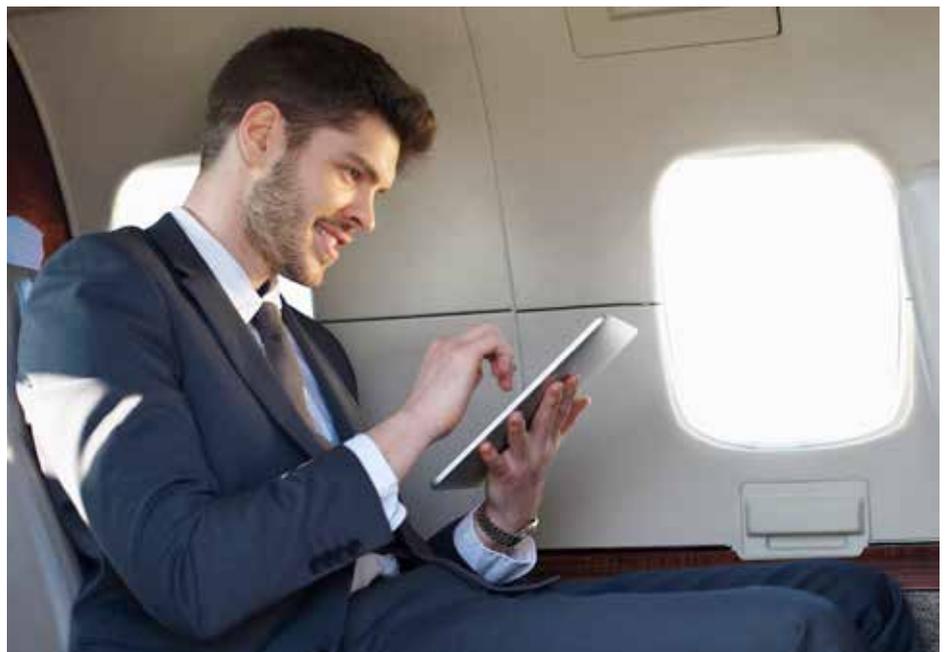
“And we were extremely disruptive in the airline and business aviation industries when we introduced streaming IFE, which you might consider Gogo's ‘Netflix in the sky’. It meant that instead of installing DVD players and constantly looking for the latest DVDs, now customers could leave our system to automatically load new movies without any crew interaction. It loads licensed movie content and the latest TV shows. Then, when the passenger wants to relax, they go to the portal and select their viewing, from the hundreds of movies and shows that the system loads and updates.”

Aguirre mentions that Gogo disrupts operationally too, and while I expect him to talk more about remote technical solutions and enabling services without ever visiting an aircraft, his explanation is quite different. “We ship more Iridium products and more air-to-ground products every month than anyone in the industry. To be able to do that, we had to automate our business, which goes back to the Amazon comparison and our scalability, which has enabled us to grow from our beginning when we had just a couple of hundred customers. Today, we have more than 10,000 active subscribers to our services, and process and ship around 80,000 products per year. We've scaled and grown the business to produce consistently reliable, predictable output.”

DNA-driven disruption may be the key to Gogo's success, but there'd be no point in disrupting with a product the industry didn't want. The company is therefore careful to reach out to its flight department customers and authorised dealers. It uses surveys and at least one dealer gathering every year, seeking opinions on new ideas. Their feedback is taken very seriously – it has resulted in changes to products and inspired new ones.

#### **AVANCE delivery**

Soon after its early 2018 launch, Gogo's AVANCE system was shipping so quickly the



company was struggling to match demand. Gogo made big claims for the two AVANCE platforms, L3 and L5, so how are they shaping up one year on? “AVANCE has seen the fastest adoption rate in our history. In the same time frame we've sold more L3s and L5s than we did our original systems, and that was at a time when we had no competitors. Now, many of our customers already have a connectivity system and they have choices.

“AVANCE has exceeded our expectations in terms of customer demand and the

market feedback we're getting. We're seeing throughputs more than three times greater than with our previous system, so the end user experience is much richer. And customers love the ability to switch services on and off without having to return to a maintenance facility; we've seen almost half our AVANCE customers decide to switch on their Gogo Vision streaming video service for example, a decision that previously would've required a visit to the dealer, but which we can now turn on remotely with a simple ‘flip of a switch’.

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“When we brought AVANCE to market, we thought smaller jets would typically get L3 and big jets L5. We’re seeing a pattern along those lines, but we’re also seeing L5 being more popular. The L3/L5 decision is driven by how much data the passengers and flight crew need. Customers using heavy turboprops and light midsize jets are selecting L5 – a 4G solution, compared the L3’s 3G – to satisfy their high demand.

“Conversely, we also have customers with larger jets who feel they only want to receive email on their smartphone, and they’re going with L3. It seems every time we think we know what the customer wants for a specific aircraft they throw us a curve ball, but this has been a pleasant curve ball, since 60% of our L5 customers are new to Gogo.”

#### Gogo satcom

While AVANCE continues taking business aviation by storm, Aguirre says Gogo is looking to expand its addressable market. “Over the next year or two business aviation is going to take a major step towards satellite-based services. We’re an Iridium value-added manufacturer and reseller, and we’re very excited about Certus and the NEXT constellation – it’s a whole new market for aircraft operating outside the US.” Today, Gogo has around 5,000 Iridium and Inmarsat systems in service, but these new developments will see it expand its broadband coverage globally.

“We’re also going forward with a business aviation Ku solution. It will expand our market from being an air-to-ground supplier to becoming a full, international connectivity supplier. We think it will be very well received by our air-to-ground customers who also fly internationally, as well as new customers.

“And we continue to pay attention to the user experience, including passengers, crews, installers and maintainers. We launched our DASH product in 2018, as a customer tool providing insight into our service so that pilots and flight departments can see how the system is working; we’re continuing to

SERGIO AGUIRRE

**“Gogo is a dedicated aviation connectivity company. That’s all we do. We do it more broadly than anyone else”**

develop tools that make connectivity user friendly, even when there’s an issue.”

Gogo intends that AVANCE will be the foundation for its connectivity offering, whether the ‘pipe’ to the aircraft is air-to-ground, Ku, or something else. The richness of the AVANCE experience is essential to Gogo’s future, although Aguirre cautions that some of the ability to switch services on and off might depend on network capability.

And yet, there are already suppliers offering global broadband connectivity packages. Dedicated professionals providing services, single-point billing and full customer support, so why ought the market consider Gogo? “Because there’s a big difference between aggregating bills from different companies versus a vertically integrated solution. No other provider is on the same scale of value-added to the customer as we are.

“We build the hardware, write the software, operate the network and provide the support. It avoids the flight department’s nightmare of discovering ‘it’s the box, not the service, so it’s someone else’s problem’. That vertical integration makes so many problems go away, because when there’s an issue, we know it’s ours to resolve. Vertical integration also provides cybersecurity benefits, and that’s

becoming more and more critical. Since we own the entire experience, and every piece of the infrastructure, we are able to secure and monitor it, ensuring it is as tightly protected as it can be from bad behaviours.”

Sergio Aguirre makes a convincing case for Gogo as, of course, he should. But there’s no escaping the fact that he faces real, well established and very smart competition in the global broadband market into which the company is expanding and, very soon, in air-to-ground connectivity on home turf. “I totally embrace the competition – it’s good for our customers and drives us to be better. But some competitors are doing a phenomenal job addressing the top few percent of business aviation, while others serve aviation although their core business is TV broadcast or maritime communication.

“Gogo is a dedicated aviation connectivity company. That’s all we do. We do it more broadly than anyone else. We’re the leaders in commercial aviation connectivity and in business aviation. An important reason why we can serve a transatlantic commercial aircraft and a single-engined turboprop is because aviation is our sole focus. We go very deep into aviation, but within that space we’re very broad and we aren’t diluted by other market segments.”

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# A Legacy of luxury

Le Blanc et Noir Owner's Retreat,  
AERIA's shortlisted 737 BBJ design for  
the 2019 International Yacht & Aviation  
Awards. (all AERIA Luxury Interiors)

**AERIA Luxury Interiors has built a reputation on ACJ and BBJ work. After a successful Boeing 777 completion, the company is looking forwards to more widebody work**

Based in San Antonio, Texas and established only in 2012, AERIA Luxury Interiors is a specialist in large aircraft VVIP completions for high-net worth and head of state customers. It's demanding work that the company does exceptionally well, in a sector of the industry where discretion, reputation and efficient project execution are perhaps more important than ever to success. How then does a seven-year old company do so well at it?

In AERIA's case, appearances really are deceptive and Ron Soret, Vice President and General Manager, says: "We like to refer to San Antonio as the birthplace of large aircraft VIP cabin completions. They've been done here since the early 1970s and include the first three Boeing 747 cabin completions ever."

In fact, AERIA Luxury Interiors traces its origins directly back to 1960s' business aviation pioneer Dee Howard. Using military surplus Lockheed Ventura twins as feedstock, Howard created a series of conversions that might be considered among the world's first modern business aircraft. He also took a role in developing what today is Bombardier's Learjet, working with Bill Lear in the early 1960s and building the initial full-scale Learjet mock-up in his San Antonio hangar.

Howard's company later pioneered the VVIP widebody completion process, working on the earliest Boeing 747 conversions, including a 747-300 for His Majesty King Fahad of Saudi Arabia, and developed a line of aircraft modifications and equipment that it sold alongside its MRO business. By 1991, Alenia had acquired a 100% stake in the Dee Howard Co and in 2002, VT San Antonio Aerospace purchased it. In 2012 it launched AERIA Luxury Interiors, a company with traditions dating back to the beginnings of modern business and VVIP aviation.

Today, AERIA primarily works on Boeing and Airbus models. "We do completions for heads of state, in addition to Fortune 500 corporations and high net-worth individuals." Aside from the demands of cabin work on such a large scale, Soret says: "One of the biggest challenges when managing a head-of-state completion project is that we have to work with several government departments and officials during the decision-making process and get the necessary approval from all these various stakeholders while adhering to the given timeline.

"We've carried out completions for an entire aircraft and partial refurbishments before, and each has its own unique set of challenges. We perform the majority of the work in-house, although we do outsource some parts of the cabinetry fabrication. The most substantial portion of the completion process in which we partner with a trusted vendor is probably the CMS/IFE system. To date, we have partnered with Astronics/CCC and Rockwell Collins [now Collins Aerospace] for all the systems we've installed."



There's often time and money to be saved in having airframe maintenance and/or repairs performed while an aircraft is grounded for cabin work, especially if access panels might be coming off for antenna installation or other major IFEC work. AERIA offers a solution here too. "We can provide a full range of turnkey solutions. We've our own staff of technicians, who provide MRO services as well as interior completion and refurbishment. And, in collaboration with our sister company VT DRB, an FAA ODA [Organization Designation Authorization] holder, we can offer certification solutions and engineering for avionics, antenna installations and other major modifications, as well as complex repairs."

Also based at San Antonio, VT DRB specialises in engineering, programme management and certification of cabin projects, avionics and structural repairs. Established in 1996, the company reckons to have been involved in at least 25% of the in-service BBJ completions and represents an ideal, local adjunct to AERIA's services.

AERIA employs around 140 personnel, operating multiple shifts when the workload is high and when an aircraft delivery is imminent. Typically for a completion house, its workforce is highly qualified in traditional skills handed down through the generations and applied to comply with the latest aviation standards and regulations, while upholding the style and functionality expected of a VVIP cabin. Nonetheless, Soret explains that the company is keen to embrace the latest technologies wherever appropriate. "Keeping a close eye on technological advancements, we recognised very early on that 3D printing is a great technology to replace antiquated practices that often take up a great deal of time simply due to their process or cure times. Apart from improving efficiency, 3D printing technology has also provided us endless opportunities in exercising design ingenuity. Together with our specialty shops, our skilled technicians and world class craftsmen have pushed beyond the ordinary to showcase their artistry and bring focus to the

#### RON SORET

**"We do completions for heads of state, in addition to Fortune 500 corporations and high net-worth individuals."**

aesthetics and details in each product to better enhance the quality of work our customers have come to appreciate from us." And AERIA is equally keen to embrace and nurture the next generation of craftspeople: "We offer trainee positions and we've partnered with local tech schools to offer apprentice opportunities."

#### AERIA showcase

It's a familiar irony of the completions business that those performing the work very rarely have the opportunity to show it off other than to the client. Computer renderings might embody the ambition of a design but often give little idea of the quality of finish or ambience created. Thus, a satisfied client list might be the only real evidence the world at large has of a company's capability, but AERIA has earned a rare opportunity to properly showcase its work.

The company has been shortlisted for the 2019 International Yacht & Aviation Awards, presented in Venice on 24 May. Known as Le

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RON SORET

“Our major achievement to date was the re-delivery of our first widebody interior completion, on a Boeing 777.”

Blanc et Noir Owner’s Retreat, AERIA’s entry is configured for the BBJ MAX 8 and Soret explains its significance: “We’re thrilled to be able to participate in the awards, which offer a platform to showcase our in-house design expertise in luxury cabin interiors. It’s an opportunity a company like ours rarely gets to enjoy owing to the wishes of our clients to maintain their privacy. At the same time, the awards offer a front row seat to the hidden world of aviation design that very few people ever see.”

The concept centres around a ‘Wellness Cabin’, equipped with exercise equipment, massage chairs and pop-up monitors for entertainment. A VIP bedroom off the Wellness Cabin features a king-size bed and both rooms are designed to maximise the use of available space while simultaneously creating a sense of spaciousness. A lavatory, including two marble vanity units and a large steam shower, completes what AERIA calls the Master Bedroom Suite. Altogether, the suite demonstrates what can be achieved when traditional materials and modern design unite, yet Soret still doesn’t consider it AERIA’s greatest work.

“Our major achievement to date was the re-delivery of our first widebody interior completion, on a Boeing 777. Our in-house designers collaborated with the client’s personal design team to provide guidance as well as ensuring the products created and materials used were certifiable and fully compliant with airworthiness standards. Guided by an executive leadership team of industry professionals and realised through the dedication of experienced technicians and skilled craftsmen, the 777 programme was successfully delivered on time and within budget. We produced a beautiful interior for a very satisfied customer.

“Moving forward, we hope to continue working on such large-scale projects and strengthen our track record. We’re proud to have achieved what we have in just a few short years, and we are confident of building AERIA into a leading brand in the market in the foreseeable future.”



Custom monument design and creation requires skilled craftsmanship and precise attention to detail.

An AERIA concept for the Boeing 787 BBJ



**GILLIAN HAYES**  
Chief Executive Officer, AVIAA

# Advantage AVIAA

**Founded in 2016 as business aviation's first group purchasing organisation, AVIAA is working to build a global community for suppliers and customers alike**

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Striding through the hotel lobby for our 0630 meeting, AVIAA CEO Gillian Hayes brims with her usual enthusiasm for the company and its customers, despite the hour. A prosopagnostic's dream in her signature bright blue, she's on a mission to disrupt business aviation through AVIAA's global purchasing ambition, and this early rendezvous is the only space we could find in her hectic meeting schedule.

AVIAA is fundamentally a group purchasing organisation (GPO). It brings fleet purchasing power to everyone by combing the requirements of several operators. Fuel is an obvious example, where the needs of a Citation Mustang owner-pilot might be merged into the much larger purchases of a couple of corporate flight departments, providing a considerable reduction in cost to the individual owner.

Fleet operators could be forgiven for asking what's in it for them – and several have. But there are savings to be had even for a 100-strong fleet if AVIAA adds its requirements to the similar needs of several other operators. Right now it potentially creates the purchasing power of almost 500 jets and Hayes reckons it will be closer to 1,000 aircraft before the year's out.

There's also a benefit to suppliers, servicing clients they may never have reached in the past, and gaining access to large, lucrative sales. And while fuel is an easy example, AVIAA is expanding its influence across the board, already with particular focus also on data, FBOs, ground handling, insurance,





Gillian Hayes joined AVIAÂ in June 2017, taking the CEO role in January the following year. (all AVIAÂ):

maintenance and training. It's an expansion that's been bolstered by a recent merger with Convolus, a European smart purchasing network, that brought 150 jets into the AVIAÂ 'fleet'.

And yet, Hayes says there's more to the AVIAÂ advantage. "We're building a community that's good for the operator and supplier alike. We, the aviation community, must have healthy suppliers. When you think about a 'buying club' you tend to think of a group that uses its power to beat prices down, but we're just trying to streamline the process.

"Look at a typical transaction and you might see as many as 20 intermediaries, each taking their little piece, because the market is very fragmented. It's not transparent and no one really knows what anything costs because there are so many players. We want to bring all our members together with the vendors they want to work with, facilitating conversations so that purchasing is much more direct, while the acquisition and retention costs for suppliers are lowered, avoiding the need for them to take a bite out of their margin in order to supply a high-quality product. But it only works if we have frank, open, honest and transparent group discussions."

AVIAÂ is therefore all about its members and suppliers, but as a business it needs to make its own money. How? "We charge a membership fee to participate in the network and we take administrative fees on the supply side, but they aren't commission based, they're intended just to support our work – typically they end up being between 3 and 5% of overall spend. We've seen that prove small enough in other industries that it doesn't interrupt the transaction and still brings down cost, but it's obviously big enough to keep our ball in play."

It's a tried and tested model elsewhere. It has worked very well in US healthcare, but also in catering and restaurant groups, and local and state government, essentially in anything that needs to perform lots of

purchasing with little money and time to put into a professional purchasing process. "We provide that purchasing expertise to even the smallest business aviation operator."

An important part of that purchasing professionalism is the ability to save customers money without pinching suppliers' profit. AVIAÂ's network might show that a piece of maintenance could be done with equal quality at a facility just 20 minutes flying time away, but an owner operator just wouldn't have the exposure to the supplier base to know that. Equally, AVIAÂ is able to expose service vendors to operators they might otherwise never see.

Last August, for example, AVIAÂ signed the Patriots Jet Team as a supplier of upset prevention and recovery training, guaranteeing members discounted slots on the Team's unique courses. "They're very good at what they do and very busy doing it, but they weren't necessarily looking to run around educating the market place; but we can do that for them. We can help our members know that Patriots Jet Team is there, and we consider them a very high quality vendor. And I'm certain of their quality because I visited their facility."

#### **Personal relationships**

Further to the process of introducing vendors to customers, Hayes says AVIAÂ has plans to publish requests for proposals on its website, telling potential vendors of particular customer requirements and facilitating any resulting transactions. Regular member conferences are also on the agenda, with plans for a regular programme beginning this year, providing the opportunity for members to recognise common requirements, which in turn saves suppliers the need to visit multiple customers. Perhaps more importantly though, conferences are a nurturing ground for personal relationships.

"Our founders, Dustin Dryden and Jim Hall, say it's all about personal relationships. As a newcomer I was a little nervous, navigating the acronyms and learning the industry, but

*Hayes with AVIAÂ founders Dustin Dryden and James Hall.*

I've found people so welcoming – and that's our role as a GPO, to introduce and welcome people within the industry. Our customer success team speaks to members weekly and we often hear of an issue before the vendor does. Then, we'll work to repair or strengthen the relationship, or even to open a new one. You could consider us the industry glue, but "We're building a community that's good for the operator and supplier alike I prefer to think of us as elves or minions, running around and facilitating."

At this point in the conversation another elf appears, Rick Tilghman, AVIAÂ's Chief Operating/Chief Product Officer. Gillian Hayes had worked in a similar role to Tilghman's prior to taking the CEO position and says: "I needed to find someone who was hopefully better than me at doing what I had been doing and that was Rick. He runs the ops and product side of the house."

Like Hayes, his background is not in business aviation; he reckons it's one of the few industries he hadn't already worked in, but previous roles had required top secret clearance for government operations and seen him work a couple of years as a director at PayPal, all of which equipped him well to bring modern business analysis techniques and understanding to business aviation, an industry he describes as having 'largely a barter economy'.

"Looking at the industry, I couldn't see how any operator could plan beyond the next quarter with any certainty, because they couldn't understand their future risks. I also think a lot of capital is misallocated and there are ways of optimising efficiency that will allow business aviators and suppliers to allocate capital in a way that helps them grow their business over time.

"A big focus for me is on analytics. We have lots of members using SAGE, QuickBooks and Excel to run their businesses and while these are fine from an accounting point of view, they don't help develop a business. They don't show you which aircraft are most



GILLIAN HAYES

**"We're building a community that's good for the operator and supplier alike."**

efficient, where you're losing money, where you could realise more profits. Meanwhile, suppliers have struggled with the distributed nature of the industry, having to invest heavily just to find customers, which means they have analytics questions too. Just as we have a members' dashboard that helps them make their purchases, so we'll have a supplier dashboard that shows them where customers are and what they need."

Speaking to Hayes and Tilghman, it seems they're attempting to create a local customer/supplier relationship on a global scale. "That's what we want," Hayes confirms. "We want expert vendors who really know how to provide the best service at the best

price, regardless of where in the world our customers or their aircraft are." "And beyond that, Tilghman says: "We're working to help operators compare how their aircraft are performing against a baseline generated across customers operating similar jets. Ultimately, they'll be able to make fleet and regional comparisons, because operating the same aircraft the same way out of London compared to south Florida, for example, has very different costs."

**Success story**

Recently promoted Chief Business Development Officer, Matt Smith has a background in charter brokerage and fleet management, with a focus on reducing cost

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and optimising efficiency, an apparently ideal introduction into AVIAÂ. His team drives new members and suppliers into the AVIAÂ community. “We need members to attract suppliers, since we’re working for both. That’s unusual for the industry; we’re helping provide customers with the services and products they need and providing suppliers with a large pool of potential customers.”

Still new to the company as Vice-President Business Development when he spoke to *EVA* at the MEBA show, Smith was busy meeting potential new suppliers and keen to celebrate the news that Jetex had signed up to the AVIAÂ list. “I’ve also just taken on a Middle East representative and I have people in the US and the UK. As we grow and build our community so we’ll add to the team, but I’m keen that we should grow organically – I’m wary of repeating a common start-up mistake by overloading the sales team.

“And at the same time as my title is VP Business Development, AVIAÂ is still a start-up, so we all have to be really agile. I’ve helped fill the coffee machine, and pitched in on a recent North American FBO tender. It involved creating a mailing list, calling the list, printing it and mailing it; on thanksgiving I worked alongside Gillian and another member of staff preparing the mailing, stuffing envelopes. I love that one day I’ll be doing my ‘proper’ job and the next I’ll be doing something random.

“It means I really look forward to going to work and I’m enjoying the different perspective that comes from working with non-aviation people in an aviation community.” Nonetheless, AVIAÂ has set itself up with a team that includes non-aviation folk, including Hayes and Tilghman, as a disruptor in a conservative industry – do some potential members and suppliers take a little more convincing of its worth?

“We have our early adopters, members who’ve been with us since the beginning and they’re fully engaged. Then we have more hesitant customers, but we’re helping change their purchasing patterns and with time they’ll see that. We’re also super transparent and we’ll just as happily tell people they’re already doing very well as we are to tell them we could help.

“This is a partnership and as more people see us grow and becoming more established, they’ll join the community. Every contact we have with a company builds on our relationship with them. Our customer success team will help them make better purchasing decisions and go to our suppliers if they notice a customer isn’t buying from them.

“For example, we might see that a customer isn’t buying fuel from one of our suppliers at a particular location. It might be because at that one FBO the supplier is a few cents more expensive than a competitor. We can go to the supplier and say, ‘On the basis of our

customer data, if you reduce your cost by a couple of cents, you can increase your fuel uplift by this much’. All the data we gather and distribute to subscribers is blind, so nothing confidential is given away but, at the same time, it helps everyone.”

Smith says it also works in reverse, with suppliers coming to AVIAÂ to better understand their sales. “We supply a solid source of market intelligence and even help open new markets. We had a US company with no international presence, which came to us for advice because they were opening in Europe. They wanted to identify the key locations for their product so they could be sure of a customer base. We supplied the data that enabled them to create an expansion strategy. We really do work for our suppliers just as much as our members; we treat them and their data as a community.

“I’ve even been able to personally help solve a member’s problem. A charter operator, he came to me at the NBAA show complaining that he couldn’t get credit with one of our fuel suppliers. I walked him to the supplier’s booth and started a conversation with their senior leadership team, which revealed he’d just become stuck in their computer application process. Now he’s happy because he has the credit and the better rates being an AVIAÂ member generates, and they’re happy because they’re selling millions more gallons of fuel. That’s a real AVIAÂ success story.”



**Above left:** Matt Smith, Chief Business Development Officer;  
**Above right:** Rick Tilghman, Chief Operating/Chief Product Officer.

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# Growing Success in Singapore

**In just four years, Flying Colours has grown its Singapore business from fixing scratches and removing stains, to full cabin refurbishment. With co-located Bombardier expanding, General Manager Paul Dunford is looking forward to a busy 2019**

Flying Colours Corp celebrates its 30th anniversary this year. The family-run business became an MRO and interiors specialist in 1989, having started as an aircraft painting outfit before moving into aircraft sales. Still headquartered in Peterborough, Ontario, it acquired a St Louis, Missouri facility in 2009 and opened another, within the Bombardier Seletar Airport service centre, in 2015.

The company is renowned for the quality of its cabin work and to ensure its high standards were maintained, the Singapore unit opened with a mix of Canadian and local talent, as Paul Dunford, General Manager Singapore, explains: “Originally the team was a mix of recruited local and experienced Canadian Flying Colours Corp staff. To support their training, the new Singapore recruits spent time in the Canadian facility, taking three months intense instruction with our full interiors team.

“Four Canadian senior technicians joined them on their return, supporting the facility’s opening and inaugural months of operation. Today, the 22-strong team comprises mainly regional recruits, although two of our Canadian colleagues chose to set

up home in Singapore and we are pleased to have retained them at the facility.”

Flying Colours Singapore was always imagined as a centre of expert cabin refurbishment and repair to complement Bombardier’s MRO facility and today, Dunford says its workscope covers: “...a wide range of interior needs, serving a customer base of private individuals, corporate flight departments and charter fleets. Over time, the number and size of projects flowing through the workshop has increased. Originally, we received requests for minor repairs – scratches in woodwork, stain removal on credenzas, soft furnishing fixes, or small component replacements – but now we’re asked to re-veneer entire cabins, completely reupholster seats and modify configurations. In fact, over the last year alone we’ve completed two full and three partial cabin refurbishments on site in Singapore.

“The team is also undertaking more cabin touch-ups and repairs to improve aircraft value for owners looking to sell. And we’re seeing higher demand for interior changes from new owners wishing to maintain their asset’s value, plus increased general interior maintenance.”



As word of the quality of work emerging from Flying Colours Singapore continues to spread, Dunford says: “We have a strong portfolio of customers and we are continuing to grow in the region; in 2018 we completed more than 60 projects. Some clients worked with us before we had a presence in Singapore, and would fly their aircraft to Canada, others are brand new to us. Most come via Bombardier, which is managing their aircraft maintenance, but we are also building relationships with our own Bombardier customers. They appreciate the time and money saved by having their aircraft repaired in the region by high-quality specialists, as opposed to having to fly it to Europe, the Middle East or the Americas.”

And what of returning customers? “Our cabin refurbishments may be one-off, but we hope that should an aircraft need touch-

ups or exchange hands, then the owner will return to us. We are now in our fourth year of operation and beginning to see more repeat customers.”

The close working relationship at Seletar also delivers benefits to Bombardier, Flying Colours and their customers, beyond top notch craftsmanship. “We work with the Bombardier Seletar team to ensure aircraft downtime is optimised. A good example is a cabin refurbishment project we completed last year on an aircraft that came in at short notice. The owner had purchased the pre-owned Global and it needed 120-month maintenance work. We simultaneously refurbished the interior with a full cabinetry refinish, new carpeting, rose gold plating on the metal features, new soft goods, and new galley and lavatory countertops. The seats and divan were reupholstered too.”

The requirements of Flying Colours Corp’s Singapore clients are essentially similar to those using its North American facilities, involving the same types of work. It’s in the execution that the markets tend to differ. “In Asia, red is a lucky colour so we see more of it in the cabin, in soft furnishings or wood colouring. The younger entrepreneurs also like contemporary minimal looks, so we work carefully to accommodate the needs of carbon fibre and other unusual materials, as well as the more traditional styles.”

#### Expanding facility

Bombardier has announced its plans to expand the Seletar facility and this means expansion for Flying Colours Corp too. As *EVA* went to press, the company shared news that its contract in Singapore had been confirmed for another five years ensuring its further growth alongside Bombardier’s.





Flying Colours Singapore has seen its work grow to include partial and complete cabin refurbishments.

PAUL DUNFORD

“Flying Colours Corp’s expansion plans will align us perfectly...”

As well as enlarging its workshop capacity, the company will be adding additional spray booths, generally increasing capacity and creating new roles.

Dunford notes: “Flying Colours Corp’s expansion plans will align us perfectly with our partner’s growth plans in the region. We expect our ‘heavy check’ interior workload to greatly increase with the addition of a larger Bombardier MRO hangar and exterior paint facility.

“There are some 300 Bombardier business aircraft in Asia and many are close to their 96- or 120-month maintenance checks, which means Bombardier and Flying Colours Singapore are readying themselves to take on an anticipated uptick in aircraft flowing through the facility. We’re in a strong position to support Bombardier and the aircraft owners by minimising downtime with our ability to offer the interior support while Bombardier’s team works on the aircraft.

“Meanwhile, our off-site team is also growing. Sometimes it is more cost-effective to fly our

team with a part and special tools to a client’s jet, rather than having them fly the aircraft to us. Owners appreciate this bespoke, onsite service. In cases where we are on a schedule or a job requires specialist knowledge, we fly team members in from North America to supplement our local personnel.”

#### More space at home

While work in Singapore blossoms, so Flying Colours is also growing its Canadian and US sites. Last October the company announced its intention to build a new hangar at Peterborough. Incorporating a 40,000sqft (3,715m<sup>2</sup>) paint shop, a similarly sized maintenance/interior workspace and two levels of offices for an additional 20,000sqft (1,860m<sup>2</sup>), the building is due for completion later this year.

Having opened additional space for interior and carpentry work at Chesterfield, St Louis in January 2018, Flying Colours moved into a fifth hangar this January, having taken on its lease last December. Re-equipped with the latest tooling and maintenance equipment, the hangar was immediately occupied

by a pair of Globals, in for 120-month maintenance checks. In keeping with the overall Flying Colours’ plan, the St Louis site was looking to swell its employee numbers beyond 200, by recruiting an additional 50 personnel.

Cognisant of the crossover between many traditional craft-based occupations as well as modern electronics and IT industries into MRO and completions, in March Flying Colours held the first in a series of recruitment events at its Ontario base. Employees were on hand to describe their roles, explaining how electrical, carpentry, sheet metal and upholstery skills were in demand, alongside more traditional engineering talent.

A further event is planned for St Louis and a Flying Colours’ press release on the subject nods towards the future demands of its Singapore facility, noting: “Flying Colours has operations in ...Asia as well, and employees interested in international opportunities may have the opportunity to transfer”.

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Founder and Chairman, Dragon General Aviation Group

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**Diana Chou** came into business aviation in the late 1990s. (all DGA)



# Dragon General Aviation Group

## Dragon Tales

**A veteran of business aviation in China, Diana Chou sits at the head of the Dragon General Aviation Group she created. An active, influential founder of the Asian Business Aviation Association, she remains on the Board of Governors and is among the region's key business aviation leaders**

Diana Chou stands as a beacon for business aviation in China. Founder and chairman of Dragon General Aviation Group (DGA), she also helped establish the Asian Business Aviation Association (AsBAA), remaining on its Board of Governors. She was the first woman in China to sell a business jet and subsequently branched off into helicopter sales. Now, DGA encompasses three distinct brands, L'Voyage, Aerochine and Jet 8, while Chou also runs other interests outside DGA and sits on several boards and committees with organisations both inside and outside aviation.

Chou's story is that of a pioneer. Her father had been involved in establishing Dragonair during the early 1980s, but that was not the inspiration for her aviation career. She began her bizjet odyssey in the late 1990s, taking Bombardier's products into the region after her brother, his business partner and Mansour Ojjeh secured exclusive rights to sell Bombardier aircraft in China, Macau and Hong Kong. Chou's brother and business partner worked in the US, where they regularly chartered aircraft for business. The partner also worked with the Ojjeh family, owners of TAG, and was neighbours with Pierre Beaudoin, then Bombardier's

Chairman of the Board and now its President and CEO.

With the deal done, the three looked around for a salesperson. Diana Chou was selling cosmetics, for Estée Lauder, and her brother asked her to give it a shot. It was a big ask, because first she had to educate China's business elite, convincing them of the benefits of business aviation at a time when the country's regulations and limited infrastructure made operations very difficult. Typically, she persisted. Two years later, she sold her first jet. Then decided to sell helicopters too...

### **Jet 8**

Remaining as perhaps DGA's closest connection to Chou's business aviation beginnings, Jet 8 sells jets, but also provides financial services, consultancy and more. Compared to the local landscape of 1998, there is now plenty of competition for jet sales, largely thanks to how Chou opened up the market. So how does Jet 8 compete in an expanded marketplace?

"There are many aircraft brokers out there, but also a frequent lack of transparency. We focus on providing the best advice to help the

client select the right aircraft. My business partner, Adrien, and I, have a deep knowledge of Bombardier aircraft – Adrien was a top salesperson with them. But at Jet 8 we don't take inventory and we're typically paid by the buyer, so we are in a unique, independent position to advise buyers without conflicts of interest. That means we can advise on a Bombardier purchase, but also on competitor brands if they are more suited to the client.

"We share a philosophy of looking after the best interests of the customer rather than our own. We believe that through caring for the clients' needs, whether buyers or sellers, we'll be rewarded with repeat business and referrals. A happy customer is the key to building a sustainable business, particularly when the merchandise might command US\$50 million, and the relationship has to be built on trust.

"We've developed a unique acquisition tool to help potential aircraft owners navigate a complex market. We translate critical parameters that influence the market and impact aircraft ownership, filter out the noise and provide clarity for potential buyers, helping them make the best aircraft acquisition decision. When an owner is



**Chou and Jet 8 Managing Partner**  
Adrien pose with a Global backdrop..

ready to upgrade or sell their aircraft, we take a similar approach, representing them exclusively and presenting only the offer that makes most economic sense.”

Sometimes, the best advice is not to buy at all. “If a customer doesn’t fly much, where’s the sense in them buying a jet? We believe that in turning their business down, we’ll win their eternal thanks. We can arrange charter flights for them instead and we’ve developed long-lasting friendships with the

majority of the customers we’ve refused. Sometimes these friendships open doors into other business ventures, or bring rewards in another form.”

#### **L’Voyage**

The first Wyvern-accredited charter broker in Asia, L’Voyage also specialises in providing luxury travel and lifestyle experiences. It offers charter aircraft from a worldwide pool of around 6,000 airframes and represents a number of

machines exclusively. As in everything DGA does, quality and service are of primary importance, but how does Chou ensure a fleet of 6,000 aircraft meets her high standards?

“L’Voyage operates to a set of stringent standard operating procedures and trains every employee to the same high standard. Our CRM [customer relationship management] system holds records, including information on aircraft specifications, insurance, AOC and pilots’ credentials, on every aircraft and operator. We inspect and update those records annually.

“We also watch every flight closely. We have pre- and post-flight checklists and monitor flights en route. If we find abnormalities, we feed back to the operator and seek a solution. If the operator can’t conform to our system, we drop them from our supplier list. It’s also true that customer feedback helps keep us on our toes.”

#### **DIANA CHOU**

**“We share a philosophy of looking after the best interests of the customer rather than our own.”**

Owners with underused aircraft might place them with L’Voyage exclusively. “Before we put the aircraft into the charter market, we make certain it’s operated under Part 135,” Chou says. “If it isn’t 135-equipped, we need to convince the owner to upgrade it with the appropriate avionics. Then we work closely with the aircraft management company. They’re responsible for the scheduling, flight planning, dispatch, catering and ground handling, while we are responsible for clearing payments before a flight and arranging ground transportation for the charter customer. Every charter request is screened and filtered, and we present only trips that make the best economic sense to the owner. We also seek owner approval before we sign any charter agreement.”

A charter could easily be an important component in one of L’Voyage’s luxury travel destination packages, but these represent a different challenge again to get right. Chou explains: “I usually try the destination myself first or rely on recommendations from friends and customers. We also select our trade partners very carefully, working closely

only with approved, licensed travel curators with in-depth knowledge and personal experience of the destination.”

**Aerochine**

Under Aerochine, Chou represents Bell in mainland China, Macau and Hong Kong. While there’s an obvious private, corporate and VVIP market for helicopters, there’s also a broader demand for more utilitarian missions in construction, emergency services and basic passenger and freight transport. It’s a set of requirements that seems at odds with DGA’s luxury and business aviation brands, but Chou’s helicopter experience easily wins through.

“When an operator wants to enter a market segment, Aerochine gets involved in the feasibility stage, selecting the appropriate aircraft for the mission. We look at the options they need to select in order to perform the mission, for example whether they might install a single or double hoist on a search and rescue aircraft. We also do cost, financing and performance analysis.

“I’d been selling jets for almost ten years before we were made the Bell representative for China. I believe Bell appointed us on the basis of our market knowledge and ability to deliver, but it operates to a stringent code of business ethics and upholding that standard is not easy. So I constantly emphasise to my team that if we’re to build a sustainable business, we must adhere to and even exceed those high standards. We have checks in place to ensure we do, and staff bonuses are based on those essential KPIs.”

Aerochine also offers Bell-authorized MRO, but there’s more to supporting helicopters in the region than supplying maintenance and repairs. “Safety is paramount for any aircraft operator and we face an uphill struggle to educate Chinese operators that good maintenance practice ensures safe flying and reduced downtime. The only independent MRO for helicopters in China, we’re impartial to how the operators run their flight departments, but we’re obliged to provide expert advice on how aircraft should be maintained according to the manufacturer’s service manual and



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**Right:**  
**Aerochine** hands over a Bell 407 to its new owner. Aerochine reassembled and flight tested the aircraft before delivery;

**Below Right:**  
Chou and colleagues accept a Customer Service Facility certificate from Bell.

service bulletins. We assist operators with their maintenance schedule and annual checks, and we modify aircraft against their operational requirements.”

Meanwhile, although Bell’s military programmes have remained healthy, its commercial platforms suffered a decline in recent years from a position of pre-eminence perhaps three decades ago. Now, particularly through the JetRanger X and forthcoming 525 Relentless, but also by embracing new technology, the OEM appears resurgent, providing a rosy outlook for Aerochine. Based on her years of helicopter experience, does Chou agree?

“Absolutely! Bell’s tiltrotor technology is proven in military service and will soon be available for civilian use. They’re also the first manufacturer to sign a partnership with Uber to build a flying taxi. Many companies are vying to be the first to launch one, but Bell’s prototype puts them firmly in front of the pack. I believe Bell’s VTOL technology will revolutionise travel.”

#### Group benefits

Aerochine, Jet 8 and L’Voyage are firmly rooted in aviation, each with its own discrete area of expertise. Nevertheless, Chou reckons the common threads between them are sufficient to deliver important benefits to DGA as a whole.

“L’Voyage offers an entry into business aviation. It’s where our clients experience the efficiency of private jet travel, whether for business, pleasure or just a special trip. Through charter and only where appropriate, we gradually navigate customers towards aircraft ownership. They can charter different aircraft, helping them understand each type’s performance and competitive advantage. By the time they’re ready to move into ownership, they are well-informed aircraft users, able to make sound purchasing

decisions, based on their actual needs rather than on impulse.

“At Jet 8 we meet many emotional, excited first-time buyers and we send those who fly less than 300 hours a year away; we recommend they charter. Sometimes, a buyer needs an interim jet while they await delivery of their customised aircraft and we’ll package L’Voyage’s service to offer them a turn-key solution. It keeps the customer close to us and away from competitors who may not have their best interests at heart.

“Aerochine’s customer profile is more industry-orientated, but its database is shared with the group and it also assists corporate jet customers designing helipads for their offices. It can help with corporate shuttle procurement too, typically for moving executives over shorter ranges between factories. We’ve developed an internal referral system between the three companies, which is proving efficient and cost effective.”

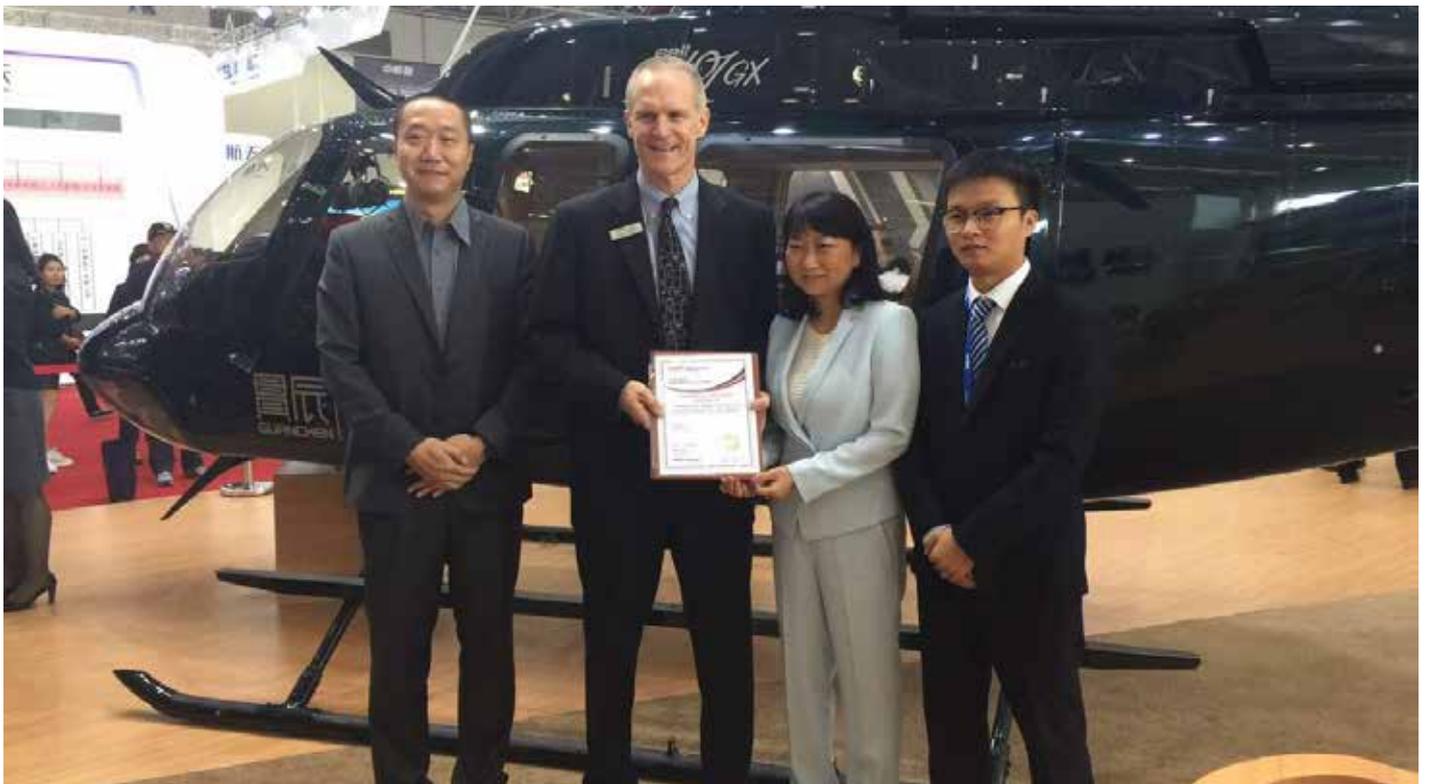
Diana Chou was instrumental in introducing China to business aviation and she has remained closely aligned with the trade bodies and associations at its core. They include AsBAA, of course, but also The Pacific Basin Economic Council, The Better HK Foundation, The General Association of Zhejiang Entrepreneurs, HK & Mainland International Investment Society and The Ningbo Provincial Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, which between them help cement her position as a vital influencer, and keep her close to developments, benefiting both DGA and the region’s burgeoning business aviation sector.

China has traditionally struggled with a lack of airports and infrastructure, plus an excess of ‘red tape’, making it difficult for operators and passengers to properly exploit business aviation. Now the situation is changing, as



today’s leaders embrace the possibilities of tomorrow. “In the 13th Five Year Plan,” Chou explains, “the Central Government is encouraging the construction of small general aviation airports. Meanwhile, the CAAC [Civil Aviation Administration of China] is trying its best to relax antiquated regulations and implement policy that encourages general aviation growth. Opening up the lower airspace for helicopter movements and cross border flying, for example, are important developments the Chinese government is diligently working on.

“I’ve been involved in the region’s business aviation for 20 years, watching it grow from two aircraft to more than 600, and I’ve witnessed how the establishment of AsBAA helped the industry lobby various Asian governments, enabling them to see how business and general aviation stimulate GDP and employment. We’ve a long road still ahead, but as an industry we’re making headway.”





**This image:** The G650ER is Gulfstream's long-range, high-speed flagship; **Above right:** The G650ER cockpit proved comfortable over the Singapore-San Francisco record flight; **Below right:** Gulfstream Beijing. (all Gulfstream)

# Gulfstream Improving Services & Shrinking the World

**Gulfstream has improved its service offering in Europe and Asia, and added to its senior leadership team in Savannah. Meanwhile, the flagship G650ER has been streaking across the world, setting a new series of seven records**

With the dramatic new-technology G500 in service and the similar, though larger G600 on the cusp of first delivery, Gulfstream has turned its attention towards strengthening its global customer support infrastructure. After the excitement surrounding entry into service of any new jet fades, it's a manufacturer's ongoing support package that generates loyal customers, a fact far from lost on Gulfstream.

At the same time though, while the superlative G500 and G600 have won the lion's share of attention over the past couple of years, Gulfstream considers the G650ER the brand flagship. It's the largest and longest-ranged aircraft in its catalogue, and the manufacturer proved its pre-eminence with a series of seven record-breaking flights last December, culminating in a 13-hour 37-minute run between Singapore and San Francisco.

Gulfstream announced the latest G650ER record on 19 February, two months after the 18 December 2018 flight. The jet had



launched from Changi Airport at 1058 local time and touched down in San Francisco at 0845 local, completing the 7,475nm (13,843km) route in the shortest time ever for an ultra long-range aircraft.

The manufacturer's own figures record the G650ER's maximum range as 7,500nm (13,890km), achieved at Mach 0.85 and yet the February press release noted an average of Mach 0.87 over a distance just 25nm shorter. Those numbers ought to suggest this was a prepared aircraft, perhaps lightened for the record and flown using special procedures by a Gulfstream crew especially familiar with the G650ER. And if not, perhaps the weather was ideal, with optimal winds assisting the high cruise speed?

EVA put these questions to Heidi Fedak, Gulfstream's Director of Corporate Communications. Her response was matter of fact: "The leg was chosen to showcase the aircraft's performance capabilities but

required no specific procedures or actions. Nor was it the perfect day, wind-wise, to break a record. The typical G650ER operator cruises between Mach 0.87 and the aircraft's maximum operating speed of 0.925 – our normal cruise speed is 0.90, for a range of 6,400nm, which is unparalleled in the class. The entire Singapore-San Francisco trip was flown at Mach 0.87, the ideal speed for the long-range mission distance, so this was a flight any crew could have accomplished."

Fedak also confirmed the aircraft was in standard configuration and the mission completed with three Gulfstream pilots and one passenger. "Our pilots described it as an 'easy mission for the G650ER', and it arrived in San Francisco with 4,500lb of fuel – about 50% more than IFR reserves."

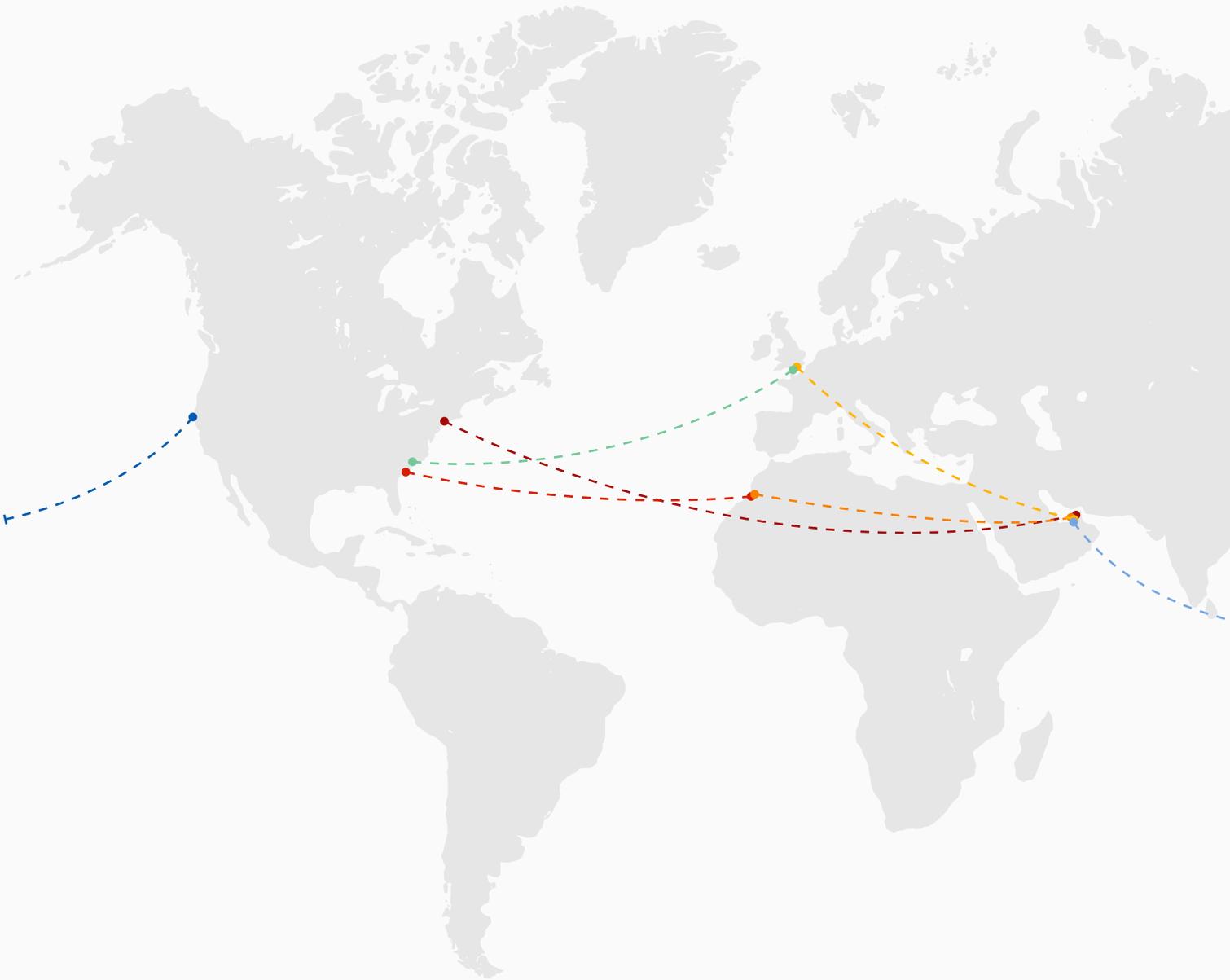
Even after almost 14 hours, the crew and passenger reportedly landed in San Francisco with minimum fatigue, the flight deck having proven 'extremely accommodating'

throughout; they also appreciated the cabin's low altitude and air quality. In fact, it seems there's no escaping the fact that the exercise summed up everything long-range, high-speed business aviation is about.

#### Service expansion

While the G650ER was off shrinking the globe, Gulfstream was actively expanding its global service network. Most recently it announced new developments in facilities and personnel in Asia and Europe.

Expansion in the latter region centres on Paris Le Bourget, where Gulfstream has secured 16,500sqft (1,533m<sup>2</sup>) of hangar space, adding to the support offered by its Field and Airborne Support Teams (FAST) unit, located at the airport since 2017. The three European Aviation Safety Agency-trained FAST technicians are managed out of Gulfstream's London Luton Airport service centre and specialise in aircraft-on-ground situations. The European offering is further



augmented with the appointment of Clarke Moucher, Managing Director of Customer Support for Europe, the Middle East and Africa; Moucher will be closely involved with Gulfstream’s expanding Farnborough, UK site.

Elsewhere, Gulfstream, Jet Aviation and Hawker Pacific now share General Dynamics parentage, which is good news for Asia’s Gulfstream operators. “We have more geographic territory covered than ever before with Gulfstream Beijing, Jet Aviation Singapore and Hong Kong, and Shanghai Hawker Pacific,” Barry Russell, Vice President, Customer Support Sales and New Business Development, confirms. “There are knowledgeable, well-trained Gulfstream technicians at all four locations, providing customers with the benefit of having options for their maintenance.”

A fleet of approximately 340 Gulfstream aircraft operates in the Asia-Pacific region, in excess of 290 of them large-cabin models and almost 60% of the total based in China and Hong Kong. Also Hong Kong-based, Ernest Tai is the newly appointed Managing Director of Customer Support for Asia, a job mirroring Moucher’s European position.

Russell explained the role: “He engages directly with in-region customers and coordinates with Gulfstream, Jet Aviation and Hawker Pacific to provide support. To a large extent, he develops and drives the support capabilities in the region. He also partners with sales to increase market penetration by showcasing Gulfstream customer support, and Jet Aviation and Hawker Pacific service and delivery capabilities.”

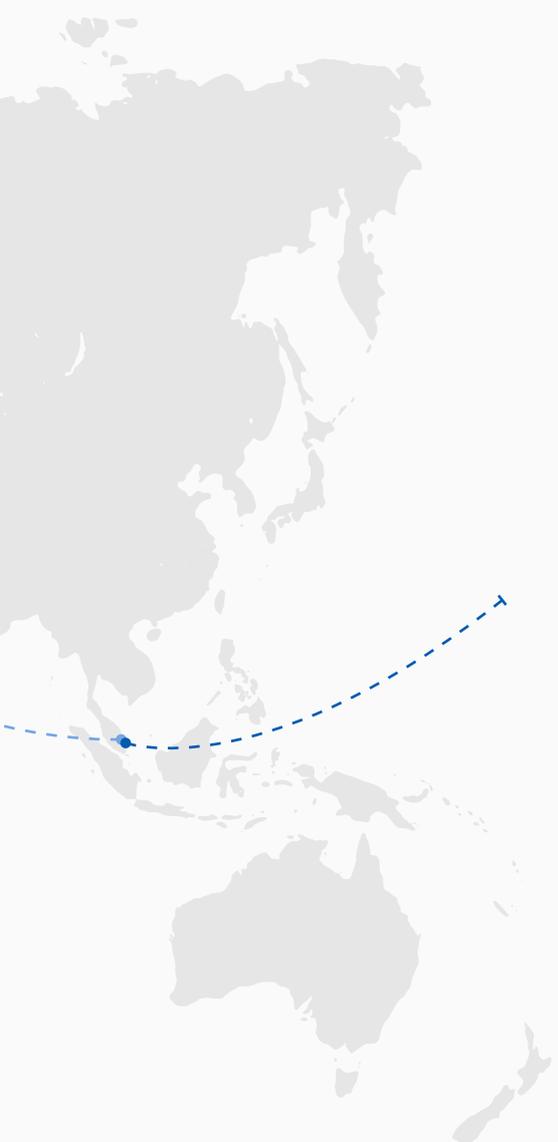
“He won’t necessarily deal with issues related to an aircraft-on-ground situation. Gulfstream has ten field service representatives in Asia-Pacific – four in Hong Kong, two in China, and one each in Singapore, Japan, Australia and India – and several FAST technicians in the region – Beijing, Hong Kong, Singapore and Bangkok – who would more likely interact with a customer facing that scenario.”

#### **Better in Beijing**

In a further commitment to Asia-Pacific, Gulfstream has added capability at its Beijing facility. Its technicians have earned Civil Aviation Administration of China approval for 96-month inspections on the Gulfstream G550 and G450; 72-month inspections on the G280; and 144-month inspections on the G200.

# G650ER December 2018 Records

(All subject to National Aeronautic Association ratification)



	From	To	nm/km	Time
●	Teterobo, New Jersey	Dubai UAE	6,141nm 11,373km	11h 2m
●	Savannah Georgia	Marrakech Morocco	3,829nm 7,091km	7h 3m
●	Marrakech Morocco	Dubai UAE	3,550nm 6,574km	6h 46m
●	Dubai UAE	Biggin Hill UK	3,046nm 5,641km	6h 45m
●	Biggin Hill UK	Charleston South Carolina	3,710nm 6,870km	8h 15m
●	Dubai UAE	Singapore	3,494nm 6,470km	7h 15m
●	Singapore	San Francisco California	7,475nm 13,843km	13h 37m

Russell notes that since it opened in November 2012, Gulfstream Beijing has serviced more than 1,050 aircraft visits, including road trips to the region’s airports. “Employing approximately 50 personnel, including around 20 technicians, the facility has in the region of 70,000sqft [6,503m<sup>2</sup>] of hangar, shop and office space. Plus, an on-site warehouse includes a stock of close to US\$2.5 million in parts and materials.”

### Back in Savannah

Recent senior leadership changes at Gulfstream’s Savannah, Georgia headquarters are also significant. It says the appointments: “...meet the company’s growing number of aircraft programmes, manage its worldwide supply chain and innovate for the future.”

The areas into which the executives are appointed are particularly relevant in that context, as Colin Miller becomes Senior VP, Innovation, Engineering and Flight after Gulfstream veteran Dan Nale retired as Senior VP of Programs, Engineering and Test. Greg Collett is made Senior VP, Manufacturing and Completions, replacing former Senior VP, Operations Dennis Stuligross, who becomes Senior VP of Program Management, Quality and Supply Chain.

Between them, these positions encompass almost the full gamut of Gulfstream capability, revealing a characteristic quiet confidence for the future. The company knows what it does well and works hard to build upon its own high standards, always with an eye on the next-generation technologies that are shaping tomorrow’s Gulfstreams today.

### Barry Russell

“We have more geographic territory covered than ever before...”

# Global Reach, Learjet Legend

**Bombardier demonstrated the exceptional performance of its Global 7500 with an epic Singapore–Tucson flight, but hasn't forgotten its light jets or customer support offering**

With the Global 5500 and 6500 nearing the end of their test campaign ready for first delivery later in 2019, it would seem entirely reasonable for Bombardier's focus to be on perfecting the latest jets in its line. Perfection is no doubt what the Canadian manufacturer is seeking, but at the same time, it has found the capacity not only to prove the reach of its Global 7500, but also to extend the utility of a business aviation classic, the Learjet.

Bombardier delivered the first customer Global 7500 last December, immediately leasing it back as a demonstrator for the 2019 world tour, while it awaits completion of a dedicated company aircraft. By early March the 7500 had already truly travelled the world, accumulating 170 flying hours in the process and, according to a Bombardier spokesperson, '...demonstrating exceptional performance and reliability'.

Around 16 of those hours were accumulated during an 8,152nm trip between Singapore and Tucson, Arizona, the longest-ranged flight of any purpose-designed business jet ever. The aircraft also achieved the record for highest speed over the longest distance and landed with 4,300lb of fuel in its tanks, sufficient for another 90 minutes in the air.

Check Bombardier's website and the headline for Global 7500 range is 7,700nm, yet the record flight covered in excess of 8,100nm; a cynic might suggest the aircraft was specially prepared and crewed. It seems only logical that the cabin ought to have been stripped



back and, perhaps, additional fuel tanks fitted, while a crew of three might be the full complement. There could be no passengers or baggage, since both represent little more than ballast when extreme range is the ambition.

EVA asked Bombardier to come clean about the aircraft's configuration. It did. And the response was surprising. A crew of three did, indeed, pilot the jet, but there were also three passengers. Between them, passengers, crew and luggage contributed towards the 900lb payload filed on the flight plan. It must have been an uncomfortable ride in that stripped-back cabin? Apparently not.

"The cabin was not only fully representative of a typical aircraft, but included customer options – a large, permanent bed and a full-height wardrobe in the aft stateroom," Dominique Cristall, Senior Public Relations & Sustainability Advisor says.

The aircraft's advantage must therefore have come from a specially trained crew, eking out every drop of performance? "No special crew was required, and the mission was performed well within the aircraft's operating envelope," was Cristall's laconic response.

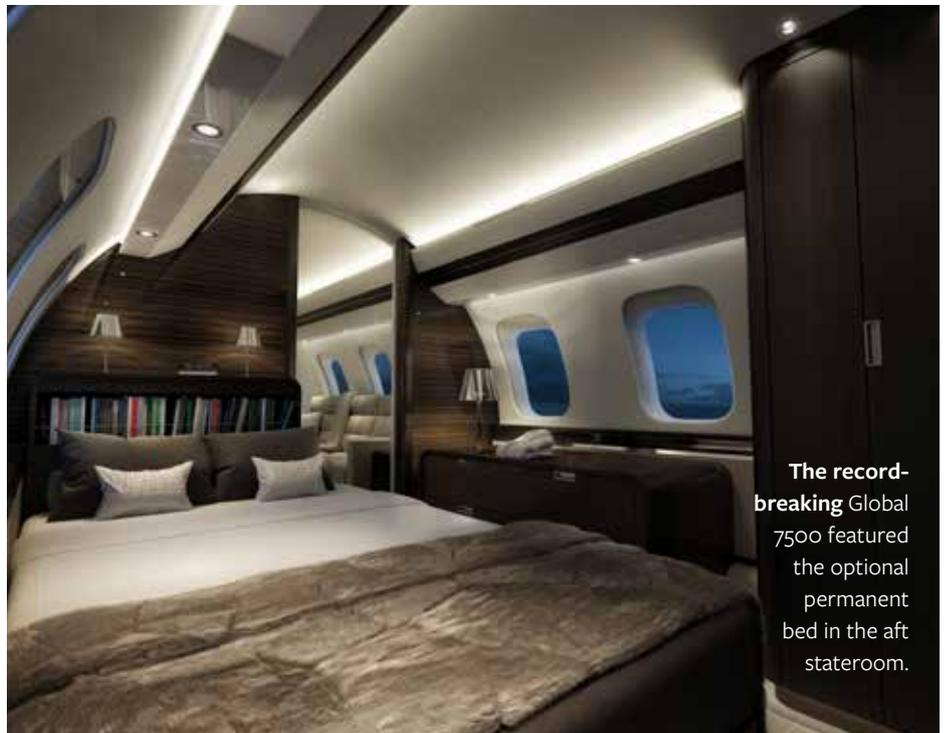
It seems the Global 7500 is genuinely exceptional therefore, Bombardier confirming



The Learjet 75 light jet offers a 2,040nm maximum range. (all Bombardier Business Aircraft)



Learjet 75 cabin.



The record-breaking Global 7500 featured the optional permanent bed in the aft stateroom.

that its ability to fly high above commercial traffic at optimum altitudes for minimum fuel burn is an essential aspect of its long-range capability. Cristall further explains: “The priority was to show that customers could realistically fly such missions with ample fuel reserves. Thus, we decided to use our Long-Range Cruise [LRC] setting to maximise fuel at landing. The LRC setting results in variable speed, but works out overall to about Mach 0.85, allowing us to land with reserves well over NBAA IFR requirements.”

Bombardier describes the Global 7500 cockpit as ‘the industry’s most spacious’, also noting its ‘superior aesthetics’ and

‘permanent side-facing jump seat’. ‘Spacious’ and ‘superior’ might be down to individual interpretation, but the record flight crew reportedly had no complaints and also appreciated the jet’s crew rest area, a completely private, comfortable space furnished with two cabin windows and a berthable seat.

**Learjet extension**

While the Global 7500 wows at the heavy end of Bombardier’s scale, the iconic Learjet, in its latest Learjet 70 and 75 models, continues the famous lines’ 55-year history at the light end. Its developmental emphasis may firmly be on the Globals, but the OEM has not

forgotten the beloved Learjet as it continues to introduce incremental improvements to the airframe, avionics and maintenance schedule.

In January, Bombardier announced an extension in major powerplant inspection intervals for the Learjet’s Honeywell TFE731 turbofan, from 3,000 to 3,500 hours, representing a considerable operator saving. Backed by extensive historical data, the extension is available without modifications to engines or airframe, while Cristall notes for the future: “The FAA stipulates robust guidelines that ensure all extensions, regardless of the source, remain safe and do not compromise airworthiness.”



The original TFE731 was certified in 1972, but continuous improvement and technology insertion have resulted in an efficient, digitally-controlled engine that the Learjet 70 and 75 employ in its TFE731-40BR version; the extended inspection interval applies to all -20 and -40 motors. On average, Bombardier says the change represents more than 12 months additional time between major inspections and it confirms that some customers are already enjoying the benefits.

Introduced to Bombardier operators via temporary revision (TR 5-17) to the Honeywell Light Maintenance Manual (LMM), the extension is available through Bombardier Business Aircraft's network of nine global service centres and its authorised service facilities, spanning 26 countries.

Meanwhile, the airframer also announced a combined 25 million flying hours for the Learjet fleet, the Learjet 23 having entered service in 1964. More than 2,200 aircraft remain operational and, among them, the Learjet 70 and 75 are responsible for around 153,000 hours of flight time. And they'll be responsible for many more hours aloft, since Bombardier has plans for them beyond maintenance boosts.

In fact, the Learjet 75 already received a significant comfort enhancement, along with a new cabin design, in 2016. The reworked interior includes a pocket door, separated from the cockpit and cabin and, according to Bombardier, reducing cabin noise by 8dB. It remains unique in the class and is far from the last investment in Learjet development.

This year, a Garmin G5000 (Garmin Phase 3) avionics upgrade becomes available for all Learjet 70 and 75 aircraft, as a retrofit package for in-service machines and on the production line. With



a nod towards futureproofing, Cristall says the updated avionics suite, on Bombardier's Vision flight deck, brings: "...workload-reducing improvements, including climb, cruise and descent vertical navigation, enhanced take-off and landing performance calculations, and more. In addition, FANS 1/A+, which will enable customers access the most efficient and favourable routes, will be offered as an option. It will ensure readiness for modernised airspace requirements and deliver efficiency gains that are expected to lower direct operating costs."

#### Asian expansion

But neither intercontinental reach nor a production history spanning almost half the period of controlled, heavier-than-air flight will earn the loyalty of discerning customers if aftersales support is lacking. Bombardier knows this as well as, perhaps even better than, its industry competitors and after announcing improvements to its service offering in Europe and the US, in February the OEM revealed plans for a major expansion of its Singapore Service Centre. The work will add additional hangar space, a paint facility, parts depot and enhanced interior finishing capacity in a quadrupling of the existing site's space. Scheduled to open later in 2020, it will support in excess of 2,000 annual visits.

In a 26 February press release, Jean-Christophe Gallagher, Vice President and General Manager, Customer Experience, said the facility will offer "...access to the complete range of OEM customer service 24/7, 365 days a year. This expansion is another key building block in our drive to enhance the accessibility of our OEM expertise for customers worldwide and to solidify our position as a leader in aftermarket services in the Asia-Pacific region, a pivotal growing part of our global network."

The expansion can be taken as evidence of the industry's long-term commitment to the region and also of Bombardier's intention to remain a leading player as business aviation expands through Asia-Pacific and especially in China. Few OEMs are perhaps better placed to service that expansion, since the Learjets and Challengers offer a varying combination of accommodation and regional range that perfectly complements the Global's intercontinental performance, which brings the US and Europe easily into reach from Asia.

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# Connected Xperience

**SD reckons effective connectivity is all about the experience...**

Connectivity providers know that it is the quality of the service they deliver that counts, rarely the method of delivery. Yet connectivity remains shrouded in a level of technological mystery, relying on megabits per second (there are eight megabits in a megabyte, apparently), pipes (connections between aircraft and satellite, or ground antenna), upload speeds (moving data off the aircraft, through a pipe and slower than download speeds), download speeds (moving data to the aircraft, through a pipe and faster than upload speeds), and on, and on.

Delivering quality service is usually dependent upon understanding exactly what constitutes quality to an individual customer but charting a course through the technology thicket to arrive at that understanding is often a major challenge. It's a thicket SD (Satcom Direct) has negotiated many times and one it saw a pressing need to clear. The solution is SD Xperience. Michael Skov Christensen, VP International, explains.

“It’s a step into talking to customers about their needs and the experience they’ll get, both for people who walk to the right when



**Left:** Michael Skov Christensen, Vice President, Satcom Direct



they enter the airplane and those who turn left, because it also covers pretty much everything about how the aircraft is operated.

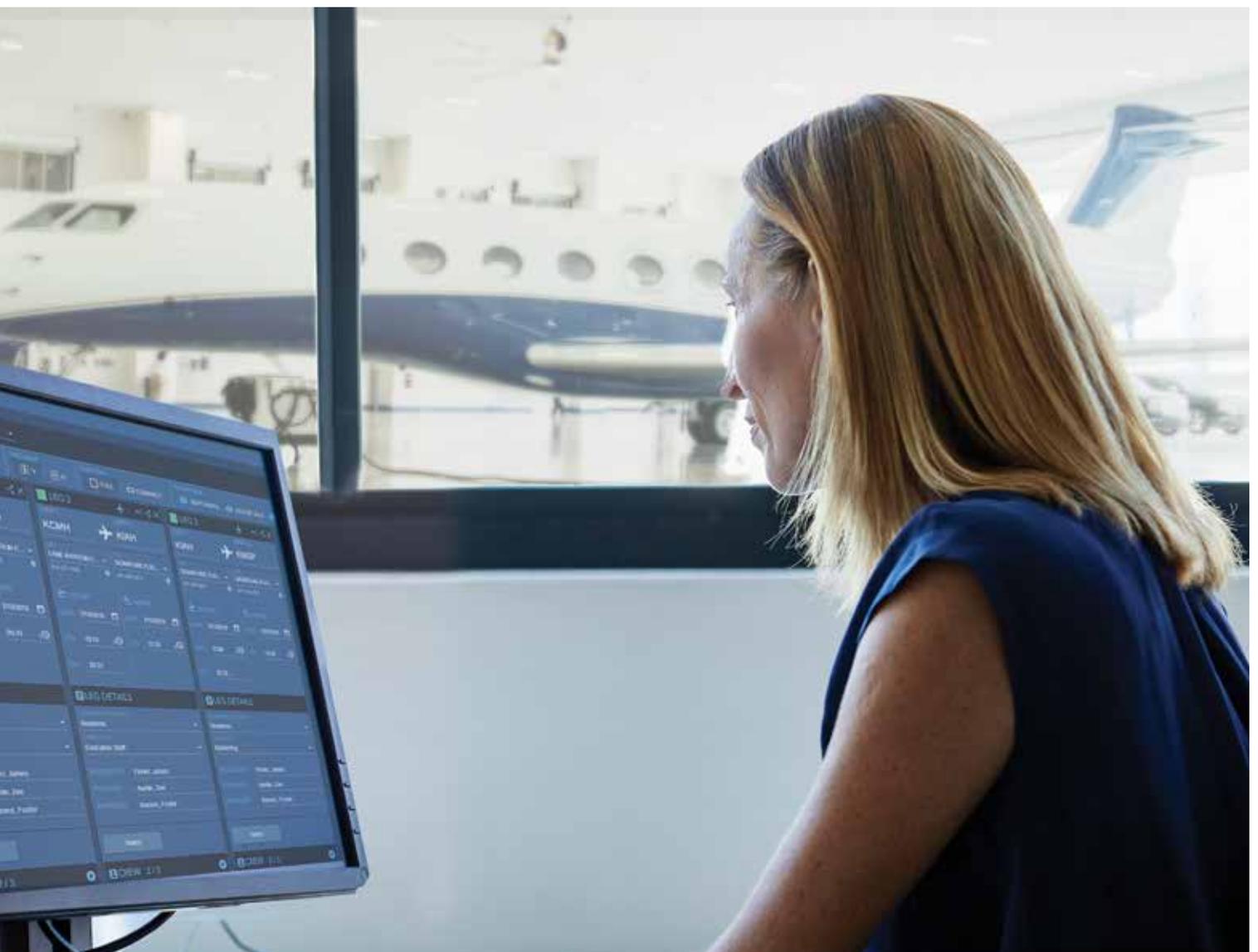
“There’s a legacy of talking about technologies and it’s traditionally been difficult to translate that into an expectation of experience. That has made managing the gap between expectation and what’s actually delivered particularly difficult. Someone tells you, for example, that you’ll have 10 megabits per second [Mbps]. What does that mean? What will you be able to do? SD Xperience bases what we’re offering on what the client will experience.” It means the conversation starts off with ‘here’s what you’ll be able to do’, or ‘tell us what you want to do’, and the technicalities of that become irrelevant.

SD has been in the connectivity business more than two decades, and expanded its capability over the past five years into hardware provision, establishing SD Avionics out of its acquisition of TrueNorth. “That enables us to control the internal environment, which means we control the experience in the cabin, in the cockpit, in terms of support and in terms of value adds.

“Also, today’s aircraft have transitioned to digital systems, generating huge amounts of data. But dumping that big data on a customer doesn’t make for a good experience – what are they going to do with it? If we capture it, manipulate or filter it, then present it in a useful, easily understandable format that enables flight departments to improve their efficiency, then we create synergies and an attractive product. Our hardware allows us to do that.

“Because we’ve become a manufacturer, we also know exactly what’s running on our equipment and we can plan for what’s next. For example, we’ve sold Iridium services for a very long time and we’ll continue doing that for their next generation of satellites, but we’ll also be building Iridium NEXT Certus units.

“And the glue that holds all this together is really our software. The original SD Pro modular software enabled a single log-in to access relevant information across multiple platforms. Now, SD Scheduler has become a significant step towards facilitating the ultimate SD Pro system.





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“Almost everything in flight operations circles around when an airplane is dispatched and when it lands again. During flight, the aircraft needs connectivity, so the on-board routers need good connection and support if required. At the same time, flying hours become relevant for the maintenance schedule and, as soon as you switch the airplane on, cybersecurity is paramount. Once the airplane is dispatched, everything else follows and SD Scheduler helps gather all that data, synchronising the aircraft with flight operations for an optimised end result.”

Christensen defines that end result as the overall experience, the cornerstone on which SD delivers its connectivity solution. “We’d rather talk to our clients and partners about the end result, the experience, then work back, than look at each of the individual outcomes they want and then attempt to add them together. Now the conversation is about features and experience, not technology.”

So, what happens if a client does have a particular provider or system in mind? “They’re free to buy whatever they want, but we’ll always ask for a conversation about what they’re trying to accomplish. Is their chosen route the best one? We’ve always had a consultative approach to how we interact with customers, but now we have our three core activities – connectivity, hardware and software – we can talk about nose-to-tail experience.”

So long as the experience meets the expectation, SD has the flexibility to bundle services with whichever connectivity pipe is best suited to the customer – it has solid agreements with Inmarsat for Jet ConneX (JX) and Swift Broadband, SmartSky, Viasat and, most recently, Intelsat, which made its commercial service introduction on 2 April. So long as the system works, the support is good, the price is right and the experience fulfilling, it really makes little odds to the customer whose pipe they’re using.

### Pipe partners

Christensen says SD is a top-level partner of both Inmarsat and Viasat. At last October’s NBAA show Inmarsat announced signature of its 400th JX subscription and Christensen reveals that around 70% of those deals were done through SD. “It’s testimony to how much our customers believe and trust in us when it comes to new technology. It’s also testimony to our relationship with Inmarsat, where we work together to drive innovation.

“And we were Viasat’s first partner for its Ku-band network too. We’ve worked with them to improve it and we were the first value-added retailer they announced for the upcoming Viasat-3 Ka.

“Nevertheless, we felt there was a spot for a third satcom alternative and that’s Intelsat’s FlexExec Ku-band service. It brings a number of unique features that provide flexibility for some customers. First off, we don’t have speed plans with FlexExec, the customer gets everything the network can give them. Right now, that means 10Mbps (megabits per second) to the airplane and 2Mbps off, but we’ve been very conservative with our initial announcement and the network holds great additional capacity.”

Employing high throughput satellites for the first time in a Ku network, FlexExec is the only dedicated business aviation service and particularly effective over high-traffic routes, but also enables additional capacity to be targeted as needed. Among the oldest satellite operators, Intelsat is also one of the largest and its capability is enabling SD to offer a new type of product.

“We’re being very flexible with some of our FlexExec subscriptions. We’ve started looking at pay by the hour. SD Xperience enables customers to define what 10Mbps means to them and then they choose the package that best fits. We’ve trialled 10Mbps on our jet and it translates into seven or eight devices working simultaneously, using WhatsApp, email and so on, comfortably.

“We can look at a FlexExec subscription, combined with our hardware and software, guarantee and warranty programmes, and tie it all into one budget that tells you exactly how much you’re going to pay per flight hour. It means customers who know how many hours they fly will know exactly how much they’re going to pay. It’s effectively a single hourly rate for the experience.”

It sounds like an ideal solution for cost-conscious operators, depending upon what those hourly rates will be... “We haven’t published a price list yet, because although we know where we initially want the pricing to be, we’re also very open to customers coming to us and asking that we create set-ups for them. If we see those individual needs being applicable to multiple clients, then we’ll react to that,” Christensen explains.



SD’s Florida data centre helps ensure the highest levels of cybersecurity.

# APAC Expansion

**Jet Aviation's acquisition of Hawker Pacific's Asia-Pacific FBO and MRO network marked a major expansion for the General Dynamics company. Joe Reckling has been appointed SVP Regional Operations, APAC, to oversee and develop the area**

Jet Aviation completed its acquisition of Hawker Pacific last May, in the process adding seven FBOs and 14 MROs across 19 Middle East and Asia-Pacific (APAC) locations, along with more than 800 employees, to its roster. Although work continues to integrate the new assets, in February Jet Aviation announced that rebranding of the former Hawker Pacific FBOs was complete.

Affecting individual facilities at Cairns, Darwin, Perth and Sydney, plus two at Brisbane, the change aligns the Australian FBOs with Jet Aviation's 27 existing sites across America, Europe, the Middle East and Asia, enabling them to better compete in the global market, according to Joe Reckling, Senior Vice President Regional Operations, Asia-Pacific, who emphasised: "The Australian FBOs have a history of strong performance and will continue delivering exceptional customer service under the Jet Aviation brand."

Jet Aviation's ambition for its new acquisitions goes beyond rebranding, however. To help capture the value of Hawker Pacific and support its vision, Jet Aviation has formed a new Asia-Pacific (APAC) region, appointing Reckling to manage it. Reporting directly to Jet Aviation



Brisbane FBO with Jet Aviation titles. (all Jet Aviation)



Joe Reckling, SVP Regional Operations, APAC; Right: Hong Kong MRO.

President, Rob Smith, he oversees the company's business activities throughout the region and the ongoing operations of the Hawker Pacific business; the new APAC region has 21 locations and more than 1,100 employees.

Looking again at the Australian FBOs, Brisbane has two under the Jet Aviation brand. Competition within the company makes little sense, but Reckling confirms: "...both will remain strong under the Jet Aviation brand and continue to operate in synergy. The Brisbane FBO and Brisbane Jet Base offer customers baggage handling, hotel and catering coordination, fuel arrangements, ramp and hangar parking. With customs, immigration and quarantine

clearances on site, we also offer executive and crew transportation, wireless internet and concierge services to ensure everything is taken care of.

"The two locations therefore offer the same capabilities and service, but they are uniquely positioned on the airport to cater to differing customer requirements. The Jet Base is located in a high-traffic, high-demand area close to the domestic terminal and a future runway expansion. It offers customers a quicker transition into other airport amenities and utilities, while the second location is in a more secluded and private area. It caters for travellers who particularly value privacy and have additional security requirements."



Further enhancing the Australian network, the FBOs in Brisbane, Cairns, Perth and Sydney belong to the Air Elite Network. US-based Air Elite applies its accreditation to a global network of FBOs, guaranteeing quality facilities and service standards. Reckling notes: “Darwin is a new facility and currently undergoing review to join the Air Elite network, while the benefits and standards associated with being part of the Air Elite network will continue to be upheld at our other locations.”

#### Asia

Delving further into Jet Aviation’s APAC region, Reckling emphasises: “We are now in a position to further expand our portfolio, enter new markets across Asia-Pacific,

and offer more options and value to our customers worldwide. Hawker Pacific as a Jet Aviation company will continue to look at opportunities where we can offer a viable solution or service for our customers.”

Jet Aviation’s coverage has also extended in China and Singapore. Like Brisbane, Shanghai has two Jet Aviation FBOs, catering for traffic growth at both Hongqiao Airport and Pudong Airport, according to Reckling but, unlike the Australian facilities, they retain Hawker Pacific titles.

“We have not yet announced any rebranding in China, since our presence in Shanghai is a joint venture and we are currently discussing the best way forward with our partner. Shanghai

Hawker Pacific Business Aviation Service Centre [SHPBAC] is a joint venture between Shanghai Airport Authority and Hawker Pacific.”

In Hong Kong, Jet Aviation offers MRO, with particular emphasis on Bombardier, Falcon and Gulfstream, while in Singapore it offers an impressive mix of MRO and FBO. “Our facility at Seletar Airport has been providing maintenance, refurbishment and AOG services since 1995, and we offer FBO services at both Seletar and Changi Airports. Jet Aviation has successfully built a reputation for delivering premium maintenance services in Singapore.

“With the integration of the Hawker Pacific facilities in Singapore, we now occupy a



total hangar space of 17,915m<sup>2</sup> [192,835sqft], making Jet Aviation Singapore the second largest facility within Jet Aviation's global network. It offers six maintenance hangars, 2 parking hangars, a paint hangar, a cabin interior workshop, customer lounges and other services. Clients using the facility benefit from our local skills and experience, and our global aviation services network, which supports them worldwide.

"We've been operating in Singapore since 1996, and our experienced technicians provide support for Airbus, Beechcraft, Boeing, Bombardier, TBM, Falcon, Embraer and Gulfstream aircraft. We're also a Factory Authorized Service Center and Warranty Repair Facility for Boeing Business Jets, DAHER-SOCATA, Dassault, Embraer and Gulfstream. Singapore also has a dedicated AOG staff and holds EASA 145.0461, FAA J8MY465N, CASA, Bermuda CAA, Cayman Islands CAA, CAAC, Guernsey (DCA), Hong Kong CAD, India DGCA, Indonesia DGCA, Korea MOLIT, Macau

AACM, Malaysia CAA, CAAP, CAAS, CAAT, ROC CAA and Vietnam CAA maintenance approvals. Beyond maintenance, repair, overhaul, retrofit, painting, modification and upgrade services, we also offer aircraft sales, spares distribution, FBO and aircraft handling services."

Almost a year on from its Hawker Pacific acquisition, Jet Aviation has rebranded

its Australian FBOs and consolidated its service offering across the new APAC region. Reckling confidently declares: "Now we're in a position to further expand our portfolio, enter new markets across Asia-Pacific. Bringing together these two well-established brands has reinforced our position among the world's leading business aviation service providers."

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**"Bringing together these two well-established brands has reinforced our position among the world's leading business aviation service providers."**

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# From Dubai to the World

## Entering its 21st year in the industry, ASM offers flight support and charter services from its Dubai base

In 1998, Vito Gomes established Aviation Services Management (ASM), a bespoke flight support company specialising in business aviation. Two decades on, the Dubai-based enterprise is recognised globally for the quality of its ground handling, flight planning, fuelling and charter services, Gomes leading from the helm as he has throughout ASM's history.

Recognition for Gomes himself came first in 2010, when he was ranked 78th on *Forbes Indian Power List*. Then, in 2013, he placed 69th on the *Forbes Top 100 Indian Leaders in the UAE List* and received a 'Top Indian Leader' award. In 2015, Gomes ranked 95th on the *Top Indian Leaders in the Arab World 2015: Owners List*, then 87th in the *Forbes Middle East Top 100 Indian Business Leaders in the Arab World 2016 List* and 99th in the 2017 version.

Gomes was also nominated as an Aviation Executive of the Year in the Aviation Business Awards of 2017 and 2018, and for a Sapphire Pegasus Lifetime Achievement Award in those

same years. Against this backdrop, he has established ASM as a firm feature of Dubai's aviation ecosystem, the location having proven ideal for a variety of reasons, as a company spokeswoman explained.

"The UAE presents bountiful business opportunities in general and private aviation. The country's economic setting has created a large cluster of financially substantial business leaders, spawning a collection of supporting industries, including business aviation, catering to the needs of these wealthy individuals.

"But, ASM's UAE base is also important for the easy access it provides to markets beyond the country's borders. From its Dubai headquarters, the ASM team constantly taps into new markets, seeking opportunities and ultimately strengthening the company's position as a global player."

Among those emerging markets, ASM has identified Asia as presenting a particularly exciting set of opportunities. "The region's

developing trade and growing economies are attracting global businesses. We believe that as a result, the general aviation industry in Asia-Pacific, and mainland China in particular, is entering a golden era. With international business travel increasingly flowing to and from Asia, business aviation hubs are proliferating, and service providers are investing heavily to meet demand.

"Almost 1,500 private jets operate in the Asia-Pacific region, while China appears to have the will and desire to attract and accommodate business aviation. The companies entering the Asian, and particularly Chinese markets, seem to fully embrace the priorities of their new customers and the enhanced efficiency of charter travel. We see huge opportunities in Asia but realise it will take committed effort to exploit them in the long term."

Meanwhile, ASM also owns a Learjet 60 and Learjet 60XR, based in the UAE and available for charter. A partner company operates the aircraft, while an in-house team sells their availability for medical evacuation, and business and leisure travel. Beyond the Learjets, ASM's charter team also has access to an extensive operator network, enabling the fulfilment of any charter requirement.

### Why ASM?

It's clear ASM understands the flexibility, persistence and service standards required for success in Asia but on paper, or perhaps screen, its list of services looks like those available from many other flight support



ASM has this Learjet 60XR available for charter. (both ASM)



The ASM management team celebrates 20 years in business at the MEBAA show in December 2018.

providers. So, why might a customer choose ASM over even one of its local competitors for their flight planning?

“Over the past 20 years, ASM has managed thousands of missions. Our 24/7 in-house operations team is among the most experienced and highly qualified in the industry – not every flight support company has such expertise available and that’s especially important to many of our customers.

“Our flight plans are also designed to optimise trips at the most favourable operating costs. We’ve built a broad network of reliable partners and suppliers, and we have excellent connections with airport authorities around the world, providing advantages that we pass on to every client.”

And when a customer reaches their destination? How does ASM ensure the quality of service it strives to deliver is realised when a client lands at a remote FBO on the opposite side of the world?

Valdo Gomes, Business Development Director, says: “When ASM chooses a ground handler, the team looks closely at its facilities and reputation, seeking out the highest service levels at the best price. Our executive team audits our suppliers and the standards for becoming a trusted FBO are exacting. Contracts with handlers are evaluated annually, while ASM’s quest to find excellent new ground facilities around the world never ends.

“Aside from Dubai, we also have people based in Goa and Mumbai; London, UK; Colombo; Nairobi; Singapore; and Moscow. This international presence keeps the ASM operations team up-to-date on emerging market needs and facilitates the most efficient ground handling solution for the private, commercial and cargo flights we support.”

Another source of pride, ASM has created a substantial global base of contracted fuel suppliers, offering

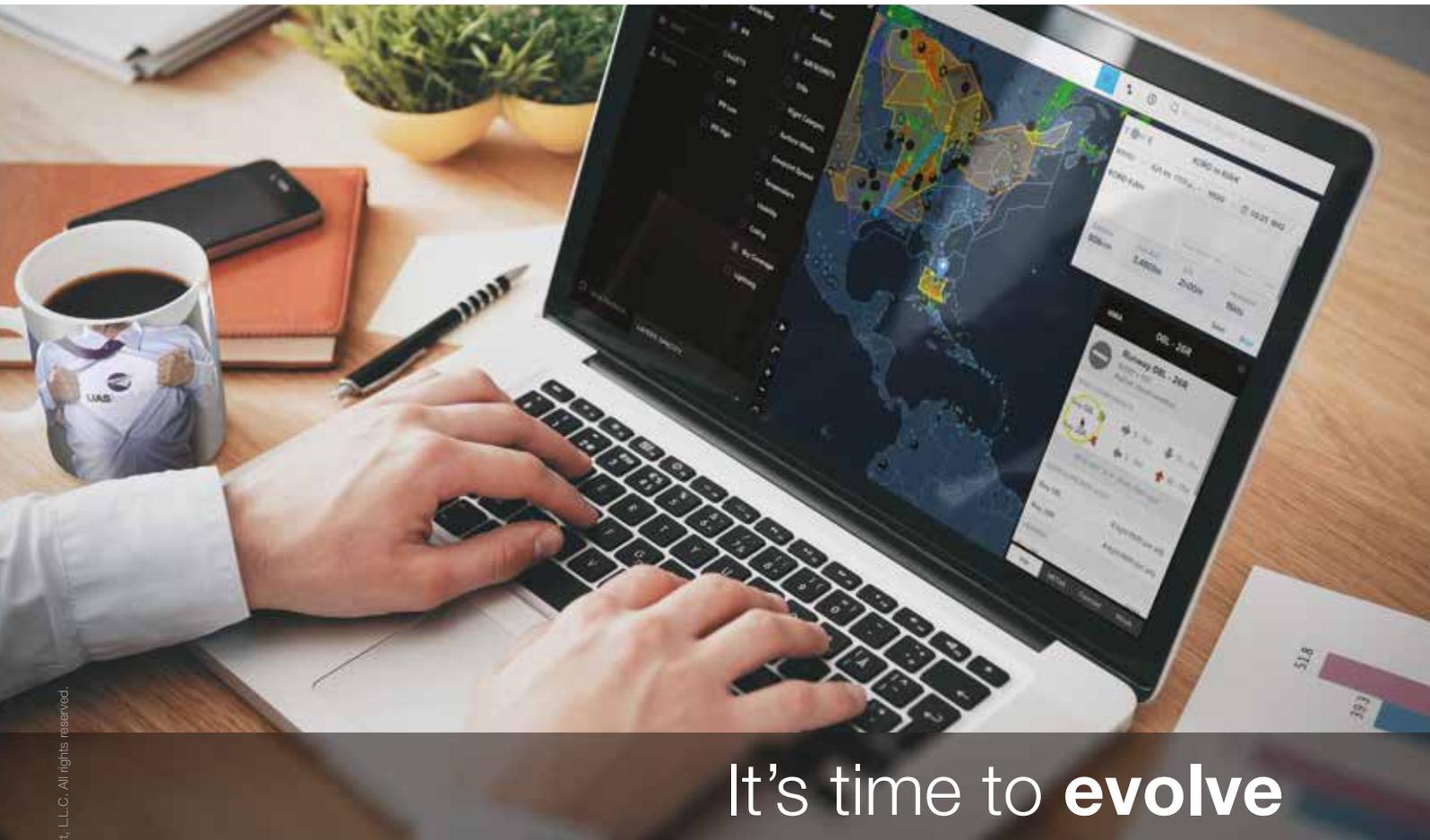
price transparency and favourable rates for its customers, wherever they fly. Priyantha Brito, Executive Director Fuel & Special Projects, explains: “We carry comprehensive liability insurance for all refuelling services up to US\$1 billion per occurrence and work only with the most reliable, reputable providers. We evaluate them every quarter, working to secure the best combination of service and cost efficiency at all the airports our customers might visit.

“Indeed, the in-depth knowledge and understanding we’ve gained on supply chain logistics at the major airports is among our primary advantages. It helps us foresee potential complications and warn clients about them or offer assistance well in advance. That’s why we serve not only business aircraft operators with, perhaps, a single jet, but also major international airlines, including Emirates, KLM, Air France, Singapore Airlines, Cathay Pacific and Korean Air.”



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