

WINTER 2019/2020

BUSINESS AVIATION MAGAZINE



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Jet Edge CEO

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Well, here we all are with the opening days of 2020 already upon us. Of course, 2020 is a US election year, with President Donald Trump aiming to secure a second term, and the Democrats going hammer and tongs to try to ensure he doesn't succeed.

US election years always have a few twists and surprises in store, and the whole of business aviation will keep one eye on the horizon, watching out for unexpected squalls. The President's first term was a market pleaser, with market friendly policies such as tax cuts and deregulation taking pride of place, and the S&P 500 showing a 47.5 percent growth through the period.

The UK elections in December went very well for business aviation, given that one of the major parties was giving serious consideration to a phase-out date for fossil-fuel powered business jets at UK airports. That party did not manage to cross the finishing line in first place in our first-past-the-post electoral system. However, this should be taken as a real warning shot across the bows. 2020 has to be the year in which we get the message across to the general public that business aviation is serious about reducing emissions.

The UK Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, was returned with an overwhelming majority and now has a clear mandate to implement Brexit. None of us know what that means, but we will probably get a lot closer, in the coming year, to finding out. Will it be good for business aviation? We'll have to wait and see.

2019 was both a very good year for Business Aviation Magazine and, towards its close, a very sad one, in that we lost our Chairman, Munir Raja, who passed away unexpectedly on 19th November 2019. Munir was an essential figure in our opening three years. His guidance, enthusiasm and support was a tremendous source of strength for us all. I am delighted to be able to announce that his wife, Nasim Raja, has graciously agreed to join the Board as Chair. Her guidance and wisdom through the year ahead will be invaluable.

ANTHONY HARRINGTON

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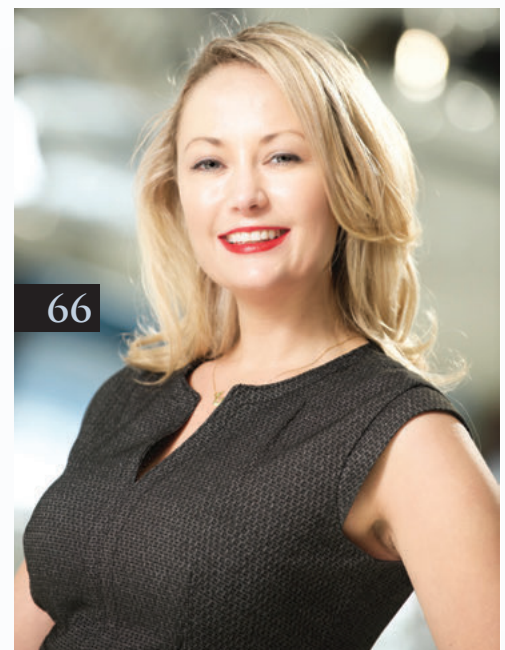
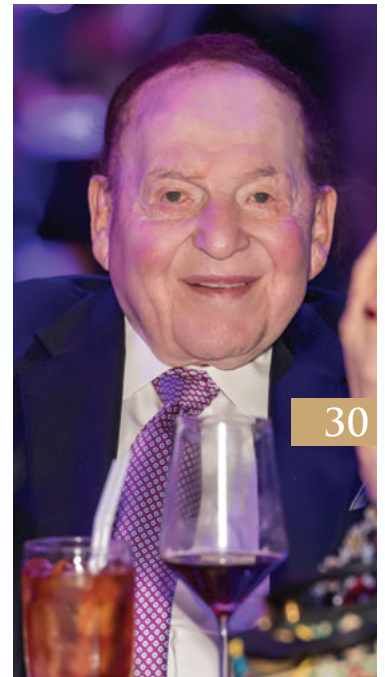
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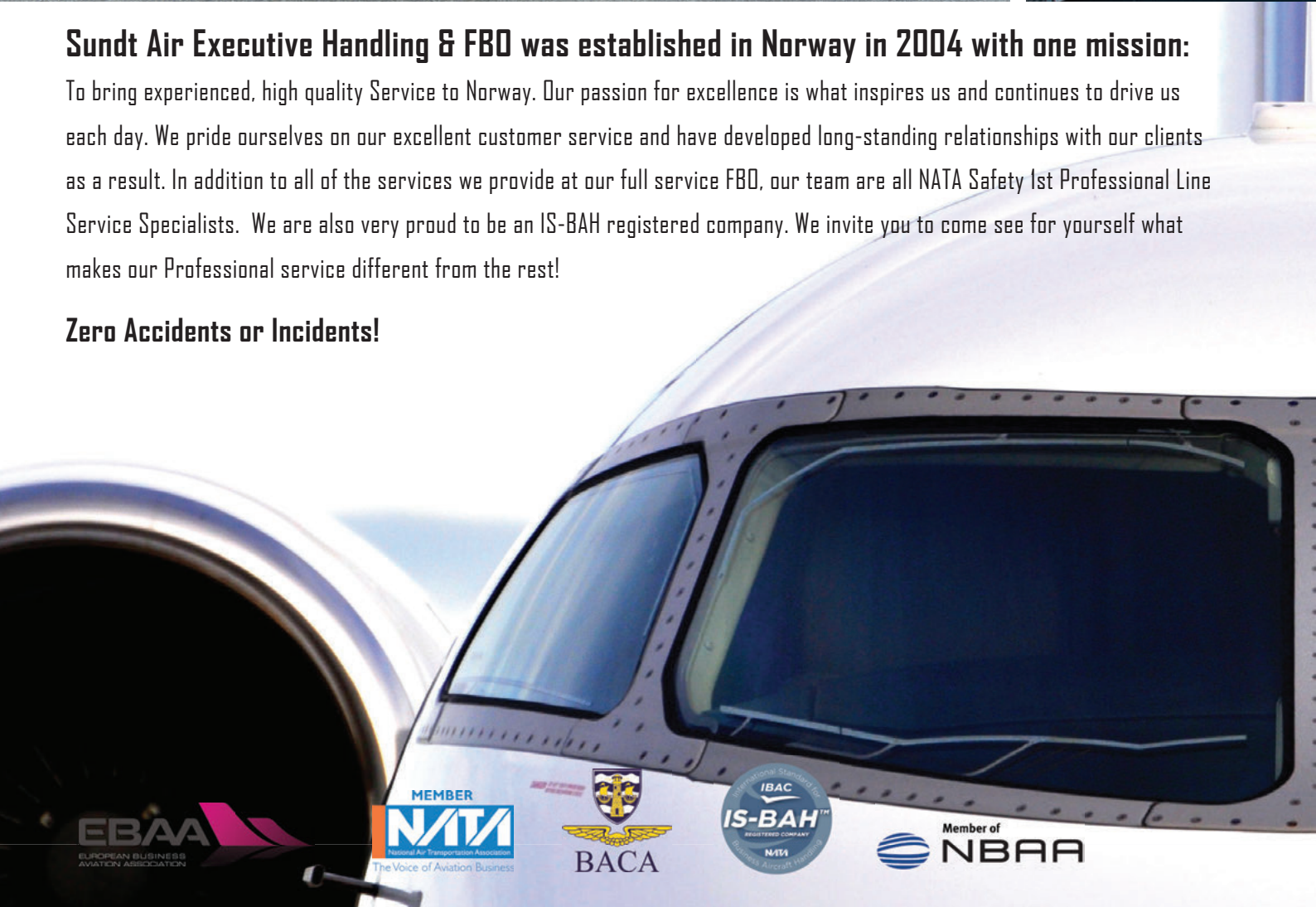
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REDEFINING PRIVATE AVIATION

Bill Papariella, Jet Edge CEO, talks to Anthony Harrington about the company's current and future ambitions

AH: So, how has 2019 been for Jet Edge?

BP: This year has been a year of really great growth for us. But to take it from the beginning, we set out at the start of this year to do a couple of strategic things. First was to finish off a round of financing. Second, we put together a plan that was capable of growing the company in a way that we felt was both responsible and sustainable, and also one which would be able to take us safely through a tough market.

This started with people and products, and looked at the optimisation of our platform. I am pretty happy to report that all the way through to this point at NBAA, we have succeeded in all our goals. We hired a number of A-list people in our senior sales team. We have our legacy teams, the guys who helped me take the company to this point in time, Adam Parnes, our Director of Maintenance, Jimmy Potter, our Chief Pilot, and Lynn Sloan, Director of Operations, and many others.

AH: Are the new guys and your existing team meshing well together?

BP: Absolutely. I think this is because the investment allowed us to spend the time to find the right people. In the past, when you are really grinding, you tend to think, I'll give this person a shot and see what happens, and if it doesn't work out, that slows things down.



I did not want to go down that road. So when we set out to fill some top positions, we really did a much more extensive search for the right people. We had an idea who we wanted, it was just that, in the past, we simply couldn't afford them. The financing round allowed us to hire the best and that has made a significant difference.

I believe strongly that you have to be prepared to pay for growth. It doesn't come cheap. So, we brought in people like Jonah Adler, our Chief Revenue and Marketing Officer, and Michael Sanders, our Chief Finance Officer. We brought in Clayton Smith to run retail sales, and a number of others. So, we really focused on building out the group and our capabilities.





“When we set out to fill some top positions, we really did a much more extensive search for the right people. We had an idea who we wanted, it was just that, in the past, we simply couldn’t afford them. The financing round allowed us to hire the best and that has made a significant difference.”



Gulfstream GV in Jet Edge's
point-to-point fleet



AH: How do you keep on top of it all?

BP: Well, like any successful business we run on budgets. Each division puts together a budget at the end of the year and then we put it all together and take a view. I hold them to that budget and to key performance indicators each quarter.

My approach is, they can hire whoever they need or want, provided they hit their numbers. I feel like, on the Sales side, you really need your A-team. But on the back end, you also need your A-team. Delivering these flights safely and reliably is absolutely key.

In September, according to Argus, our large cabin, ultra-long range charter figures notched up the second highest volume of charter in the entire country, second only to EJM. So, to put that in context, some of our biggest competitors are barely doing half our numbers, and some are barely doing a third.

So, we checked the 'people box' in our 2019 plan. If we look at product, I don't think we've quite checked that box yet. We developed a migrating fleet plan, but we still have more to do in defining the various market segments and addressing them specifically. Take for example the 91 aircraft we know are in the San Francisco technology base. We have not really dialed in on that level of specificity yet and we need to.



So, step two, after people, was get our mainstream products working well. Step three was to plan for the future, define areas where we could grow profitability and engage with those areas successfully.

One product we did develop which I am very happy with is our dynamic pricing for our point-to-point fleet of Gulfstreams. This takes the same form as you will find in the hotel industry. High demand days are more expensive than low demand days. It really is that simple. Spring breaks and early December are going to be peak pricing.

This is very much what you see with VistaJet and XOJET. If you own a point-to-point fleet and have the technology to deploy dynamic pricing, that is a very successful formula, and it has been wildly successful for us. It has changed our company forever, for the better – beyond what I thought it would do.

AH: Is it because it generates more margin?

BP: It does that, but a point-to-point fleet generates significantly greater charter hours. You may do eighty hours





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in a month on that fleet, but only forty in a month on the managed fleet. That extra forty hours, even though your yields are less, you outrun your fixed costs and it becomes a pretty good profit machine.

In order to do this though, you have to have a strong balance sheet, because you have to get the planes. Some of them we lease, some of them we lease from owners. Either way, we are taking the risk. It works great so we are going to continue to do this. We now have 13 aircraft in the point-to-point fleet and 62 planes under management. This is up by about 10 planes through the year.

We probably will not go all that much further than 13 aircraft in the point-to-point fleet for a bit. We are a white label on this. We serve the wholesale distribution channels on this, more than we do the retail channel.

To do retail sales the right way, what you do not want to do is go out and start competing against your wholesale channels. So you have to build retail sales in an organic fashion. You don't want to go hiring high profile sales people who are going to be going head to head with your broker clients. You want to hire youth who understand your sales techniques, and want to learn the business. They need to understand that certain distribution channels for us are sacred, you don't touch them.

AH: How has hiring younger staff worked out for you?

BP: It takes you longer to get young people to where you want them to go, but they learn your way, and that is really good. About three out of five of our younger hires really do end up making us a profit, and the two that don't you can generally find an alternative use for. I've only really had to fire one young sales person. I've had three that did not cut it as sales staff, but were good in other areas and ended up carrying their weight in other areas.

So, I would say that I am actually proud of the way our youth development programme is working and we will continue to hire at this level as well as looking for top people when we need them.

Going back to our people plan, we have Araceli Leon, our Chief Experience Officer, who has now been with the company eight years. She started out of college and worked her way up to her present position. She now holds one of the few C-list titles held by women in our industry. She has about 50 direct reports to her, and her group has had zero staff turnover in her management ranks. And underneath those managers they too have had zero turnover.

So she has control over all the "experience", or customer touch points, in the company, including cabin attendants,

“ We now have 13 aircraft in the point-to-point fleet and 62 planes under management. This is up by about 10 planes through the year.”

Gulfstream GIV-SP in Jet Edge's point-to-point fleet



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how pilots relate to clients, all that side of things. In flight, how the planes look, whether the snack baskets are set out right, all the detail work. So this is a function that she created almost entirely on her own, and it works great.

AH: Anything else outstanding on the product side?

BP: Yes indeed. We are now the only part 135 company in the country that is going to have two BBJs available for charter. These are managed aircraft joining our fleet along with two GVs and a GIV. The BBJs are going to float around the world, so that is a very unique product for us. We are very excited about it. In fact, this year at NBAA, Boeing partnered with us on the static display, which is truly an honor.

AH: So, how would you sum up the impact thus far of the capital raising exercise you went in for?

BP: The capital came from private equity, but I am still the majority owner of the business. That wasn't necessarily my intention, but that's just how it turned out. Solace Capital are a very different PE firm to most. This is their first business aviation venture, but they did plenty of due diligence, before they committed and they got up to speed pretty quickly.



They have been wonderful partners. If I don't call them, they don't call me. They tell me I call them way more than any other CEO they have. My former business partner, Richard Bard, a mentor of mine, I would call regularly, so they kind of filled that gap for a while. But they are patient capital, which is great. I'm sure if we weren't hitting our numbers they'd call me a lot more, but we're doing well, so they are content to sit back.

We didn't need to do this deal. If it had been the wrong capital, from the wrong team, I wouldn't have done it. I raised the money because I believed very strongly that business aviation was in the throes of pivoting to digital technology, to dynamic pricing, and to different product sets in aircraft management.

I believed that the business was transforming at lightening speed, and that this transformation was being driven by a lot of these apps out there. Without the right talent, we would not survive this change. I wanted to be able to offer the services the market would be looking for going forward, and to do this we needed to attract great talent to the company. |BAM





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LIVING THE DREAM

Kenneth Ricci on how an entrepreneurial idea transformed into Directional Aviation Capital

On 15 October 2019 Business Aviation Magazine, in company with just a select few of the top business aviation publications and media groups, attended the official opening of Flexjet's Mayfair office, hosted by Directional Aviation Principal and Flexjet Chairman Kenneth Ricci, Flexjet CEO Michael Silvestro and the company's new European Managing Director, Marine Eugène.

The meeting was attended by several of the most senior figures in business aviation, including Gulfstream President, Mark Burns, Jahid Fazal Karim, Owner & Chairman of the Board at Jetcraft, Embraer Executive Jets President and CEO Michael Amalfitano and Steve Varsano, founder and President of The Jet Business, which has its luxury Mayfair showroom just a stone's throw away from Flexjet's new offices. We were fortunate to be able to spend some time with Kenneth Ricci, who today is clearly the most iconic figure in our industry.

“At the time, many private equity firms were thinking about going into business aviation. I was approached by one of these companies to be their ‘executive in residence’, effectively teaching them about business aviation. That set me thinking. Why would I teach them, when I was perfectly capable of doing it for myself?”

Kenneth Ricci,
Directional Aviation Principal
and Flexjet Chairman





Michael Silvestro,
Flexjet CEO

AH: Kenneth, can we begin by looking at how Directional Capital got started?

KR: That's a great question. You know, of course, that I accidentally sold Flight Options?

AH: The 'accidental' bit I did not know. I remember that back in June 2012, when you had returned as chairman of Flight Options, you were awarded the William A. Ong Memorial Award from the National Air Transport Association, one of the industry's most prestigious accolades. I think you were the youngest-ever recipient of that lifetime achievement award. As for Flight Options itself, you founded the company in 1998, I believe, and grew it to the point where, at the time of the award, it could claim to be the second-largest company in the private jet travel industry.

KR: That's true. But there is a loop involved here. Backing up a bit, in March 2002 Flight Options merged with Raytheon Air Travel, which gave us the Teterboro NJ maintenance facility and added strength to the Flight Options maintenance network. This was about the same time that we added the Citation X to our fleet and signed our 2,000th owner.



Marine Eugène,
Flexjet European Managing Director

At the time of the merger, I had an agreement with Raytheon that each party had the option to buy the other out. In 2003 I made them what I thought was a spectacular offer. They thought it was way short of the mark, so they exercised their option and bought me out. That left me with a nice bank balance, but effectively unemployed.

At the time, many private equity firms were thinking about going into business aviation. I was approached by one of these companies to be their 'executive in residence', effectively teaching



Flexjet G650 Air to Air

them about business aviation. That set me thinking. Why would I teach them, when I was perfectly capable of doing it for myself?

So, I decided to hang out my own shingle as a PE house with the specific purpose of investing in business aviation. The big difference between us and other PE houses though was that we would be focused on investing our own money, not raising capital from outside investors. That, in a nutshell, is where Directional came from!

In 2003, we started searching for transactions that we could be involved in. The transaction we found that interested us a lot, involved Allied Capital, which owned the debt on Mercury Air Centres. Allied found that it had to foreclose, which meant that they now owned Mercury, but didn't have any experience of running that kind of operation. They asked us to come in and run it and invest in the equity, which we did, while they held the debt. This was 2004, when Mike Rossi and I got involved.

Flexjet House in Mayfair
by design house, Beauxideal

AH: I take it that the price of getting involved pretty well cleaned out what you'd got from Raytheon buying you out.

KR: [laughs] That's not the first time I've gone 'all-in' and it probably won't be the last time, either. The fun part of the story though, is that in 2007 Macquarie Infrastructure Company, which owns a bunch of airport assets, bought us out for \$600 million. There was about \$200 million of debt in the company so the actual payday was about \$400 million – still a very nice payday!

However, I remember clearly that at the time of the sale, I didn't really want to sell. I thought we were really on to something. With the companies I get involved with, I always feel this, that I'm really on to something. I get very attached to them. That said, now we were flush with some capital to invest, and in much better shape to look again at the market.

The first thing that happened was, I bought Flight Options back. This wasn't a planned acquisition. It came out the blue.

BAM spoke to Tracy Hain, Owner and Chief Designer of the design house, Beauxideal, who was commissioned to design Flexjet's sumptuous Mayfair offices

BAM: Tracy, what was your starting point?

TH: The mandate was to create a space for the European Flexjet team to work, but also to create an inviting and luxurious space for Flexjet members and clients to use whilst in London. It had to be inviting, luxurious and intimate whilst offering all the necessities to conduct meetings by video conference, etc.

The floor was divided up into a tea point and lunch area, an open office workspace, a private office for the Managing Director, a board room, a smaller private meeting room and a reception lounge. The space needed to offer privacy as well as be welcoming and open for all sorts of work and social meetings.

There are references in Flexjet's current plane interiors, to the Art Deco era, so fabrics and drawer hardware were chosen to reflect that style. Colours were carefully chosen to evoke the colours we see from the air when looking down on earth; the ocean blue chairs, the

beautiful Emperador brown marble, which looks like freshly turned earth in the fields, the green sofa showing off the colour of rich vegetation, the gold of wheat fields and even the reception area rug was chosen for the pattern resembling contrails created by passing airplanes in the sky.

The lamps and overhead light in the boardroom are visibly and beautifully engineered like the Flexjet aircrafts. Drawers were lined in ocean blue suede to present on board accessories to potential clients. Plants were used throughout to remind us of the greenery we see from above and to soften the corporate environment. In the open office area, a connection to flight was made by sourcing an antique propeller from the first British airplane to see combat in WWI, the Vickers Gunbus ca 1915.

Unlike most offices, this office feels less corporate with exquisite attention to detail and luxury and thoughtful choices throughout.





Flexjet Global Express

This was in 2008. HIG Capital had only recently acquired Raytheon's Flight Options division. It bought the company in December 2007 and announced a \$1 billion order for Phenom 300s virtually at the same time.

HIG had a reputation for breaking up companies and selling the bits off profitably. However, what they discovered was that it was very hard for them to break up Flight Options. The company had long running customer contracts and contracts with pilots, and none of that was easy to break up. It was also a very specialised operation in a field that they did not know well.

Now a digression is necessary. I have a tradition with my family where all my children skip eighth grade, and we travel for a year instead. I was travelling with my son in 2008 on this year long trip. We were in Cambodia when HIG called me and said: 'You have 48 hours to buy Flight Options or not!'

When I sold Flight Options that was for a value of \$360 million. Buying it back cost \$120 million. What it came down to with personal guarantees



Flexjet Operations Control Center,
Cleveland, OH

and so on was that over the phone in Cambodia I was faced with making a \$50 million decision. So, with Cambodia being twelve hours ahead of the US, I would be touring Cambodian landmarks with my son during the day and exactly 12 hours later I'd be negotiating with HIG.

We bought it back in 2008 in the depths of the recession. I brought in Mike Silvestro to help run it. I told Mike, don't tell anyone I'm doing this. If it doesn't work, I don't want anyone thinking I did a deal that failed!"

So, from 2008 to 2011 we ran the business but were very silent about it. But in 2013, when we were able to buy Flexjet, that was the time we started to really seek to tell the world about what we were doing. When we bought Flight Options it had a horrible lineup of aircraft, no question. We had a real mix and we had to decide what we were going to major on. The only aircraft type we had a significant number of was Phenom 300s, but there were also Citation 10s, Hawker 800s, there were all types. So we started talking to Embraer and Cessna.



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Then Bombardier approached us and said, would you ever consider buying our aircraft? I said, I can't, because Flexjet competes with us, and I can't buy airplanes from my competitor. So I said I will sign any order you want, if you will sell me Flexjet. So that is how we ordered the Lear 75, the Challenger 350 and the Globals. We bought Flexjet for \$185 million and announced a multi-billion purchase order with Bombardier. At the same time, we soon extended the Flexjet range by adding Embraer and Gulfstream aircraft to the fleet.

AH: Did your banker fall off his chair when you put all this to him?

KR: My banker's always falling off his chair! When I think about Directional, and what we do today, we always look to the good of the overall business. I am not about accumulating wealth to the detriment of the people who have trusted me.

Funnily enough, although Bombardier really wanted to sell us the Globals as part of the deal, and it was a good part of the motivation for them behind the deal, when it came right down to it, they couldn't sell them to us because they had an exclusive contract with Netjets. I was nervous about the Globals from the start because of the price tag but really did want get into offering the larger aircraft to our client

base. We have now announced that we will be the launch customer in North America for Gulfstream's G700, and that is a fantastic long-range aircraft. Mike and I expect it to be our flagship aircraft for probably the next decade at least.

In 2016 we announced a restructuring where we transitioned Flight Options into an on-demand service and absorbed much of the Flight Options brand into Flexjets, which is now our dominant brand.

Our latest development, as you know, has been the opening of our European office, here in London's Mayfair, which is home to some of the world's most respected brands and businesses. We have seen business jet travel to and from, and within Europe grow by more than 44%, year on year, through 2019, so the timing is definitely right.

We've taken the time, over the last few years, to really understand the nuances of the European market. We've built up operational experience, and we've recruited the finest talent, as the appointment of Marine Eugène, as our European Managing Director amply demonstrates. We're looking forward to 2020, which I am confident will be a year when our European presence really takes wing. |BAM



(left to right) Mike Rossi, Kenneth Ricci and Michael Silvestro
At the Living Legends of Aviation Awards Gala

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On 18 January, Flexjet Chairman Kenneth Ricci was inducted into the Living Legends of Aviation, at the 16th annual Living Legends of Aviation Awards Gala. Ricci also presented Fellow 2019 inductee, **Jeff Bezos, Founder and CEO of Amazon**, and Founder of the space exploration innovator, Blue Origin, with the Kenn Ricci Lifetime Aviation Entrepreneur Award, from the Living Legends of Aviation.

“Through Amazon and his other ventures, there are few industries that have not been touched by the entrepreneurial spirit of Jeff Bezos, including aviation. Through Blue Origin, he is redefining our relationship with space, and is an inspiration to millions of aspiring entrepreneurs in aviation and in a variety of fields.”

Kenneth Ricci,
presenting the award

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Q: Could we begin with a brief outline of the reason for Citadel opting to stage its event at NBAA 2019?

JB: Our goal was to provide a more intimate outlet for networking conversations within business aviation than the traditional trade show party atmosphere offers. With NBAA attracting thousands of industry professionals to Las Vegas, Citadel saw this as the perfect opportunity to provide a platform to mingle amongst our industry partners, OEM representatives, and clients. It also gave our guests the chance to see first-hand the level of luxury completions Citadel offers, by touring an Airbus ACJ 340 and a Boeing BBJ. We wanted the level of grandeur that this party portrayed to directly parallel the higher standard that the company itself embodies.

Q: Vanessa, this was a challenging event to present? How do you go about designing it and putting it all together?

VB: I wanted to curate a space and experience that not only reflected the Citadel brand but also encompassed a familiar arena with sprinkles of Louisiana culture and cuisine. What better venue than a hangar with two VVIP aircraft positioned as centerpieces with an active runway as the backdrop?!

We incorporated a logoed ice sculpture plus Cajun food, including boudin and mini king cakes, and a band playing Louisiana Cajun style music.

BEST HANGAR EVENT YET?

Joe Bonita, Managing Director, and Vanessa Bernard, Aviation Marketing Manager, on Citadel Completions' outstanding NBAA Hangar Networking Event



Q: There were several highlights to the event, not least of which, of course, was the entrance of Mr. Adelson himself. Was it something of a family occasion for him, with his wife and children being present?

JB: Citadel was privileged to have our President and CEO, Mr. Sheldon G. Adelson, Dr. Adelson, and other members of the Adelson family as our hosts and guests of honor celebrating Citadel's participation at the 2019 NBAA and our very successful, first full year of operation. The Adelson's have been long-time VVIP aircraft owners and operators. They are avid aviation enthusiasts and it was a great honour to have them present.

Q: The event included a glittering guest list. That must have been very satisfying for you?

JB: We were honoured to host a wide range of professionals, including several esteemed clients, as well as manufacturers across the spectrum of aviation. Attendees included vendors, suppliers, and other key industry partners. It was really impressive to see how many of our guests had traveled internationally, and took precious time out of their busy schedules, to attend this premier networking event.

Q: How did you see the event and how did you feel it went?

JB: I always appreciate any and every opportunity that allows the Citadel team to engage with our industry, and to continue to build working relationships. At Citadel we pride ourselves on relationships



rather than transactions. This is a key distinction which we find important not only to clients but to all of our industry partners. This promotes trust, comradery and a rapport which leads to successful alliances. Our NBAA networking event also allowed us to introduce and engage guests that may have never met with us face-to-face before.

Q: One of the highlights, surely, was the chance it gave many of the guests to look inside Mr. Adelson's aircraft?

JB: We were so fortunate to have access to the family's personal

aircraft, allowing our guests the opportunity to experience the standard of luxury and attention to detail that Citadel offers.

The Airbus ACJ 340 is extremely impressive, spanning over 3,000 square feet of living space, with a spacious master suite, comfortable lounge area, elegant dining room, and six additional bedrooms for guest comfort during the possible 22 hour flight range of the aircraft.

“ We incorporated a logoed ice sculpture plus Cajun food, including boudin and mini king cakes, and a band playing Louisiana Cajun style music.”

Vanessa Bernard,
Aviation Marketing Manager, Citadel Completions





Mr. Sheldon G. Adelson,
President, Citadel Completions



Dr. Miriam Adelson



Q: How well do you feel Citadel is fitting into the Louisiana community, and how is the company playing its part as one of the major businesses in the area?

JB: Our facilities are located at Chennault International Airport in Lake Charles, LA. Currently we reside in two large hangars spanning 260,000 square feet, which allows us to deal with multiple narrow and wide body completions. Plus there is an

administration building which houses our professional design center, and state of the art manufacturing shops, including avionics wire harnesses, upholstery, and sheet metal and machining. Chennault offers significant opportunity for future growth, with substantial aviation infrastructure and incentives for business. The local community has been very supportive of our presence and appreciates the vast employment opportunities that we offer. To date, we have sponsored the local air show, a balloon festival and a Veteran's Day Festival with future community involvement being discussed. |BAM

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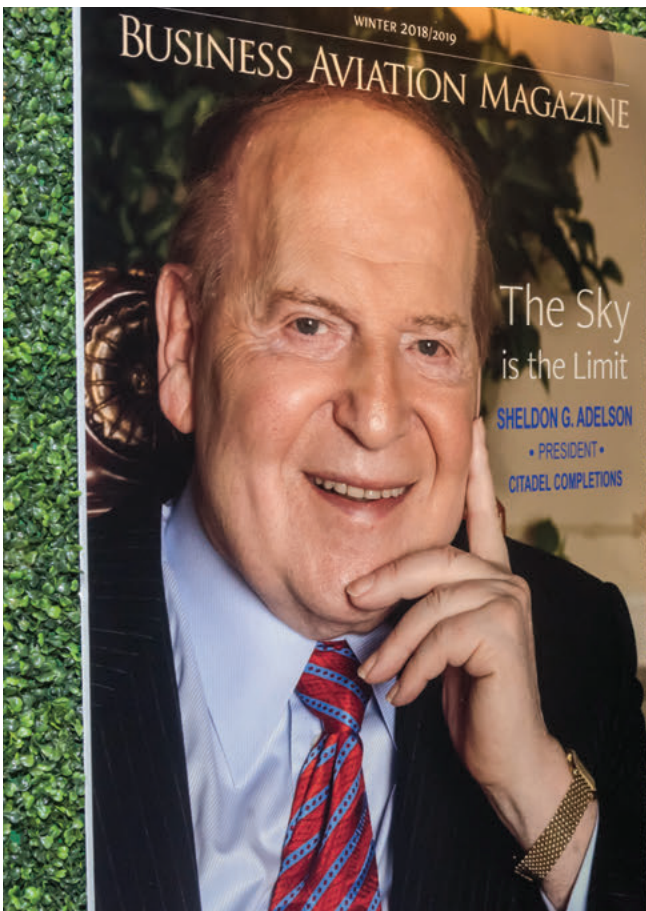
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Business Aviation Magazine were delighted when **Mr. Sheldon G. Adelson** graciously consented to sign the front cover of the Winter 2018/2019 Issue featuring Mr. Adelson and Citadel Completetions as the cover story.

The opportunity arose when, by good fortune, Max Raja, the CEO of BAM, and Anthony Harrington, the Editorial Director, happened to be sitting at a table adjacent to the entrance when Mr. and Dr. Adelson arrived at the venue. That signed copy, now framed, has pride of place in the BAM offices.



Max Raja,
CEO, BizAv Media Ltd. & BAM



Business Aviation Magazine were proud to see large display versions of our articles for Citadel Completions receiving a lot of attention at the hangar event.



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A portrait of Eric Lewin, a middle-aged man with short brown hair, wearing a dark blue suit jacket, a white shirt, and a striped tie. He is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with green foliage and brown autumn leaves.

THE ART OF CLOSING

Eric Lewin, Owner of the Global Closing Room, talks to Anthony Harrington about what this means for transaction facilitation services outside of the United States

“Clay and Holly are incredibly switched-on, down-to-earth people, with a wealth of experience, so it was easy to maintain a good, informal conversation with them. Then, one day, Clay asked me to partner with him to bring his technology to the rest of the world.”

AH: Eric, lets talk about how your interest in business aviation got started.

EL: It goes back to 2005 when I joined the global law firm, Mayer Brown, in its Paris office. They had a thriving aviation practice there, with a partner who specialised in helping clients who wanted to buy or sell aircraft.

I left the firm at the end of 2009 to join Bank of America in London, the largest bank-owned leasing company at the time. My commercial role, aligned with originations, was to structure and execute corporate aircraft finance transactions.

After a few years, I joined AirFinance Leasing. It was a boutique, startup financier, whose primary line of business was to act as a qualified advisor to the Export-Import Bank of the United States. We supported the bank's corporate and general aviation finance initiative by originating transactions and making recommendations as to deal structure.

Then, after a few more years, I left to start my own law firm, and my practice includes advising on corporate aircraft sales, acquisitions, and financing.

AH: You became involved with Clay Healey, the managing member of AIC Title Service, and that led eventually to your present project, the Global Closing Room. How did that come about, and what was the attraction?

EL: I met Clay and his wife, Holly, at the usual events in London and Geneva. I think I first met Holly after she





had presented her blockchain solution. I introduced myself and asked her a few questions; I had published an article on smart contracts a few months earlier. Later, Holly, Clay, and I had a discussion on structuring escrow solutions outside of the United States. After that, Clay and I were invited to speak on a couple of panels on topics where, as it turns out, we have shared views.

Clay and Holly are incredibly switched-on, down-to-earth people, with a wealth of experience, so it was easy to maintain a good, informal conversation with them. Then, one day, Clay asked me to partner with him to bring his technology to the rest of the world.

AH: What is the state of things now?

EL: The Global Closing Room is ready to go!

AH: In a nutshell, what are the benefits of using the Global Closing Room?

EL: The Global Closing Room expands, geographically and substantively, AIC's proven, outstanding Aircraft Closing Room, with features required to make it work in the non-US market. By focusing on the essential logistics required to close, the platform is incredibly easy to use and adaptable, while incorporating enterprise-grade infrastructure and security. It's impressive!



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“The Global Closing Room expands, geographically and substantively, AIC’s proven, outstanding Aircraft Closing Room, with features required to make it work in the non-US market. By focusing on the essential logistics required to close, the platform is incredibly easy to use and adaptable, while incorporating enterprise-grade infrastructure and security.”

Parties can set up a closing room where they can track the status of conditions precedent and transaction documents, which includes seeing how the other parties to the transaction are getting on. The parties, of course, can digitally execute transaction documents without releasing their signatures; when they are ready to close, they release their signatures. The Global Closing Room even accommodates documents executed in manuscript! The Global Closing Room can also facilitate funds transfers, in USD, GBP, EUR, and CHF, during the European business day. Everyone loves the closing sets and the closing statements showing the funds flows, both of which are issued immediately on closing. Lawyers also like the closing sets because they can use them to easily create closing sets in their house style.

A major strength of the Global Closing Room is that it fits in really nicely with incumbent systems and processes. There is a lot more to it, but the key is that the Global Closing Room will save transaction parties and their lawyers time,

money, and inconvenience, and the Global Closing Room is structured to mitigate execution risk.

AH: What kind of feedback have you had so far?

EL: It’s awesome. Sophisticated market participants love the simplicity of the platform, its ease of use, and adaptability. That’s great, because we want to make their lives easier by helping them do more transactions more quickly.

Those who routinely do transactions subject to US or English law have quickly taken to the Global Closing Room. Potential users who do transactions subject to civil law, such as French law, are also very interested.

The main hurdle we seem to be encountering there, involves customs and practices that encode a strong bias favoring manuscript signatures at physical closings or scanned PDF closings. That bias persists despite the fact that no one really enjoys attending physical closings where multiple copies of the same documents are passed around a table for the parties



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A portrait of a middle-aged man with short brown hair, wearing a dark blue suit jacket, a white shirt, and a striped tie. He is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. The background is a blurred cityscape.

“Sophisticated market participants love the simplicity of the platform, its ease of use, and adaptability. That’s great, because we want to make their lives easier by helping them do more transactions more quickly.”

to sign, or where they have to print, execute, and scan entire reams of paper that they then send to their attorneys.

Fortunately, default rules render manuscript signatures unnecessary for certain classes of agreements. That position is strengthened by recently enacted statutes that explicitly authorize the use of digital signatures to execute contracts. The Global Closing Room can provide whatever level of digital signature the parties need.

The Global Closing Room is groundbreaking and powerful. Everyone should use it. |BAM



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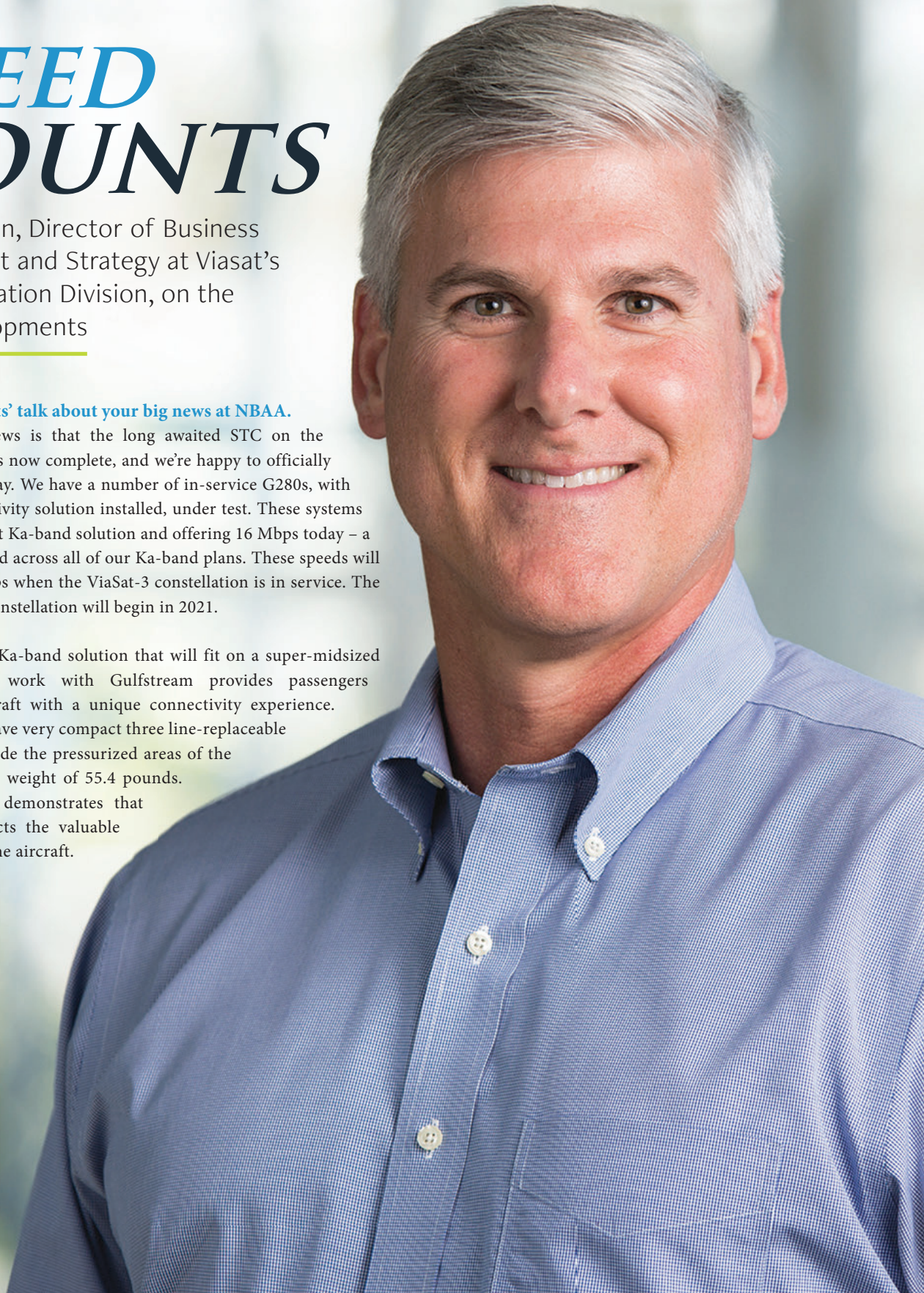
SPEED COUNTS

James Person, Director of Business Development and Strategy at Viasat's Business Aviation Division, on the latest developments

AH: So, James, let's talk about your big news at NBAA.

JP: The big news is that the long awaited STC on the Gulfstream G280 is now complete, and we're happy to officially announce that today. We have a number of in-service G280s, with the Viasat connectivity solution installed, under test. These systems are using the Viasat Ka-band solution and offering 16 Mbps today – a speed that is offered across all of our Ka-band plans. These speeds will increase to 32 Mbps when the ViaSat-3 constellation is in service. The launching of the constellation will begin in 2021.

Viasat is the only Ka-band solution that will fit on a super-midsized aircraft, so our work with Gulfstream provides passengers aboard these aircraft with a unique connectivity experience. Additionally, we have very compact three line-replaceable LRUs that sit outside the pressurized areas of the cabin, with a total weight of 55.4 pounds. The light weight demonstrates that this system respects the valuable real estate inside the aircraft.





Gulfstream G280 with Viasat Ka-band connectivity installed

Only one of these pieces of kit, the antenna, has to go into the tail, and we offer a DC or an AC version of that. In business aviation probably about 65 percent of the aircraft are DC, but we are seeing the AC wired numbers growing, so we are designing our systems to meet the various needs of customers. That proportional split probably goes back to early size and weight decisions, but that is all changing now.

Earlier in the year, at EBACE, we announced that we'd be an option on the Embraer Legacy and Praetor aircraft. With Flexjet and Embraer's big announcement at this

conference that a significant number of Praetors will be going to Flexjet. We are very excited about this news.

A couple of weeks before NBAA, in the run up to it, we made an announcement of our deal with Standard Aero regarding our Bombardier Global dual-band solution, which combines our Ka and Ku-band services - providing the fastest speeds available, globally. Since Standard Aero is one of our dealers, we can now offer our dual-band solution on



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Bombardier Globals. Standard Aero provides our hardware and the STC themselves or through other dealers, so that has added further to the range of options we can provide. The STC defined the radome and the various configurations of the system. They made it flexible, so it supports a number of the routers that are out there, such as GoDirect or Satcom Direct.

AH: You, of course, are totally agnostic, as the broadband provider, as far as distributors are concerned?

JP: We are. Different value-added distributors have different strengths. When you talk to flight departments, usually they are very loyal to whatever distributor they are used to working with. They'll say things like: I only like to work with this one or that one. The flexibility in our technology allows us to support them all.

AH: When you come down to it, 16 Mbps is a lot faster than many people get at home from their terrestrial providers!

JP: It is, and again, when ViaSat-3 launches, we will be doubling those speeds and offering 32 Mbps plans. One of our key advantages is forward-compatibility, meaning that operators do not have to change the hardware or the radome

to use ViaSat-3 once it is in service. In essence, we have future proofed the aircraft from a connectivity standpoint.

AH: Does this mean we'll see high-speed broadband to business jets coming down in price?

JP: My guess is that, over time, pricing will follow what we have seen in the cellular market. In the States at least, people might pay \$40 or \$50 a month for their service on an 'all-you-can-eat', or 'all-in' basis. Previously, cellular users were paying these amount to providers when all they had was a 2G phone that could only make calls. Now look how much more users get from most mobile providers. Users now have a 4G phone with a mobile computer in their pocket.

The in-flight connectivity market is pretty similar. People tend to pay about the same when it comes to monthly cost. For us, that means starting under \$5,000 a month for our Ka-band service.

AH: I imagine that if you can afford a business jet, then \$5,000 a month is not going to make you gulp and pause, not given how essential broadband connectivity is these days.

JP: It is not even the fuel costs for one hour of flying!

“When ViaSat-3 launches, we will be doubling those speeds and offering 32 Mbps plans.”



Another hot topic that passengers and operators are speaking about is unlimited streaming. In the past, if people wanted to stream, say, Netflix on a business jet, they would have to buy a separate 12-inch or 15-inch TV antenna and pay a monthly subscription fee.

Now, with Viasat Ka-band, subscribers are able to stream their favorite service over the Ka-band antenna. When they sign up for Viasat unlimited streaming, they're able to bring their own Netflix subscription, Amazon Prime, or whatever streaming service they want.

The data being used for these streaming services does not count against their data allocation. This means that if they are subscribed to one of our 100 Gb plans of data per month, they are still able to use 100 Gb for other online activities like email, video conferencing, web browsing, etc.

AH: How do you actually do that? It must chew up quite a lot of bandwidth.

JP: It goes back to what I've been talking about. Our satellite capacity is orders of magnitude more than the capacity available on our competitors' satellites. Through

our innovation, we are able to use our capacity a lot more efficiently than the competition.

So, we introduced 140 Gbps with ViaSat-1, we nearly doubled that with ViaSat-2, at 260 Gbps and with ViaSat-3 we are offering a Terabit per second per satellite. Our competitors are in the 10 Gbps range and we are going to 1,000 Gbps. This allows us to provide an unparalleled in-flight connectivity experience.

AH: How does 5G figure with you guys?

JP: 5G services are simply the next generation of the 4G terrestrial mobile technology. We also use a form of spread spectrum. It is slightly different, but it is not the terrestrial 4G or 5G standard, as it's a waveform optimized for satellite transmission.

You have to remember too, that services that rely on Air-to-Ground terrestrial broadband cannot provide a service over the oceans. This is key because of what has changed in the super mid-size business jet class today. If we take the Praetor 600, for example, it has the legs to fly from London to New York. We're already seeing so much more trans-Atlantic flying by mid-sized jets, which we are able to serve because of our global capabilities. |BAM

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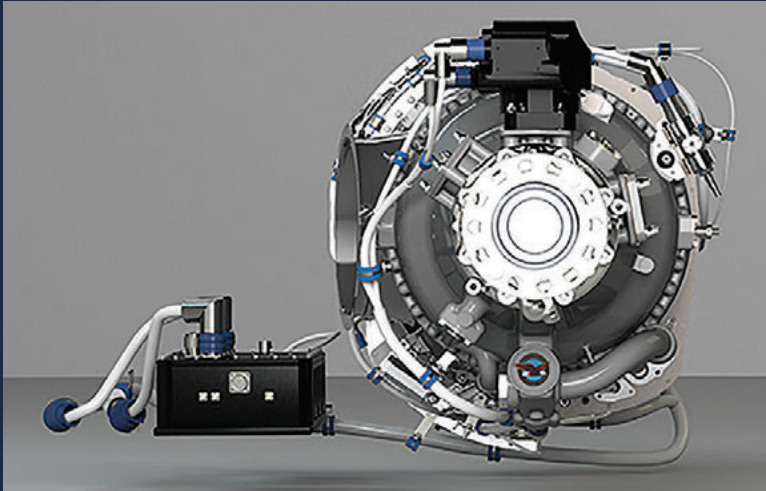
CONTINUOUS INNOVATION

Nicholas Kanellias, Vice President of General Aviation at Pratt & Whitney Canada, reflects on the latest developments in the company's iconic PT6, and on the engine's tremendous history of innovation and success

Q: When we talk about the PT6, we're looking at a truly iconic product, with over 60,000 PT6 engines having been produced, for some 150 or more different airframes. How and when did you get involved with all this, Nick?

NK: My career with Pratt & Whitney began when I joined as a Senior Test Engineer in 1996. I was a mechanical engineer, with an engineering degree from McGill University. From the start I was drawn to the bigger picture on the business and technology side.





“The PT6 E-Series™ is the first turboprop engine in general aviation to offer a dual-channel, integrated, electronic propeller and engine control system. This really does push innovation to a new level.”

My fascination has always been about how people perceive products and what value they place on the benefits they derive from those products, rather than just purely on engineering issues and solutions. It was about how those solutions fitted into the real world, and what kinds of opportunities there might be to enhance and develop those solutions.

In those early years, I was a member of the test division and much of our work was around the certification programmes for

new helicopter engines. We'd produced the first of the turboshaft versions of the PT6 for helicopters decades before I joined. Back in 1968 Bell Helicopter placed its initial order for the first turboshaft, the PT6T Twin-Pac engine for the Bell 212.

The Twin-Pac was two PT6s coupled in a single package to power medium-sized, twin-engine helicopters. This model entered into service in 1970, with the US Armed Forces ordering 294 Bell 212s also called the UH-1N Twin Huey.

Within 11 years PT6 engines were powering 1000 helicopters, mostly manufactured by Bell Helicopter.

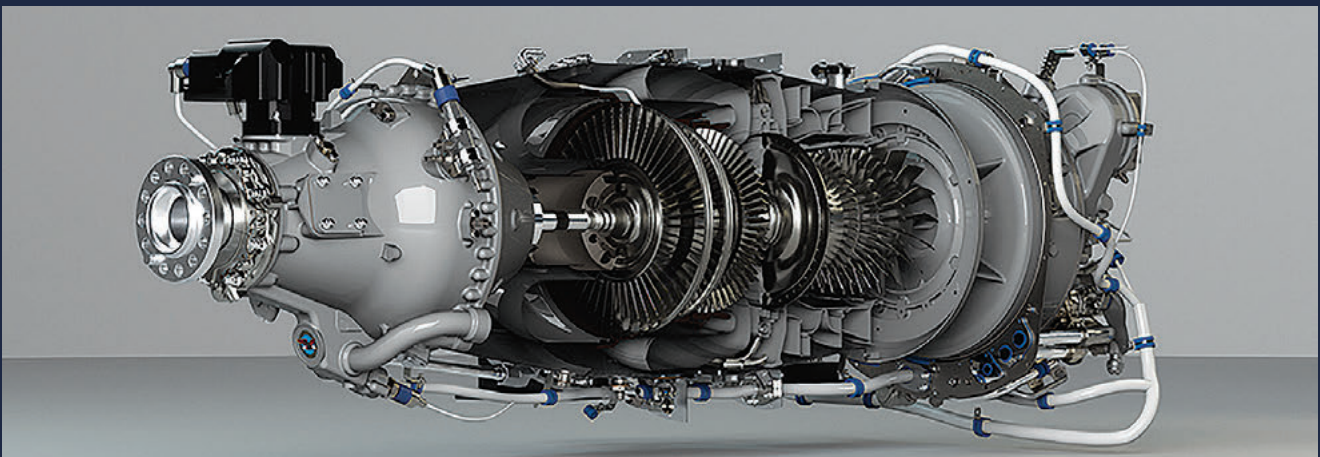
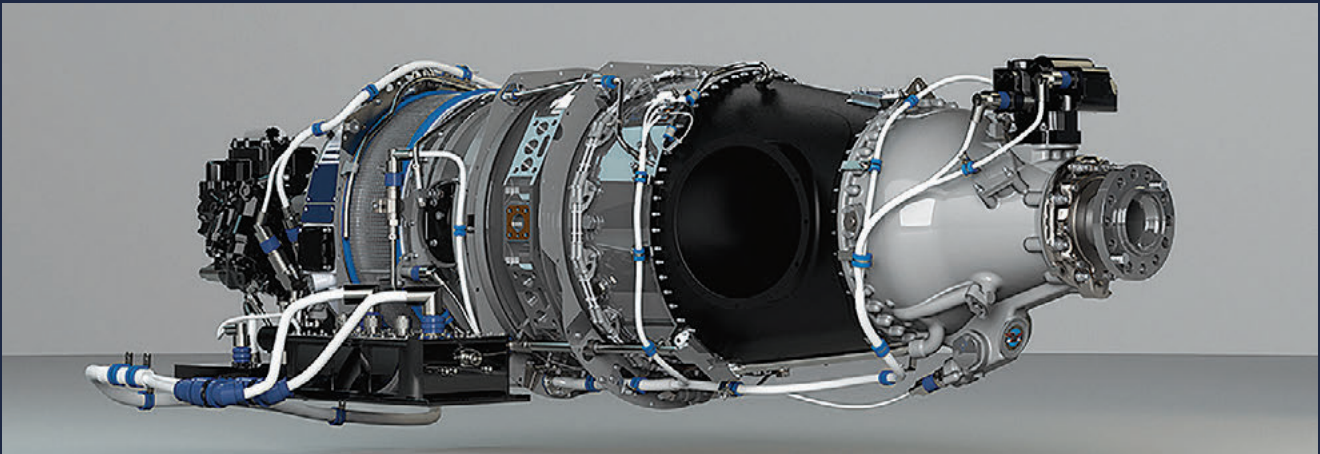
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The 1980s and 1990s saw variants of the PT6 gaining wide acceptance for a new generation of single turbine engine aircraft. Over the next few decades, we managed to boost engine thermal power through advances in materials, and we made impressive gains in the durability of the static components in the engine through lessons learned from our turbofan and turboshaft product lines. At the same time, we also achieved steady improvements in fuel efficiencies.

We have had so many innovations on the engine over the years. The test and certification division I joined grew into the product engineering teams, where we had responsibility for the development of new variants. That in turn progressed to the point where we also focused on strategic planning efforts for the PT6 engine, developing and identifying new business opportunities.

My role today is to lead the marketing and sales activities for General Aviation in Pratt & Whitney Canada. I am also responsible for the company's liaison with GA airframe OEMs around the world. My team also provides ongoing engineering and technical support to PT6 turboprop owners and operators around the world.

Q: You've had Full Authority Digital Engine Control (FADEC) capabilities on the PT6C for quite some time. How did that improve things?

NK: We've been doing variants of FADEC for the larger PT6 for a long while now. We developed it on the Eurocopter EC175, which is now called the Airbus H175. Essentially, if the engine control system is a supervisory system then the engine will only do so much. The pilot has the authority to shut the engine down. With FADEC the electronics have complete control, and this takes a lot of work off the pilot's shoulders.

With Dual Control FADEC you have redundancy there as well. It's not just about stopping and starting the engine. It does so much more. What we've done now is to develop a completely new electronic and digital platform, and we've introduced dual control for the first time into the turboprop market.

Q: That brings us on to your new PT6 E-Series™ engine, which you announced at NBAA. Could you tell us about that?

NK: What we've done with the PT6 E-Series™ engine is to take a completely fresh look at engine performance and the control systems, as well as integrate data intelligence into a completely new service wrapper. The PT6 E-Series™ engine

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really changes the perception for everyone involved, so it is about a lot more than just developing a FADEC.

We've worked hard to ensure that the PT6 E-Series™ engine offers specific benefits and value for each of the stakeholders involved, from the pilot to the operator and to the maintainer. Working with Pilatus on the new PC-12 NGX and Honeywell, we fully integrated the engine control system and avionics.

The PT6 E-Series™ is the first turboprop engine in general aviation to offer a dual-channel, integrated, electronic propeller and engine control system. This really does push innovation to a new level. From the pilot's standpoint, this provides a more intuitive way of flying and greatly simplifies the workload. The engine can be started and stopped with a single push of a button.

At the same time, the single lever and integrated propeller and engine control system allows precise engine control. It constantly monitors temperature and torque to deliver optimal engine power and performance through all the phases of a flight. The aircraft can climb faster and cruise at a higher speed, with the engine delivering around a 10 percent increase in power.

The engine control system we have developed, with the enabled digital auto-throttle, for the first time, has full control of the whole powerplant, including the engine and

the propeller. There is no mechanical back-up required; the dual-channel FADEC has complete redundancy built into the system.

The fact that the engine is digitally connected means that more than 100 parameters are monitored, which makes possible predictive analysis of the engine and facilitates proactive maintenance planning. The EEC (electronic engine control) is being fed all the key engine and aircraft data. It can make the necessary adjustments to optimize and deliver the appropriate power throughout the flight.

Importantly, once the aircraft is on the ground again, all the engine flight data is wirelessly downloaded. This provides operators and the maintainers with valuable insights into engine performance and health.

At the same time, we have doubled the minimum maintenance interval, raising it from 300 to 600 hours. Scheduled maintenance has also reduced by 40 percent because of all the integrated components.

Q: So, you've been doing this in one shape or form since 1996, Nick. How is it going for you? Any boredom showing up round the edges?

NK: (Laughs) I don't think I have ever been bored working for PWC. Every day is varied, 365 days a year. And when it comes to meeting our customers and delivering value, it really is the icing on the cake... |BAM

“The engine can be started and stopped with a single push of a button.”

Nicholas Kanellias on the PT6 E-Series™



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PASTURES NEW

Mike Moore, Executive Vice President, Essex Aviation, talks to Anthony Harrington about his decision to leave Meridian, where he headed up aircraft management, fuel sales and retail charter, in order to join Lee Rohde's aircraft broking and consultancy company, Essex Aviation

AH: Mike, in many ways you've been the 'face' of Meridian for more than a decade. Many people in the industry will be surprised at the fact that you are no longer there. What was the decision process that led to you leaving to join Essex Aviation? And why did you choose aircraft acquisitions and consulting, in general, and Essex in particular, as the next step in your career?

MM: There is no doubt that Meridian has enjoyed tremendous growth in recent years, and I've been proud to play a role in that. As part of that growth, Meridian opened up its 30,000 square foot hangar at Hayward Executive Airport, giving the company a West Coast presence to go with its Teterboro FBO.

Things have moved on quite a long way since I joined Meridian back in 2008, as the Director of Aviation sales, and I have to say it has been a tremendous eleven years. I've been heading up aircraft management and sales for a long while now at Meridian. As anyone who has done it will know, this is a really demanding position. At the same time, I've known Lee Rohde for probably more years than I've been at Meridian and we've talked together many times about the market and about transactions.

Sometimes I'd have a client who wanted to buy an aircraft and I'd put Lee in the frame. Or he'd be buying an aircraft for someone and he'd put me and Meridian in there as an option with one or two other aircraft management operations. So, we've done a lot of business together over the years.

I've always rated Lee as one of the best in the business. He does a tremendous amount of research for clients, and if he's making recommendations about services, such as aircraft management, he really goes out of his way to understand what the options are that he's proposing. Very few brokers do that side of things well.

AH: So, have you always had an interest in the transaction side of business aviation, the buying and selling of aircraft?

MM: Absolutely. The funny thing is that I did this all the time for free for Meridian clients. Someone who was a charter customer of ours, for example, would call me up and say, "Hey Mike, I find I'm doing around 80 to 100 hours a year charter, should I be buying my own aircraft yet? Should I maybe think about a fractional share?"

When I got those kinds of calls, I'd ask them what kind of budget they thought they could afford a year, what kinds of trips they were making, who they were flying with and so on. Then I'd work out potential operating costs, and look at some pre-owned versus new aircraft costs., I just wanted to give people good advice and help them make an informed decision.

I'd put quite a bit of work into it, then I'd discuss it with the client and pass it on to Lee, or to one of the other major brokers. I've dealt with them all over the years. But all of this would be simply relationship building on my part. It would be a free service for the client. I enjoyed it and it was a real value add for whoever I was doing it for, but it did not generate direct revenue for me or for the company, unless we ended up managing their aircraft

So, the idea of doing this full time was very appealing. I'd done aircraft sales and acquisitions early on in my career in business aviation, and I had enjoyed it hugely. I originally joined Meridian to head up Aircraft Sales & Acquisition, and Aircraft Management. However, then we had the global financial crash of 2008 and the bottom dropped out of sales

“Sometimes I’d have a client who wanted to buy an aircraft and I’d put Lee in the frame. Or he’d be buying an aircraft for someone and he’d put me and Meridian in there as an option with one or two other aircraft management operations. So, we’ve done a lot of business together over the years.”

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transactions. That was my first week at Meridian. The company decided to concentrate on Aircraft Management, so that's where I put all my efforts.

The other side of this is that aircraft management is very much a relationship game, but it is one where, as the go-to guy for the client, you can find yourself fire-fighting morning, noon and night. A very common conversation is where the owner calls up aggrieved at the end of the year, because he expected to get 400 hours of charter to offset his costs, and the actual figure is way south of that.

When you explain to him that the figure of 400 hours was predicated on the jet being available, which you made clear when he signed the management contract, whereas he was himself using the jet for 400 hours, that conversation tends not to go well.

Then there are the occasions where you get his or her permission to use the jet for a charter flight, despite the fact that they need it in two days for a key meeting. Then the jet goes AOG with an orange light in the cockpit, and you're phoning the owner up late at night to explain that the jet is not going to be available, after all. It doesn't matter how you approach it, that is not going to be a happy conversation.

Then there are the crew issues in a world where pilots are in short supply. I'd phone an owner up and advise them that pilot salaries had moved well beyond what the owner was currently paying. "You need to increase their salaries, or you'll lose your pilots," I'd say. About a year later they'd phone in a panic. Their chief pilot's just resigned. You can't say, "I told you so," but hey, I told you so.

AH: So, how did things progress between you and Lee?

MM: We were having a serious conversation at NBAA this year. I'd lost an aircraft management deal in a four way competitive pitch between Solaris, EJM and Jet Aviation and I said to Lee, I'd really like to be a fly on the wall to hear how those pitches all went, to see why I lost. Lee gets to see this all the time. I mentioned that I liked how his company deals with clients and that I saw myself doing that in the future.

One thing led to another, and we ended up talking about how I would fit in at Essex. By the start of November, I was clear in my mind that the time had come to have a serious conversation with Lee. That moved really quickly, and I started with Essex Aviation at the start of December.



Lee Rohde,
President & CEO, Essex Aviation

Lee told me I could work from home or from anywhere I liked in the country. That was a huge plus for me. My wife and I have a big home, and the kids are all now at college or in their own places, so the idea of a move down to Florida, or somewhere sunny, sounded fantastic. I had a fourteen hour-a-week commute when I was at Meridian and I can now use that time so much more profitably!

AH: You're part of the leadership team at Essex, I take it that the role is tightly focused on transaction consultancy and the buying of aircraft.

MM: We're completely neutral on the solution. Our job is to find the best outcome for the client, given the client's budget, resources, mission profiles, number of hours flown a year and so on. We'll quarterback refurbishments for clients, and we do a lot of new aircraft and pre-owned aircraft transactions. If a fractional solution or a jet card would better suit the client, because he or she doesn't have the budget to run a private jet, or doesn't actually need a fractional share, that's what we'll recommend. As a completely independent house, the client knows we are acting purely for them. It's a great place to be. |BAM



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RAISING THE BAR

Dafne Isasi, President and CEO of Global Crew Prestige, talks to BAM about how the company's cabin crew training as well as staffing capabilities are raising the bar in business aviation and beyond

Q: Let's talk about your career in aviation – how did it begin and why did you start your own company (Global Crew Prestige)?

DAFNE: As soon as I took my first flight, from Buenos Aires to Nice, I knew I wanted to work in aviation. It was on this flight (when I was nine) that my mother moved our family from Argentina to France. While I have always had a keen interest in aviation, sparked by learning that my great-aunt was a parachute champion, my first flight launched a lifelong passion for aviation.

My strategy early in my career was to gain exposure to as many sectors of the aviation industry as possible. After graduating from the Auguste Escoffier Hospitality Management School and the Cannes-Mandelieu Institute of Aeronautical Training in France, I became a corporate flight attendant. Since then, I have also worked as a flight coordinator and aircraft sales & acquisitions broker, as well as served in various management capacities for private aviation companies in Europe and the US.

Private aviation has the world's most demanding clients, and I recognized that in-flight service was not meeting expectations. This realization led to me founding Global Crew Prestige (GCP) in 2012.

Q: What was your strategy when you founded Global Crew Prestige and where does the company currently operate?

DAFNE: I founded Global Crew Prestige to address two major themes that I noticed in private aviation – (1) flight attendant service is often lacking in quality and (2) high turnover rates for pilots and flight attendants internationally. GCP first focused on #1 – elevating the level of flight attendant service worldwide.



GCP created, and has refined over many years, a proprietary flight attendant training program based on the principles of European-style service and etiquette. Once GCP developed a reputation for cultivating the highest caliber flight attendants in Europe, I expanded the company's reach.

We now offer training programs in London, Los Angeles, New York, Paris, and other locations worldwide. GCP's instructors lead training programs for corporations (training / retraining of crew members) and individuals (aspiring / current flight attendants).

In 2019, Global Crew Prestige also began addressing the second theme, namely high turnover rates for pilots and flight attendants.

Q: How are you addressing the turnover issue?

DAFNE: In my various roles in the industry, I have been fortunate to have interacted with countless pilots, flight attendants, aircraft owners, and private aviation companies. This has afforded me a strong level of insight into the needs of all parties in the industry. Crew turnover often results from a lack of "fit," either among crew members or between the client and crew.

Global Crew Prestige is addressing the industry's high crew turnover by taking a white-glove approach to staffing. We thoroughly vet pilot and flight attendant backgrounds to ensure that they have the requisite training. Each crew member then takes a personality test (developed by GCP in conjunction with psychologists), which allows us to create combinations of



Dafne Isasi's great-aunt,
Parachute Champion

crew members who have compatible personalities. This approach is unique to GCP and is one of our major competitive advantages.



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The next step is a comprehensive discussion with the CEOs / management teams of private aviation companies to determine their respective clients' requirements (full-time or contract employees, location, language, personality traits, etc.). At this point, we have the ammunition we need to create synergistic crew teams that will work well with their respective clients.

Our staffing / matchmaking service reduces crew turnover as well as improves in-flight service and safety.

Q: What is Global Crew Prestige's value proposition for the OEMs and other sectors of the industry?

DAFNE: GCP maintains a curated database of flight attendants (many of whom were trained

“ We work closely with OEMs, such as Dassault Aviation, and private aviation companies by providing them access to our crew database, giving these companies the ability to help differentiate themselves. Our database and selection processes ensure that the right crew is placed with the right owner. The overall experience of each flight is that much better as a result.”

by GCP) and pilots around the world who are open to new opportunities. Oftentimes, a company or individual will purchase an airplane and not know how to source a well-trained crew that will be a strong fit (personality and otherwise) for the client.

This is where we come in – we work closely with OEMs, such as Dassault Aviation, and private aviation companies by providing them access to our crew database, giving these companies the ability to help differentiate themselves. Our database and selection processes ensure that the right crew is placed with the right owner. The overall experience of each flight is that much better as a result. When you are flying in a high-end product like a Falcon, you really want the total experience to be perfect for the VIP on board.

GCP's database has hundreds of pilots and flight attendants worldwide (crew members must apply to GCP for inclusion). The OEMs and other private aviation companies can sort our database by various crew member characteristics and other variables. We then interact with both the client and the crew members and ensure that the selected crew members will be a strong personality fit amongst themselves and with the VIP.

All of these services are available through our online platform – we welcome you to check it out at www.globalcrewprestige.com.

Q: Thank you, Dafne. Any closing thoughts?

DAFNE: I am extremely proud of what the GCP team has accomplished since 2012, and we are excited to continue to grow the company and provide industry-leading training programs and crew staffing services. Everything GCP does aims to positively impact private aviation, and we look forward to working with our clients and partners to continue to drive progress and improvement in the industry. |BAM



Geoff Chick,
Senior Vice President, Worldwide Service Network
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BREAKING MONOPOLIES

Loris Di Filippo, CEO of Argos VIP, talks to Anthony Harrington about the company's successes

AH: Argos operates a magnificent chain of FBOs across Italy. What did it take to put this hugely impressive portfolio together? How difficult was it?

LDF: ArgosVPH was born in 2000 with a rather different business model to the one we have today. It was only after the initial liberalisation of the ground services market in Italy, in 2006, that we were able to move into being a full-service handler.

At the time, we immediately saw an opportunity to focus our activities on providing high-quality services to business aviation. There was just nothing like that to be found in Italy before we began establishing our FBOs. This kind of assistance for private jets just didn't exist.

Everything at Italian airports was dedicated to commercial aviation. Business aviation was just something that happened on the side, but Italy's major airports did not really see it as important or as something that could generate significant revenues for them.

Looking at the market, it was absolutely clear that there was a tremendous opportunity here to focus on providing the highest standards of care for passengers flying in on private jets. The crew too, need a range of services, including crew rest rooms, lounges and facilities. There was just nothing by way of dedicated facilities for business aviation, be it for passengers or for crew. In some airports in Italy, this is still the case.



So, we set about convincing airport authorities to allow us to establish facilities and we succeeded to the point where we now have ten FBOs in mainland Italy, two each in Sardinia and Sicily and we have our offices just across the border in Switzerland.

I think that the right word to describe our vision is “dedication with a pinch of madness”. When we work on a project we are absolutely committed to realizing it to the best of our ability. This communicates

itself to the clients, who feel and believe that we are taking care of them.

In other countries it is normal to find dedicated FBOs, but not in Italy. Everything here is more complicated, with airports being accustomed to run as virtual monopolies. If you are market-oriented, as I am, you have a different vision and you have to bring airport authorities round to your way of thinking. It takes time. I am quite driven, and I dedicate my life to my clients and my staff. That level of commitment has been key to our success.

Someone who wanted to obtain everything for themselves could not have built the kind of operation we have today. You have to create an organisation where everyone can grow together, and everyone gains.

In my opinion, there is a traditional way of doing business in Italy that stifles innovation. There is a tendency to see competition as a negative, rather than as an opportunity to improve. The usual response, instead of seeing competition as a challenge to

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improve your own operation, is to try to move Heaven and Earth to destroy the competition. What these traditional businesses do not see is that without competition, there is no incentive to improve and in a global world, inevitably you fall behind.

Inevitably, when we set out to negotiate with authorities who were accustomed to running monopolies, we had all kinds of difficulties put in our path. However, you just have to figure out arguments and ways to overcome bureaucratic obstacles and all the institutional issues that go with getting the required permissions and building rights

All of these difficulties we took – and continue to take – as good opportunities as we worked on our own internal improvements and on the standards of service we provide to customers.

AH: Clearly, Italy has a very complicated and complex structure as far as general aviation is concerned. What are the challenges of operating inside this world, which is so different from anything operators in the USA or the UK would experience?

LDF: At the level of the structures and regulations for general aviation, that is the remit of airport management. However, in reality, there are many conflicts of interest around issues such as where those who manage the infrastructure also provide the services. It is hard to introduce competition into that kind of structure, since those who are in authority can protect their privileged position. How competition can be introduced into that kind of situation is often unclear.

Clearly, what is needed is for everyone involved to agree that we all have a common project, which is to grow General Aviation in Italy and to create value for our clients. Collectively, we have a responsibility to grow this concept. To the extent that we are successful our efforts create work and jobs and help to increase economic prosperity. The aim has to be to create value for all and not only for a few.

AH: This is a related question, of course, but how do you manage to get an airport with a monopoly on services to even consider giving you space and letting you in to provide services. What are the key arguments that are persuasive to the authority?

LDF: Unfortunately, there is no overwhelmingly persuasive argument you can bring to bear when the authority holds a monopoly position. But persistence often pays. We keep talking, as far as is possible, and eventually, hopefully, someone senior takes the point that things have to change and move forward. Then we start to get some traction and things can be done. When the major actors in the sector decide to move together and build together, we can create real value for the country as a whole.

AH: Argos has really surged ahead in the last decade or so. Where has the growth come from?

LDF: I understood from the outset that there was a need and an opportunity, here in Italy. Business aviation was not at the same level here as it had reached elsewhere in Europe or in the world. The infrastructure was old and was not dedicated to GA. In fact in most instances, GA was considered by airport authorities as an obstacle to commercial aviation. They were simply neglecting the opportunity to harmonize these two different sectors, which are actually complementary, and can develop together.

AH: You have built up a fantastic team, what can you share by way of your approach to team management?

LDF: It might sound trivial, but the whole team is absolutely fundamental to everything we do. For it to work we need to take care of each person in the team; to listen to each person and to ask them to respect their colleagues and clients. One of the hardest things in this world, I think, is to really listen, and to look always at ways of improving everything, starting with ourselves

AH: Service quality is very important, obviously, with any FBO or indeed, with any service aimed at corporates and high net worth individuals. How do you keep everyone on their A-game?

LDF: I try to visit each of our FBOs regularly, to create leadership and to build trust with our people. If you take care of your team, they will take care the client and their job will become a real mission for them.

Our philosophy, our message about valuing people and creating value for them, will be the essence of the upcoming year. We will have some interesting news for our clients and our staff. |BAM

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CENTRE OF *EXCELLENCE*

Fiona Langton, Managing Director of Stobart Jet Centre, talks to BAM about the company's growth and her role

Q : Can you begin with some background on the Stobart Group and how the Jet Centre fits into the group structure, and what it brings to the group?

FL: The Jet Centre started operations in January of 2018 and provides a diversified service targeted at private aviation. Whilst the Group's Aviation sector's largest area of focus is Commercial activity, with many exciting new developments, the Jet Centre supports the elite and charter operations that require the privacy and discrete services that are expected by private aircraft clients at the airport.

Another part of the attraction of London Southend Airport (LSA) is the ease of access. This has improved even further over the past year. Passengers can now more easily connect to the first and last flights

since the introduction of early morning and late-night trains, as well as new bus services. The percentage of passengers travelling to and from the airport by train from Central London has increased to more than 30%.

Elsewhere, the Jet Centre at Teesside International has seen some major celebrities using the facility, thanks to Radio 1's Big Weekend in Darlington. The Jet Centre at Carlisle is also building a great reputation, supporting the Armed Forces and other activities. Overall, the Jet Centres in London, the North and North East are really starting to build a dedicated and loyal client base, which is truly valued by the Group. It has been built on delivering a fantastic service with every visit.

Q: Fiona, how has your career in business aviation and airport management helped you in your current role?

FL: It's incredibly important to understand how each of the parts connects and know how to deliver on all expectations, as there may be many elements involved in one flight.

Having worked in my early career as Private Cabin Crew for more than 12 years in the Middle East and UK, I have a very clear understanding of what our clients expect when they touch down at our FBO. As one of their clients in the past, I understand how time is one of a private client's most important considerations.

I also worked in operations for large European-based contracts and alongside military logistics in Afghanistan. This gave me an understanding of how efficiency, organisation and clarity are required in all types of communications.

My brief rotation as a broker gave me a valuable insight when dealing with third-party connections and what their role is within each flight. I see my experiences as valuable when supporting a complex and changeable operation, and over time this has given me a chance to build a reliable network of industry professionals to work with.

Overall, my background experience has given me a strong insight into the vast world of private aviation, and an understanding of the many levels that can be associated with our operations. This has greatly assisted me with my airport management career.

It's about building trust and reliability to deliver, which I value highly and work hard at every day. Working upwards to the level of MD was a position I always aspired to. However, this is something I have never taken for granted as I know it's just a title, and nothing can be achieved without the support of a great team, and the people who you surround yourself with.

I always look to balance the requirements of my team and the business, to ensure we are consistently working towards one goal: to deliver for our clients and to be successful in everything we do. I love this world and my passion for service delivery and results is what drives me.

Q: London Southend Airport has seen rapid growth in recent years, what is driving that? How do you see things going?

FL: LSA has set its sights on reaching 5m passengers by 2023 and is well on the way to achieving this. LSA grew nearly 40% last year, with Ryanair and easyJet boosting the airport's growth plans. On top of these relationships, LSA secured a contract with a global logistics supplier and opened new Wizz Air routers in the latter half of 2019.

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commercial required activity, LSA will be able to provide the services commercial carriers require for the long-term growth for both parties. The Jet Centre compliments this productivity by being earmarked as an area of growth for the airport as well. With a recorded 1,600 movements for 2018, we are on our way to reaching our target for 2019.

Both commercial and private have a lot of room for additional partners and are keen to be in a position to stretch the capacity we have, not only for the growth of the business, but for the future of the region.

Q: Getting voted the best airport in London for six years on the trot by Which? is outstanding. What are the factors that have kept the airport at the forefront?

FL: People, it's all about people. The human factor in our business is the most important area, and we have been working at making sure our teams are well equipped and supported along the way. This enables us to ensure our teams can deliver the highest service expectations during our growth.

We do not want to lose the personalised aspect of travelling through LSA, which we know is what people comment on as being a positive experience.

Another area we are focusing on is cleanliness, it's a very strong draw factor for clients and passengers who visit our location. We are working hard to ensure that we deliver a pristine experience with every visit.

Q: Let's talk about the FBO and the service it provides to business jet customers

FL: We have a '24/7 always on' approach that, in our industry, is extremely important to always be available. Be it to answer any questions our clients may have, we have worked hard to make sure a response is always received and that we have a team available to support flights at anytime of the day or night.

Due to the growth at the airport, our night slots have been slightly reduced. However, we still have ample availability and will always look to assist any request that comes in to ensure we continue to provide services 24/7.

London is only 38 miles by car and we can provide helicopter transfers, which can get you into central London in an average of 13 minutes. This

is a popular choice for our HNWI, who require ultra-quick transfers.

We have hangar and ramp spaces available, and these are valuable commodities within the London region. We have recently signed 25 new agreements with new base clients at London and yet still have room for more to join us.

We benefit from working very closely with our airport teams, which means we always have additional support if required for larger charter flights. We provide an onsite security screening room for fluidity of service for charter flights, as well as a luxury lounge that welcomes crew and clients at any time.

We value the processes at the airport as one of the fastest available. We can remote clear for immigration, meaning our clients can transfer directly from their aircraft to their vehicle of choice on the ramp and on the road within minutes of landing. It's all about efficiency and convenience for our clients. These were always the original values of our organisation and I look to develop and continue this, making sure we deliver on this with every visit.

Q: What about catering and concierge services?

FL: We have great relationships with all the main premium aviation catering organisations, and can provide the best quality and range of aviation catering options.

The team are also very accustomed to simplified approaches to catering requests, such as fast food orders, which can be arranged on request. We also take care of even more cost-efficient requirements that can be as simple as a meal deal from our local supermarket. We are happy to cater for all requests as we understand everyone has different requirements.

Within our lounge we provide onsite catering options as well, that clients can order directly from Bourgee, a

premium restaurant located at the airport. So, meals can be obtained at short notice. If the clients want to take their time in the lounge, food can be arranged for their arrival/departure.

We are also lucky to have the Holiday Inn within a minutes' walk of our location, which is also useful for crews who have short stop overs and require the comforts of a hotel, as well as onsite sleeper rooms within the lounge for crews who want onsite services. They too provide us with catering options for our clients, so we are never short of options and solutions.

We look to provide a myriad of concierge services for every level. We have local beauty salons on call as well as strong relationships with all local transport and hotel accommodation service providers. No request is too big, we love it when we get adhoc requests from our clients which can test us; it could be anything from a simple Amazon order, all the way to a VIP trip to locations such as Liberties, for individual client requests.

This year has been incredibly exciting with the arrival of our new equipment, such as the Mototok 7500 tug, which handles up to a B737. Plus we have seen the addition of new team members, assisting us in keeping

our operations running 24/7 whilst offering a high level of experience and service delivery.

For the future, we are looking to increase our team's skillset even more by introducing new training courses. The introduction of a new Training Manager will help us to focus on developing staff VIP service awareness. I feel it's important to note, as well, that we are looking at internal development programmes that involve dedicated journeys for each member of our team, tailored to their own growth within our business.

Safety and compliance are always at the top of our agenda. The introduction of James Palmer, our General Manager to the London Jet Centre, means he is leading the improvement of all our internal processes. These have been complemented by the introduction of a new body scanner in our screening room and we have begun the journey towards our IS-BAH accreditation.

As a team, we are always looking at how we can become more environmentally aware, which aligns with our airport's environmental policy. We are focused on being a leading location in the self-sustainability movement.

It's a busy but exciting time for us, and we welcome the opportunity to speak to any new clients looking for an adhoc solution, or wanting cost effective options for their base aircraft. We can provide solutions for both short term and long-term agreements. |BAM

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CYBER SAFETY



Chris Moore, President of Business Aviation at Satcom Direct, talks to Anthony Harrington about his role and SD's focus on open architecture and total security

AH: In 2019, you became President of Business Aviation at Satcom Direct. What does the Board of SD look like now?

CM: We have David Greenhill and Jim Jensen as co-owners, with Jim being the founder and CEO of SD. David is CEO of COMSAT, our governmental business. We bought that business from Airbus a few years back. It is in the government space and it is doing very well. Then there is our General Counsel, our CFO, and myself.

We are an innovation business, so we try not to get buried in a load of bureaucracy. It is a very open business, with 450 staff worldwide now. We try to keep things very customer focused and lean. Every SD office you walk into around the world, whether it is in Hong Kong, London or Florida, it feels like SD. We're blessed with the best staff in the industry.

AH: Cyber security is still an absolutely major issue and SD has been diligently defending business aviation against any number of attacks. What can you tell me about the ongoing "struggle" with the hacking community?





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Satcom Direct Global Headquarters
Melbourne, Florida

CM: We launched our cyber security suite of products at NBAA back in 2017. We took a leadership stance on it from an industry point of view. At the time so few private jet travellers were aware of the threat. Being up there at 40,000 feet or so created a sense of immunity from security breaches, whereas, of course, broadband communications were just as vulnerable as on the ground, if the right security measures were not in place.

On the network side of things, we had been making huge investments in infrastructure, and we were not really talking about it. Everything we are doing with SD Pro®, our cyber threat monitoring systems and our SDR® Gateway platform, we'd actually been developing and using for years, but we hadn't announced it or put it front and centre. We have had government and military customers on our network from the beginning and security was always huge for that segment, so it has been a normal part of our product set.

We now have some 600 aircraft subscribed to our SD Pro Cyber Security module. We also have customers who have put their physical infrastructure into our data centre. What they send never touches the public internet. It goes from their servers to our infrastructure in our data centre and gets distributed over our network.

AH: How much space do you have in your data centres for collocating kit?

CM: We're expanding those all the time. We code name our data centre phases, Alpha, Bravo, Charlie and Delta. We have just expanded by a further 2,500 square feet. This is a lot of footage for rack space. We have filled up Alpha, and we're filling out Bravo pretty quickly. Charlie is already in demand. We don't really view the data centres as a major revenue earner for us, as they have essentially been developed as part

of the SD ecosystem for our customers in government and big corporate flight departments.

With COMSAT, our sister company, we have teleport access and data infrastructure, so, as the SD Group, we offer hardware, software, and infrastructure - the only element we don't have are the satellites. We have good partners like Inmarsat, Viasat and Intelsat which control and manage them.

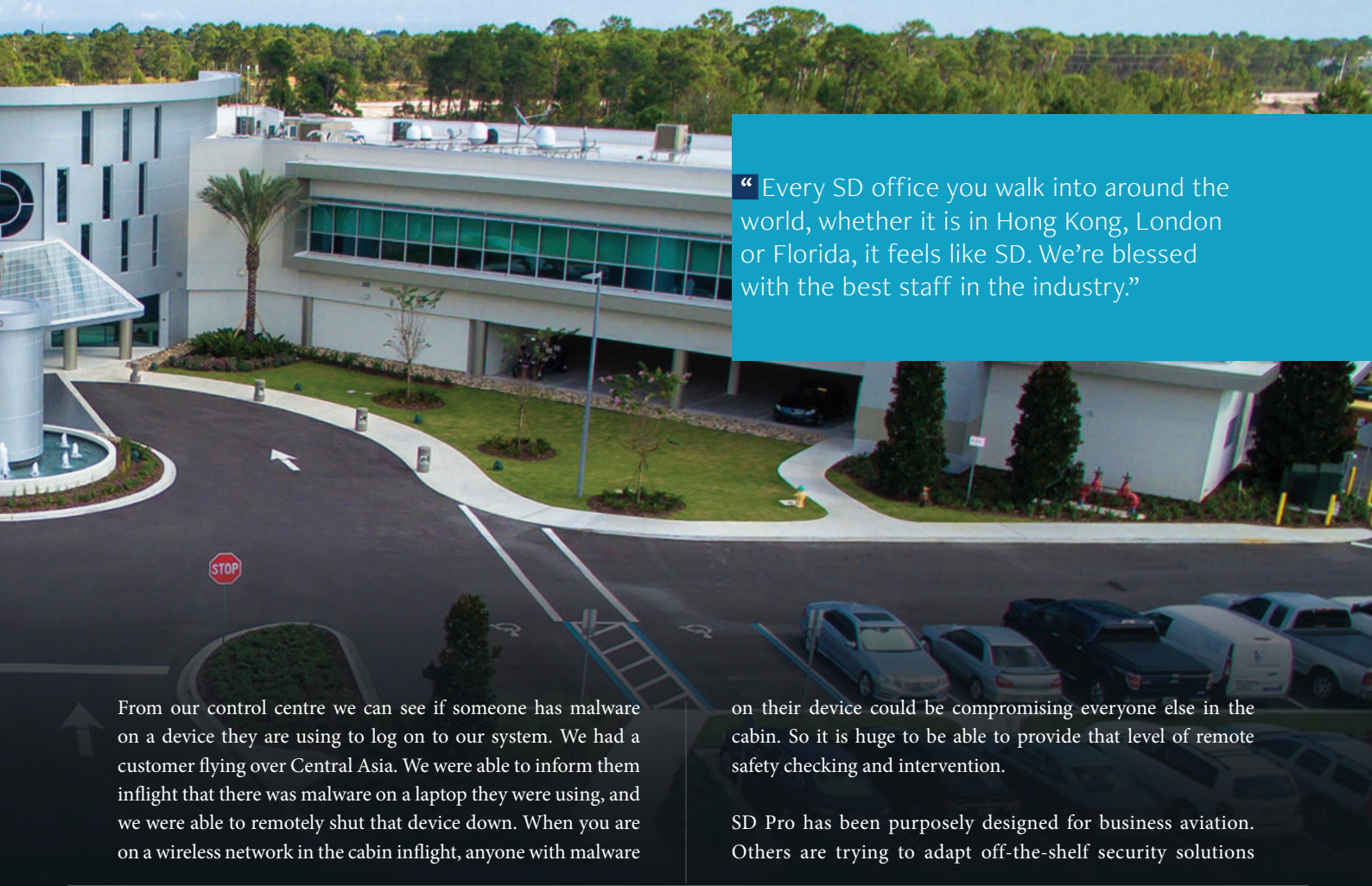
Our job is to provide and support the hardware infrastructure, via the SDR and SDR Gateway. We are also now manufacturing our own flat panel antennae, which will be available to the market in 2021. We started development of that about two years ago, with our partner in Germany, QEST.

Looking at the whole thing from the perspective of the business aviation customer, our job is to ensure that we give customers the best "insurance" possible on security. In our control centre we continuously see cyber threats, all the time. We provide customers with monthly reports to demonstrate the cyber event types and how we have mitigated threats.

AH: Do you have a feel for where most of these hack attempts are originating, from what countries?

CM: They come from all over, Europe, the Far East, America, South America. When you think of the high profile individuals on these aircraft, our job is to really ensure their data security and safety along with, of course, their overall safety as passengers in an aeroplane.

Many of the threats we see are actually brought on board the aircraft in the form of malware. Most people have stopped giving away USB sticks as many of those turned out to have viruses already embedded on them.



“ Every SD office you walk into around the world, whether it is in Hong Kong, London or Florida, it feels like SD. We’re blessed with the best staff in the industry.”

From our control centre we can see if someone has malware on a device they are using to log on to our system. We had a customer flying over Central Asia. We were able to inform them inflight that there was malware on a laptop they were using, and we were able to remotely shut that device down. When you are on a wireless network in the cabin inflight, anyone with malware

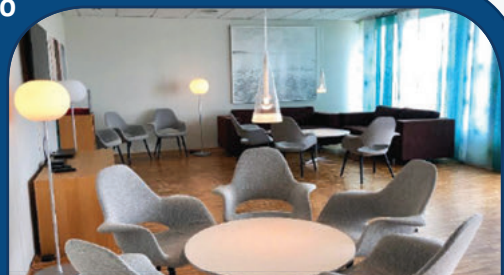
on their device could be compromising everyone else in the cabin. So it is huge to be able to provide that level of remote safety checking and intervention.

SD Pro has been purposely designed for business aviation. Others are trying to adapt off-the-shelf security solutions

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to hold things together. We have built this from the ground up to be aviation friendly.

On our GX Inmarsat service, something like 85 – 90 percent of the customer base has signed up for our cyber security service. On our older, legacy L-band services, the numbers are much lower. Internationally though, outside the US, the Swift Broadband network is a big market for our cyber services.

AH: You have a partnership going with Rolls-Royce. What can you tell us about that?

CM: We will be able to give any Rolls-Royce engine customer a complete record of times and cycles. Rolls-Royce has taken the whole digital engine side of things very seriously. They have a great leadership position in that. The data goes over our network and it makes life so much easier for the operations staff.

Business aviation is still in the learning stage when it comes to automation of intelligence about the aircraft and mining big data sets for ops and predictive maintenance. This is all playing very well to our ability to provide a secure communications link from the aircraft to the ground.



We have gone open architecture from the start in the design of our operating system, and this is clearly the right way to go. The IT industry discovered the benefits of open architecture thirty years ago. It enables you to build partnering relations with others, and the whole industry benefits as a result. When you buy SD, basically, as a customer you are buying back your freedom to work with the products and suppliers you want to work with. If the customer has a different flight scheduling system they want to use, it is a simple matter for the data we're collecting to flow into the scheduling or flight planning package of their choice.

From our point of view, it is not about the size of the pipe to the cabin anymore. It is all about capability and value add. [BAM](#)

“SD Pro has been purposely designed for business aviation. Others are trying to adapt off-the-shelf security solutions to hold things together.”





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Can Sasmaz, CEO of MNG Jet, based at Atatürk Airport, Istanbul, Turkey, talks to BAM about the company's growth and services

“We provide a very comprehensive maintenance service, which includes the ability to link online with the aircraft manufacture or the parts supplier's stocking system, if that is available.”

Q : The MRO side of your operation recently received EASA Part 147 approval, plus you have EASA Part-145 approvals for the Bombardier LearJet 60 and the Embraer Legacy 600/650. How important are these approvals for you?

CS: They are very crucial. We have long offered the highest quality aircraft maintenance services to business jet operators across the region. This includes providing 24/7 support for aircraft with an AOG issue. We have a team of expert and highly experienced engineers and technicians who provide this service, so the EASA Part 147 approval and the EASA Part 145 approval were both very important for us, for being a One Stop Shop.

Having the training approval in house will have a positive quality and cost effect for our customers, as we can grow the team with extensive standards and experience.

We provide a very comprehensive maintenance service, which includes the ability to link online with the aircraft manufacture or the parts supplier's stocking system, if that is available. We provide full dispatch and documentation for all parts shipped, with a fast 24-hour AOG service. We will go all over the world to resolve AOG situations for our clients.

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“Our own in-house spares run to more than 5000 line items for business jets. We aim to keep our clients flying as near to 100% of the time as is possible. Plus, we also carry out all warranty claims monitoring for our clients, which includes dealing with programmes from Smart Parts, Support Plus, MSP, MSP Mechanical or Avionics, CASP, GE On-Point and JSSI etc.”

Being a game changer in the business operation, we also provide maintenance contracts for our customers on a “Not To Exceed” basis. This enables our customers to avoid unpleasant surprises at the end of the maintenance work. This way, our Clients are more comfortable with knowing the maximum final figure – even during the work process.

Our own in-house spares run to more than 5000 line items for business jets. We aim to keep our clients flying as near to 100% of the time as is possible. Plus, we also carry out all warranty claims monitoring for our clients, which includes dealing with programmes from Smart Parts, Support Plus, MSP, MSP Mechanical or Avionics, CASP, GE On-Point and JSSI etc.

We can also perform C Checks on larger aircraft, such as the

Boeing B737. We handle all airframe, avionics and engine maintenance, upgrades and modifications, and carry out engine inspections and replacement. We are approved for a wide range of aircraft and engine types.

Q: You recently also received FAA approval. What does this mean for you?

CS: It was another big step for us to support the N registered customers around the region. It is also an indication of our commitment to growth as a company and to our focus on quality.

Q: I believe you can also handle interior refurbishments?

CS: Yes indeed. We frequently carry out full cabin upgrades and refurbishments. The projects we have handled and continue to handle range from small enhancements to complete overhauls for aircraft. We are the maintenance location for Bombardier and Hawker business jets in Europe, providing technical services for Challenger CL601s, 604/605/650s Challenger CL300/350s and Challenger 850s. We also provide this for the Global 5000/6000 series and a wide range of Hawker aircraft types.

In addition to our wide range of capabilities, we also perform full aircraft painting with the highest “business jet” quality in our dedicated paint hangar.

Q: You have a strong charter element to your operation. What can you tell us about that?

CS: We have a wide range of aircraft available, able to fly from 7 to 15 passengers anywhere, anytime. For our charter



customers, it is as if they were the owner of the aircraft. We use our own aircraft for charter services, and we handle every detail of the trip, including catering, ground transportation and concierge services.

To sum up, we are the one of the best providers of business jet maintenance, operations and charter services across the region. We love to change the game and set the trends. |BAM

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Hundreds of business aviation professionals enjoyed a lavish evening at the 1923 Bourbon Bar, Las Vegas, on Wednesday 23rd October, at Bizav Media's NBAA-BACE 2019 Professional Networking Cocktail Reception. Guests rounded off a busy day at NBAA-BACE with a tremendous evening of networking and partying.

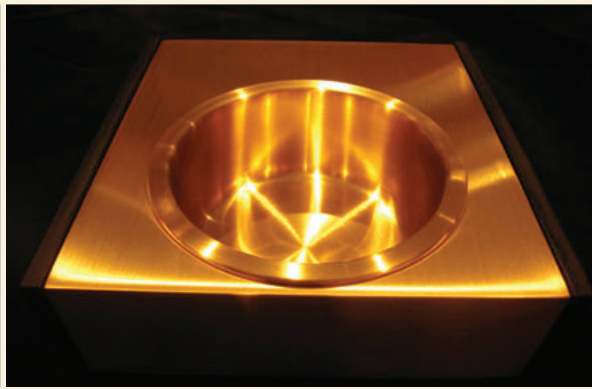
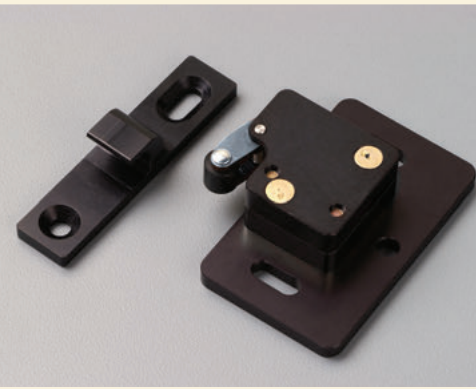




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For a complete gallery of photos from the event visit:
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GETTING BACK TO NATURE...

South Lodge Hotel & Spa, by Jane Stanbury,
BAM's Global Luxury Correspondent

“For use only in the event of accident or emergency, running out of wine doesn't count,” reads the notice above the emergency phones strategically located around the extensive spa at the West Sussex, UK, South Lodge Hotel & Spa. The message reflects the whimsical nature of the property, which sits resplendent in some 93 acres of terraces, gardens, lakes, woodland, parkland and manicured lawns. The extraordinary 19th century mansion appeals to those seeking a quintessential British experience, combined with modern day comforts.

The blend of traditional luxurious comfort, elegant modern country décor and a sense of humour, is beguiling. It reflects an approach designed to ensure guests enjoy ultimate rest and relaxation, accompanied by unequivocally detailed service, delivered with a genuinely warm smile. It is also discrete and consummately private, exemplified by its hosting of the G20 summit in 2009. The property was loved by Churchill and is equally adored by all its 21st century guests.

The neo-Jacobean mansion, with its impressive honey-brick façade, contrasts dramatically with the most recent addition to the hotel. A new spa, designed with sustainability in mind, mirrors its natural habitat. The green-oak clad exterior envelops a 44,000 square foot oasis, and is topped by a grass roof emulating the rolling South Downs. The natural hues and organic styling merge the lines between the building and the grounds.

The spa doesn't just look naturally inviting, it is environmentally friendly too. It generates its own power, using biomass waste from the hotel to heat the triptych of thermal areas, and the external hot tub's waters. The UK's first heated, wild swim pond addresses concerns about the effects of chemically treated water on health and

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The pièce de résistance however is the relax room featuring state-of-the-art egg-like loungers. The oval bed with its hooded top stimulates four senses using light, movement, sound and touch in varying formations.



the environment. The ample indoor pool is bathed in natural light through floor to ceiling glass walls which also optimise the pool's UV cleaning process. "Alchemists & Wizards" deliver intoxicatingly natural treatments using bamboo sticks, mud wraps and natural herbs.

The pièce de résistance however is the relax room featuring state-of-the-art egg-like loungers. The oval bed with its hooded top stimulates four senses using light, movement, sound and touch in varying formations and is an intriguing end to a day of treatments. Alternatively, one can choose to rejuvenate in Botanica, the spa restaurant which serves plant inspired plates to satisfy any palette. It even offers up the popular *Wasted Burger*, comprising leftover ingredients from the healthy breakfast juices.

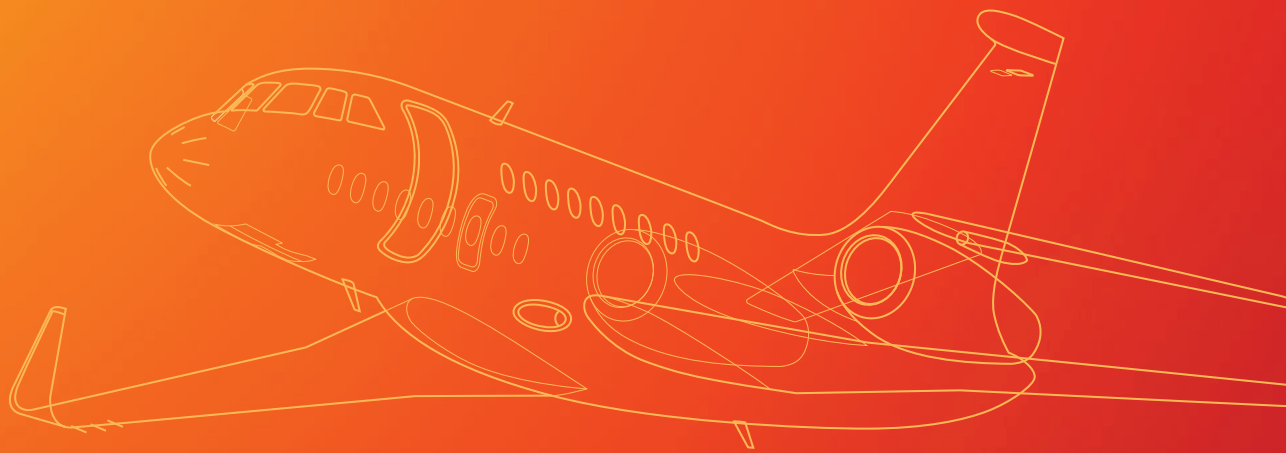


Nature is writ large throughout the hotel. The beautiful rooms are individually themed and named after orchids or Sussex locations. Many have breathtaking views across the South Downs. An empty vase sits on each window ledge with a message encouraging guests to bring back flowers picked along one of the many tracks and trails around the grounds. Rooms are capacious with high ceilings and traditional wood panelling fusing with inspired contemporary wall coverings.





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Quirky furniture exemplifies the humour with soft toy sheep acting as door stops. Sumptuous beds feature hand-made mattresses covered with crisp, deep linens and a pillow menu that offers a range of softness along with accompanying sleep scents. Walk in rain-showers, deep baths and of course his and her sinks set into beautiful marble countertops complete the elegant charm. The lower floor which gives directly onto the grounds has rooms set aside for those that want to share the experience with four legged friends. Each pet-guest is also treated to a sumptuous experience with lush beds and tasty snacks.

The adherence to local natural heritage flows through to the dining experience. The Camellia restaurant's seasonal fare combines vegetables from the hotel's walled kitchen garden, and the finest local Sussex ingredients to serve a modern version of traditional dishes. South Lodge game from the estate, local lamb or fish from the south coast are transformed into modern day masterpieces under the guidance of chef Jamie Gibson.

For an alternative Chef's table experience, The Pass restaurant is a refreshing evolution of the concept. The intimate restaurant offers a view of the kitchen through floor to ceiling glass dividers, enabling guests to watch the menu preparation unfold. Head chef Tom Kemble and his brigade deliver each exquisitely produced dish directly to diners, and as each course arrives the chefs chat about methods, techniques and ingredients.



Dishes can be tweaked to incorporate favourite ingredients, but only if they add to the flavour. Kemble blends his experience, gained from cooking in a number of produce-inspired restaurants around Europe, To this he adds the knowledge imparted by his Japanese grandmother, to produce each tantalising menu. Each of the eight courses are paired with a wine as recommended by the house sommelier according to the dish and the tastes of the guests.

From the heart of the city, to the heart of the countryside, takes just thirty minutes if travelling by helicopter from the Edmiston London Heliport. Yet guests flying in and setting down in the pastoral landscape will immediately notice that South Lodge is a world away from the hustle and bustle of city life. It is the perfect location for getting completely back to nature. |BAM





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