

SUMMER 2017

# BUSINESS AVIATION MAGAZINE

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## MAY YOU LIVE IN INTERESTING TIMES...

Is it just me or has EBACE come round again really quickly this time? Probably because it has been such a hugely eventful year. When I sat down to pen this half the EU and all the EU elite were holding their breath wondering if their worst nightmare was about to come to pass, with Marine Le Pen winning the French election, despite the polls, in a re-run of the Brexit and Trump fandangos. By that Sunday evening, however, it was plain that Macron had won, but then the markets started focusing on the fact that the man has no party to speak of and little experience. Ah well...

My point is that this has been a year where politics has trumped economics hands down and the business aviation sector - along with investors and financial institutions everywhere - has been operating in a fog as far as the future is concerned. Who knows what a politician is going to do next? Answer, no one, not even the politicians! So we've all just knuckled down and got on with business, which is always the best solution under the circumstances.

Of course, most of us are delighted that a real businessman, owning an absolutely iconic business jet, is now the President of the USA, and much is still expected by way of a boost to the US economy. So here's hoping that by EBACE 2018 global GDP will be looking up and the airframe OEMs will find themselves selling more jets than they can make. Nice thought, but probably not a realistic one...

Once again we at BAM are tremendously grateful for the support we've received from the industry. We'd like to take this moment to say a heartfelt "Thank You" to our advertisers and to the organisations that have so generously sponsored BAM's EBACE After Party on Tuesday 23rd May. So our thanks to JSSI, Primus Aircraft Management Solutions, Genève Transfiert Limousine, Design Q, G-OPS, Satcom Direct, Academy 147 and Goldtree. Our venue this year is the famous Le Baroque Club, on Place de la Fusteria and is a "by invitation only" event for BAM clients and sponsors.

Our cover story this issue features an interview with Brian Proctor, President and CEO of the Mente Group, one of the most successful consultancies in the industry. Once again we have a tremendous line up of interviews with leading figures in the sector, and some mouth-watering travel pieces from Jane Stanbury, BAM's global luxury correspondent. As always, if you have any great feature ideas or would like to see your company featured in BAM, don't hesitate to get in touch with the BizAv Media team.

  
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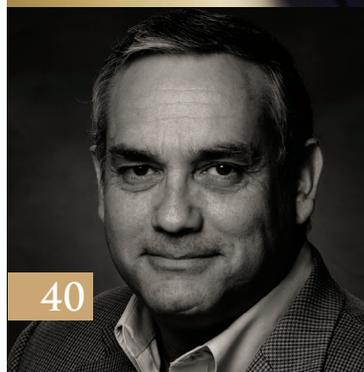
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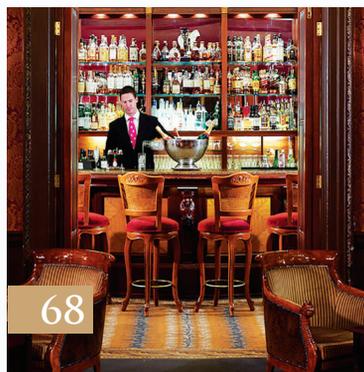
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# BUY SMARTER...

BAM talks to Mente Group's President and CEO, Brian Proctor



**M**ente Group, LLC headquartered in Dallas, Texas, USA provides a unique, customer focused consultancy and brokerage in the fast-moving, global business jet market. The firm has grown 350% in the past 24 months. Recently, Anthony Harrington caught up with Brian Proctor, the firm's President and CEO, in preparation for this year's European Business Aviation Convention and Expo (EBACE) in Geneva.

**Q: How did you come to start the firm?**

**A:** We started the business in July 2009 with literally \$100 in cash. You know, July of 2009 was a great time to start an aviation company {Laughing}. We put various data subscriptions to services like JetNet on our credit cards. What helped us enormously though, was that we were able to close our first transaction in the first 30 days. We acquired a Citation Excel for one of our clients. That really helped us get going.

**Q: What were you doing prior to founding Mente Group?**

**A:** I was one of the founders and chief operating officer of Leading Edge, an aircraft brokerage firm. We launched the company in 2004 and built it into the second largest aircraft broker in the world. My former partners are still running the company but after the downturn that followed the 2008 crash I thought it was time to move more into consultancy. My partners at Leading Edge bought me out and we remain good friends. Once we got Mente Group up and running, we were able to attract some of the folks who worked for Leading Edge and they, too, brought a great deal of experience with them. So it was more like giving birth to a teenager, than a new baby!

We now have 15 employees. In 2016, we added sales staff in Portland, Scottsdale, Denver and New Jersey, giving us a very significant presence in the US. All in all, we are very pleased with the growth that we have seen so far.

“We launched the company in 2004 and built it into the second largest aircraft broker in the world.”

# ...SELL FASTER

**Q: What does the consultancy business consist of?  
Where are you looking to add value for clients?**

A: We started off with three legs to the stool, as it were, and we have just recently added a fourth leg. The first three practice areas that we brought to market were: first, our aviation consulting and strategic planning. Here we provide general consulting, fleet planning services and the like.

The second arm of the business is transaction advisory and execution. This involves helping our clients to acquire assets across a whole range of categories, from jet cards and fractional membership to large cabin aircraft and fleet acquisitions. We recently assisted a client in the purchase of six business jets for their fleet, in a transaction that was close to \$160 million.

The third leg to the stool is what we call operational consultancy. This consists of helping, for example, corporate clients who want to build their own in-house flight department. Here we would hire the pilots for them, help them figure out the right equipment that they will need, write and set up the flight operations procedures and practices. This division also does best practice audits and ISBAO certification work to help them demonstrate to their clients and the world that they have achieved best practice standards.

We have recently rolled out a new service offering for aircraft owners, specifically lenders and operators with large fleets. Our new Asset Valuation tool allows aircraft owners to constantly know the value of their investments. We spend a lot of energy and resources studying asset values, specifically future residual values. In the years before the 2008 global financial melt-down, there were times when you could have bought an aircraft, operated it for five years, then sell it for more than you paid for it. Those days are over. The manufacturers had such a long lead time on new aircraft that people were prepared to pay a premium just to get their hands on an aircraft. Again, those days are gone. The market today is still seeing residual values falling at a much faster

rate than ever before, so the decision about whether to buy pre-owned or new now has to take full account of the kind of depreciation the buyer is going to have to deal with. Residual values do matter today and we can add real value here for our clients.

All our employees have a long history with the aviation sector. They understand the lifecycle of aircraft ownership, from pre-purchase right through to the eventual sale and disposal of the aircraft. Our team includes pilots, former mechanics who have maintained a range of different aircraft types, safety auditors and top industry sales people. Richard Emery, for example, was head of sales for Gulfstream, before joining us. He brought a wealth of knowledge of the aviation sales process and is very well connected with aircraft sales operations around the world.

**Q: How is business right now?**

A: Things are looking very good. We have ongoing transactions in both the new and the pre-owned jet markets. We are acting for several fleet operators right now who are replacing and upgrading aging fleets of aircraft, and that is very exciting. Plus, every corporate department that buys a new jet always needs to have some kind of supplemental lift arrangements in place, so we are busy helping them sort that side of things, as well.

What makes us so different from other consultancy organizations is that we are very much a client-centric company. We focus first on trying to understand our client and their needs, then we work back from there to determine the type of aircraft that will best suit their requirements. One of the clients we worked with recently, for example, needed two aircraft to replace the two aging aircraft they currently owned. They had two different aircraft types and were thinking of consolidating by buying two identical aircraft. However, when we spoke to them it was clear that they had two very different mission profiles. They needed a light jet for regional and local trips and a long range jet for coast to coast flying across the United States. That mandated two

different aircraft types and we were able to show them why standardizing just on the long range model would not have been cost effective for them.

After working with us, our clients begin to understand how different our firm is from the competition. Almost everyone our clients talk to, as far as suppliers are concerned, are trying to sell them something, whether it be an aircraft or a service. We take a different approach. We first seek to understand their needs and their current situation, so that we can direct them to the best solution and outcome for them. What gives the client confidence is that he or she can see that we have nothing which would create a bias in our advice. We are independent and neutral and are simply looking for the best possible solution for them.

**Q: How does your actual revenue stream break down between transactional work and consulting?**

A: The two are very closely linked. What I mean by that is that the revenue split is probably of the order of 70/30 in favor of transaction-based revenues. But what drives those transaction deal flows is the consultancy, so it doesn't make sense to split them out and to think of them as two separate lines of activity. The one drives the other and vice-versa. By constantly doing deals we are able to bring invaluable expertise to the table when our clients are thinking of buying, selling or upgrading their aircraft.

**Q: When you add on additional staff, what kinds of people are you looking for?**

A: We always look for deep experience. The sales team we've hired in the western part of the US, for example, are guys who have worked for years at the OEMs. Vince Restivo,

for example, used to be head of completions for Gulfstream. His arrival has added a whole new dimension to our business and he puts us in a great position to be able to monitor refits and major upgrades for our clients, helping them through any build process.



We hired Jeff Dorrugh from Bombardier, where he had a major role in asset advisory services, and that again, adds a dimension to our game. He is a certified ASA appraiser, so we can provide valuations to the industry as a consultant. We also work very closely with lenders now for appraisals, and we see this as a primary growth area for the business. We are well placed to help lenders be more efficient in the way they manage their books and portfolios.

All of our new team members have vast connectivity experience and expertise. Working with their former partners will help us to extend our footprint internationally. We expect to have our operations in the US fully built out by the end of 2017 and we are already looking to work with our international partners to gain a larger international presence. |BAM

“What gives the client confidence is that he or she can see that we have nothing which would create a bias in our advice.”



“We are already looking to work with our international partners to gain a larger international presence.”

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# BEING CLIENT-CENTRIC COUNTS

Stephan Krainer, General Manager, Primus Aircraft Management Solutions, talks to BAM

In 2010 Stephan Krainer founded Primus Aircraft Management Solutions in Gratz, Austria, with the idea of providing outsourced aircraft management solutions to smaller operators. “It was clear to me that many smaller operators simply did not have – and still don’t – a sufficiently skilled and well-staffed technical department. That being the case it seemed clear that one could make a viable business out of providing a range of outsourced technical services focused on Continuing Airworthiness Management (CAMO),” Krainer explains.

Accordingly, Primus built up a strong technical skills base in-house on the basis that the cost could be spread across a number of operator clients. “We can either act as their outsourced technical department focused on health and safety, regulatory compliance and maintenance, or we can provide a menu of specific services to complement whatever strengths they have in-house,” Krainer explains.

Primus offers a complete range of solutions. Where it does not have specific disciplines and capabilities in-house, as for example, with flight support, it will arrange and manage the outsourcing of those services, so that the client still has a single point of contact, namely their Primus account manager, for all services.

“By focusing on managing third party suppliers across a variety of disciplines, we are able to stay lean and provide our clients with a very cost effective service,” Krainer notes. Client operators without a sufficiently large and competent technical department would have to outsource some services anyway, so it makes sense for them to leverage Primus’s expertise. “Our clients know that we will contract with the best people at the best prices,” he notes.

After winning a number of clients in Austria, Krainer turned his attention to operators in Africa and was able to sign up one of the biggest and most able African operators, Best Fly, in Angola. “Best Fly look after some 14 aircraft and we provide a range of CAMO services to them, thus helping to deliver a first class service to their clients,” he comments.

According to Krainer, clients across Europe are starting to see increased levels of activity, and this increase has enabled Primus to win a number of new clients in their local market. The company now has a staff of thirteen,

including a number of technical specialists. Krainer’s major current project is developing Primus’s parts procurement business.

“Sourcing aircraft parts for our clients has worked extremely well for us and has proved to be a profitable business both for us and for the clients. We are often able to save them considerable sums, while finding hard-to-get parts for older aircraft, or sourcing parts faster than could be procured through standard distribution channels,” he comments. The parts department at Primus, which is growing in size and staff, are able to add value for clients in a number of ways, including providing them with advice and saving the client significant sums on new and pre-owned parts.

“We are very much a business-to-business provider. We see ourselves as the good guys, by which I mean that we are quite happy to provide advice without necessarily looking to charge the client. It is enough for us to build the relationship and to demonstrate that we are here for them and can help them across a range of issues,” he comments, adding: “The whole idea is to keep building our relationships in the sector and not to take the position of a lawyer who charges his clients for every email! We work hard to get our clients to know that if they want anything, we are there for them.”

Primus’s parts department sources parts from all round the world, often finding quality parts in places clients would never think to look. “It often happens, for example, that an aircraft is sold with, say, spare wheels as an extra, that never get used and end up cluttering up someone’s hangar. We source our parts at brilliant prices and we share this with our clients,” Krainer comments.

Sometimes it makes more economic sense, without compromising the aircraft’s air worthiness, to repair a component rather than replacing it. “Where this is an option we see that the part is repaired properly for a fraction of the cost of a part exchange. But that needs someone who can take control of the job and see it through carefully. You need specialist skills for this and we have the people in-house who can manage this for the client. Smaller operators will just not have the spare capacity or the in-house expertise available to do this, so again, we are able to add real value,” he notes.

Primus does not get involved directly in aircraft purchases for clients. As Krainer observes, business aviation already



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has more than enough competent aircraft brokers already. However, the team provide a range of services to clients and operators who are in the process of buying or selling jets, including carrying out aircraft appraisals and pre-buy inspections.

Running a lean operation means that everyone Primus hires has to have both the technical skills and the right attitude and mind set to fit in with the Primus culture and approach. "It can take a good while to find the right person when we are recruiting. If you are just in it for the salary, you are not the right person for us. We have a passion for aviation and for providing the highest quality service possible. If someone has that attitude, then they will fit right in. We are a very tightly knit team of aviation enthusiasts who are nuts about aircraft, and we are all more like family than work colleagues," he concludes. |BAM

“It often happens, for example, that an aircraft is sold with, say, spare wheels as an extra, that never get used and end up cluttering up someone’s hangar. We source our parts at brilliant prices and we share this with our clients.”





# Academy 147

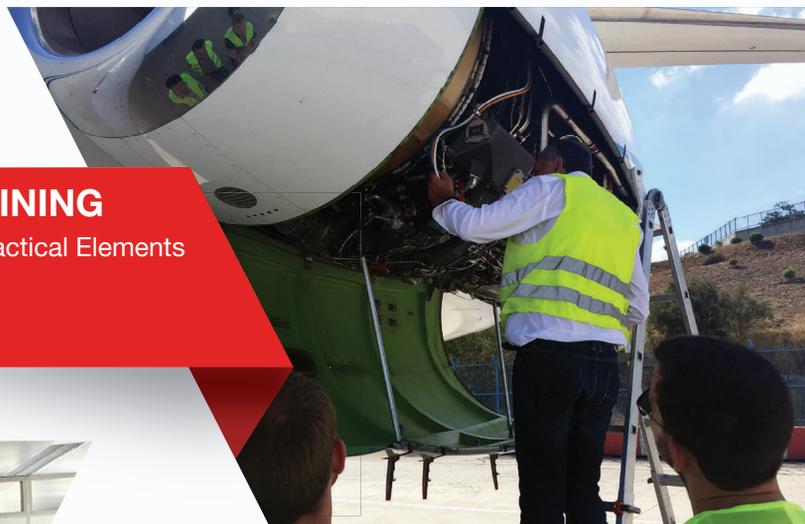
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# ACADEMY 147 TRAINING

Andy Trinchero, Co-Founder of Academy 147, talks about building a dynamic training company focused on business aviation



## Q: How did Academy 147 get off the ground?

A: We founded the company in 2014. It started off as an idea, working in a home business. Then, after a few months, we moved to our first office. We started off with the intention of offering General Familiarisation training which are 3 or 4 day courses covering the basics of the airplane and focusing on the large base of aircraft operators in Malta and the need to train their maintenance planning staff.

We quickly saw that the market was very interested in Level 3 Type Training courses and that there was a worldwide shortage of certifying engineers to work on business jets.

What helped us enormously was that in 2013 the regulatory bodies changed the training regulations. This was both fortuitous timing and a strong incentive to us to press on with our project. The change in the regulations brought in a strong practical component as a new mandatory obligation to accompany the traditional classroom based training, both from an approved training organisation. Since all of our instructors are licensed engineers, we were in an excellent position to perform the practical training. The idea was to have one day that was classroom-based and one day in the hangar, working on the aircraft, intermixing theory and practice. The approach was very well received and, from word of mouth reports from those who underwent our training, we really started to pick up new business. In three years we have managed to grow at a very good rate. This success can only be attributed to our innovative

and highly-experienced team as well as our strong drive to move forward.

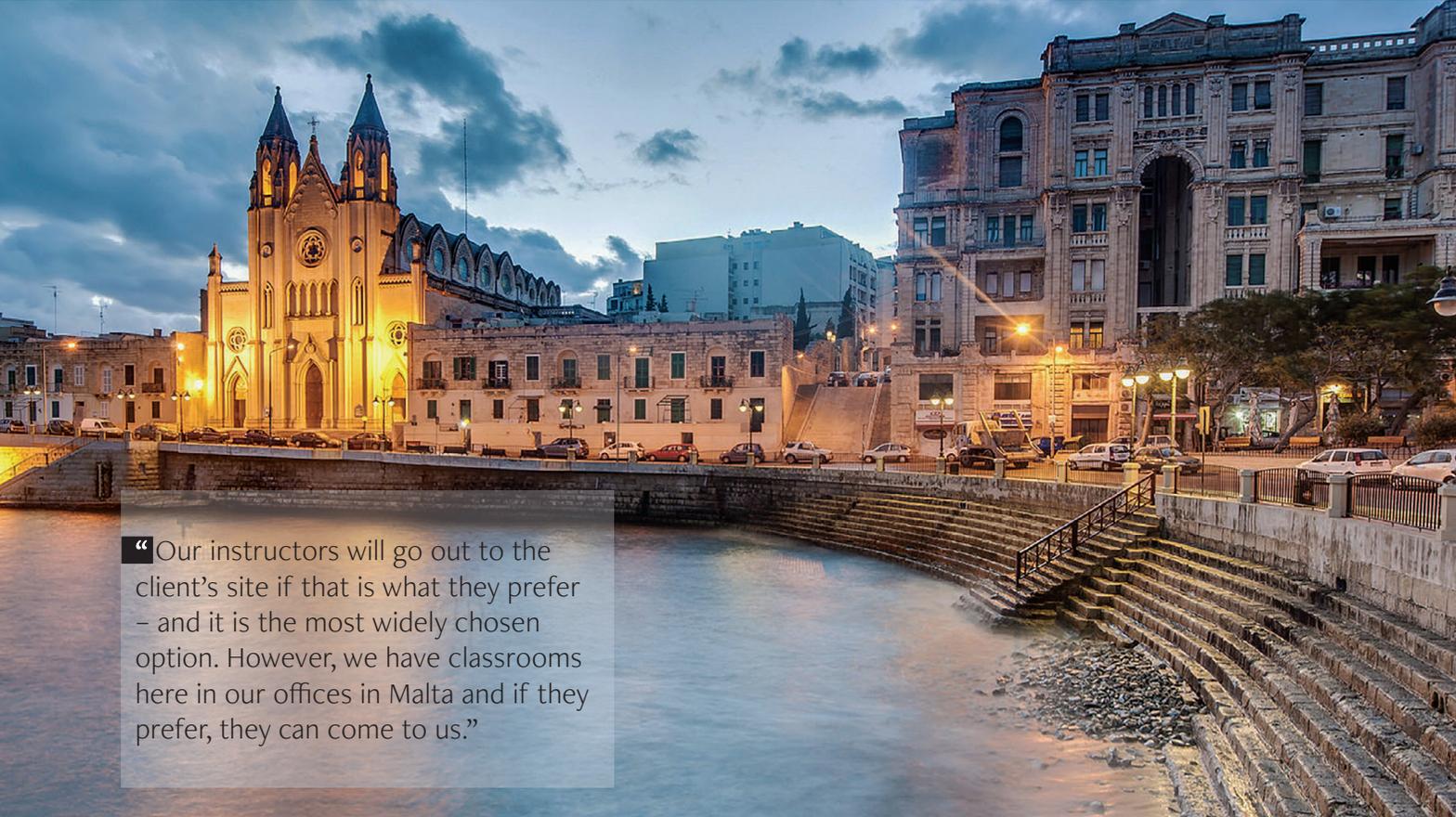
## Q: What about instructors? How do you keep up the quality of the training?

A. Our instructors are all engineers by training with many years, often decades, of work on aircraft behind them. They all have at least ten years' experience on the aircraft that they are teaching. We are based in Malta, but we are very much a multi-cultural company as you would expect from a country that is right at the heart of the Mediterranean.

We provide our training to clients right across the globe, with the greatest demand coming from Europe, the Middle East and Asia. Our instructors will go out to the client's site if that is what they prefer – and it is the most widely chosen option. However, we have classrooms here in our offices in Malta and if they prefer, they can come to us.

## Q: What is the range of your courses today?

A: We have a very wide range of courses, covering a multitude of aircraft types and topics. In all we have over 100 courses that we offer. It all comes down to flexibility. This is a very dynamic industry so we really need to be



“Our instructors will go out to the client’s site if that is what they prefer – and it is the most widely chosen option. However, we have classrooms here in our offices in Malta and if they prefer, they can come to us.”

on our toes. When clients see an opportunity coming up in their work flow to release a few of their staff for training, we need to be able to respond very rapidly. We can generally mobilise a training course bespoke to the client’s requirements, sometimes within 48 hours of getting a request.

**Q: Do you provide much by way of computer-based trained (CBT) for at-home learning?**

A: We use some digital media, and all our training materials are delivered on tablets, so we are almost entirely paperless in our approach. That is a huge point with our clients and makes it much easier for us. We intend to develop more interactive courses as we go on, using CBT to complement our existing training methods. However, there is really no substitute for the hands on experience of working on actual aircraft alongside and under the direction of someone who knows the tasks inside out. Teaching is an art and we are always looking to get the right balance between instruction, practice and self-directed learning.

**Q: What is the market like at present?**

A: Demand is very strong right across the market. There are a good many people requiring technical training

and looking for technical careers. Many already in the industry want to broaden and extend their skill set, so training is very much in demand.

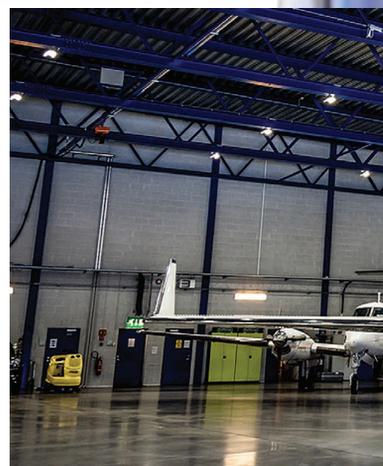
**Q: How do you see the future for your company?**

A: We want to grow into a world-wide training company, where our clients can have confidence that we are able to provide the same very high standard of training anywhere in the world. We want people to know that we can meet their needs at very short notice, and still deliver a great level of quality. This is very important for us.

Many of our students would have had to travel to the US or Canada to get an equivalent level of training, and we are able to provide the courses for them at their work place. Plus our pricing is more reasonable than they are going to find elsewhere. One of our biggest challenges is working with maintenance companies to find gaps in their schedules that will enable them to free up some of their team to attend the course that we put on at their premises.

**Q: Developing courseware must be challenging.**

A: We have a whole engineering department that develops our courseware. The team includes electrical and mechanical engineers, graphic artists and our instructors, serving as subject matter experts, who themselves have a wealth of knowledge and extensive experience of the aircraft that is the target of our training programme. We also work closely with our local University to source engineering talent. [\[BAM\]](#)



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# DEVELOPING FOR THE FUTURE

A conversation with Robert Walters, Business Development Director, London Biggin Hill



**O**n 13th February this year, London Biggin Hill celebrated its 100 year anniversary as a functioning airport. However, London's only in-London business aviation airport is not resting on its laurels.

As Robert Walters, Business Development Director explains, the airport has just extended its opening hours and has several major development projects in hand. These include a dedicated four star, 50-bed hotel to be sited at the airfield and an aviation college (both currently in for planning approval). Plus, it has just secured £15 million funding for a new 140,000 square foot office, hangar and business aircraft parking facility.

**Q: Let's start with the extension to your opening hours and what this means for aircraft coming in to London Biggin Hill?**

**A:** Certainly. As of 1st May, the airport opened for business at 6.30 a.m. and closes at 11.00 p.m., which means we are open one hour earlier in the morning and two and a half hours later at night. So, anyone flying in to Biggin Hill at 6.30 is in plenty of time for the 7.00 first flight of our Heli Shuttle service to Battersea or Vanguard on Canary Wharf. This is a six minute flight right into the heart of the City or the West End. For our American clients leaving the US for an overnight flight, this means that they can wake up refreshed from their night flight, hop onto the heli and be sitting down to a business breakfast with their clients or financiers by 7.30 am.

Similarly, for anyone flying in to London on a day trip, it means they can end the day with a leisurely dinner in the City or the West End without needing to rush back to the airport. Our clients told us that they found a 9.00 p.m. close really cramped their day, so the later 11.00 p.m. close has been warmly welcomed. This is already shaping up to be a real game changer for us. We were already seeing a substantial increase in aircraft movements for the first four months of this year as compared to 2016, and we expect this trend to continue even more strongly given our extended opening hours.



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**Q: When did you introduce the Heli Shuttle service?**

A: It began around 18 months ago and has been a huge success. The fact that we are able to transport passengers from the airport to the heart of London in just six minutes has been massive for our clients. The price – which is £2,300 – is not a factor with clients. What counts with them is the time savings. No one wants to be stuck in morning or evening rush hour traffic trying to commute into or out of London so the service is greatly appreciated. It would be almost unimaginable now without it.

**Q: You certainly have a tremendously active development schedule. Tell us about it.**

A: This airport has been the centre of innovation right from our earliest days. Before the airfield itself actually opened for business, in the Summer of 1916 it was the centre for the development of air-to-air communications, and this was later deployed over Northern France. We are committed to carrying on that tradition and development is a key part of this.

There is a tremendous range of skill sets on the airfield today. We have some ten MRO shops, with the latest being Bombardier's maintenance facility here on the airfield.

Bombardier chose Biggin Hill both because of our status as the gateway to London for business aircraft, and because we were able to demonstrate to them just how committed we were to the continued development of the facilities at Biggin Hill.

They liked the fact that this is a private business that sees some 50,000 aircraft movements a year and that we are able to guarantee that we have the capacity to enable Bombardier and its customers to continue to grow for the next 20 to 50 years.

In fact the growth that we are now experiencing did not come about by chance. We spent the last 20 years educating and talking to local, regional and national policy makers about what we are achieving. We work hard to share our future plans with them and to demonstrate in detail how positive we have been and will continue to be, for their economies and constituencies.

For example, we have two brand new GPS approaches that will be up and running by the end of the year, on Runway 21 and Runway 03. At present we only have a visual approach on Runway 03, so having a precision approach on both ends of the runway will be huge for us. 2017 is really going to be the

“Bombardier chose Biggin Hill both because of our status as the gateway to London for business aircraft, and because we were able to demonstrate to them just how committed we were to the continued development of the facilities at Biggin Hill.”





pivotal year of change for Biggin Hill. The new hangar and office block will be well underway and that will give us more capacity for people who want to base their aircraft here.

We have two FBOs on the airfield, ourselves and Signature Flight Support. They are very important for us as their global network is a tremendous additional source of aircraft movements for the airport. We collaborate very closely together.

**Q: What can you tell us about the planned hotel and aviation college?**

A: As everyone in the sector knows, there are issues with shortages of skilled people right across business aviation. The London Aerospace and Technology Centre we propose to build will give people in London and the surrounding area the chance to learn the skills they need to enter the aerospace sector. At the same time, for the MRO shops based here, it means that Bombardier and others will be able to recruit trained engineers straight out of college. We are looking to turn out some 100 engineers a year once it is up and running.

Our four-star hotel is in the planning process right now and we hope to be onsite, starting construction by the end of the year. We have approval for a 75 bed hotel, but we may start with 50, depending on how discussions go. It will be a tech-friendly hotel, nestled between the Formula One offices and Bombardier and will be a fantastic addition to the airport. |BAM



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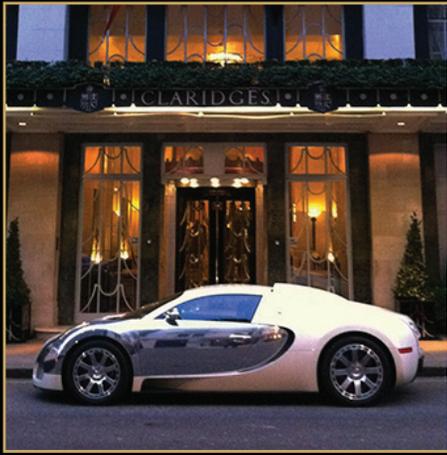
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**GOLDTREE**



# BRINGING THE CUSTOMER TO THE OPERATOR

Stratajet Founder and CEO, Jonny Nicol, talks about transforming the charter sector



**D**espite the focus on the task in hand, a lot of thoughts can flit across a pilot's mind as they go through their familiar pre-flight routine, particularly when the mission involves flying an aircraft on an empty leg return journey. One day in 2007, Jonny Nicol found himself sitting in the cockpit of a Citation CJ at Nice Airport, preparing to ferry the empty aircraft back to Oxford. Outside, he could see a British Airways jet taking on passengers for a flight back to London.

“That was the moment when it hit me that there would almost certainly be a number of people on that BA flight that would be only too keen to swap their place on a crowded commercial flight for a seat in the back of a luxurious business jet. Moreover, I could see clearly that I could have dropped them off at the London airport of their choice for very little incremental cost over and above that incurred for the empty leg flight I was about to make anyway,” he says.

What was also immediately obvious to Nicol, however, was that as things stood, business aviation lacked any way of turning that thought into reality. There just wasn't any system that could have alerted any of those passengers – or the operator – to the potential win-win that those BA passengers were just yards away from.

A gap, or a problem like that, of course, when it involves sufficient numbers of people, is simply a business opportunity hiding in plain sight. Nicol realised that what he was looking at was basically a combination of an information gap and an ease of access issue – both of which, he realised, could be solved by an internet-based solution. Another pilot might well have got as far as this, while sitting at the controls, but then they would more than

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likely have dismissed the whole thing as a flight of fancy, since not that many pilots can also claim to be software engineers.

The whole idea would have vanished into the “too-hard-to-do” box and the pilot would probably have forgotten all about it before the jet leapt off the runway for the hop home.

However, Nicol just happened to be a software engineer as well as a pilot, and he had already launched two technology-based businesses. Once spotted, a hot business idea was not something he was minded to let slide.

A bit of background is in order. Nicol learned to fly in the RAF and after five years’ service he left and set up a recruitment company specialising in providing staff for promotional events – mainly young actors and actresses with the social skills to act as brand ambassadors and corporate hospitality stewards and stewardesses at key events.

“Staffing the brand promotion/corporate event business has traditionally been run by brokers operating with paper-based databases and filing cabinets. I took that whole industry and put it online, writing all the code myself. That really ignited my interest in technology. At the same time, the success of the company – I made more money in eleven months than I had made during the course of my previous five years in the military – gave me a real appetite for running my own business,” he comments.

That first business venture was interrupted by Nicol being recalled to the military. That led to him founding a new company, Oxford Computer Information Systems where he was under contract to develop an application for the Ministry of Defence (MoD). After two years he sold that business and took a year’s sabbatical, during which he gained his commercial pilot’s license and had his moment of illumination on the ramp at Nice Airport.

“As soon as I really started thinking about how to build a system to make it easy for people to find and book a charter flight the major problem that came squarely into focus, was the whole issue of inaccurate price quoting by operators,” he comments. Nicol points out that people outside the charter industry tend not to know that at least one in five charter flights actually loses an operator money.

The reason for this is that there are a large number of pricing variables that need to be taken account of when quoting a price for a charter flight. Nicol cites the example of Manchester Airport. The

landing fees charged by Manchester Airport vary depending on what month, day and time of day we are talking about. “The difference between the lowest fee and the highest can be several thousand pounds. If an operator gets it wrong, it doesn’t just eat into their profit margin. It can turn the whole trip into a loss-making flight,” he says.

“If we could build a system that automatically calculated the correct fees and costs on all the relevant variables for any point-to-point flight, it was clear to me that we’d be able to offer really compelling efficiency gains for operators. Plus, we would have a great system for customers looking to fly privately from the airport of their choice to their chosen destination,” he notes.

The aim was to build a quote engine that, in a matter of seconds, would generate an accurate price for the end user for all the aircraft that fit that particular client’s specification, and that were available for the designated journey. The Stratajet system works out the price and generates the quote, so the operator doesn’t have to do a thing. Since this can take, on average, around 23 to 25 minutes to complete by hand, there are considerable time savings for the operator.

Plus, as Nicol notes, when compiling a manual quote for a charter flight it is impossible for any single individual to have instant and accurate access to the many fees that could be involved. By way of contrast, this is the kind of task that computers excel at. “We have built what is, without question, the world’s most accurate quoting tool for private flying. We give operators the freedom to set their own margin and we deliver customers direct to them so we are an immediate revenue enhancer for their business. And on top of this we bring them real and substantial operating efficiencies – so what is not to like?” he asks.

The task of building a system capable of doing all this has not been a simple one. It took Nicol five years to develop Stratajet, which launched in April 2016.

In the year before the launch Nicol set out to meet as many European and US operators as he possibly could. He bought a 1983 Piper Chieftain and flew all round Europe meeting operators and discussing their pricing strategy with them. Then he did the same with US operators, holding a total of 486 meetings in 197 cities across the US in just 94 business days. “I’ve served three operational tours in the military and nothing I have ever done left me so shattered as that dash across the US. The fact that we could do it of itself proves the immense



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importance of business aviation. What emerged with great force from these two campaigns, across Europe and across the US, was that every operator has their own ideas about how to price. So we have built huge flexibility into Stratajet for operators to determine their own margins while the system does the grunt work of ensuring that all the relevant fees for a particular flight are accurately incorporated in the quote," he observes.

One of the most important innovations that Stratajet brings to the table is the ability to allow end users to "repurpose" empty leg flights. The calculating engine will work out what the additional actual cost to the operator would be of moving the jet to the airport the user wants to fly from, and the cost of repositioning it from their destination airport.

In many instances, where the user's preferred departure airport is relatively near to where the jet is actually parked the cost will be slight. It is worth remembering that the jet is out of position anyway, by definition, since it is the subject of an empty leg movement. So turning the return trip into a revenue generating trip, even if it requires an additional hop or two, is usually a very attractive proposition for the operator. At the same time the fact that the end user has been given the freedom to specify more convenient departure and destination airports, is a big win for them, since they are still getting the repurposed flight at an attractive price. Remember, the flight still counts as an empty leg flight that the operator was going to have to bear the cost of, so they can afford to give something back to the end user!

At the end of January, Stratajet introduced yet another major innovation, which serves to highlight just how beneficial the right software tools can be to the day-to-day running of a charter operation.

"We introduced a simple slider which allows the operator to choose between generating more charter business by lowering their margin and thus making flights cheaper but still profitable, or, if business is booming, they can move the slider to increase their margin, thus taking advantage of strong demand to generate more revenue while keeping flights within their ability to meet the demand," Nicol explains. This is achieved simply by pulling the slider in one direction or another on the screen between the two poles of "more margin" or "more bookings." According to Nicol the operator can adjust the slider as many times through a day as they feel to be appropriate.

So does Nicol worry about the competition getting into the coding game and producing a rival system?

"I can't see it. Our database calculates the exact price for a landing at the time and date specified. This is no small thing to do. Plus it works out with extreme accuracy all the 14 fees that are going to be incurred with every flight. There are a huge number of variables and we calculate prices with a level of accuracy that no human could expect to achieve – and we do it in around 10 seconds, not the 23-25 minutes it would take to do that by hand. Plus, the cost of providing pricing on quotes for charter brokers falls directly on the operator. Using Stratajet, that cost disappears," he notes.

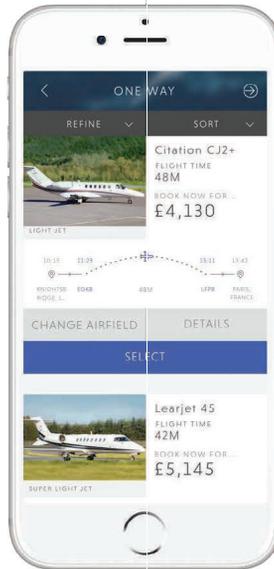
"As of today we have 512,000 lines of pricing data, with each line capable of being calculated differently depending on as many as 247 variables. For a competitor to duplicate our database would be a really massive undertaking. This is why it took me five years to build the system," he comments.

Keeping all the fee information and other variables up to date is a massive research undertaking. Stratajet already has a team of 14 full time researchers tasked with keeping the database 100% accurate across all the variables.

Shortly after the launch in April 2016 Stratajet had 134 aircraft on the system, all capable of being chartered by end users. By February this year there were 1286 aircraft on the system, a massive step change in the range of choice available to end users. "We are really happy with the rate of growth. Some 42% of our customers are repeat bookings and 32% of customers are first time flyers with private aviation, massively higher than the industry average for charters, which stands at around 8%. So we can be very confident that we are actually helping the industry to grow the user base far more rapidly than traditional charter has been able to do," Nicol says.

Another noteworthy point is that instead of the traditional approach to booking a charter flight, which is usually done by the executive's PA, the executives themselves are finding the system so easy to use, Nicol claims, that many are going online on their own laptops, tablets or smart phones, and booking the flights themselves.

So is Nicol out to sign up every operator in business aviation? Not exactly, he says. "We carry out a very thorough vetting of an operator that wants to join Stratajet, using air safety audit folk like Wyvern or Argos. But we still have plenty of excellent operators to sign up and we are very confident that we are going to dominate the market for online charter bookings. The future looks very exciting," he concludes. **BAM**



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# TRACKING MRO

Nick Godwin, Managing Director of Commssoft OASES,  
on the challenges in mapping MRO IT

Any operation that has many thousands of moving parts and nested dependencies is going to require either mountains of paper – which will be guaranteed to create muddle – or top notch IT supporting software. Commssoft has been in the business of providing MRO IT systems to both airlines and private aviation since its formation in 1971.

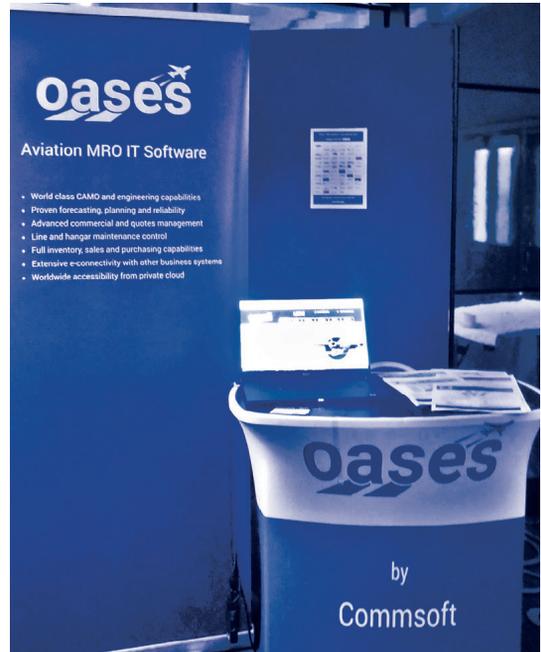
As Nick Godwin, CEO of Commssoft explains, the company began as a software development arm, serving Laker Airways, writing programs and putting the hardware together to run Laker's fleet maintenance program and ancillary services. "There were a number of parts to that program but the maintenance modules were the dominant features and the core of the system," he notes.

Called OASES, Commssoft's offerings can now be tailored to fit the requirements of a variety of MRO and CAMO (Continuing Airworthiness Management Organisations). The MRO IT system it offers has been continuously developed over the last 40 years, and Godwin reckons that that pedigree has enabled Commssoft to open up clear blue water between itself and the competition.

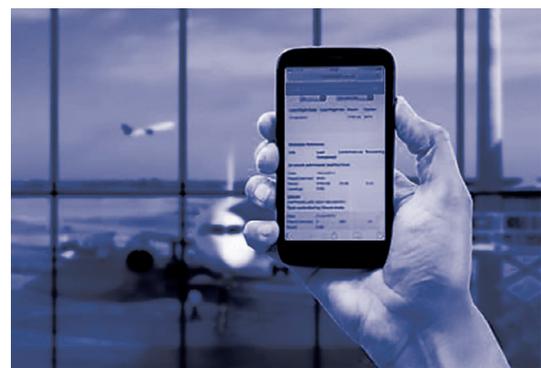
"Back in the 1980s, the software was a green-screen client server system, like all IT software at the time. By 2004 we'd re-developed it on what was then the latest Oracle database software," he recalls. Since then the team has added a new graphical user interface and, in 2008, new integrated planning and NSBL tools. Future trends include moving the whole system to the cloud so that user organisations have complete security and safety as far as their data is concerned, and providing a range of mobile apps and decision support systems.

"There are quite a few companies who are either already in or who want to get into providing software to MRO companies, and to some degree new software tools make it easier to generate applications, so it is easier now for new entrants to get involved. The real issue however, is that even if you have the technical expertise to design software systems, to produce a top quality MRO support system you need to really understand aviation processes," Godwin comments.

The systems designer needs to understand the regulatory regimes in the sector and the reporting requirements the system is going to have to comply with. They need an in-depth understanding of the requirements of all the stakeholders and what they are going to want from the IT system. "On top of all this, the aviation sector is constantly developing and changing, so you are never done and the knowledge base you have accumulated so far is never final," he comments.



“The real issue, however, is that even if you have the technical expertise to design software systems, to produce a top quality MRO support system you need to really understand aviation processes.”





Godwin points out that right now, everyone is busy incorporating mobile technology into aviation, just as they are with financial and banking applications, but aviation is very different from other areas that are addressed by software. “With ordinary apps that are not life critical, you are happy if they work 95% of the time and do 95% of what they should do. In aviation an app has to work 100% of the time and it can never lose data or snarl up. It has to be extremely robust and it has to connect up with all the other systems, such as operational and accounting systems. So all these factors constitute a real and difficult barrier to entry, as far as MRO systems design is concerned,” he adds.

On top of this, Commssoft has been doing a tremendous job of growing its client base. Reputation and word of mouth are tremendous assets in this business, and Commssoft has already signed up ten new clients so far in 2017. “These ten new contracts cover some thirteen operations in ten different countries. In the MRO and CAMO sectors, everyone knows us. We have a very dominant position as a supplier to airlines across Europe, including in Eastern Europe and also in Central Asia. However, we do not yet have as high a profile as we would like in corporate aviation,” he says.

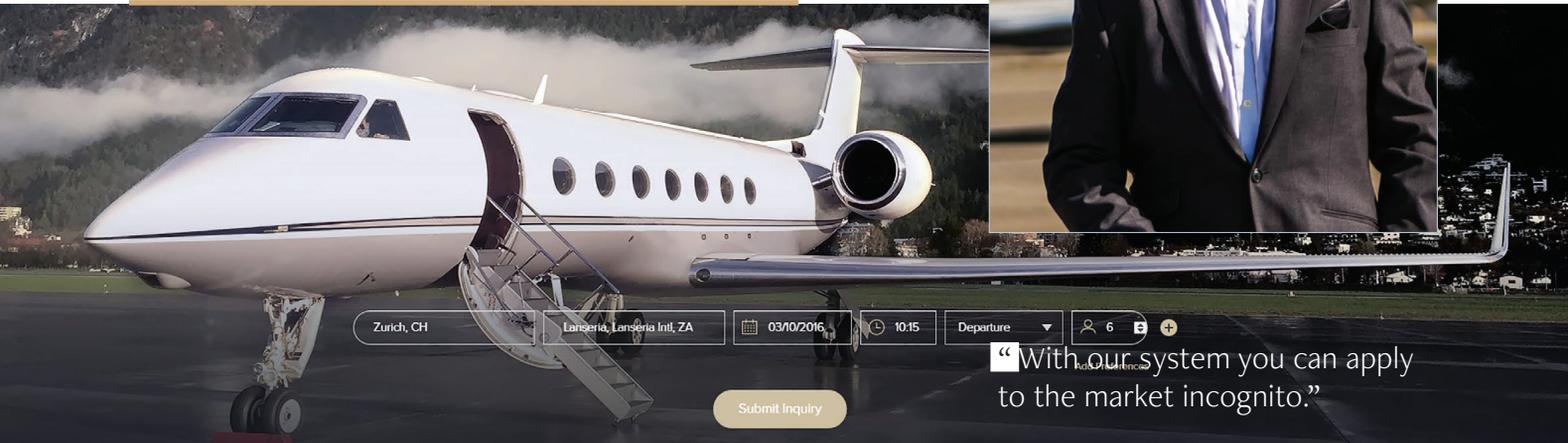
An MRO operation specialising in business jets would use Commssoft’s applications in two major ways, Godwin explains. First, they would use it to monitor and support all the maintenance and upgrade activities on aircraft coming into the shop, as well as using it for quotes and invoicing. MROs also typically provide some CAMO services and the entire planning and scheduling environment for their clients’ aircraft or fleet of aircraft. “The software helps the MRO shop to ensure that all the items have been addressed, that there are no over-runs or outstanding issues and that the aircraft is fully compliant with all the regulations,” Godwin says.

OASES is agnostic to any aircraft type. The works requirements specific for a major inspection interval on a particular aircraft are taken straight off the relevant OEM’s system. “We import that and replicate it into OASES, which then generates the production schedule, the parts list and handles all the accounting and purchasing aspects,” he explains. It will tell the MRO shop that this particular inspection or upgrade requires, say, five hours of a hydraulics engineer’s time, 7 hours from an electrical engineer, and so on. It imports all the costs associated with the various skilled grades required and generates the bill.

“This is all about scheduling things properly and keeping costs under control and closing tasks. Our systems really do make life a great deal easier for MROs, CAMOs and airlines,” Godwin concludes. |BAM

# EMPOWERING THE END USER

BAM talks to Jet Scout Founder Stefano Costi



“With our system you can apply to the market incognito.”

In December last year, Jet Scout launched its new, online public charter-booking platform. BAM spoke to Jet Scout CEO and founder Stefano Costi about the new platform, which aims to benefit charter operators and brokers as well as members of the public who want to fly private.

**Q: What led to Jet Scout wanting to launch a public charter-booking platform?**

A: We are essentially a software company with a great deal of experience in the business aviation world. We already had a scheduling system for operators, called Aviator One and I had been looking at the various systems on the market for several years. The trigger was to improve the quoting/scheduling part of our system, but how? The improvement would have to take account of the fact that times have changed and the market requires more flexibility than ten years ago. So we combined the requirements in one solution: Incoming requests now create a recipient and then go through an all-new quoting system. We have further enhancements coming in the months ahead!

What became clear to me was that characteristically, all the other systems on the market were for the industry, not for the end user, who had no access at all. So we decided to produce a platform that would be completely open for any member of the public to use, but that would also add great value for operators and brokers.

**Q: What made your approach different, apart from targeting end users, which a few other platforms also do now?**

A: The biggest difference is in the technical design. The approach we have taken means that the end user, the private person who decides they want to look at flying charter from one airport to another, is catered for, but we are also able to give the engine that

drives the system to operators and brokers to service their own, unique client base. If you think about the problem from an operator's point of view, if they get 100 requests for quotes on flights from brokers, they will sell, on average, two flights. Now it takes them, using the traditional, manual approach, over twenty minutes to prepare a quote.

With our system, the end user specifies their departure and destination airports, the number of passengers and the type of aircraft they would prefer, but in the public cloud part of the platform they have no control over where the quote will go or which operator it will end up with. If they are an experienced user or have a preferred operator, then the system will route them to that operator or broker's private system. That is one of the options they have when they log on to the system. We build “white label” subsidiary versions of the platform that are specific to each operator. This means that they have a direct route for their clients to come through to them. The public systems on the other hand, is great at generating new clients for any and all operators who reply to the end user's request. That is an open market and the end user will pick the offer that best suits their requirements.

The benefit of our public cloud platform is that the end user is completely anonymous. They have an account on the system and it shows them how many enquiries they have sent out, and how many replies, that is - offers of flights, the system has delivered to them. All that the operator sees is that there is an enquiry, and the details relating to that enquiry. So it is very much a B2C platform.

On the white label system specific to each operator there is no user anonymity since this is the user's choice and reflects an

established relationship. The end user will have a history with that operator and is clearly content to go direct to that operator without launching an open tender for that particular charter flight. That signals very clearly to the operator that they have a very strong relationship with that client and that the client is happy to work with them.

One of the strengths of the system, from the operator's perspective, is that if you as the operator do not have the aircraft available to meet your client's requirements, you can redirect the enquiry to the public cloud and act as the broker for your client. So this ensures that you are both able to meet the client's requirements and gives you the opportunity to add value for the client by giving you the ability to match the offers you receive back from the public cloud system, precisely to the client's requirements.

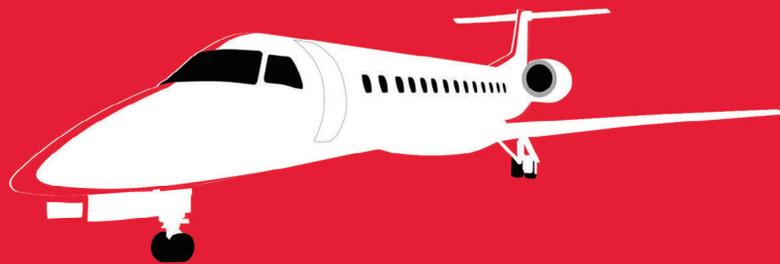
Importantly, this is not a manual, time consuming operation. You don't have to pick up the phone and talk to five or ten operators on behalf of your client. The system does it all for you. We also have a "red button" alert system. So if you have an AOG issue with a client's flight, you can hit the red button and every operator on the system will see the urgency of the request. They can see that it is an AOG and the specific aircraft that you need a replacement lift for.

These situations are incredibly stressful for an operator. The crew of the AOG aircraft are under pressure, the client wants the situation solved instantly and you and your sales people have a huge problem. With our system you can apply to the market incognito. So none of the operators replying to the request will know, for example, that you are a deep-pockets operator that they can bump up their prices for. So we have a lot to offer operators and we get a great deal of interest and acceptance when we show them how the public cloud system and the white label system badged to their company, complement each other and work together. The key to success is connectivity. We strongly believe in the design of Jet Scout.

**Q: What happens when the end user accepts a quote?**

**A:** When the end user confirms their acceptance of an offer (i.e. reserves a flight) they do so on the basis of a full account of the offer, the estimated flight time for their trip, the specifications of the aircraft, and the expected routing, since our system is also linked to a flight planning system. The quote is very accurate, with all the appropriate fees taken into account because we do not want the operator to be losing money on a charter. The operator will confirm the flight by setting the flight to the 'booked status' as a confirmation to the inquirer. It is important to stress that we carry out a thorough vetting of every operator. If there are negatives we will discuss them frankly with the operator but there is no room for repeat errors in this business.

Our aim is to continue adding functionality to the system and to highlight those operators that are really delivering outstanding levels of customer satisfaction. This industry needs end users to have a really good experience when they fly private, or we will lose them to the scheduled airlines! |BAM



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## HOW TO SUPERCHARGE AN MRO

Phil Stearns, Stevens Aviation Sales and Marketing Director, talks to Anthony Harrington

**Q: How did you first come to be involved with business aviation?**

A: Like many in this industry, my childhood was steeped in all things aviation. My father came out of the Korean War a qualified pilot and a mechanic then worked as an A&P for years after. He flew C119s and also maintained them. The C119 looks like its name, the Flying Boxcar, and is a pug-ugly aircraft, but he was a real enthusiast. I learned about his career early on in life and fell in love with aviation myself. It was not an enthusiasm shared by my brothers and sisters, and my own kids have not got the bug, so it looks like the Stearns passion for aviation ends with me. He and I worked side by side in the 1980's on the B1 Bomber and Space Shuttle programs – memories I will cherish forever.

My father would take me to all the air shows and we had a great time. I inherited his flying jacket and regard it as a prized treasure. I have a Master's degree in Business from Franklin University, Ohio and an engineering degree, but the first half of my working life had nothing to do with aviation. However, I was still passionate about aviation and every time an aircraft flew over while my wife and I were talking I'd look up and say how much I'd love to learn to fly. So, my wife said go take some lessons. I did and got my pilot's licence in the early 1990s, but it was just a hobby with me as I was just flying for the fun of it.

Then, about 2005, having spent nearly half my working life in sales, marketing, and engineering positions that had nothing to do with aviation, I decided to do something I could feel passionate about. I knew nothing about the MRO business but having an engineering and a marketing background, and drive for aviation, that seemed right for me. So, I got in touch with Stevens Aviation, since they looked like one of the major players on the East Coast and convinced them to give me an interview. We talked and I knew this was what I wanted to do. They still weren't sure of me since I had no working background in aviation. However, I pressed on and kept up the contact for a year and a half, and they finally agreed, at which point I joined them as a district sales representative. I

progressed from there to general manager of our Dayton Ohio branch. Then Mr. Foley, our CEO – editor's note: see the Spring Edition for an interview with Tom Foley – created the post of Director of Sales and Marketing for me, which I have held ever since. My father passed a year or so later but was able to see me move into aviation as a career which was one of the better days in both our lives.

**Q: So what does sales and marketing mean in an MRO context, since you kind of have to wait until a scheduled maintenance comes around for an aircraft or it comes in for an upgrade, or has an AOG situation?**

A: That is a great question, and really gets to the heart of what we do. One way of answering it is to say that if you were a new investor in the aviation business, setting up an MRO shop, and you invested in the hangarage and the skilled people and all the equipment and tooling you were going to need, then sat back and waited for the phone to ring, you would probably go broke. Unless, of course, you were already hugely well connected and everyone in the industry knew you and trusted you, and even then, you'd still have to market yourself and have a sales team that had their noses to the grindstone and knew how to bring in business.

From my perspective, it is not the aircraft in the hanger that is the "primary" focus for the sales team. That is mainly for the operations team to handle and to ensure that everything is done to the client's satisfaction. We have four skilled and committed operations teams at our three locations and with our AOG group that do this very well – every day of the year. My work starts years before anything comes in to the hangars, and sometimes even before the client owns the aircraft. It is all about building



“My work starts years before an aircraft arrives in the hangar. Relationships need to be developed over time. You have to become their “go-to” guy for anything they need to know about the industry.”

relationships with owners and operators, and these relationships need to be developed over time. You have to become their “go-to” guy for anything they need to know about the industry.

What I always say is that aircraft management companies manage aircraft for a fee. We help owners and operators on a thousand different aircraft management issues, from talking with them about possible replacement cycles, to showing them how we can reduce their life cycle costs or bring down the cost of a planned upgrade or emergency repair – and we do it all for free. You have to win their trust. You may not see a dollar from your efforts for years, then suddenly, when they have a real need, you are the asset that makes their life easier. Then, finally, the aircraft winds up in your hangar and not in some other MRO shop’s hangar, and when you do the job right the relationship is even stronger thereafter. It’s a lot of hard work, but if you know what you’re talking about, have a passion for helping people and making a positive impact on their flight department, and show them there is a high value to this relationship, you become their best choice.

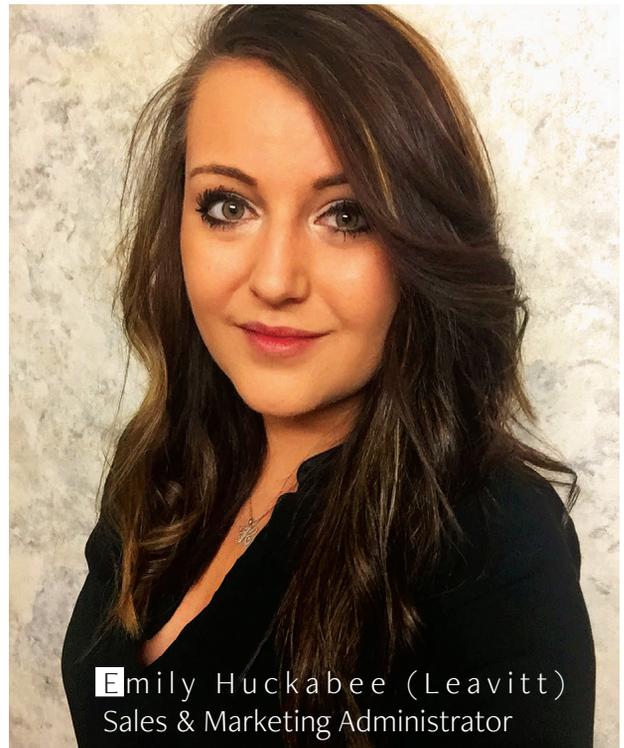
**Q: How do you ensure that sales and marketing are working in harmony with each other, when you carry responsibility for both?**

**A:** It starts with hiring and retaining the right people and knowing each person’s strengths. Every one of my sales reps has their own approach which varies greatly. Some I only need to contact every now and again. Others feel very comfortable with quite a high level of contact. You set the overall goals and objectives and then let them get on with it. If I have to micro-manage someone, I’ve hired the wrong person.

With marketing, I am extremely fortunate in having an absolutely excellent sales and marketing administrator in Emily Huckabee (Leavitt). I might have an idea for an advertisement or marketing campaign and Emily will take that and bring it into focus with the message spot on, that’s a real skill that I value highly. Our CEO and owner, Tom Foley, takes a very active interest in ensuring that we get the key messages right and that these carry through into our daily operations as well as efforts at trade shows like NBAA.

At this year’s upcoming NBAA in Las Vegas in October our big message is going to be centred on the extensive work we are doing with Gulfstream aircraft. That division is doing extremely well and we want to get them front and centre. Plus we want to highlight how well our mobile AOG trucks and mobile teams are doing right across America, helping to get our clients flying again as fast as possible. That team of trucks and technicians is extremely important to us and is a real value-add for our clients.

The third message we want to push concerns our avionics upgrades. For the next two years or so anyone thinking about avionics around the world is going to be focused on ADS-B. This is where an aircraft continuously broadcasts its position to satellites and in-turn to other aircraft and air traffic control ground stations, acting as a replacement for secondary radar. It is a key element of the US Next Generation Air Transport System. It is already generating significant business for us and we expect to get even busier up to and beyond the 2020 deadline.



**Emily Huckabee (Leavitt)**  
Sales & Marketing Administrator

**Q: If you had to sum it up, what is it that really differentiates a good MRO from a run-of-the-mill shop?**

**A:** I have given a lot of thought over time to that question and my answer is basically simple. A good MRO, and a deep relationship with that MRO, will lower your cost of ownership over time, as well as being a lot easier and more pleasant to interact with. Imagine, for example, that it is 2.00 a.m. and 10 degrees below zero, and you have an AOG. If you pick up the phone to an MRO shop that you have a long-standing and excellent relationship with, they are going to pick up and they are going to get on your problem immediately. If you are phoning someone you have either no relationship with, or where you are just another customer, they may not pick up the phone at that hour, and they are certainly not going to rush to solve your problem. Or, even in a non-emergency, sometimes the phone rings on the weekends just to get information or to say hello. They call, we answer. Most flight departments run every day, including weekends and holidays. You have to be committed to work in “their” world, not just “yours”.

A good MRO is responsive. It thinks long term about the relationship. It knows how you are using your aircraft, how it fits into your flight department, the kinds of missions it flies. A good MRO team, working together, can really keep the bad surprises and the headaches down to an absolute minimum for the owner and they come up with effective solutions when there are problems. But to get to this kind of relationship with the client you have to be their go-to guy; you have to be willing to take that 2.00 a.m. call and to get your whole team into action, to be on the customer’s side and to help them through it. If you do that, the owner will be much better off and you will have a happy client who is in it for the long term with you. |BAM



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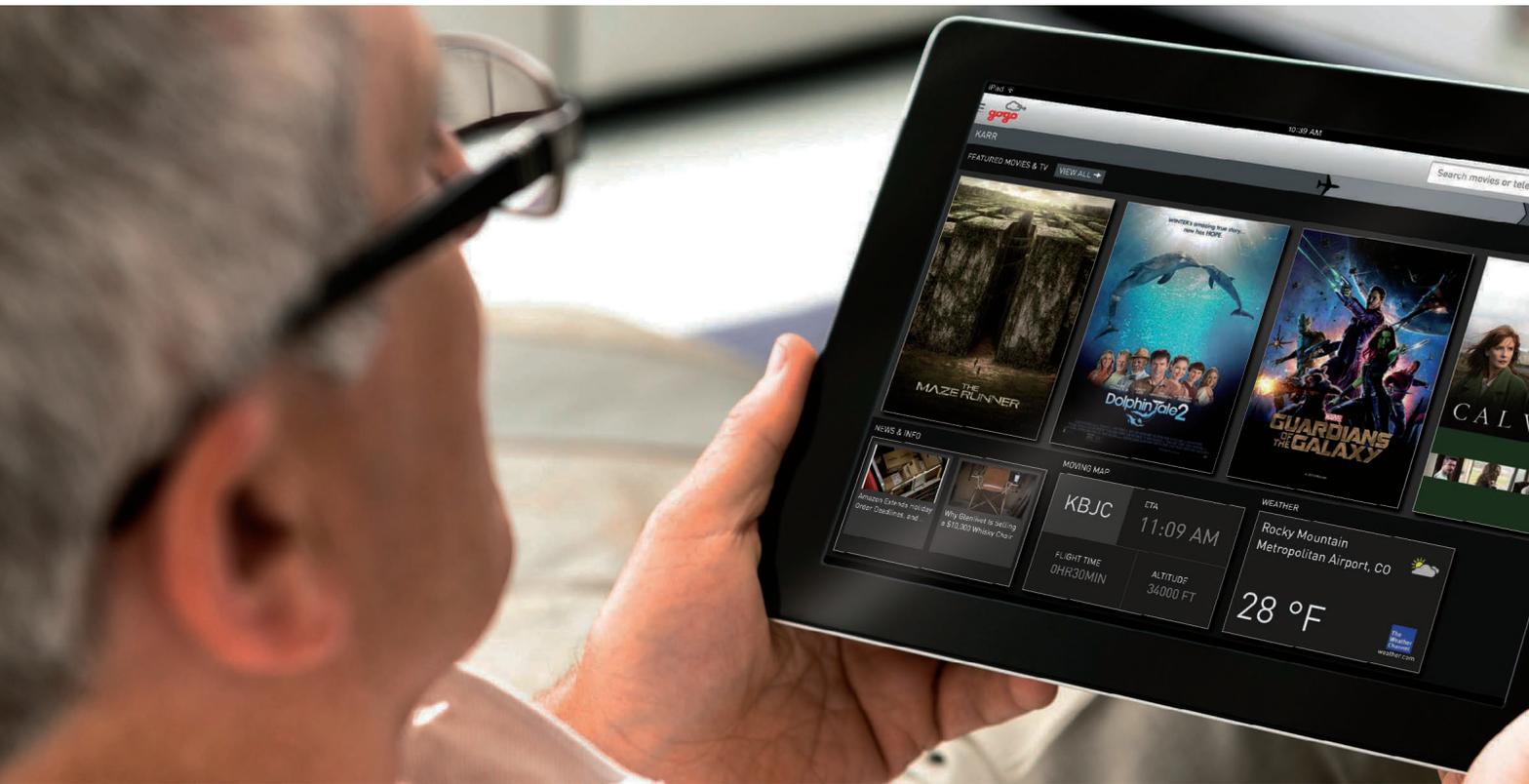


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# EXTENDING A GLOBAL FOOTPRINT

Gogo Business Aviation Executive VP and General Manager, Sergio Aguirre, talks to BAM

The last two years have been outstanding for Gogo Business Aviation. The company has grown at a tremendous rate – over 26% year on year for 2015, with the 2016 figures yet to be released, but generally expected to show similarly strong and sustained growth. And now, as Gogo Business Aviation’s Senior Vice President and General Manager, Sergio Aguirre, notes, the company is about to underscore the fact that it is a global, rather than just a US player.

To this end, Gogo will be making a major announcement at EBACE about its new, global 2Ku-band network, which adds hugely to its well-known air-to-ground (AtG) communications offering. The AtG network transformed the cost structure for cabin connectivity in both commercial and private jets, and the 2Ku network will enable Gogo to extend its services globally while driving

down connectivity costs for passengers on private jets as well as for commercial airlines.

**Q: Sergio, before we look at the new Ku-band option which will extend the range of services Gogo is able to offer to European, Middle East and Asian clients, tell us a bit about how things have moved on over the last two years for you and the company.**

A: The most important, and the most humbling thing for us is that the market has responded very well to our offerings and has displayed a huge appetite for cost-effective streaming entertainment and connectivity capabilities in the cabin. Our customer base has placed a very high level of confidence and trust in us, which is tremendously gratifying. At the same time, we feel that given our track record, we have earned this, since we have broken all previous business models on IFE and connectivity and made our systems very affordable to all



“The most important, and the most humbling thing for us is that the market has responded very well to our offerings and has displayed a huge appetite for cost-effective streaming entertainment and connectivity capabilities in the cabin.”

segments. We now have over 7,000 aircraft, both commercial and private, flying with Gogo streaming services onboard and Gogo voice, data and text services from your own smart phone.

When I say, “streaming services”, you cannot provide a sensibly priced actual streaming service to an aircraft in flight yet, since your fees to the content providers would be massive. The way we get around this is to stream the latest movie releases, as they become available, even before they are available on DVD, direct to the aircraft every time they land at one of the many FBOs that take our streaming update service. We have negotiated agreements with all the major film studios so we are able to offer this service at an excellent rate to our customers.

This is our Gogo Vision service and our ground based infrastructure allows us to provide rapid content updates for our IFE system. This automatic refresh of new media content takes a tremendous load off whoever is responsible for the aircraft, since the onboard media server is always kept up to date without them having to do a thing, and hundreds of titles – including all the latest Hollywood blockbuster releases, are there for the passengers to select.

**Q: I believe you have a 10 Mbps connectivity service to the cabin?**

A: Yes, this service is now certified and we will be taking it to the market in the next couple of months. There is huge demand for it and we expect it to do very well. What is absolutely key for us though, particularly in Europe and the Middle East, is the fact that we have now completed the roll-out of our global 2Ku-band network. This is very crucial for commercial airlines since it allows them to start providing internet connectivity to the cabin on European regional and international flights. It is also tremendous for VIP aircraft. We have secured a launch customer on an Airbus 319 and the installation on that aircraft began in the middle of April. The customer will take delivery of this VVIP aircraft towards the end of May and we will be announcing all the details at EBACE.

**Q: What sort of speeds do you think you will be delivering to the cabin?**

A: Right now, what we are saying to customers is that the service will deliver around 50 Mbps to the cabin. However, when the high throughput satellites come onstream, we anticipate 200 Mbps to the cabin. Already, with the existing service what we are seeing in testing is speeds in excess of 100 Mbps. So the reality is

far exceeding our expectations. We already have the service on quite a few commercial aircraft in advance of the main launch.

**Q: Is this a partnering arrangement that has allowed you to bring the 2Ku service to market?**

A: This is a proprietary Gogo world-wide network, compiled and built by us, utilising satellite services from SCS Technologies and Intelsat, and is a service fully managed by us. We provide the hardware and the service and support, while subcontracting hardware manufacture to Cincom. We do all the final assembly and testing. Because of our Air-to-Ground (AtG) network across the continental USA, people tend to think of Gogo as a US-based service. In fact, even before the launch of our new 2Ku-band service, we had customers in over 60 countries, with literally thousands of international customers. We already have a strong presence in Europe and the Middle East, with staff in locations around Europe in both support and sales.

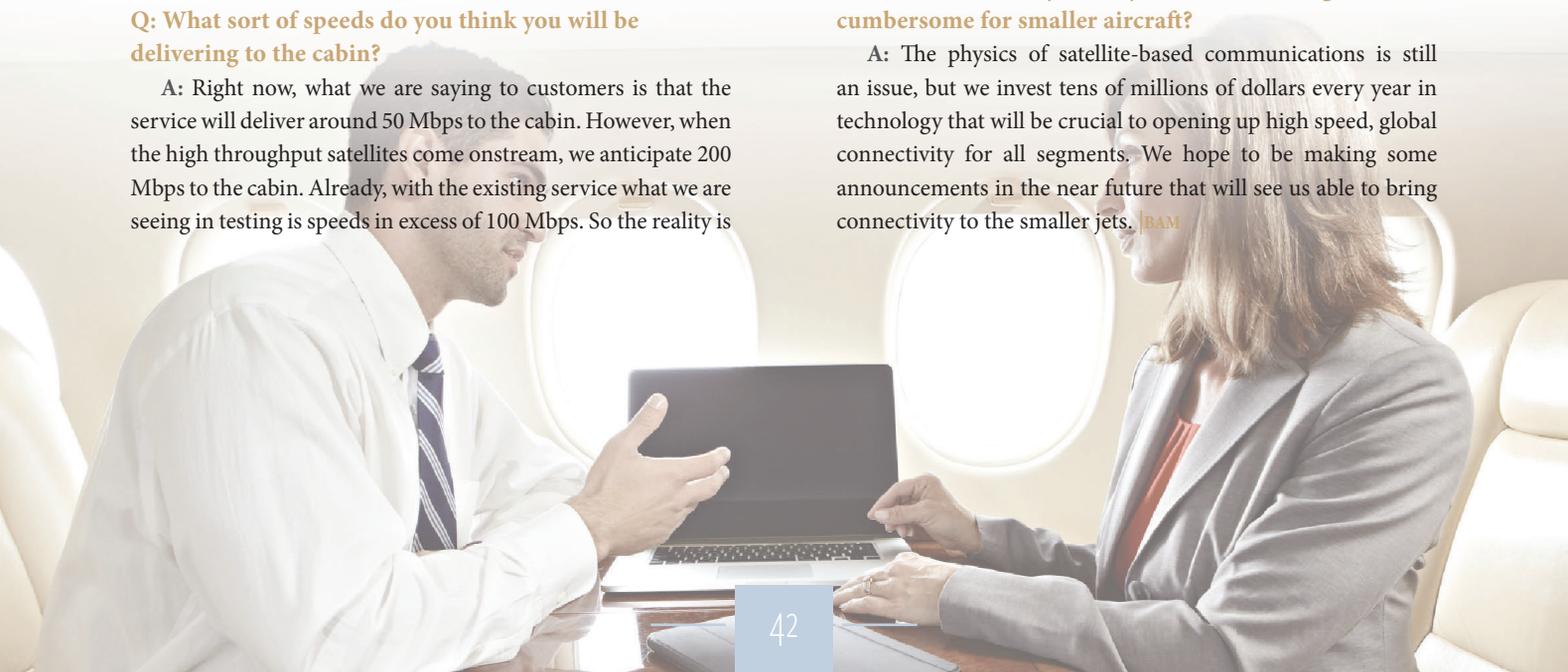
With Gogo Vision we are able to address the needs of our international customers by offering them a choice of seven languages both for the films and for the user interface. So we already have a very good international story to tell, and it will get even better with our 2Ku service.

**Q: Is this only for large jets or can you cater to smaller jets as well?**

A: With Gogo Vision, you have a solid state server on board so you do not need internet connectivity to drive the IFE system. So we are able to provide the small jet market with the latest technology as far as in-flight movies and TV shows are concerned, without the need to connect from the sky. In fact as far as IFE is concerned, most of our customers, both operators and owners, are flying smaller jets and they are very appreciative of the fact that we can provide IFE without them having to pay hundreds of thousands of dollars for expensive connectivity.

**Q: If they want connectivity though, do smaller jets still have problems, since the antenna required to bring satellite connectivity to the jet are still too large and cumbersome for smaller aircraft?**

A: The physics of satellite-based communications is still an issue, but we invest tens of millions of dollars every year in technology that will be crucial to opening up high speed, global connectivity for all segments. We hope to be making some announcements in the near future that will see us able to bring connectivity to the smaller jets. **BAM**



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# GROWTH THROUGH ACQUISITION

BAM talks to F/LIST co-CEO Michael Groiss about the firm's acquisition of OHS Aviation Services



In early April this year the Austrian aircraft interiors specialist house, F/LIST, formally took over the business operations of OHS Aviation Services.

**Q: What was the thinking behind the acquisition of OHS?**

A: In recent years OHS has been both a competitor and a customer of F/LIST, so we knew the company very well and respected its strengths. It is a company that has a number of very expert people and that is very well connected and held in high regard in the after-market. Plus, of course, it has a very good relationship with LBAS (Lufthansa Bombardier Aviation Services), which is also in Berlin.

All these things were very attractive to us. So when the company ran into financial difficulties last year and came to us to suggest that we could work together, we were very interested. We analysed the company and its network of clients and contacts, plus its various certifications and it was clear that OHS would be a very good fit with our business. It was doing more than us in the after-market and has excellent premises in Berlin, very close to LBAS.

**Q: How big is OHS?**

A: They are in four different locations in Berlin. On the airport perimeter they had upholstery, carpeting and lacquering departments and a small service company. They are certified specialists for Part 145 and EASA 21J, which were certifications that we did not have, so that has been a very strong addition to our portfolio of services and offerings. They had a number of assets that we have taken over, together with some 35 staff.

One of the most interesting factors for us is that because they also provide aircraft cleaning, they have close contact with a whole range of customers that we would like to see getting to know more about F/LIST. Providing a service like that creates excellent ongoing opportunities to meet new potential clients and to make them aware of the range of services that we can provide.

When customers take an aircraft into OHS's Berlin premises they get both the exterior and the interior of their aircraft cleaned. In itself that generates revenue but the contact with the client is what is most valuable. It creates opportunities for us to show prospective clients what can be done with their cabinetry and interiors to refresh their aircraft and to give it an "as-new" look!



**Q: Have you made public the value of the deal?**

A: No. What I can say though is that this was an asset deal in which we took over all of OHS's assets including their employees with all their rights and duties, as well as their EASA Part 21J and Part 145 approvals.

From our perspective, thanks to their global network, it gives us the opportunity to take our product portfolio to a much wider international audience. This has very positive implications for the Berlin site. We are also already looking to expand the Berlin operation and are currently recruiting for five additional people to fill various positions. For me, this is just a starting point and I am sure the company will grow steadily over the next five years.

“It gives us the opportunity to take our product portfolio to a much wider international audience.”

**Q: What size of aircraft has OHS specialised in to this point?**

A: Because of the close cooperation with Lufthansa

Bombardier Aviation Services, the main focus was and will be Bombardier business jets, although we will certainly work on aircraft of other manufacturers as well. Large aircraft like ACJs and BBJs, however, do not count among the regular customer base.



**Q: Are you optimistic about the current economic climate for business aviation?**

A: For us things are definitely looking better in 2017 than they did in 2016. Last year we were a little way short of running at full capacity, and this continued into the first quarter. However, given the programmes that we are now engaged on, and the OEMs that we are working with, everything is pointing to us achieving 100% capacity by the end of the year. |BAM

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# PAINT SHOP PRO: TURNING DREAMS INTO REALITY

Anthony Harrington talks to Jim Renfro, CEO of Highlands Aviation

**D**esigners who specialize in aerospace schemes are wonderful at weaving visions of flowing, multi-coloured waves washing over the shiny surfaces of the latest business jets. Getting that dream design from the computer screen onto the solid aluminium skin of a jet however, is another challenge entirely.

Paint, by its very nature, is messy stuff. Spraying it onto a three-dimensional aluminium sheet, which is not paint friendly in the first place, is a much underrated and hi-tech art. This is especially true when you remember that the owners of private jets are among the most discerning and demanding people you are likely to meet. They are highly unlikely to

tolerate nubs of paint hardening under a clear coat over-coat, or a smeary borderline between two adjacent colours. This would definitely have the client hitting the reject button.

However, getting a complex design precisely right, with the pattern perfectly in place, so there is nothing for the eye to fault, either in the surface texture of the paint or in the flow of the lines themselves, is exactly what a great aircraft paint shop is in business to do. Jim





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Renfro, the founder and CEO of Highlands Aviation, Incorporated, which specializes in painting and refurbishing interiors and exteriors of corporate jets and turboprops, likes to joke that he would find it easier to find a new spouse than a new painter!

“My employees are professionals. They only turn out quality work. I do not have to micromanage them because they are all very proud to produce a top end product. They understand what is involved in masking out and applying a complex design and they know how to do the job right the first time,” Renfro states.

Any design that uses multiple overlapping or adjacent colours requires a great deal of masking. “The stripes have to look harmonious and in proportion because they go around three dimensional objects, some of which, like the engine nacelles, are either rounded or oddly shaped. We have to clean up blow-by as we go so that the final design on the aircraft is as crisp as the designer envisioned it. We do our warranty work on the front side, not after the event. We get it right first time. If we should make a mistake, we would lose a substantial amount of time scraping everything off to bare metal. We especially do not want to see that happen,” he explains.

In the end, for long lasting durability and sharpness of colour, it all comes down to getting the actual paint itself right. Renfro says that his paint shop has been a long standing user of Akzo Nobel’s products. “Throughout the years, this has been the most consistent product we have utilized. We use it because of its ease of application and it is very forgiving. It has great consistency of colour and longevity. Add to this, the fact that with rival products there are more ancillary additives required to minimize overall drying time. In taking this into account, there is no contest.”

“If you are doing multiple layouts over the topcoat you have just applied, you do not want to have to wait 24 to 48 hours before you can apply the next coat. You want to get it all laid down inside a time-frame that the owner is going to find acceptable. Once you put the clear coat over the top of the previous layers, you have locked in everything that you have done,” he says.



Jim Renfro with Mr. Phil Goff, Chief Pilot for Kinsley Construction Inc., taking delivery of the freshly repainted TBM. 930.

Highlands Aviation schedules approximately 12 to 15 corporate aircraft per year for refurbishment. "It takes a little more than a month to do a mid-sized jet. The average aircraft takes about 2,800 hours to paint. Doing it right takes time. I tell every customer, 'you will quickly forget how long we took to paint your aircraft once you get it back, but you will never forget if we don't do it right!'"

Renfro admits he is not a master designer. "All my taste is in my mouth," he jokes. "If the owner likes the design, that's good enough for us." Highlands Aviation works closely with Scheme Designers when customers have a difficult time selecting what livery they want to utilize. Scheme Designers is an aircraft exterior design shop founded by Craig Barnett, who has a well-deserved reputation for excellent aircraft designs. Scheme Designers is renowned for developing over half of the new factory model exterior styling of airframe OEMs.

As far as demand is concerned, Renfro says he is already feeling some benefit from the Trump Presidency. "There is no doubt that the election has created a large amount of optimism that the administration is going



to be more business-friendly than its predecessor. We currently have about eight jobs we have bid, and have received deposits on three of them already. So we should have a pretty strong year. If President Trump gets his tax proposals approved by Congress, we are going to see some strong growth in the use of corporate aircraft once again. This growth will benefit all sectors of the aviation industry, including ours." |BAM

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# FUELLING SUCCESS

BAM talks to Avfuel Corporation's Joel Hirst, VP Sales

Every Jet A fuel salesperson knows they are selling a commodity product with a skittish price point. To be successful in the jet fuel business, you need to be able to build a loyal customer base, one that will not easily be lured away by a one-off offer of a couple of cents' discount per litre.

To do this, you have to provide both an excellent suite of services that wrap around your product, and a competitive price. As Joel Hirst, VP sales at Avfuel explains, these are issues Avfuel has been on top of, since the company's president and CEO, Craig Sincock, acquired Avfuel back in 1985.

Like every company in the fuels business, Avfuel had to react quickly to the plunging price of oil. From a peak of \$115 a barrel in June 2014, oil crashed to less than \$35 a barrel by the end of February 2016. The fall in the price per barrel has been one of the major factors influencing the global macro-economic environment for the last two and a half years.

The impact on business aviation, Hirst points out, was double edged. On the one hand, anyone buying fuel, whether to top up their jet or their private car, loves paying less per gallon. On the other hand, the uncertainty caused by the price drop has had a depressing effect on corporate decision making, causing many companies to postpone new investments and acquisitions until they could get a clearer view of where the global economy was going. That in turn caused a

drop, or at the very least, a flattening in aircraft movements, which had a negative impact on fuel sales.

"When crude dropped hard, it brought an almost immediate halt to all kinds of capital expenditures in multiple industry sectors. The airlines benefited, but cheap oil does not make general aviation fly. It had almost no beneficial effect on flight hours. From our standpoint, it meant that customers owed us somewhat less money, so that was a benefit, but now there is a massive backlog of aircraft at the OEMs, especially in the large cabin category. Buyers have mostly put a hold on acquiring new aircraft until they can see an improvement in the economy," Hirst said.

For the global economy to pick up, oil needs to be back to \$65 - \$70 a barrel, rather than \$45 - \$50 a barrel as we currently see. "Energy makes the world go round. There are so many companies tied to oil in one way or another—and they produce so many commodities—that we need oil back at that price for people to begin to feel confident again," he notes.

That said, Avfuel has not paused in its strategy of generating a full suite of value-added services to complement its fuel sales. "A big focus for us has been the independently owned and operated FBO. We enhanced our Avfuel-branded offerings for independent FBOs and we added some 20 strategic locations this year. These include some very key airports in Washington, Dallas, White Plains, Scottsdale and Anchorage, and we could still sign a few more before the end of the year," he comments.



In addition to its branded FBOs, Avfuel recently completed an agreement with Air BP that gives it access to 89 locations across Europe, while Air BP Sterling Card-holders gain access to 20 Avfuel locations in the U.S. “This will expand as time goes on; we are just rolling out that agreement now,” Hirst said.

Avfuel has also taken note of the extent to which consolidation is taking place among FBOs; to assist its Network FBOs to compete in a consolidating marketplace, Avfuel unveiled some new network solutions. In late October, it announced a retool of its popular AVTRIP loyalty programme to include tiered rewards beginning January 2017. Avfuel also introduced two new systems—Avfuel Network Referrals and Avfuel Network Rewards—that will enhance connectivity within the Avfuel Network of 600+ branded FBOs.

The Avfuel Network respects the FBO’s independence while still providing a comprehensive range of services sufficient to rival those offered by the large chains. Hirst points out that this provides operators with the competitive advantage they need to compete in an evolving marketplace. Their regular customers now have access to the Avfuel brand at more than 600 locations. And with Avfuel Network Referrals, the FBOs gain access to a new, simplified online tool that enables them to refer customers to each other, earning them the opportunity to secure more business.

Avfuel also owns 16 FBOs in addition to those it brands. These FBOs are in the U.S. and the U.K., and the company has been steadily expanding its services to commercial airlines as well as business aviation.

“Despite all the additional services we provide, including our flight planning services through Avplan International Trip Support, we are still very much a fuel-driven company, and our major drawcard for our global client base is our ability to provide them with access to competitively-priced fuel anywhere on the planet,” Hirst notes.

“If you are going anywhere outside of our own branded network, we have access to a further 3,000 plus global locations through Avfuel Contract Fuel, so there aren’t too many spots around the world at which we are not already providing fuel. However, if pilots want to go somewhere we do not yet cover, it’s simple for us to arrange fuel because of our wide network of trade and exchange partners. What this does for flight departments is gives them pre-authorized credit and 24/7 support, even if it’s the first time they are travelling to that particular destination. When a pilot lands, they are busy on the flight deck and have a great deal to do. So it is nice to know that the ground services side is all taken care of through Avfuel, and that we have pre-advised them of the crew’s requirements,” he concludes. |BAM



“We enhanced our Avfuel-branded offerings for independent FBOs and we added some 20 strategic locations this year.”

# OUTSTANDING DESIGN Q

BAM comments on their exemplary work and expansion plans



Five years ago we saw Howard Guy's team building the world's first purpose built Jet sales showroom for Steve Varsano at Hyde Park corner. Five years on Steve has experienced great success for his vision and has been rewarded for the fabulous design and build that Design Q contributed in making his facility truly breathtaking.

Now he is expanding his operation and to do so he has had to move. Design Q moved out the massive



Airbus 319 full size section and the totally unique interior back to Design Q for a make over.

It is planned that in June & July Design Q will set up his new stunning Facility in Park Lane where the extended fuselage will sit for all to marvel.

Steve has offered Design Q space so collectively they will be able to show clients the latest designs full size on a 35 ft long high definition screen.

This is truly a great time for The Jet Business and Design Q and these are certainly the guys that stand out as the people to talk to if you want the best business aircraft! **BAM**



This is truly a great time for The Jet Business and Design Q and these are certainly the guys that stand out as the people to talk to if you want the best business aircraft!

# BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

Anthony Harrington talks to Brandon O'Reilly, CEO TAG Farnborough Airport



**Q: TAG Farnborough Airport has invested very substantially over the last few years in the facilities and build environment at Farnborough. Can you take us through the development stages, the rationale for all the improvements and whether more are planned?**

**A:** We have invested in excess of £200 million to transform the airport from a military airfield to what it is today. TAG Farnborough Airport is the only airport in the UK which is exclusively dedicated to business aviation, providing purpose-built facilities and services tailored to the needs of the market. As we see increasing demand for higher-volume flights, we have invested in additional facilities for passengers and crew. A new passenger lounge accommodates up to 80 passengers, whilst also offering privacy and comfort to individuals and small groups. The sophisticated interior is adorned by a fuselage clock, coffee table and exhaust lamp custom made from vintage aircraft parts. Other distinctive features include a "TopBrewer" coffee machine which can be operated via an iPad provided, and a gallery seating area overlooking the runway. Waiting crew members can relax in the upgraded quiet lounges or 'snooze' rooms equipped with flat beds and a zero-gravity ergonomic chair, or use the exclusive gymnasium and shower facilities. We continue to listen to our customers, with a view to making further improvements to their airport experience in the future.

**Q: Are you seeing an upsurge in aircraft movements? What do you feel about the prospects for 2017 as opposed to 2016?**

**A:** TAG Farnborough Airport is a growing business aviation airport serving customers from around the world. We operate approximately 25,000 flights per year which accounts for around half of our permitted capacity. A 3.2% increase in total air traffic movements (ATMs) was reported for the first four months of 2017. We are also seeing more airliner-derived aircraft (50-80 ton maximum take-off weight) such

**"We have invested in excess of £200 million to transform the airport from a military airfield to what it is today."**





as Airbus Corporate Jets and Boeing Business Jets, flying in and out of Farnborough. Many of these aircraft operate to and from the US, Middle East and Asia. The investment in infrastructure and services we have made over the years means that we are well placed to take advantage of this increasing demand.

**Q: TAG Farnborough Airport's sister company TAG Aviation covers a range of services, from charter to MRO and engineering. Can you tell us about the one-stop-shop approach the TAG Group has put together?**

**A:** Farnborough is truly a one-stop-shop for business aviation customers and offers a complete portfolio of services. Our sister company TAG Aviation provides aircraft management, charter and 24/7 maintenance services. The Aviator luxury hotel, which is also part of the TAG Group, is conveniently located on site. Along with award-winning facilities and a dedicated team, TAG Farnborough Airport offers a range of amenities including a fast-track entrance to the airport for the exclusive use of passengers and crew, direct ramp access to waiting jets, on-site customs and immigration clearance, concierge service, as well as a meeting and event space. All of this allows our customers to make the best use of their time when travelling through London for business.

**Q: You deal with some of the most demanding and sophisticated clients on the planet. How do you ensure that everyone is on their A-game at all times? What is involved by way of quality control and training?**

**A:** We strive for excellence and take a can-do approach. Our customer service and operations teams are responsible for everything that interfaces with the customer, from crew and passengers to aircraft operators and brokers. They also assist passengers and crew with a range of requests while they are at the airport, focusing on a personal, one-to-one service. We have repeatedly topped international FBO polls and received industry awards, which are a tribute to the hard work and dedication of our airport team at Farnborough. Direct customer



feedback is very important to us too and we have installed iPads with feedback forms in the main terminal building.

**Q: In the US fuel sales tend to be the major revenue driver for FBOs by a long way, what are the major revenue sources for a UK FBO and how can you drive growth?**

**A:** We offer heated hangar facilities (240,000 sq ft) and ample ramp space (1.2 million sq ft), providing a secure home for permanently parked and transient aircraft. Our extra capacity ensures that we don't have to turn anyone away. We do have our own fuel provision at TAG Farnborough Airport as well.

**Q: How much of an additional concierge service do you look to provide for clients, ie, by way of hotel bookings, onward planning and the like?**

**A:** Our Handling team assists customers in arranging a variety of services, including bookings for local hotels or onward transfers. Our on-site concierge team also assist with welcoming both passengers and crew at the airport. Crew members are as important as passengers to us. At the moment, we are trialling a new service where arriving crew will be handed a key for their booked room at the Aviator hotel, making their transit even smoother.

**Q: How does TAG Farnborough fit in with the general business community in the area?**

**A:** We are a good neighbour, working closely with business partners and the local community in and around Farnborough. Besides being involved in many community schemes and supporting local charities, we are also working with schools and colleges to educate students about aviation and encourage them to become involved in this industry. Environment management is also an important aspect of our work at the airport. We have invested in initiatives such as a state-of-the-art noise tracking system, sustainable staff travel, waste management, and are on target to become one of the first carbon neutral airports in the UK. [JRAM](#)



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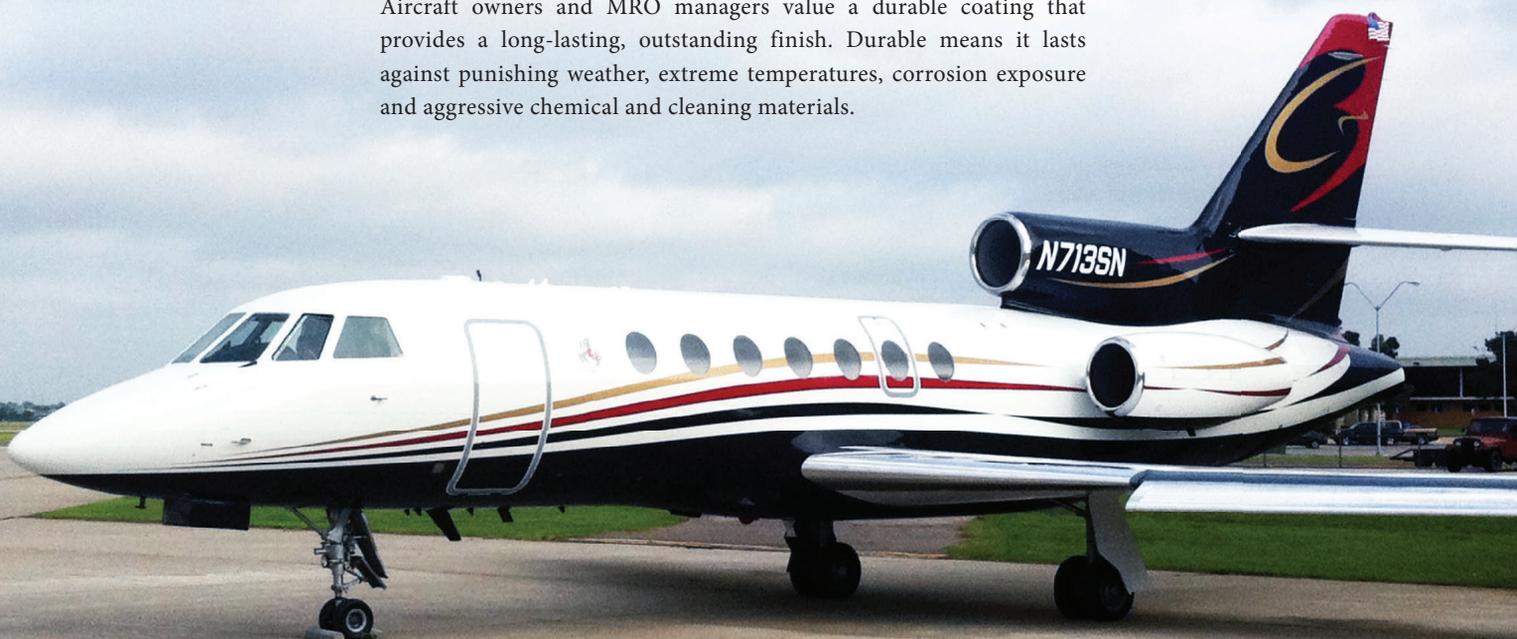
# NEW AEROSPACE COATINGS BOLSTERS AIRCRAFT PERFORMANCE IN ADDITION TO AESTHETICS

By Julie Voisin, Global Product Manager, Sherwin-Williams Aerospace Coatings

**A**s one of the most important – and visible – aircraft components, aerospace coatings must meet a wide range of specifications and provide crucial protection against corrosion, wear and tear in even the most punishing environments. Aerospace coatings also must convey a clear and concise, eye-catching corporate or brand image.

In the course of an aircraft's lifespan, even the most durable high-quality coating system will require thorough inspections along with regular maintenance such as cleaning, polishing and spot repairs. In most cases a repainting process should also be incorporated into a routine maintenance program.

Aircraft owners and MRO managers value a durable coating that provides a long-lasting, outstanding finish. Durable means it lasts against punishing weather, extreme temperatures, corrosion exposure and aggressive chemical and cleaning materials.



**Determining the need for repainting**

Coatings play a critical role in an aircraft's operation, so examining the condition of existing paint is crucial in any inspection. A dull finish can affect aerodynamics and glide. Too many layers of old paint add weight, affect speed and increase fuel costs. And while a plane with weathered paint simply looks bad, most importantly, the proper paint helps protect the airframe from corrosion.

Often, a routine inspection will reveal that an aircraft will need only minor touch-ups to its existing paint system. Other times, an inspection will reveal that the aircraft will need to be stripped, prepped and repainted.

The aircraft must be inspected for any signs of fluid leakage, abrasion, corrosion and paint erosion. Fluid leakage affects the integrity of any coating system by softening and hampering its protective abilities. It also is a leading factor in long-term coating deterioration.

If any paint has eroded, a repaint might be required even if an aircraft is relatively new. The decision to repaint depends on the condition of the previous coating system, how it was applied and the quality of the materials used. The better the quality of the paint system used on an aircraft, as well as how

the plane has been cared for, the less frequently it will need to be stripped and repainted.



Modern high-solids topcoat systems offer excellent coverage and protection for most types of aircraft, with such notable features as excellent flow and leveling, good buffing characteristics and blister resistance. High-solids topcoat technology has evolved to offer fast dry and cure times – in



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as little as six to eight hours with new systems like Sherwin-Williams SKYscapes® General Aviation Basecoat-Clearcoat. In other cases, when the project calls for the absolute best appearance with high performance, the utilization of a multi-component polyester urethane system, like Jet Glo Express™ provides both a fast cure time and unmatched distinctness of image.

### Where is the latest trend in aircraft color and paint schemes?

We can look at the needs of the customer (aircraft owner) in different ways. On the interior of the plane, a lot of customers are looking for something that represent a sophisticated, or home life to them. So they may be looking for neutral colors, they may be looking for textures that feel soft or they may be looking for something that has a shine or a glow to it. So it offers different aspects and different feels for the interior of the plane.

This latter styling trend over the last five years is the use of more effect pigments. In the past you would see small, thin metallics or mica stripes on the side of an aircraft. Recently

they slowly started creeping into larger sections of the aircraft. Now you have some aircraft featuring a metallic or mica scheme over the entire aircraft's exterior.

That said, within the general aviation or business jet aircraft community, while a lot of customers are seeking something that is sophisticated or regal, but they also may be looking for something that protects their privacy or security. As a result, a lot of times many aircraft exteriors are just plain white. Other times the white-only design scheme is also for the resale of the aircraft. Just like with an automobile, a purple car doesn't sell as easily as a silver one.

### In Conclusion...

Although it is time consuming, a regular paint regimen is a requirement in any aircraft maintenance program. A new paint job not only enhances a plane's aesthetics, it also plays an important role in protecting the aircraft's surfaces from wear, tear and corrosion, factors that can compromise the integrity of any airframe. Coatings protect the airframe's integrity – helping to keep the aircraft aerodynamic and flight ready. |BAM

“A regular paint regimen is a requirement in any aircraft maintenance program. A new paint job not only enhances a plane's aesthetics, it also plays an important role in protecting the aircraft's surfaces from wear, tear and corrosion...”



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# X2 KOH SAMUI

## SATISFY THE SOUL AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL

by Jane Stanbury, BAM Global Luxury Travel Correspondent

The Thai island of Koh Samui is well known for the bustling resorts of Chaweng and Lammai where restaurants, bars, shops and hotels compete for custom. However, head south and life becomes more tranquil. Traffic thins out and several high-end hotels are dotted around the coastline. The most distinctive of which is the X2 Koh Samui Resort.

Spreading over five acres of water front land the property boasts just 26 villa suites of which 21 have private pools. The styling is surprisingly urban. Clean lines and the intelligent use of natural local materials including wood and bamboo, blend with polished grey concrete and a thoughtful range of neutral tones, to deliver an unusual contemporary city design, but on the shores of the Gulf of Thailand.

An expansive wooden boardwalk, peppered with palm trees, leads from the open-air reception which features contemporary marble and wood architecture, to the 4K (pronounced Fork) restaurant and bar. This heavenly location is where meals, cocktails and snacks can be relished throughout the day. The restaurant layout provides two clear areas, which like the reception are open air, creating a spacious, airy and enticing venue.

The modern design theme continues with a polished, black stone bar extending over fifteen meters along one wall with a wild variety of cocktail ingredients displayed on up-lit shelves carved into the wall. The drinks menu mixes traditional cocktails with X2 specials featuring a locally brewed sugar cane rum served in chilled coconuts that can be sipped straight from the husk. An extensive wine list offers something

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to accompany every style of dish. Private barbeques under the stars, Thai cooking classes, or special set menus are all available for guests.

Diners are encouraged to relax and soak up the tropical atmosphere, reclining on generously sized Thai-style sofas whilst welcoming the fresh sea breeze which gives respite from the stifling heat. Looking out over the azure lagoon, guests will find themselves hypnotised by the waves lapping at the shore, breakers rolling over the reef and the unbelievable beauty of the coastline. As the heat recedes through the mid-afternoon, the shore welcomes a hive of local activity. Traditional Thai long-boats “putt-putt” past as they set out for the evening catch; crab fishermen paddle in the receding tide rhythmically clicking stones in their hands to attract the crustacean. They are no match for the crab catching Sandpiper which, with its oversized feet and amazing speed, picks up its afternoon snack every day on the dot of three.

The 4K menu is as diverse as the vista, offering traditional Thai dishes such as Pad Thai noodles, and Mussaman curry, but with a contemporary twist. These spicy plates are complemented by traditional western options including lamb, steak and fish plates which seem somewhat tame in comparison. The servers are friendly and helpful, yet remain unobtrusive, leaving the impression you are merely staying at your own private beach estate.

If the sea lacks appeal the capacious swimming pool, the deepest in Koh Samui, invites sun worshippers to cool off in

its refreshing waters. A raised lounge area to one side of the pool resides over the gardens with sumptuous day beds and loungers to laze around on; whilst at the shore's edge bean bags, and sunbeds provide further dozing options. The overall effect is to induce an intoxicating atmosphere of pure idleness.

Uniquely X2 Koh Samui is the only property on the island to offer guests unlimited spa treatments throughout their stay. The X2 spa is nestled in a far corner of the resort providing a cool oasis from the burning day. Continuing the urban-by-the-sea styling grey slate walls are punctuated with teak cabinets containing an array of oils, incense, lotions and potions from X2. Floor-to-ceiling windows look out to a garden where pairs of brightly painted butterflies flit between the leaves of the lush vegetation and colourful birds swoop between the trees. It certainly fits with the X2 ethos of blending luxury with nature. In dedicated treatment rooms, tiny Thai therapists ply massages with incomprehensible strength ridding the body of stresses and strains using a combination of techniques, herbal poultices and various body parts; thumbs, elbows, knees, fists, hands; to deliver soothing tension relieving sessions.

Accommodation is provided in Bauhaus inspired individual villas, each with its own private garden, protected from the outside world by a foliage drenched wall. The pool villas offer a seating “box” recessed into the wall with sumptuous mattresses and triangular Thai-style cushions which are amazingly supportive. Around the pool the verdant garden incorporates sunbeds, dining area, and a pebbled garden with outside shower. The neutral tones of the open plan interior create an elegant space that wouldn't look out of place in the heart of a New York designer-boutique hotel. The bedroom area features a high cathedral ceiling and wall-to-wall windows, with one wall providing dark wood cabinets for storage. The centre piece is a ridiculously comfortable platform bed with views out to the pool.

A sliding wooden doorway leads through to a vast grey polished concrete bathroom incorporating shower, bath, sink, wardrobe, and glassed off toilet area. Overall the impression is one of subtle and fully achieved design, incorporating nature with urban functionality, yet the whole remains inviting, relaxing and somehow sexy. Once you've unpacked there is no need to leave at any point as food, drink and massages, can all be provided en-suite.

X2 has set out to blend contemporary luxury with nature, space and privacy, and in X2 Koh Samui they have certainly achieved luxury by design. The result satisfies the mind, body, spirit and soul at the very highest of levels. **BAM**



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# FERRARI

## Supercar Dreams

As everyone knows, the roots of the Ferrari story can be traced back to 1929 when an Italian Alfa Romeo racing driver, Enzo Ferrari, formed Scuderia Ferrari, headquartered in Modena, to build racing cars for gentlemen drivers. Scuderia soon became the technical racing arm of Alfa Romeo and continued as such for the best part of a decade, until Alfa Romeo brought its racing operation back in-house in 1938, hiring Enzo as manager.

That arrangement quickly fell apart and Enzo left Alfa Romeo the following year, with an agreement not to build competing racing cars sporting the Ferrari name for at least four years. He returned to the Scuderia facilities, renamed the plant the Auto Avio Costruzioni and despite the “gagging” arrangement with Alfa Romeo, built two racing cars. Then Benito Mussolini took Italy into World War II, and Ferrari’s super car dreams went into abeyance

as the plant focused on fabricating grinding machines for the duration of the war.

In 1943, the Ferrari factory relocated to its present site at Maranello. After the war Ferrari produced its first Ferrari-badged car, the 1947 125 Sport. Then followed the legendary 250 GTO and by the start of the 1960s Ferrari was well and truly established as the dominant “super car” on both the racetrack and the road.

By the late 1960s however, there was plenty of competition. Porsche introduced its iconic 908 and the five litre Porsche 917, while Ferrari countered with the Ferrari 512S. Once the Fiat Group decided to take a 50% stake in Ferrari, in 1969, Enzo had the cash to go head to head with any manufacturer. Fiat then increased its stake over the years to 90%. Fiat’s arrival also stimulated the production of road cars in addition to Ferrari’s racing interests.





On 3 January 2016, Fiat Chrysler Automobiles officially ended its relationship with Ferrari, spinning off the group. By Ferrari's second day of trading on the Milan stock exchange, following the spinoff, the car maker was valued at \$9.1 billion, almost 80% of the value of its former parent, which had a market value at the time of \$11.6 billion!

Of course, the average price of a Fiat Chrysler car in 2016 was around \$24,500, according to Bloomberg, while the average price of a Ferrari last year was almost exactly \$400,000 more! Another factor that really helps to keep Ferrari's market value up in the stratosphere, is that making top end luxury cars is a much more stable business than auto manufacturing in general – as we saw when certain US automobile manufacturers flew to Washington in their private jets to ask for a government

bailout following the pain caused by the 2008 global financial crash.

Ferrari has produced many legendary models over the years. We've settled on just two. The 2016 Ferrari 488 Spider, with its incredible engine and open top deserves to be on any high net worth individual's "must have" list, and then there is Ferrari's answer to every other luxury car maker's supercar, the Ferrari LaFerrari, a hybrid two-seater hypercar, coming in at an ever so cool price tag of £1,150,000.

According to Top Gear, the LaFerrari drives like the best Ferrari ever made, probably because it is. I'll have to take their word for it since Ferrari are not giving away samples, more's the pity. (I could flog the sample, buy the 488 Spider at £204,000, and have near £1 million change. Lovely thought, but I'd be sad to lose the LaFerrari...) |BAM

**M**aking top end luxury cars is a much more stable business than auto manufacturing in general..."





# THE GORING

The Goring

## QUINTESSENTIAL BRITISH HOSPITALITY

by Jane Stanbury, BAM Global Luxury Correspondent

Many people will recognise the name of “The Goring” hotel as where HRH Duchess of Cambridge chose to spend the night before her marriage to Prince William. However, for many years it has been a great friend to the UK’s royal family and is the only hotel in the world to hold a Royal Warrant of appointment to HM The Queen for Hospitality Services. Not without justification.

It is quintessentially, impeccably British, but with a quirky character and sense of humour, revealed in subtle touches throughout the property. Located on the wonderfully peaceful Beeston Street in the heart of London’s Belgravia, The Goring is a seductive paradise, ideal for those seeking ultimate luxury and central London convenience. Just twenty minutes from The London Heliport it is the perfect base for any traveller looking for a very British establishment from which to explore further afield.

When it was opened by Otto R Goring in 1910, it was the only hotel in the world to have en-suite facilities in every bedroom, and to this day its interiors are unlike any other in London. Jeremy Goring, Otto’s great grandson is now is

at the helm, making it the only luxury hotel in London still owned and run by the family that built it.

Guests are welcomed by a bowler-hatted, frock coated doorman who guides visitors into a magical foyer where red coated footmen wait to fulfil Goring guests’ every request. The wide foyer corridor boasts the most stunning Fromental hand painted wallpaper. Inspired by designer Russell Sage, sprinkled with a little Goring history, and informed by block print styling, this seemingly tropical forest, morphs into countryside landscapes and back again to the jungle. Once transfixed the viewer notices it gradually coming alive with a surprising collection of figures paying homage to much of the hotel’s heritage.

A unicorn and crowned lion represent the Royal crest, a pair of walruses represent the original Goring family members, elder and younger, who opened and subsequently ran the hotel. Monkeys painted above the reception carry keys, wear a bell boy hat, sip wine, dance in top hats, and laughingly carry off guests’ jewels. The vivacious wall paper took four artists eight weeks to paint by hand, and a further week to hang around the reception area. The wallpaper is hand gilded silver leaf on paper, with the design painted in acrylics.

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This absorbing piece of art exemplifies the rich depth of the property's design which makes it stand apart in a world where hotel minimalism and beige tones dominate.

Since taking the helm Jeremy has overseen a quiet transformation of the hotel. He has commissioned an array of British designers including a team from Viscount Linley's design firm for the restaurant; Tim Gosling for the lounge, bar and terrace and bedrooms; as well as Nina Campbell and Russell Sage who transformed a collection of rooms and suites. Design sits at the heart of the hotel's raison d'être. Even each floor has the same patterned paper but the colour changes per the landing-level. Yellow, red, blue, grey and greens replace floor numbers.

The hypnotising reception gives onto the lounge area which serves a kaleidoscope of guests throughout the day. Morning coffee is served to departing guests or local business types; the magnificent afternoon tea attracts an array of loyal guests to enjoy the finest pastries, savouries served on multi-tier cake stands, accompanied by the finest teas. As the sun sets the early evening welcomes diners enjoying one of the cocktails from the bar's expansive drinks menu. Post dinner guests recline in the surroundings inspired by the Empress Josephine's, Chateau de Malmaison.

The lavish lounge features handwoven carpets, gilt stitched silk wall hangings and original cornicing. The windows have fully dressed deep red silk curtains and swags, with gilt poles and arrowhead finials. Golden framed pictures adorn the walls, save for one frame which surrounds a white glove, supposedly left at the scene by the infamous art thief the Pink Panther.

The theme of deep crimson and gold continues through to the bar, with hand sprayed red lacquer walls giving a burnished, luxuriant feel, while the carpet, handmade and handstitched, is a daring tiger print. Mementos of the Grand Tour bring the room to life. A warm, intimate atmosphere is generated by wall lighting that is designed to emit the exact glow of a small dinner candle.

Resting quietly on the fireplace is Barbaraa, a beautiful foot stool with a carved wooden head and sheepskin body. She is accompanied by her black-sheep footstool friend. Hotel legend suggests that if you don't pay your bar bill the black sheep will appear in your room as a subtle reminder. The origins of Barbaraa are believed to arise from the hotel's country mansion feel. George Goring, the father of Jeremy, the present incumbent was driving through Somerset, and discovered the workshop producing the stools. He bought one, as he thought it emphasised the country feel. Barbaraa took up her place and the guests loved it, since then a Barbaraa appears in every room. She also appears on the ties of the Goring team members throughout the hotel and perfectly reflects the quirky nature of the property.

The dining room, where breakfast, lunch and dinner are served, strikes a dramatic contrast with its neutral tones. The elegant, light filled, space, has retained some original features including high paned, arched windows and oval mouldings on the ceiling. The silks of the chair backs and curtains were inspired by a photo of ball gowns worn by a group of Debutante.s. Classic touches include crystal salt and pepper containers, complemented by a table-top transparent obelisk. Three contemporary Swarovski crystal chandeliers emulate the beauty of the Japanese cherry blossom. It is clear the sophisticated, yet simple design, is there to encourage diners to focus on the Michelin Star food which is simply a treat for most discerning of taste-buds.

The menu's provenance nods to the hotel's core British essence, with seafood and fish sourced from the UK coastline, the lamb from Romney Marsh, and the beef from Scotland. The cheese table represents the UK's finest producers and has been created to satisfy every preference. The menu has its roots firmly in modern British classics and for those wishing to experience the life-royal order the Eggs Drumkilbo which was reputedly the Queen Mother's favourite dish. Surprisingly it is not an egg-based dish but a seafood melange featuring crab, lobster, a soft-boiled quail's egg topped with caviar and clarified tomato jelly. The Beef Wellington is tenderly wrapped in pastry and melts in the mouth, whilst the indulgent deserts including chocolate ganache or warm Eccles cakes, satisfy even the sweetest tooth. The meal is perfectly balanced with English vegetables and naughty but irresistible thrice cooked chips. The menu also offers vegetarian options of no less richness.

The hotel's 69 rooms bely the extravagance of some of London's larger properties. Refreshingly doors are still opened with a real golden key as guests are transported into sumptuous surroundings. Each room proudly displays its own design, and features a plethora of grand embellishments.

Yet the hotel is not without its modernity. Designer Tim Gosling created a sleek new look for three of the hotel's balcony bedrooms. Working with technology company, Paragon, specialists in AV and lighting, each room retains elegance, yet boasts the very latest touch screen technology. Curtains, lights and sound systems are all operated by a single touch screen. The TV rises gracefully from beneath the leather inlaid surface of the writing desk, cum dressing table and a giant padded headboard incorporating reading lights invites lengthy breakfasts in bed.

Behind heavy, plush curtains a paned glass door leads to a delightful, private balcony that looks out across London's second largest private garden, after Buckingham Palace's. An emerald green lawn contrasts with an array of flowers



Hotel legend suggests that if you don't pay your bar bill the black sheep will appear in your room as a subtle reminder.

and established overhanging trees. Guests can enjoy drinks, lunch, or dinner on the terrace. The Alice in Wonderland feel inspires thoughts of white rabbits and mad hatters, when in fact tucked away in the far corner is a statue of the original founding Otto Goring with a plaque saying, "I made this hotel." His button hole flower is diligently changed each day.

Stepping out onto the bustling London pavements it is hard to believe that The Goring's peaceful ambience continues inside. Guests however never need to leave completely, as a personal mini- Barbara is available to keep with every stay. |BAM





Jane Stanbury

# MATURING MARKET ABACE 2017

by Jane Stanbury, BAM Global Luxury Correspondent



Ed Bolan

A mixed batch of weather reflected the mixed batch of announcements made at this year's ABACE. During the three days, which featured blustery winds, freezing cold temperatures and blazing sunshine, some 9,000 visitors toured 170 exhibits. The largest footprint yet, the show was complemented by a static display of 35 aircraft, which reflected the diversifying nature of the Asian sector. Some 40% of exhibitors were Asian companies headquartered in Asia, making it a truly Asian exhibition.

Ed Bolan, president and chief executive of the US National Business Aviation Association, welcoming media on the first day, said that ABACE17 intended to put China at the centre of the global business aviation sector. "It underscores the value of the sector to citizens, companies, communities and countries. It helps the region understand the importance of the business aviation sector, how it helps productivity enhancement, creates jobs, and plays a humanitarian role," he said. Business Aviation Means.... has been made the Asian Business Aviation Association's (AsBAA) slogan and aims to emphasise this understanding.

Bolan also underscored that this year's conference schedule focused on infrastructure development. An ongoing lack of slots, the reluctance of airports to welcome business aviation, and lack of maintenance and resources remains a challenge. A call was made by AsBAA Chairman,

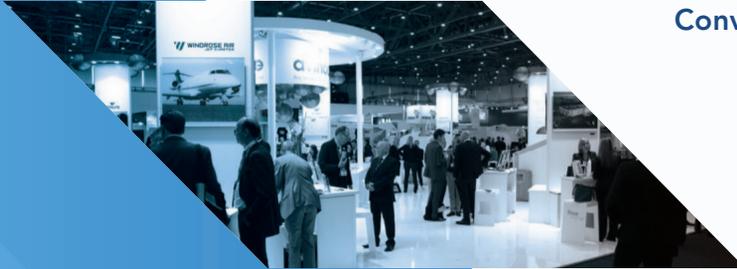
"It underscores the value of the sector to citizens, companies, communities and countries. It helps the region understand the importance of the business aviation sector, how it helps productivity enhancement, creates jobs, and plays a humanitarian role."

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Charlie Mularski, to empower the private sector, and to explain to government the need to simplify and optimise business aviation procedures.

Ongoing research at Pudong Airport is currently exploring the feasibility for more business aviation activity, and last June Hong Qiao international airport became the first to have a dedicated apron for business aviation. Yet there is still a long way to go.

AsBAA is working with the Chamber of Commerce China to bridge the private and public sector gaps, as well as build up service standards and safety criteria. Nevertheless, Bolen reckons that the future of business aviation in Asia and China continues to be strong. ABACE has more than doubled in size and diversity since 2012 as more companies understand that business aviation will enable them to do more, and be more productive.

Asian Sky Group's annual report predicted that the next twelve months will likely see a growth of just 1% in new deliveries, with the total fleet size likely to be just 1,167 by the end of 2017. This is an increase of just 12 aircraft compared with 2016. This doesn't necessarily indicate a decline in desire or interest from the market. 112 aircraft joined the fleet of which 55 were pre-owned.

The most popular new model added to the Asian Pacific fleet in 2016 was the Gulfstream G650 and G650ER with a grand total of 17 new machines entering the market. Interestingly six pre-owned models also feature. With its recent China certification of the Gulfstream G650 and G650ER, the OEM is well positioned to continue to strengthen its market presence here. Unsurprisingly the Gulfstream chalet and booth were buzzing all through the show as it confirmed it is expanding its customer support in the region

The ASG report also noted that of the leading ten operators only three, HongKong Jet, Sino Jet and Lily Jet grew their fleet size, and that several young start-ups were snapping at their wings. The challenge for the likes of the established operators is how to morph a brand built on luxury, to one that delivers the agile, tailored business delivered by the boutique operators, such as HKBellawings, to an increasingly focused business traveller. Market optimism has increased year on year and utilisation of the existing fleet is up, which bodes well for existing support services including FBOs, MROs, and technical suppliers.

Out on the static the widest variety of aircraft ever was displayed. These included solar powered unmanned aircraft, piston aircraft, turbo-props, intercontinental biz jets and rotary machines, as well

as an air ambulance. Several debuts were made, with the most talked about arrival being that of the Hondajet. Fresh in from Carolina, the six-seater took pole position on the static line as Michimasa Fujjino, president and CEO of Honda Aircraft anticipates that growing Asian wealth, a young generation of new business travellers, and the opening-up of general airspace around China will support market evolution. The first ONE Aviation Eclipse 500 light jet to be delivered to a Chinese customer was also proudly showcased by Jinggong General Aviation and at five seats also suggests that a new breed of flyers will recognise that they don't have to fly in large cabins to achieve their aims and objectives.

The first public showing of Beijing 999, the Beijing Red Cross' Dassault Falcon 2000LX kitted out for special medevac missions was warmly welcomed. The Red Cross is adding a Gulfstream G550, outfitted for medevac purposes, to the fleet of two Airbus Helicopter H135s and Dassault. This will be used for disaster relief and air rescue services internationally, as well as in China.

Zetta Jet displayed one of its Bombardier Global aircraft as it announced the addition of a 14th Bombardier Global 6000 to its expanding fleet. Operationally based at the company's Los Angeles, the new Global will support the growing business which recently merged with Asia Aviation Company in Singapore. Driven by Asian private charter Zetta Jet has grown significantly in the past two years since launch and continues to offer both ad hoc and block hour charter services.

Deer Jet launched two new services. Deer Jet Care Plus aims to bring the Deer Jet portfolio together in one product to make accessing services more efficient. Customers can now buy, at discounted rates, maintenance, aircraft cleaning, trip planning services, and ground services all in one package. A new Deer Jet FBO card provides loyalty points and streamlined services at all 17 FBOs operated by Deer Jet for a discount.

Away from the new transactions there has been a noticeable shift in Asian market behaviour, with pre-owned sales now making their mark. This is further bolstered by international buyers recognising the opportunities presented by an Asian fleet which offers low-time, well maintained aircraft. The shift in purchasing patterns can be said to represent a maturing market, but also one feeling the restrictions underpinned by a watchful Chinese political system, which with a national fleet of 313 jets remains the biggest in the Asian-Pacific region.



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Flying Colours Corp. the Canadian completions and refurbishments specialist has been riding this wave noting that its facility located in the Bombardier Seletar Singapore building has experienced a 40% increase in demand for its touch up and renovation surfaces. "We are busier than ever. We've increased our team by six and are sending more teams to clients than ever before to fix small interior problems. It's often cheaper for the client to do this than re-position the aircraft and certainly exemplifies the current market," said Eric Gillespie, Executive VP Flying Colours.

Away from the commercial affairs, a cheque for \$54,000, raised by AsBAA members was handed over by chairman Charlie Mularski to Orbis. The not-for-profit global development organisation, which aims to reduce avoidable blindness in developing countries, provides many services but is best known for its flying eye hospital. [JBAA](#)

Airbus ACJ319 Elite Lounge by Lufthansa Technik



A 50th birthday is cause for celebration, but it was a very special half century for Matti Auterinen, Hendell Aviation OY Chairman this March 1st, when he coincidentally received news that EASA had finally given the green light to Single Engine Turboprops (SET-IMC) flying in commercial operations IFR. The agreement, effective immediately, opens up the path for expansion to types like the Cessna Caravan, not; Pilatus PC-12 and Daher 900 series, which can go onto the AOC's of established operators in 32 European states and offered for public charter.

"Having studied these new EASA CAT SET Ops, the document is very good, enabling a good operating framework and terrific opportunities for operators," said Matti Auterinen, now recognised as a tireless ambassador for the sector, having pioneered commercial flights out of Finland for Hendell in 2013 with Pilatus PC-12s. He and his team also spent over a year assisting Middle East operator GI Aviation achieve GCAA certification for the PC-12 in the UAE. Their ticket was awarded last December and the business is now up and running with a second aircraft about to start service from a new Dubai base.

"We are receiving more enquiries to manage PC-12's and a notable growth in charter demand," Auterinen said. "Our four PC-12s have never been so busy. Significantly, more and more charter brokers are becoming aware of the varied new destinations they can propose to clients, this is good for us – and for the industry as a whole."

Hendell based a PC-12 in Saanen, Switzerland in the winter and this summer it is extending its charter offer from St Tropez,

# GET SET, GO...

EASA ruling ushers in a new era for Single Engine Turboprops, writes Alison Chambers

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Lausanne, Geneva and other airports around Europe. The company is also exploring new markets in medevac, cargo and aerial survey, building on the PC-12's versatility.

Auterinen continued, "buoyed by the Brussels news, we are planning to exercise options on eight more PC-12s during 2017-2018 and are pleased to announce a new partnership with FLY7 of Lausanne." This co-operation bolsters its fleet to 12 and makes Hendell the biggest commercial commercial SET Operator in Europe." (He is also looking at the UK along with FLY7).

Despite Brexit the UK that is really embracing this sector. At EBACE, Harrods Aviation will announce it is taking over the FBO at Cranfield Airport (the only airport runway in the UK with a University) – as an overspill to London Luton, the UK's biggest airport for bizav movements. It will also, importantly offer landing fees will be half that of its Luton facility.

Also at EBACE Gama Aviation will be talking about its new status as an authorised service facility on the Cessna 208 and all Cessna SETs from its Glasgow base, complementing a new service provider agreement it has obtained to support the Pratt & Whitney Canada PT6A powerplant. This positions them to assist operators with engine related AOGs across Europe.

Single Engine Turboprops are not new. The US has been operating SETops Single IFR for 20 years and continues to see 20% growth year-on-year even though the market is already very mature. (These aircraft have also been flying in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Brazil and South Africa for commercial passenger, aeromedical and cargo operations, as well as in most other jurisdictions).

Speaking at the recent BBGA annual meeting in March, Simon Talling-Smith, CEO of Surf Air Europe, said he was looking forward to bringing its popular US airline subscription model (based around the PC-12) to Europe this summer. "We operate 12 PC-12 aircraft in the US and we have 24 more on order. They fly between 2,200 and 4,000 hours each year. Some 85% of its 3,000 members in California come from the commercial airlines (many of them Southwest customers) and the brand has made such a positive impact it now enjoys a partnership with Lufthansa Miles and More. Starting initially with an Embraer Phenom 300 and initial flights to Cannes, Geneva and Ibiza, the intention is to add a PC-12NG – both to be operated under TAG Aviation's AOC," he says.

Textron has also jumped in with a brand new clean sheet 'Single' design for its new Denali, due for first flight in 2018. The project extends to a JV GE engine for general aviation aircraft, inherited following GE's acquisition of Walter Engines in the Czech Republic. The Denali is designed to fly eight passengers with a target range and speed in excess of 1,500 nm and 280 knots. Its 1,650 hp EASA certificated M601H-80 derivative will deliver a 20% fuel burn improvement compared with the PT6, it claims and deliver 10% more thrust at cruise, GE says.

We don't think it will stop there either. At NBAA last year there was talk of up to four new 'Singles' designs on the drawing board.

According to US GAMA figures, the PC-12 was the top turbine-powered business aircraft in 2016 with 91 sold, 30% more than 2015. The OEM's milestone 1,500th aircraft is due to be handed over by year end.

"With the PC-12, people don't realise it is a very spacious aircraft. It can hold up to nine passengers in pressurised comfort, it has good environmental performance and has terrific accessibility because SETops aircraft can use unimproved airstrips," said Edwin Brenninkmeyer, CEO of Oriens Aviation and board member of Linear Air.



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JetFly, based in Luxembourg, is a fractional model (which complements the NetJets model, taking its customers to runway restricted places that NetJets cannot – such as Courcheval.) Members can buy as little as a 16th share of the aircraft for private charter. Many HNWI's are members of both. JetFly operates out of Denham, UK, supporting a customer base that has more than 100 members.

GI Aviation's arrival was warmly welcomed by Ali Al Naqbi, MEBAAs chairman. "We have waited six years for a model like this," he said, speaking at GI Aviation's launch at Zero Gravity in Dubai, the world-famous drop zone. "This helps the industry to right size and bring in a new entry level of customers – which is just great news."

In addition to offering clients a time-saving alternative on busy UAE routes, GI is confident of operating feeder services for the bigger Middle Eastern carriers. Their PC-12 can help reposition crews, even assist carrying spare parts. Thanks to the aircraft's lower maintenance and operating costs, charter prices can be reduced as much as 30%, says General Manager Marios Belidis.

EASA has highlighted the need for operational requirements for crew training, capability and experience and flight planning. It also suggested enhanced maintenance



programmes need to be in place, and to this end it has engaged QinetiQ to put together a Minimum Equipment List for SET-IMC operations.

Hand in hand with this, Eurocontrol is already working on developing new low level routes to accommodate these aircraft.

AOPA UK CEO Martin Robinson advises that good progress is being made to help fund the vitally important LPV approaches required, because this is what this sector needs – the investment in infrastructure and qualified pilots.

This is encouraging as one key obstacle to future business aviation growth is access, especially as business jets are getting squeezed out of busy hub airports. . At the recent Business Aviation conference, put on by the Royal Aeronautical Society, Brian Humphries, EBAA President highlighted that airport slots are still being held up by the EU in the wrangling over Gibraltar and Spain. Lack of airports isn't the issue, but a shortage of them with the required nav aids is, he said.

While Europe (Germany and France in particular) have been pro-active in pushing through an aggressive programme of LPV GPS-based approaches, the UK has been slow, with a backlog of airports waiting to have such approaches implemented. |BAM



"We are receiving more enquiries to manage PC-12's and a notable growth in charter demand."





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