

WINTER 2023/2024

BUSINESS AVIATION MAGAZINE

BRIGHTEST HORIZON



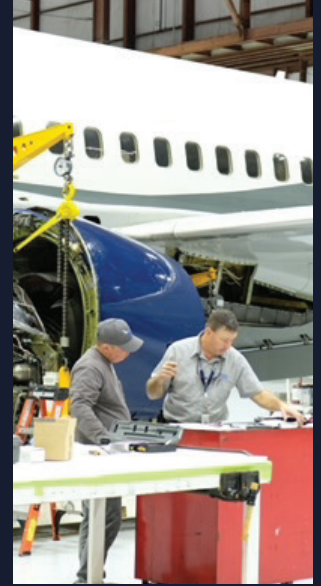
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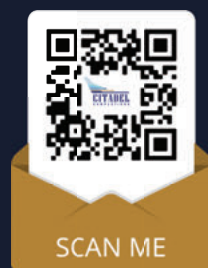
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RINGING IN THE NEW

As we head into 2024 there is much to be thankful for. Headline inflation in the US this time last year was over seven percent. Today, that headline number has been cut to just 3.1 percent. For jet operators, owners and charter customers, the fact that inflation is coming back under control will be excellent news.

At the same time, whispers of a coming recession, which were growing louder this time last year, have faded almost to nothing. US economists are generally agreed that we can look forward to a strong 2024. That too, is great news for business aviation in both Europe and the US.

Of course, November 2024 will see a highly charged US Presidential election, but probably the least said about that, the better. We'll all keep our fingers crossed that whatever the outcome, the result will be positive for business.

Probably by now nearly everyone in business aviation is keeping at least one eye on what is happening in the 'future flight' space. This embraces everything from drones to unmanned aerial vehicles to electric and hydrogen-driven aircraft. Change is happening at an amazing clip. Rolls-Royce, for example, is very close, according to reports, to proof-testing hydrogen as a fuel for its Pearl 700 business jet engine.

By the time 2024 rolls to a close, we'll probably be a long way further forward towards commercialisation on any number of these projects. How they will integrate and interact with business jets remains to be seen, but we are surely living in interesting times, as the Chinese curse has it.

Looking back, 2023 was a tremendous year for us at BizAv Media. We were delighted with the relaunch of our European networking event in Geneva during EBACE. We followed this up by forging a new relationship with the Hard Rock Café in Las Vegas for our American event during NBAA-BACE. On top of this, we launched video interviews and guided tours of some beautiful aircraft on our YouTube channel. These can be viewed at: www.youtube.com/@bizavmedia

So, now we are all firmly launched into the opening weeks of the new year, it only remains to thank all our friends, sponsors and advertisers for their continuing support. We wish you all a great and prosperous 2024.

ANTHONY HARRINGTON



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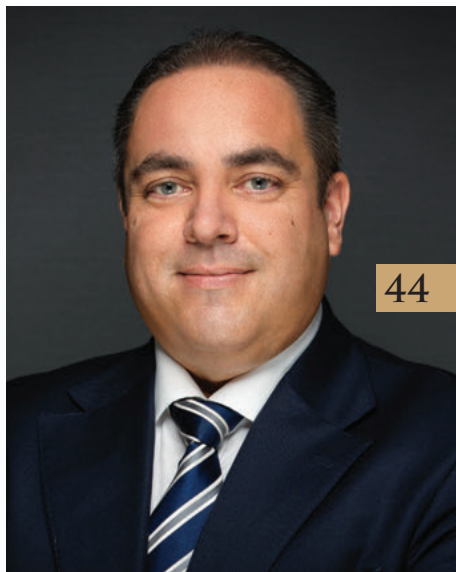
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BRIGHTEST HORIZON

Benjamin Murray, President and CEO of Skyservice Business Aviation, talks to Anthony Harrington about the company's successes since the pandemic

AH: Ben, the last time we spoke, in May 2021, Covid was in full cry. Skyservice emerged stronger from that period. What do you put this down to?

BM: When I reflect back, the quietening of activity in some areas of our business during the pandemic gave me and the leadership team a solid opportunity to assess and plan for the future. We took full advantage of the opportunity and planned out a path to what we describe as Skyservice 2.0. I will elaborate on the success of this plan and how it has evolved and developed since inception. What was absolutely key for us in the plan was to protect the jobs of our employees.

During the pandemic, our essential service teams like line service, concierge, CSRs, MRO, and pilots stayed on full-time, while other teams went to a four-day work-week. Our expectation was that when the growing pent-up demand for business aviation travel met up with the release of pandemic restrictions, we'd see a sharp pickup in business.

In fact, when the restrictions were lifted, the resulting demand for travel was massive. It was off the charts, and we gained immensely as an organisation from the decision to protect staff jobs over the Covid period.

AH: You have held top positions in some of business aviation's largest companies. What was the transition to Skyservice like for you personally?

BM: As you know, prior to becoming the CEO and an investment partner at Skyservice, I spent more than a decade at NetJets as its president & chief operating officer, served as the president and CEO of Executive Jet Management (EJM); growing the company to become the largest aviation company in terms of aircraft under management, and was president at Landmark Aviation, building it to one the largest FBO, MRO and aircraft management organisations before selling the company to BBA Aviation (Signature Flight Support).

By contrast, Skyservice is a smaller company. But what is great about that is the way that when we make decisions as an executive team today, we can see the results of those decisions almost immediately.

This is tremendously rewarding, personally. I consider myself to be very growth-orientated and entrepreneurial in my approach to management. It means that we can empower our people and that we can react quickly to opportunities. Similarly, we can take rapid corrective action if something is not working out.

“ I consider myself to be very growth-orientated and entrepreneurial in my approach to management. It means that we can empower our people and that we can react quickly to opportunities. Similarly, we can take rapid corrective action if something is not working out.”



AH: Perhaps the area of business aviation that recovered fastest, and that experienced near-exponential demand, was charter. What challenges did that pose for you?

BM: We had anticipated that there would be a strong recovery in the charter market. Of course, as it turned out, the recovery was beyond what we'd imagined. It was an absolute boom. Fortunately, we had made a lot of changes in our charter department. The aim was to ensure that we were supporting our aircraft management clients with a great system.

We made improvements to ensure that owners had a clear picture of the underutilised capacity on each managed aircraft. We had a comprehensive picture of the client's personal and business flights, as well as the availability of their aircraft for charter.

Canada has a limited supply of aircraft for charter. There are more charter clients than available aircraft. We're capturing more than our share of the available market by ensuring that we match clients with the right aircraft and by doing whatever we can to inform prospective charter clients about the benefits of charter.



“ One of the great, long-term advantages of running a successful charter operation is witnessing the evolution of charter clients becoming aircraft owners. Several of our more recent aircraft management wins have come from charter clients moving to ownership.”

One of the great, long-term advantages of running a successful charter operation is witnessing the evolution of charter clients becoming aircraft owners. Several of our more recent aircraft management wins have come from charter clients moving to ownership.

When clients are interested in exploring ownership, we walked them through the aircraft ownership process, provided expert advice on makes and models, and brought in our sales team to acquire the right size and purpose-based aircraft for each of them, based on their needs.

AH: It is a complex process, isn't it, to move from being a frequent charter user to becoming an aircraft owner?

BM: It is a complicated business. But we focus on being with the owner through the entire lifecycle. The foundation of our business is service and safety excellence.

So, when an individual or corporation charters with us and we notice that their use has increased to the point where ownership is a genuine consideration, we reach out to them.

Skyservice is a full aircraft services provider. We have our real estate business, by which I mean the hangars and our FBOs. Most of the aircraft we manage on behalf of owners are hangared



in our own secure state-of-the-art facilities. Plus, we have a really robust Maintenance Repair and Overhaul (MRO) business.

We provide a total solution which we wrap around the ownership. This includes crew support, customized aircraft management, plus putting together a good charter programme for them that can help to defray some of the costs of ownership.

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We are also the client's relationship manager with their aircraft OEM, and we have extremely close relationships with the likes of Bombardier, Gulfstream, Dassault, and HondaJet. With our ownership package, the owner knows they are going to get the best residual value on their aircraft when it comes time to sell and upgrade.

AH: How has your relationship with HondaJet progressed?

BM: Skyservice had already signed the MRO agreement and an authorised dealer agreement with HondaJet before I came along. The jets have gone very well for us and we have sold a lot of them. We've also done a really good job on the maintenance front. We have HondaJets from all over North America coming to our facility for maintenance work.

“ We provide a total solution which we wrap around the ownership. This includes crew support, customized aircraft management, plus putting together a good charter programme for them that can help to defray some of the costs of ownership.”

AH: What happens about aircraft painting? Is that something you do at your facilities?

BM: We don't paint aircraft, but we have a long-standing partnership with a trusted company that runs a paint shop next door to one of our MRO facilities. So that means we can consult and add a new paint scheme on an aircraft as an option when the owner brings his or her aircraft to our MRO.

AH: Many owners would have used the lockdown over Covid to bring forward any near-term MRO and upgrade work needed on their aircraft. Have you seen a falling away in the demand for MRO recently?

BM: As you know, Canada had 'stay-at-home' mandates and closed borders through the pandemic. Many of our owners chose to take advantage of the fact that it was difficult to fly, to bring forward any maintenance requirements. We had a lot of work of this nature in our MRO facilities.

Then again, aircraft usage has picked up strongly since the pandemic, and that too drives maintenance events, so while there has been some movement back towards more normal levels of demand, the MRO business has been good.





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Obviously, once the restrictions were lifted, aircrews and owners were really excited to start flying again. At the same time, there was a lot of fear among passengers of flying commercial with large crowds. So, we saw a real boom in first-time charter clients. They came to use with their travel schedules, asking things like: can you do a four-city pairing over two or three days? We'd see they were matched with the right aircraft for their needs. For them, they felt it was a great investment.

There has been some falling way, probably, as some folks return to flying commercial business or first class. But what I will say is that we currently have more requests for charter than we have ever had, based on the volumes of quotes that we send out each week. We are also, of course, seeing a lot of the same faces returning to use our charter services again and again.

AH: What is your employee headcount these days?

BM: We are now reaching over 900 employees. This is heavily weighted towards MRO and line services, plus we have our FBOs and our pilot and crew groups. We have approximately 50 people in our Global Operations Division.



This team handles multiple tasks and ensures our seamless operations, including aircraft dispatch and scheduling, charter services, weather reporting, crew logistics and maintenance releases.

It's a very busy place to be and our staff are highly trained and experienced. If you think about a high-demand day, where you can have large cabin aircraft all over the world needing flight permissions, fuel agreements, crew accommodation, and so on. Our exceptional performance is fundamental to delivering an exceptional service to our clients.

AH: How do you stay on top of such a complex, logistical web?

BM: We have incredible systems that provide us with a 'belt and braces' approach to prevent mistakes from happening. Safety, of course, is paramount in everything that we do. The name of the game is making sure we provide operational excellence and that we act with humility and empathy.

Aviation is a place where things can and do go wrong. You can get problems with ground transportation or have annunciator lights illuminate on an aircraft when an event is demanding attention. We get really good at making sure that the client receives the best service possible, keeping events low and the impact on a client to a minimum if not entirely removed.



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Rendering of new FBO in **Napa, California (KAPC)**



AH: Aircraft management tends to be a pretty intense part of the operation and it is one that puts you and your people in close contact with the client. How does that work for you?

BM: I have to say that I love the aircraft management business. It is undoubtedly an exciting place to be and has been for my 30+ years' experience in leading and shaping some of the best companies in the industry. There is never a dull day in aircraft management. As one of the few full-service aircraft operators in North America, we support the entire ownership experience through our sales and acquisitions division, our fuel operation, MRO, and so on.

This means that we can create a very fair and equitable aircraft management operation for our aircraft owners. We can drive costs out of the ownership process because we manage all of what happens around the aircraft. We are in a great position to be the best stewards of their ownership role. We control so much

of the ecosystem around the aircraft and by being completely transparent with the owner, the relationship between us provides Skyservice with so many opportunities to shine.

AH: What's been happening on the FBO front?

BM: Over the course of 2023, we have acquired one hangar, three FBOs, and are under contract to acquire a fourth FBO. This includes taking a financial interest in two FBOs in Florida and partnering with Fontainebleau Development. The first of these is Fontainebleau Aviation, based at Miami-Opa-Locka Executive Airport (KOPF). The second, which is currently under contract and is slated to close in the first quarter of 2024 is a greenfield site at Fort Lauderdale (KFL).

These two FBOs really put Skyservice on the map as an emerging operator in the USA. We love the fact that Jeffrey Soffer, the Chairman and CEO of Fontainebleau Development, which owns Fontainebleau Aviation, is staying

Rendering of new FBO and complex in **Seattle (KBFI)**



“ We have also expanded our footprint to Vancouver International Airport (CYVR) and to Napa, California (KAPC). We are building a new FBO and complex in Seattle (KBFI) so our expansion is going at a pace.”

on as a shareholder in the business. We'll be retaining the Fontainebleau Aviation name, and it really does open all sorts of new opportunities for us.

Jeff is a type-rated and enthusiastic pilot of his Gulfstreams and Globals and is a hugely dynamic, well-connected, and respected individual. It is tremendous for us to be able to partner with Fontainebleau.

What is key for us is that we are growing our reach to the level that our clients expect. We have also expanded our footprint to Vancouver International Airport (CYVR) and to Napa, California (KAPC). We are building a new FBO and complex in Seattle (KBFI) so our expansion is going at a pace. As of today, Skyservice is in over 13 locations across North

New FBO in Vancouver (CYVR)



America, and we continue to look for opportunities that best support the needs of our client base and help support communities in need of better business aviation support.

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NEXT GENERATION AVIATION

Norman Happ, CEO of Veryon, talks to Anthony Harrington about integrating next-generation AI and terabytes of data for aviation technicians

AH: Earlier this year you rebranded the company as Veryon, but what can you tell us about the business?

NH: Veryon has become a comprehensive technology platform that provides a vast range of technical information about a huge range of aircraft. For over 50 years, the company operated under the name of ATP. That also happens to be the name of the largest flight school in the US, so the name was both innocuous and potentially confusing.

Originally, ATP began as a publisher of aircraft technical manuals. Now as Veryon, we are so much more than that. Today, we're a comprehensive technology platform helping you better access publications, fix maintenance issues faster, and operate more efficiently without compromising compliance. The new Veryon name and branding better reflect the company's ability to lead the industry by taking technology to the next level with its machine-learning capabilities. Technical publishing continues to be a part of our business, but we now offer multiple solutions to solve a variety of challenges that are common within the aviation industry.



Norman Happ was appointed CEO and to the Veryon Board of Directors in March 2022.

Norm has more than 25 years as a transformative leader in the software and SaaS industries. His experience spans both executive and entrepreneurial roles in Fortune 500 companies as well as the founder of two technology-backed ventures. Norm has been widely recognized for his innovation in pioneering the Electronic Bill Presentment and Payment (EBPP) space which included founding Anachron, the European industry leader acquired by Billtrust (NASDAQ: BTRS).

He is credited with being an early designer and evangelist of SaaS technology and business models and as the designer of breakthrough data science algorithms related to revenue and customer retention. Norm is the holder of two US Patents.



The company demonstrated remarkable intelligence in publishing and pioneered a series of groundbreaking initiatives. In 1973, it took the binders that aviation mechanics and A&P technicians use and ensured that everything about the airframe that the technicians needed, was put into one binder.

This marked the beginning of a transformative journey—from transitioning data onto microfiche and CD-ROMs to the latest evolution, accessible now on smartphones and iPads. The whole idea was to put all the relevant information in one easy-to-access place.

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“ Our customer base is global. We now have 7,600 customers, over 75,000 users, and cover more than 142,000 aircraft.”

Then ParkerGale got involved. They acquired ATP and Casebank Technologies, which was based in Toronto, and focused on troubleshooting for technicians working on commercial and military aircraft. ParkerGale said, “We’ve got a bigger vision.” They proved it by also acquiring Flightdocs in 2021. AKKR joined forces with ParkerGale to help support that acquisition.

AKKR was excited about the idea of participating and helping to build out this broad portfolio of aviation maintenance and troubleshooting products. They became the majority shareholder in late 2021, and I joined as CEO a few months later.

My background was as an entrepreneur in technology companies. I’d spent eight years, for example, building out Intuit’s small business ecosystem and platform. Intuit saw the need for a comprehensive solution for small businesses to enable them to focus on their passions while we focused on the back-office of payroll, payments, and more.

When I sat down with the Board of Directors, it was very clear that even with all the company had so far achieved, there was so much more that we could do. There were great elements in all the products in our portfolio. Flightdocs, for example, had a very thoughtful user interface. The AI in Casebank was truly bleeding edge. Web services and great software architecture were also there in the mix.

What was lacking, when we took a good look at the portfolio, was a good footprint in the MRO space and among mixed-fleet operators, including those running fixed-wing and helicopters.

So the next step was for us to acquire Rusada. At the time, our customer footprint was over 80 percent concentrated in North America. Rusada, by way of contrast, has a global customer base and employee footprint. They had customer and supplier relationships that we didn’t have as well as experience in areas we were lacking in. The combined power of our teams, the expanded range of products, and our robust customer base provide aircraft operators with unparalleled features, including asset management, maintenance planning, supply chain optimization, compliance monitoring, and data analytics.

So, now Veryon has this tremendous portfolio of industry-leading solutions. 25 percent of the world-wide commercial fleet is leveraging Veryon to identify repeat defects. Veryon’s diagnostics products help keep their aircraft flying, and the same is true of a large number of regional airlines, along with general aviation and business aviation operators. We help everyone in the aviation industry get their aircraft more uptime. The key is having a better technology platform to manage everything from maintenance to technical publications. Our customers have been able to achieve an average 23 percent improvement in aircraft downtime costs.

AH: How big is Veryon now?

NH: Our customer base is global. We now have 7,600 customers, over 75,000 users, and cover more than 142,000 aircraft. We have been, and are, very thoughtful as to how and when we extend our team of employees. We have team members concentrated across the US, Canada, the United Kingdom, Scotland, India, and Sri Lanka.



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“ We are very interested in the potential of using AI in this space. We have some working prototypes that look extremely promising.”



AH: Are you happy with where Veryon is right now?

NH: I see a lot more opportunities ahead for us. In my nearly two-year tenure as CEO, I’ve observed numerous unmet needs in the space we operate within. It’s astonishing that many operators, particularly in business aviation, still heavily rely on manual techniques to manage their aircraft. This outdated approach not only consumes excessive time but also presents unnecessary challenges for aircraft professionals, especially amid the current global shortage of skilled technicians.

There is no doubt that building and deploying better software can really help operators do their jobs. It can also provide them with a way of drawing on experience and skills that can considerably extend what they can bring to their work.

For example, we are very interested in the potential of using AI in this space. We have some working prototypes that look extremely promising. Our aim is ambitious: integrating terabytes of aircraft data into our software to instantly deliver value to aviation operators around the world. Our capabilities

in deploying leading technology give us an exciting edge in the marketplace.

I consider myself to be a technologist at heart, and some of the things that we are now doing are incredibly exciting.

AH: Let’s take a quick diversion to talk about you. I understand you were awarded your pilot’s license around a year ago?

NH: Yes. I was meeting Cirrus in Knoxville. Everyone around the table was a pilot and they were of all ages. It brought home to me that this was achievable, and I knew it would give me a deeper appreciation and understanding of the business.

It took me a year, and I now fly a Cirrus SR20. I love it. They have a lot of technology built into the avionics that really helps to reduce the pilot’s workload. I’m completely hooked. I have a trip to the Grand Canyon coming up with my Dad. Together with my wife, we are doing all sorts of fun trips. I enjoyed working in financial services, but I’m now totally hooked on the world of aviation. |BAM

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Jan Kralik CEO



Petr Wessnitzer
Marketing Manager

Cessna Citation XLS+



20TH ANNIVERSARY *CELEBRATIONS* AHEAD!

Jan Kralik, CEO of ABS Jets, and Petr Wessnitzer, Marketing Manager, on the company's successful expansion of its fleet

INTRODUCTION

ABS Jets will celebrate its 20th Anniversary in 2024. The company's history goes back to 2004 when it took over from a local cargo operator called ABA Air. At the time the operator has just two small Citation Bravos. ABS Jets soon added an Embraer Legacy aircraft. Another joined the fleet shortly after and by 2008 ABS Jets was operating eight business jets. Today the company's fleet comprises some 18 business jets, with more on the way.

Q: Jan, as well as aircraft management and charter, ABS Jets is well known for its MRO capabilities. How did that start?

JK: We began doing line maintenance for our own fleet, then we obtained an MRO Part 145 Certificate and started doing big C-checks. We added ground handling services in Prague, then in Bratislava, and opened our OCC department. At this stage, we started to support external customers.



So, the company has grown from 25 people in 2005 to the point where we are now at 300+ employees, including pilots, maintenance technicians, ground handlers and flight planners.

Q: Where does ABS Jets stand today relative to other business aviation companies in the region?

JK: We are the number one company, without question,

in the Czech Republic and in Slovakia on any of a number of measures. These include metrics like the number of customers, the scale of services provided, employee numbers and turnover. But now, with all the additions to the fleet, and being a Part 145 MRO shop, we are now a very significant company both in the region and in Middle and Eastern Europe.



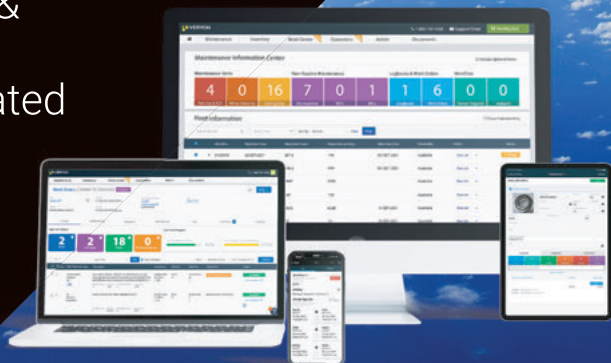
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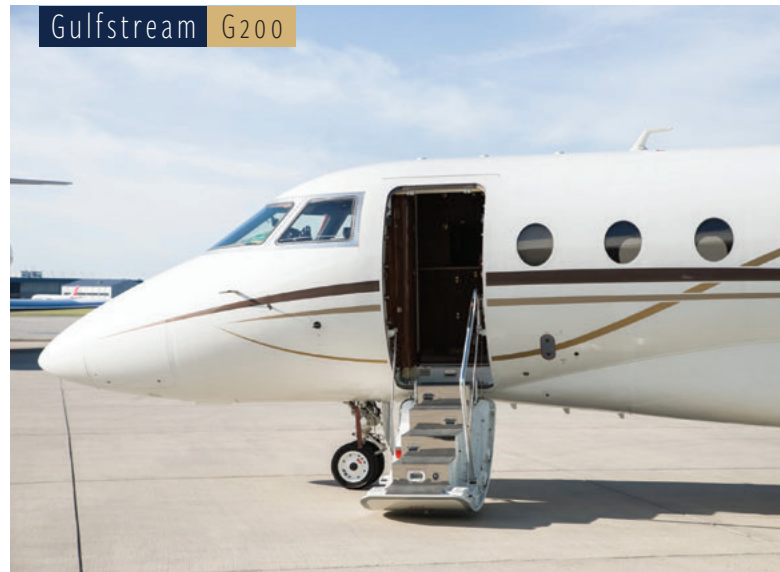
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Q: I believe you have recently added some new aircraft to your fleet?

JK: Yes indeed. We have added a Bombardier Challenger 605, a Cessna Citation XLS+ and a Gulfstream G200. I am delighted to add that more recently, in August we added a Gulfstream 500 to our managed fleet, though this aircraft is not available for charter. I am delighted to add that just a couple of weeks ago we also added a beautiful Gulfstream G650 ER to the fleet.

These additions to the mid-size and heavy jet categories of our fleet represent significant growth for us. All these aircraft are available at two hours' notice for private charter. We now have 9 Gulfstreams in total in our managed fleet, which makes us one of the biggest Gulfstream operators in Europe.

We are all really excited about the fact that ABS Jets will be celebrating its 20th anniversary in 2024. That is a fantastic milestone for us and for our clients.

Q: Petr, can you tell us a bit more about the new additions to your managed fleet?

PW: The Challenger 605 has a range of 7,400 kilometres and clients will be delighted to know that it has the widest cabin in its category, promising them a most luxurious, comfortable journey to their chosen destination. This aircraft is a popular choice for both longer transoceanic flights as well as for shorter trips around Europe.

In all, Challenger aircraft have flown a large number of flight hours to date. Their operational reliability is superb as is their safety record, and the Challenger 605 is a very popular choice among our customer base.

In particular, the spacious cabin, with club, conference and sofa seating provides a very comfortable space for passengers to rest and/or work during a flight. The cabin itself can be adapted to sleep up to five people comfortably.



“These additions to the mid-size and heavy jet categories of our fleet represent significant growth for us.”



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The Citation XLS+ is a very popular mid-sized jet with a range of 3,900 kilometres and offers very advantageous operating costs by comparison with other aircraft in this class, making it a great choice for charter customers.

The XLS+ has a high cabin ceiling along with a large luggage compartment and wide, adjustable seats.

As for the G200, it is amongst the fastest jets in the Super Mid-Size category and has a tremendous range, at 6,300 kilometres. It has a generous, spacious cabin and a proven ability to land at less accessible airports.

Q: What can you tell us about the new G500 that you have added to the fleet?

PW: The G500 is one of the most advanced long-range commercial aircraft. With a cabin that can seat 16 passengers, a cruise speed of up to Mach 0.90 (956 km/h) and a range of up to 5300 NM (9816 km), it is sure to satisfy even the most demanding of clients.

Two pilots control the aircraft, which has a wingspan of 26.55 m, is 27.78 m long, 7.78 m high and has a takeoff weight of 36 tonnes. During their flight passengers can fully relax in the comfortable and very quiet cabin, which measures 12.65 m in length with a width of 2.31 m and a cabin ceiling height of 1.88 m high. There is almost five cubic metres of storage space and the G500 has cold and hot catering.



Gulfstream G500

“ The G500 is one of the most advanced long-range commercial aircraft. With a cabin that can seat 16 passengers, a cruise speed of up to Mach 0.90 (956 km/h) and a range of up to 5300 NM (9816 km), it is sure to satisfy even the most demanding of clients.”

We really like this new addition to our fleet for several reasons. It is an absolutely state-of-the-art, long-range aircraft and is custom-made, so it looks absolutely unique. Not to mention the fact that it's a completely new aircraft.

Our fleet now includes the Gulfstreams G550, G650 and G200, the Embraer Legacy 600 and 650, the Bombardier Challenger 605, the Cessna Citation XLS+, the Dassault Falcon 7X and the Airbus H145 helicopter.

ABS Jet offers the full range of services from A to Z and provides a one-stop shop in one place in the heart of Europe. This is an essential advantage that is greatly appreciated by our clients. The services offered include private flights, aircraft maintenance, aircraft management, flight planning, handling and CAMO. |BAM

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GET COMFORTABLE

Peter Landquist, VP and senior advisor at CTT, and Eric Beverage, Sales Director, talk about Eric joining CTT, and the company's drive to improve the comfort levels for business jet passengers

Q: Peter, I understand that you are stepping back somewhat and cutting down your hours as you approach retirement?

PL: Yes indeed. Starting on 1 January 2024 I am reducing my working hours down to 60 percent. I should have retired last year, but I will be staying on at these reduced hours for the next two years. So, with the progress we have made in sales to both business aviation and commercial airlines, we clearly had a need to beef up our sales team.

Eric Beverage is a tremendous gain for CTT. He will cover North America and South America, while Ola Häggfeldt, Chief Commercial Officer (CCO), covers Europe and Asia. I will support both with my experience and the network of relationships that I have built up. Ola, I should say, joined us two years ago and has added greatly to our sales effort.

Q: How are sales going?

PL: We have an ACJ contracts for our humidification system for the ACJ320 and 220. Earlier we sold directly to completions centre. Then, together with ACJ and PMV we create an enhanced complete turnkey kit, with an STC for the 320 and 220 to offer as an option to customers.

We are, of course, also looking at other OEM platforms. These are very interesting times, and the sales potential is very exciting.

As we have said in previous interviews with Business Aviation Magazine, one of the big ironies about private jet travel is that conditions in the aircraft can get as dry, or drier, than the Sahara Desert. The only place moisture can come from on an aircraft in flight, if there is not a humidifier on board, is from the passengers. A business jet has very few passengers to provide moisture through their breathing. So very little new moisture is being added to the air.

Now, the inner skin on any jet gets so cold during a flight that the moisture that would normally be in the air in the cabin, freezes out on the metal. So, the air in the jet gets drier and drier as the flight continues.

The mucous membranes in the nose, mouth and throat dry out, creating discomfort for the passengers. This has a negative effect on taste, smell comfort, wellbeing, and health.

It follows that we have a tremendous pitch to make to aircraft owners and to OEMs, and our message is increasingly being heard and taken seriously. Eric will help us to press home this advantage across North and South America.

“ I have known Eric for more than a decade. We've been talking about it for perhaps two years, mostly joking, but we began talking seriously four or five months ago. We were delighted when he agreed to join us. He is someone who is very easy to like and is always active and successful. He will be a tremendous asset to CTT.” **Peter Landquist**

Q: When did you first start talking to Eric about joining CTT?

PL: I have known Eric for more than a decade. We've been talking about it for perhaps two years, mostly joking, but we began talking seriously four or five months ago. We were delighted when he agreed to join us. He is someone who is very easy to like and is always active and successful. He will be a tremendous asset to CTT.

Q: Eric, what was the attraction for you to take up your new role with CTT?

EB: As Peter says, we have known each other for a long time now. We would run into each other at business aviation shows and chat about everything. I started talking to them seriously around May / June 2023. What really attracted me to the company is that they have a tremendous product set and are a fantastic group of people.

They are a well-put-together company with a great product set and a fantastic story to take to business aviation and the airlines.

Peter Landquist

VP & senior advisor

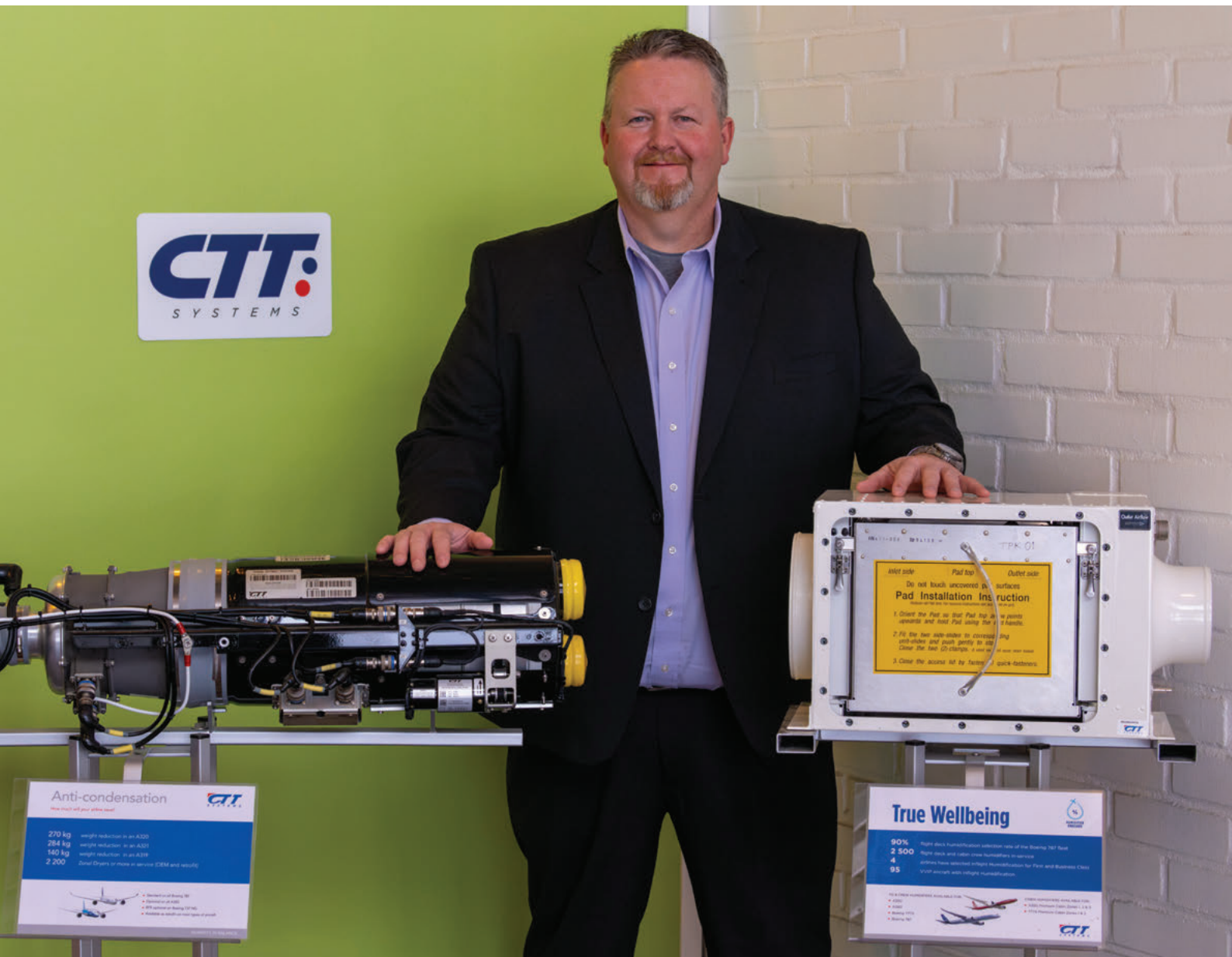
Ola Häggfeldt

COO

Eric Beverage

Sales Director





I was hugely attracted by the idea of being able to sell a product that will make a real difference to passengers flying private or commercial, whether they own the aircraft or are chartering. Humidity and the incredible dryness in business aviation cabins is a real issue.

We can actually help people avoid catching a variety of illnesses and viruses as they pass through FBOs all over the world. When your mucous membranes dry out, one of your best defences against noxious microbes vanishes. Many of the airlines and a lot of aircraft owners have not woken up yet to the fact that it is not necessary to be uncomfortable during a flight or to be vulnerable to illnesses upon landing. Being able to communicate this message and take this product and technology into the market is very exciting.

“ Many of the airlines and a lot of aircraft owners have not woken up yet to the fact that it is not necessary to be uncomfortable during a flight or to be vulnerable to illnesses upon landing. Being able to communicate this message and take this product and technology into the market is very exciting.”

Eric Beverage

I have a lot still to learn about the technology and I have a full six-day schedule that CTT has planned for me at their factory in Sweden, which I am very much looking forward to. |BAM

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PREMIUM PROVIDER

Holger Ostheimer, Managing Director of DC Aviation Al-Futtaim, on the company's VIP Terminal



Q : Could you provide insights into the history of DC Aviation Al Futtaim VIP Terminal, tracing back to 2013, and elaborate on its integration into Al-Futtaim's global operations?

OST: One of the first companies to see the potential of Dubai World Central (DWC) was Germany's DC Aviation. Based in Stuttgart, DC Aviation was already managing an aircraft in Dubai on behalf of a client based in the UAE. So, when the opportunity to move into DWC presented itself, the company began making plans to set up a new facility at the airport.

At the time, everybody thought we were crazy because it's in the middle of nowhere. But along with our joint venture partner – Dubai-based Al-Futtaim, a privately owned UAE business conglomerate, we set up the first fully integrated facility at Al Maktoum International Airport.

DC Aviation Al-Futtaim VIP Terminal (DCAF) capitalizes on Al-Futtaim's strong fundamentals and presence in the Middle East, and DC Aviation's global reputation as a premium provider of aircraft management, executive charter operations, business jet maintenance and consultation services.

The facility includes two dedicated hangars measuring 5,700 square meters and 7,500 sqm bringing the total land-side plot area to 24,000 sqm and apron area to 13,000 sqm.



VVIP customers can also enjoy the 1,300 sqm exclusive VVIP lounge area designed to international standards. It offers customers the highest levels of comfort and privacy, shower areas and a conference room.

DCAF's core areas of business include Aircraft Management, Maintenance, FBO and Ground handling services, as well as business jet charter.

Through our line maintenance capabilities which deal with a range of business jets, owners and operators receive a diverse set of maintenance services, from spare parts supply, procurement and storage to maintenance and airworthiness certification.

The Aircraft Management division is helping business jet owners to optimize their aircraft assets, by operating aircraft to meet the highest industry standards with regards to flight safety and airworthiness. Clients also benefit from significant cost-savings on insurance, fuel purchasing and other relevant flight support services.

Located in a prime position just off the airport's runway, the DCAF hangars and 7,700 sqm dedicated ramp parking enable us to support, maintain and operate private and business jets of all sizes. In addition to the VVIP lounge, customers also

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Our business jet charter clients will benefit from the operator's fleet size and variety and a 24/7 operation designed to provide immediate response to requests.

Q: Looking at DC Aviation's extensive history in aircraft management and maintenance, could you share key aspects and milestones that have shaped the company's expertise in this domain?

OST: We have steadily expanded our maintenance capabilities, investing in both headcount and training, as well as in tools, focusing on both quantitative and qualitative aspects. We believe there is a significant business opportunity, supported by the right people and external stimuli. Clients are increasingly finding us interesting, choosing us as their preferred option for maintenance work, and we aim to secure more aircraft maintenance business.

On the maintenance side, the company is approved to provide the entire maintenance scope for various aircraft, including the A320 family, Bombardier Global Express/XRS/500, Bombardier Challenger 604/605, Global 6000, and Global 5000 Vision Flight Deck type aircraft. Notably, we recently added wheel shop capability at our facility in Dubai South.

In April 2016, we obtained CAR145 approval from the UAE's General Civil Aviation Authority, allowing us to offer maintenance services for Bombardier Global Express and Challenger 604/605 type aircraft. The following year, our CAR145 approval was extended to provide line maintenance for the Dassault Falcon 7X aircraft type.

We are currently in the process of adding the Global 7500 under EASA approval for line maintenance. DCAF operates



as an EASA-approved outstation of DCA Stuttgart, and our capabilities include Wheel shop and Battery shop services, up to overhaul level.

Recently, we achieved a significant milestone by completing our first 60-month maintenance check on a Bombardier Global 6000 aircraft. Owned by a private customer, the aircraft underwent its first heavy maintenance check at our hangar at Al Maktoum International Airport. This inspection, the largest undertaken by the DCAF team, involved over 2,000 man-hours and adept management of several logistical challenges with the support of local and overseas partners.

In addition to the comprehensive inspection, the DCAF team provided invaluable support for various line maintenance activities, including Wheel Shop and Battery Shop requests, during the project.

This marks the first time our highly trained technicians have performed a 60-month check on a Global 6000 aircraft. The

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successful completion of this complex inspection underscores the investments we have made in expanding our capabilities, enabling us to provide reliable and cost-effective maintenance services to our customers. We are thrilled to offer this high level of expertise and comprehensive support, including battery and wheel shop capabilities, for Global and Challenger aircraft at DWC.

Q: Regarding the DC Aviation FBO at Dubai World Central, Aviation City, could you discuss the development, opening, and the array of services offered by the FBO?

OST: This year (2023), we celebrated our 10th anniversary since we commenced operations in Dubai. Over the past decade, we've achieved significant milestones, including the completion of our purpose-built integrated hangar facility with lounge and office areas in September 2013. This made us the first fully integrated business aviation operation at the then-newly opened Al Maktoum International Airport, located at Dubai South.

The company recently received the International Standard for Business Aircraft Handling (IS-BAH) Stage 3 certification for its Aircraft and Passenger Handling Services as part of its FBO, making it one of only two FBOs in the Middle East and one of 27 organisations globally to attain this highest level of safety standard established by IS-BAH.

This certification verifies that safety management activities are fully integrated into the business and that a positive safety culture is being sustained. We received our Stage 1 certification in May 2019 and Stage 2 in January 2021.

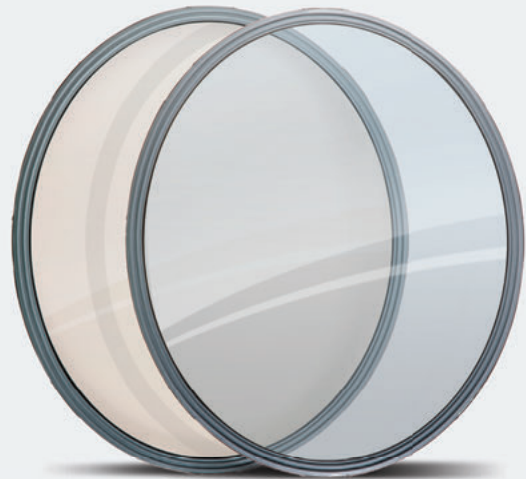
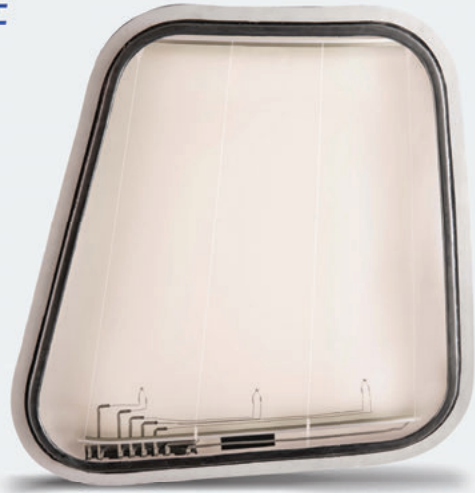
Recently, the DC Aviation Group, announced its subsidiary DC Aviation San Marino SRL (DCAS), has been issued its Air Operator Certificate (AOC) from the San Marino Civil Aviation Authority (SM-CAA) marking another significant milestone, as the Group celebrates its 25th anniversary. With the AOC in hand, DCAS can now operate and manage third-party business aircraft commercially, including aircraft charter under San Marino's T7 registration.

Q: Given the group's extensive experience in business jet charter how has the charter business performed in 2023, and what are the expectations for 2024?

OST: We anticipate steady growth in the near future, especially considering that the Dubai market has consistently outperformed other jurisdictions globally. Despite the challenging global economic conditions affecting various industries, Dubai, as part of the UAE, appears to weather headwinds with more resilience than other locations—an observation we've noted over the years.

“Over the past decade, we've achieved significant milestones, including the completion of our purpose-built integrated hangar facility with lounge and office areas in September 2013.”





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When all our charter aircraft are in operation, we can offer aircraft from third-party operators. Through our extensive network, we have access to over 7,000 aircraft worldwide, ensuring that we can meet the client's aviation needs even in situations when our fleet is fully engaged.

Q: How is the MRO (Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul) business contributing to DC Aviation's overall offerings for customers, and what role does it play in enhancing the company's services?

OST: We have two 145 approvals, a line maintenance approval for UAE GCAA covering the Global Express, Challenger 604 Variant and the Falcon 7X. We also have an EASA approval for Line and Base covering the Global Express Series, Challenger 604 Variant and additionally we can support Line maintenance for the A320, Falcon 7X and 900EX.

We are currently in the process of adding the Global 7500 under EASA approval for line maintenance. DCAF is EASA-approved as an outstation of DCA Stuttgart.

We also have a Wheel shop and Battery shop capability to overhaul level.

To maintain our accreditations, we need to keep our certifying staff current and are in the process of increasing business activity through third-party maintenance.

Q: Looking at DC Aviation's consultancy services in aircraft transactions, especially in larger-scale operations, could you provide insights into the role and significance of these services?

OST: Regarding our consulting service for companies and individuals interested in purchasing an aircraft, we operate with a comprehensive approach to ensure the best outcomes for our clients.

When a client expresses a need for an aircraft, the Director of Sales carefully assesses the client's specific requirements and preferences. Based on this initial assessment, the Director of Sales presents a selection of aircraft options that align with the client's needs. These recommendations are tailored to match various criteria such as size, range, features and budget.

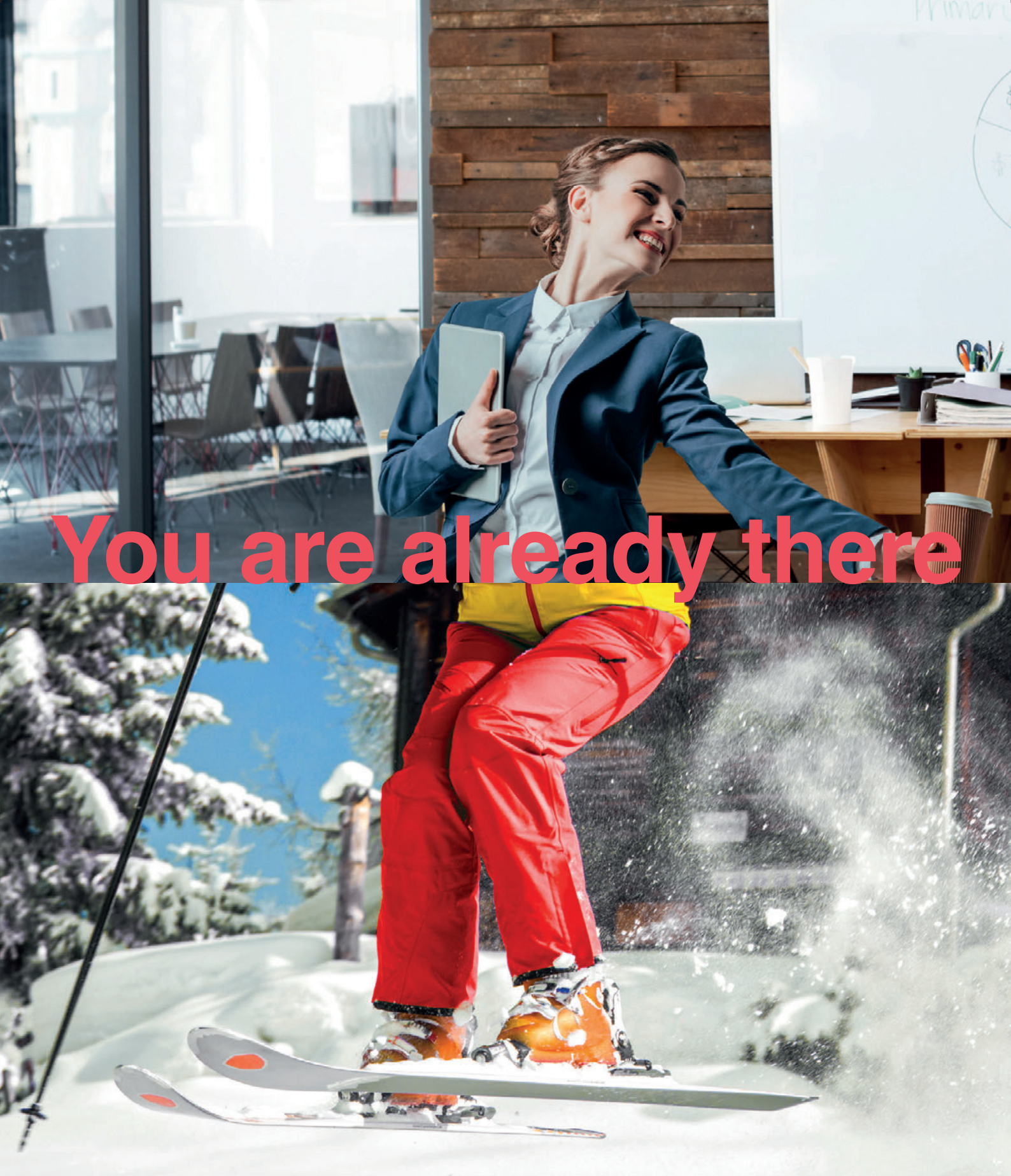
The client, with the assistance of our recommendations, creates a shortlist from the provided options. This shortlist is a reflection of their preferences and priorities.

Subsequently, our dedicated DCAF team considers the shortlist and conducts a thorough evaluation of each option. This evaluation takes into account factors like performance capabilities, maintenance history, regulatory compliance and cost considerations.

Finally, the DCAF team presents the client with a final recommendation, taking into account all relevant factors. This recommendation is aimed at guiding the client toward the most suitable aircraft that meets their specific needs and preferences.

Our goal is to leverage our expertise and industry insights to facilitate a streamlined and informed decision-making process for our clients in their pursuit of acquiring the ideal aircraft.

As we mark our 10th anniversary, we take great pride in the journey we have taken as a business. From day one, we were confident in Al Maktoum International Airport's tremendous potential to develop as a key hub for business and private aviation and thereby enhance the success of Dubai's aviation industry. We feel privileged to be a partner in the continuous progress of the UAE's expanding aviation industry and look forward to continuing to serve our clients with the best-in-class services. |BAM



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THE ACTION CONTINUES

Mark Butler, CEO of Action Aviation, talks to Anthony Harrington about his plans for Action Aviation, following the tragic death of the company's legendary founder, Captain Hamish Harding

INTRODUCTION

Action Aviation paid tribute to its Founder and former Chairman, Captain Hamish Harding, at an Aviation Industry event to coincide with the Dubai Airshow. Taking place at Atlantis The Royal in Dubai, the event brought together colleagues, partners, and friends to mark the extraordinary life of the UAE-based businessman and explorer.

The company, which Harding founded in Dubai in 2004, will remain dedicated to his vision, goals and aspirations under the leadership of new CEO, Mark Butler, and Managing Director, Frederic Dubant. Butler worked alongside Harding for 16 years, helping to take Action Aviation from an entrepreneurial start-up to a globally recognised and respected aircraft dealership. Butler will ensure the company continues to thrive in Harding's legacy.

AH: Mark, you've known and worked with Hamish for many years. Can you tell us a bit about your background both with the company and earlier?

MB: I joined Action Aviation in 2008, having previously worked at Patriot Aviation in Cranfield, where I was the Sales Director for Bell Helicopter. I met Hamish for the first time,

oddly enough, when I was acting as the ramp agent at Cranfield, since everyone else had gone home. Hamish landed his SJ30 on his way to Dubai and we had a chance to chat for a bit.

A few months later I got head-hunted by Hamish who wanted me to join him in Action Aviation, which was then really just him. This was right when the 2008 global credit crunch was in full cry, which wasn't exactly a great economic environment for a jet transaction business. I was doing really well at Bell, with a good pipeline of orders. However, I really wanted to get into fixed-wing sales and I saw the potential in the combination that was Action Aviation and Hamish.

From 2008 until 2012 Action Aviation was just Hamish and myself. At that stage, we were purely a brokerage service, dealing with buy and sell mandates. We were also focused on back-to-back transactions. Our idea was to build up a network of partners within the industry that we had an absolute trust with.

This was a novel approach, in a sense. The aircraft transaction business is hugely competitive, not to say cut-throat. Not many brokers will give out serial numbers or end buyer details to other brokers, such is the fear of getting a deal taken out from under you.



“ From 2008 until 2012 Action Aviation was just Hamish and myself. At that stage, we were purely a brokerage service, dealing with buy and sell mandates.”





Mark Butler, CEO, & Frederic Dubant, Managing Director

So, we worked hard at building a business model with our partners that basically said, my word is my bond. It was all about gentlemen's agreements. You did the deal on a handshake, and you didn't go back on your word. Everyone was very happy with that and the approach was instrumental in us winning business and growing strongly. This is still very much the fundamental core of the way Action Aviation does business today.

AH: I probably need to ask you how you feel about filling the shoes of someone like Hamish, who was an absolute industry icon and legend.

MB: I don't think that anyone in business aviation can point to a bigger pair of shoes. Hamish's character, work ethic and passion for exploring, were and remain legendary. He

was totally committed to any activity he took up. He either didn't touch it at all, or he went at it 100 percent.

That said, although Hamish was recognized as the lead singer of our band, it was the collective effort of the team behind us that accounted for our success. Their knowledge, work ethic, and commitment have been instrumental in bringing our company to new heights.

Today, we continue to build on that foundation and want the industry to know that we have a strong team in place. Our team has been just as busy since Hamish's passing, signing contracts and delivering jets to clients within days of the tragic event. And our commitment remains unwavering.





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AH: I believe you have just taken delivery of your second BBJ?

MB: Yes, and we are expanding that to another two BBJs, which we are in the process of identifying as we speak. So, we will have three BBJs by the end of Q1 next year, on charter certificates. That's the goal.

AH: How much demand do you foresee?

MB: Our recent experience at the Dubai Airshow has demonstrated the region's great interest in BBJ-style travel. We are thrilled to have received such a positive response and confident to keep our BBJs busy. Our AOC will be coming through in January, which is a significant investment for the company. This decision was made based on the tremendous response we received at the show.

AH: I take it that both the BBJs that you are seeking will be pre-owned?

MB: Yes indeed. We have identified the first of these and we are actively looking for the second. These are very complex aircraft to buy so you need to be meticulous and careful. However, there are some great pre-owned BBJs on the market.

AH: How do the operating costs, and therefore the charter fees, compare against large business jets like Globals and Falcon 10Xs?

MB: What is certain is that the annual costs of operating a BBJ are on par with those of a typical business jet, quite often, the BBJ tends to be a more cost-effective option. And given the charter rate similar to that of a Global 6000, for instance, the BBJ provides significantly more usable and available space.

Imagine soaring through the skies in a luxurious flying apartment. People who have flown in a well-appointed BBJ are very reluctant to go back to chartering a business jet. The latter can feel too limiting in terms of space and amenities.

Speed-wise, a BBJ will take perhaps a little longer to complete a trans-Atlantic flight, but you will get to your destination feeling much more refreshed and having enjoyed so much more comfort. This really resonates well with high-net-worth individuals.

Another positive, of course, is that if the aircraft runs into a technical issue, it is much easier to find technicians who can work on 737s or ACJs, than it is to find mechanics for a Bombardier, Dassault or Gulfstream. The convenience and speed of obtaining parts is a massive bonus for a BBJ operator. Furthermore, these aircraft are highly impressive in terms of their technical reliability.

AH: On the aircraft transaction front, I take it that you specialise in the larger end of the market?

MB: Yes, Action Aviation's primarily specialises in longer-haul aircraft. We do the odd Phenom sale or purchase but rarely deal with Hawkers or Citations. Our starting point tends to be Challenger 604s, Legacy 600s and above. Our expertise lies in Gulfstreams, Globals, and, naturally, BBJs and ACJs.

AH: How do you rate the market right now?

MB: Historically, Christmas is a very busy time going into charter. We'll be operational from January on the charter front, and I expect demand will continue to be good through the start of 2024. On the aircraft transaction front, the opposite is true, the billionaires and multi-millionaires are off to their holiday



“ We will have three BBJs by the end of Q1 next year, on charter certificates. That’s the goal.”

destinations over Christmas, so there is a noticeable shift in the aircraft transaction market during the holiday season.

Overall, the market has slowed a touch, but there are still

marginally more buyers than there are aircraft. Although it’s not as animated as it was a few months ago, the market is still in a strong position. Looking ahead, we remain optimistic about what’s in store for the year to come. |BAM

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RIDE INTO THE SUN

MaKayla Gorski, Director of Aircraft Management at Sun Air Jets, talks about the delights and challenges of aircraft management



Q: MaKayla, we last spoke when you were with Meridian. Can you bring us up to date with your role now at Sun Air Jets?

MG: Time has certainly flown since! Just a short time after Meridian sold its aircraft management business in 2020, I met Sun Air Jets' President & CEO Brian Council at an industry show and a short while later, joined the team with Justin Sherrill. Since then, our aircraft management operation has grown exponentially and with that, we've made some pivotal changes, as well as added additional support.

Q: How big was the company's aircraft management operation when you joined?

MG: Our managed fleet has nearly doubled in size since 2020, and is fast approaching 25 aircraft. Most recently, we've welcomed a factory delivered G650ER, along with a Global 7500, which have been great wins for us. We've been able to grow at a pace that is perfectly balanced to best serve our clients.

Q: Are you happy to take on clients who are not interested in having their jets chartered out, as well as clients who are happy to have the unused time on their jets offered for charter?

MG: We're certainly accustomed to managing any owner preferences. We'll work for both types of clients. If they want



to get plenty of charter hours, our charter team excels at leveraging the aircraft. If they want us to run their aircraft as a Part 91, we'll do that for them too.

Q: How are you enjoying your role as Director of Aircraft Management, which I believe is a role you share with Justin Sherrill?

MG: I love it. I went off on maternity leave about a year ago and when I returned, I was promoted to Director, which was tremendous. Aircraft management is always full-on and so rewarding.

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Even with the highest standards of service, things can go wrong in aviation. It's really about doing best by the client to ensure that everything goes right and minimising any inconvenience when unforeseen issues arise. It is all about managing the relationship.

At the same time, there are so many positives that we provide for our owners and for our charter customers. With our owners, it is all about running an open book. We can show exactly how we fight to save them costs and time. Our FBO at the Camarillo Airport has line service capabilities, and, as I said, we have full Part 145 repair station certifications for both our newly constructed facility at the Van Nuys Airport and for Camarillo. Our management operation is well supported by the 100-strong employee team that we have at Sun Air Jets.

Q: Clearly that initial conversation with Brian Council went very well. What can you tell us about the history of Sun Air Jets?

MG: Brian really is Employee One here. He was a tax attorney and went to see our owner, who'd bought a flight school 23 years earlier. The owner of the company had a couple of aircraft which were being managed by another organisation. Brian joined with the brief to make the company profitable. He took the decision to build the FBO that we have at Camarillo, along with a hangar to house the aircraft.

Then he obtained a Part 145 Certificate for Sun Air. Brian had the foresight over 10 years ago to see that there was a real need for aircraft to be based at Van Nuys. It was one of the most popular airfields west of the Mississippi. We took on a hangar there, then a second and some office space, and then another. It takes vision to stand on an empty part of the airfield and say, we are going to put a hangar here and fill it with managed aircraft one day.

We now have over 100,000 square feet of hangars at Van Nuys and about the same in Camarillo. That makes us one of the very few aircraft management companies on the West Coast that can tell clients that we can cater for their aircraft in our own hangars, which is a tremendous advantage for us.

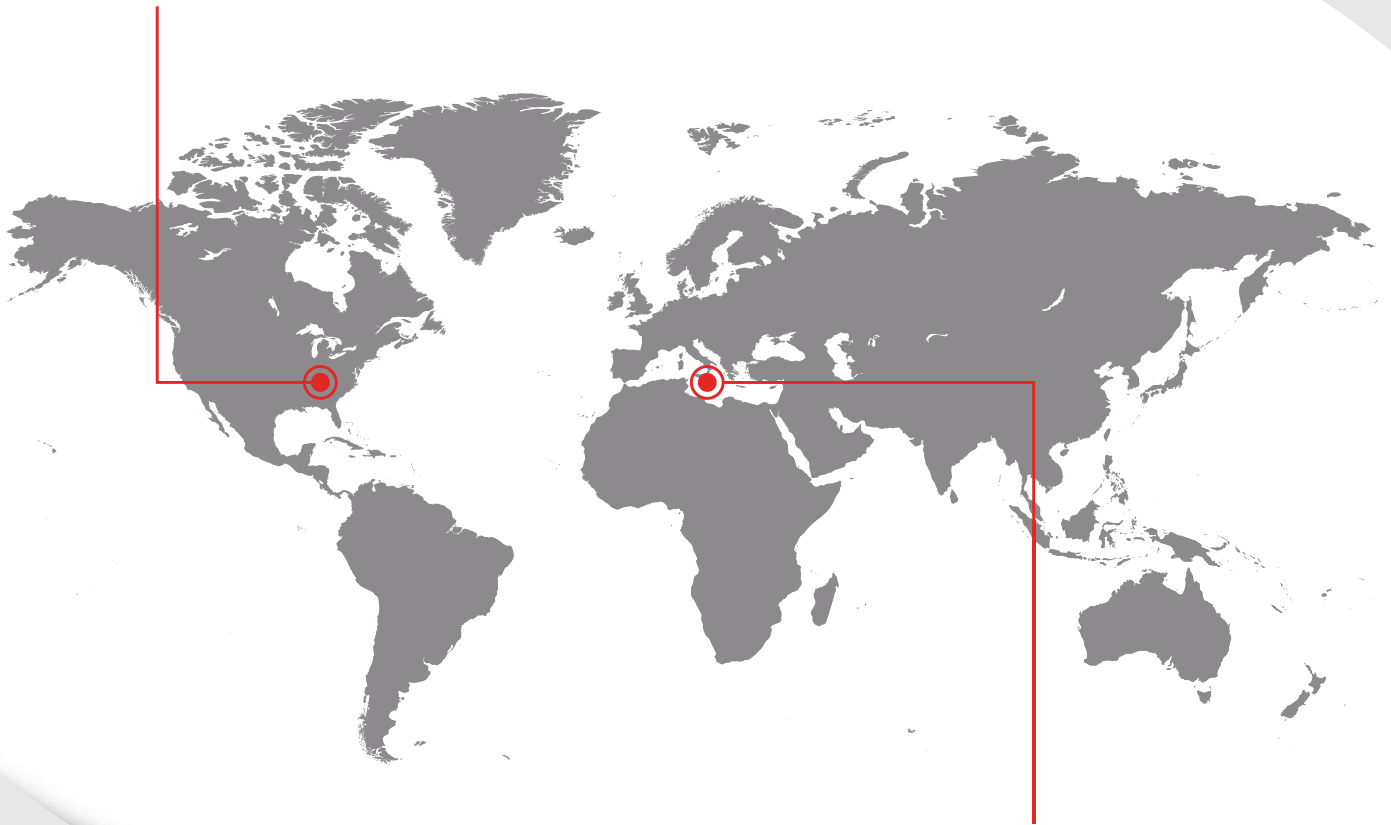


Q: How much educating do you have to do with new aircraft owners?

MG: We've seen a large increase in first-time owners, and clearly, there is a lot we can do to help them come to terms with what is involved in aircraft ownership. There are so many complex questions that must be worked through, depending on the usage profile envisaged for the aircraft.

Our goal is to help them to understand what is involved by way of operating costs. Typically, they already have a firm idea as to whether they want to charter or operate on a Part 91 basis. If they expect to fly 400 hours per year, for example, then chartering is unlikely.

As to the future, we are excited for growth, but at a pace that enables us to ensure our clients receive the same high standard of care and attention that they enjoy today. We're full steam ahead and there are lots of smiling faces in our office! |BAM



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What goes in Vegas, stays in Vegas!”, as the saying goes. However, we couldn’t keep our recent Las Vegas exploits a secret if we wanted to. When the great and the good of the business aviation community came together at the Hard Rock Café for a good old networking bash, the energy and vibe were immense. The word on the street the following day was that it was “The Best Party Ever”.

Powerful executives from across the globe were seen happily rubbing shoulders with movers and shakers from all facets of business aviation. You could see owners and operators talking with brokers and financiers. There were interior designers chatting about finishes and ergonomics with

completion experts and material suppliers. Flight directors were comparing fuel savings and maintenance challenges with the heads of FBOs and MROs.

You name the topic, and it was surely a part of the overall flow of the event. Events like this are never easy to organise. The BizAv team pulled out all the stops and ensured, with the help of the enthusiastic guests, that everything came together gloriously.

Though the journey had its challenges, the end result was well worth it. We owe so much, truth be told, to our sponsors, friends, supporters. So, we send a heartfelt thanks to the whole Hard Rock team and to our sponsors, advertisers and friends from the industry. Without you, none of what we do would come to fruition.



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If you have attended, enjoyed and benefitted from any BizAv Media gathering, we'd like to invite you to get in touch and work with us to make our next event even bigger and better. That, as always, is our goal!

Wednesday, 28th May, Geneva (during EBACE) and Wednesday, 23rd October, Las Vegas (during NBAA-BACE) are the dates and locations to keep in mind when planning for the coming year.

Look out for the BizAv Media Newsletter and YouTube channel in 2024 to keep up to speed with all the latest news and views. |BAM

For a complete gallery of photos from the event visit: www.bizavltd.com/bizav-events/nbaa2023party



SOARING AHEAD

David Vanderzwaag, CEO of AIRHAWKE, talks to our Global Luxury Correspondent, Jane Stanbury, about the acquisition of Berletex Aero Design

JS: You acquired Berletex Aero Design nearly two years ago, why did you do it and how has that transition been for you and the team?

DV: We knew that the business had a great depth of experience, especially in the VIP aircraft completions/business jet segment. Additionally, we were aware that their business model was well aligned with our approach, which is to work with a select portfolio of repeat customers who value our expertise to support completion, refurbishment, or



David & Rachel
Vanderzwaag



“ We’ve not so much changed it as expanded the portfolio of capabilities.”

modification projects. We wanted to acquire a business that was a good fit not just in terms of service and commercial aspects, but in terms of company culture. Our people are one of our strongest assets, so we’ve worked hard to integrate them to enrich our offering.

JS: Have you changed the business model since the acquisition?

DV: We’ve not so much changed it as expanded the portfolio of capabilities. In addition to the design and engineering elements, we’ve added structural analysis and certification to



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the menu. This adds real value for our customers as invariably if we are working on a modification, it will inevitably require structural testing and a subsequent supplemental type certificate. Our strategy is to offer a single resource that delivers expertise to our clients, and their customers too. We've made it a foundation of our business that everybody owns the project they work on. This generates a sense of pride and customer focus as the team works with integrity to make sure we meet our aims and objectives. It is our passion to create innovative solutions that exceed expectations.

JS: The company heritage is built around VIP design engineering – is this still your main focus-?

DV: We remain focused on offering the requisite engineering for our existing customers while diversifying into other segments like special mission, medevac and cargo. We have worked for more than 25 years supporting executive airliners from Airbus A320 size up to Boeing 747 and 777 airframes. We are also well known for our work on the Bombardier business and commercial jets as well as Dassault and Gulfstream types.

The list continues to grow and we will be adding more of both executive airliner and business jet models through the next twelve months. Our larger cohort of colleagues has a significant background in special mission and cargo aircraft modifications. An undisclosed business jet airframe has already benefitted from these capabilities for an ISR special mission project.

I was also the face behind a large cargo door conversion program for a Dash 8-300 in Canada. The medevac sector is also very close to our hearts. One of our children was born with a heart defect and during his first year, he needed medevac services twice. Understanding the value and importance of this sector from a personal, as well as professional perspective is motivating us to become more involved. A number of our colleagues have worked on these types of projects in the past and it's an area we plan to grow.

JS: How do you find talent in a sector where recruiting experience, knowledge and talent is so challenging?

DV: I've been working in this sector for a long time and in prior roles had experience of working with what is now the AIRHAWKE team. In the last twelve months, we've added nine team members, mainly from my network. We're also continuing to enhance our highly experienced team which has resulted in a dynamic culture within the company. This sparks ideas, energy and a genuine collective belief in our abilities to surmount each project. We thrive on being told that something is pretty much impossible and then making it possible.

We're also augmenting our team through the concept of a distributed global workforce by creating a network of customer-facing engineers located near our customers. We can deliver on-site support immediately and it allows us to pull from a greater talent pool internationally. Smartsheet software gives all team members complete, real-time visibility via a digital dashboard on every hour that goes into each program which helps develop strong relationships built on trust and familiarity, which in turn improves efficiencies.

JS: I know you're a fan of embracing technology, how are you applying that to AIRHAWKE?

DV: Technology can be a real game changer, and we are already initiating the use of augmented reality (A/R) for aviation design engineering. There are many benefits in doing so. It improves communication between the customer and our team and reduces the amount of time the team has to be onsite with the customer. It also improves efficiency and increases output. Significantly, it limits fitting errors, which reduces waste generated during modification.

The A/R facilitates direct interaction with 3D content as we replace traditional 2D installation drawings with model-based definitions. By adapting software compatible with the Microsoft HoloLens holographic headset, an aircraft technician can view virtual engineered components in context on a green airframe, giving a real perspective of how the product interfaces with the physical structure.



JS: What do you see as trends in modifications and conversions over the next twelve months?

DV: Following the pandemic, we are seeing more interest in multi-purpose aircraft with either interiors that can be changed rapidly, or double up as VIP, medevac or cargo. Multi-use aircraft can help an owner offset costs by operating a machine that can serve more than one purpose. We're also expecting that as more regional jets are taken out of service, and the demand for corporate shuttles and aircraft continues, modifications of these airframes will grow.

This is a great way for an owner who is looking for a customized large cabin jet to access business aviation without investing huge sums. Connectivity is also driving modification demands. Owners are increasingly equipping more than one system to the airframe and this is driving design engineering modification. And then of course there is the advanced air mobility market which will influence change for sure and enable new air transport possibilities. It's an exciting time to be in the business. |BAM



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COOLEST JOB FOR AUTUMN

Autumn Duntz, founder of Autumn Elizabeth Design, talks to BAM about forming her own design company

Q: What was your entry into the world of design, Autumn?

AD: My journey into the world of design began with my college degree in interior design, setting the stage for a transformative summer internship at Gulfstream. It was this experience that ignited my passion for aviation design. I always knew I wanted to find a niche within interior design, I thought originally it might be yacht design, but the dynamic atmosphere at Gulfstream pointed me squarely towards the world of jets, where I felt an immediate connection.



During that internship, I played a supporting role within the design team, gaining priceless insights into supplier interactions, customer presentations, and the intricacies of workshop coordination. With my degree completed, Gulfstream welcomed me back, offering a position as a visualization designer and soon after as an interior designer. This opportunity allowed me to delve into the intricate world of interior & exterior design and establish connections with the paint and interior shops, enriching my skills with an understanding of both aesthetic and practical considerations, particularly in crafting maintenance-friendly designs.

Q: What was the background to forming your own design company?

AD: The beginning of my own design company, Autumn Elizabeth Design, traces back to my diverse experiences in aviation. Specializing in refurbishment projects, my focus was on tailoring designs to the unique preferences of clients without preset options. The varied scope and intricate problem solving added a dynamic aspect to my responsibilities.

In 2019, I felt compelled to venture into entrepreneurship, driven by a vision to offer clients a comprehensive interior design solution. While my previous experiences were



enriching, I saw an opportunity to be fully immersed in each project, dedicating myself to both the design process and being the client's advocate throughout their refurbishment.

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Q: How easy was it to get started on your own?

AD: Getting started on my own has been both challenging and rewarding. I started out by creating a website and writing blogs centred around aircraft refurbishment, sharing the information I know best. I also designed concept projects to express my vision. Sharing my insights eventually resulted in my first significant project—a substantial refurbishment covering both interior and exterior aspects, which remains one of my favourite projects to this day.

As I committed myself to the initial project, momentum organically grew. One of the most fulfilling aspects of my journey is the honour of having repeat clients who entrust me with their subsequent aircraft projects. While the path had its challenges, the opportunity to design for clients and guide them through the process made the effort truly worthwhile.

Q: What about today? What is demand like?

AD: Currently, the refurbishment market continues to experience strong demand. Most major refurbishment facilities are operating at full capacity. The high level of activity is evident in the crowded schedules of these facilities.

In response to the current market dynamics, I'm advising clients to secure slots with refurbishment facilities well in advance—ideally, at least six months ahead. This strategic planning allows for a smoother and more efficient process.

However, even with last-minute requests, we can find solutions by designing around tight schedules and expediting the process. This flexibility ensures that, regardless of the timing, I can provide the high-quality service and personalized attention that my clients expect.

Q: How do things work between you and the refurbishment houses?

AD: The collaboration between my design firm and the refurbishment house is deeply rooted in a relationship-oriented approach. Our goals align well with each other. Part of my job is to help the refurbishment facility get the design details efficiently and to help answer any questions they have about the specifications as quickly as possible. I also like to be involved in the bidding process. That way I can make sure we have a clean and detailed proposal to the client. With this approach, when the project starts, things run smoothly.

I also undertake the crucial role of quality control, meticulously checking the facility's work before presenting it to the client to ensure it meets both their expectations



“ I saw an opportunity to be fully immersed in each project, dedicating myself to both the design process and being the client’s advocate throughout their refurbishment.”

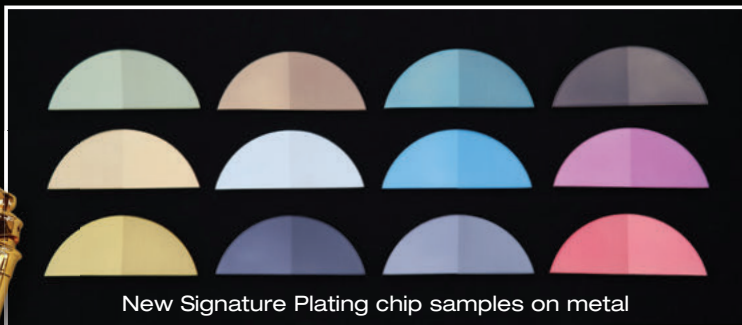
and industry standards. I act as a conduit between the refurbishment facility and the client, providing valuable context and establishing clear expectations. By aligning both parties on the project’s vision and specific requirements, we work together to deliver an exceptional final product.



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“ Since starting my business, I have completed 67 aircraft refurbishments, with a portion of this stemming from my collaboration with Jet Edge. I developed the branding for their fleet interiors, an experience that was truly rewarding. The momentum continued into 2023.”



Q: Can you say how many refurbishments you have completed since you opened in June 2019?

AD: Since starting my business, I have completed 67 aircraft refurbishments, with a portion of this stemming from my collaboration with Jet Edge. I developed the branding for their fleet interiors, an experience that was truly rewarding. The momentum continued into 2023, which has proven to be a great year. I am currently working with several clients on design projects slated for 2024, and I can't wait to see them come to life!

Q: Are you still enjoying running your business?

AD: Absolutely. I think I have the coolest job in the world! |BAM



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UPGRADING THE BEST

Madonna W. Y. Fung, General Manager of HKBAC, speaks to BAM about the company's history, awards, and the latest improvements and expansions

Q : Madonna, what can you tell us about the history of the Centre, including its founding in 1998, and the thinking leading up to its creation?

MF: Given Hong Kong's strategic geographical location as a gateway to Mainland China, and its reputation as a vibrant metropolis, the city has long been an Asian aviation hub. But before the Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) commenced operation in Chek Lap Kok in 1997, there was no Fixed Base Operator (FBO) dedicated to business aviation.

Our VIPs and busy business travellers had to transit through terminals packed with travellers. In 1998, the situation changed with the inception of the Hong Kong Business

Aviation Centre (HKBAC). This came about thanks to major shareholders. These included Sun Hung Kai Properties, the Kadoorie Group, China Southern Airlines and Signature Aviation, who saw the market potential and grasped the opportunity to invest in and develop, the business aviation sector in Hong Kong by installing Hong Kong's first (and only) FBO.

With HKBAC's unique shareholder mix, which combined, for example, a premium hospitality service provider and a property development expert, HKBAC was ideally placed to offer a unique and comprehensive flying experience, along with expert service, from day one. We are well-recognized for our top-notch services which are always provided to the highest international safety standards.



HKBAC's outstanding performance has won us many international and industry awards, spurring us on to scale new heights.

It has been amazing to witness the significant growth of the business aviation community in Hong Kong over the past two decades. HKBAC's hangars increased from one to three. Hangar 1 opened in 1998 while hangars 2 and 3 opened in 2007 and 2012 respectively, for a combined total of close to 12,000m².

Our apron has expanded from 2,700m² to 50,000m², an area equivalent to seven standard football pitches. Our business aviation network now covers more cities than are connected by commercial aviation. We have grown from a few hundred flights handled per annum back in 1998 and now serve an annual peak total of nearly seven thousand flights.

Q: Can you tell us a bit about your appointment and career, and your ambitions for HKBAC going forward?

MF: I was the Company's first employee, having joined in 1998 when HKBAC was first established. Since then, I have been leading the team and now have more than 30 years of

experience in business management. This includes corporate finance and private client sales.

As GM, I work directly with the Executive Committee, monitoring both local and international business aviation development trends. I have oversight of HKBAC's Management, Operations, and Marketing activities.

I hold a Master of Business Administration from the University of Technology, Sydney, and am a Chartered Accountant and a Justice of Peace in Sydney, New South Wales, Australia.

Q: What does the future look like for HKBAC?

MF: Hong Kong's position as an international aviation hub is designated in the Nation's 14th Five-Year Plan and confirmed in the Outline Development Plan for the Greater Bay Area (GBA) of Mainland China.

I believe that HKBAC is well placed to seize the opportunity to enhance connectivity between the Mainland cities, in particular those in the GBA, and the rest of the world. In fact, the demand for charter flights has risen significantly during and after the pandemic, among a growing number of



The renovated passenger lounge facility, featuring comfortable private seating areas, is conveniently located near the co-located CIQ Hall, offering a seamless and enhanced customer experience. With the lounge's proximity to the CIQ Hall, passengers can enjoy expedited customer and immigration clearance processes.

first-time private jet users and group travellers. HKBAC will continue to invest in the next generation of business aviation to grow our business while further bolstering Hong Kong's position as an international aviation hub.

To meet the increasing movements and serve the rising number of aircraft at HKBAC, we have been continuously upgrading our facilities and services. Our latest redevelopment and expansion plan initiated in 2021 would see our terminal space doubled with other new, additional facilities gradually up from 2026 to further uplift our service level.

Q: Let's then look at the range of services that HKBAC offers, together with its facilities for executive passengers and for the crews.

MF: HKBAC offers a comprehensive range of services tailored to meet the needs of executive passengers and crew members.

In particular, we have the advantage of being able to offer co-located Customs, Immigration, and Quarantine (CIQ) Services:

HKBAC was the first international FBO in Asia to offer on-site CIQ services, rendering the arrival and departure processes convenient and efficient for passengers and crew members. Included are customs clearance, immigration services, and health quarantine procedures. The co-location of these services at HKBAC eliminates the need for passengers and crew to have to go to separate locations, saving time and enhancing the overall convenience and experience.

The co-location CIQ service was introduced on the back of a strategic decision to streamline the clearance process for passengers and crew, ensuring a smooth transit experience

with the highest level of privacy. This initiative was put in place in 1998 and has been widely appreciated by our customers ever since.

If we turn to passenger and crew services, HKBAC ensures a seamless business aviation experience for passengers with a high degree of privacy and security. This includes dedicated VIP lounges with comfortable private seating areas, catering services, private meeting rooms, shower room, baggage service, storage service, VIP Meet and Greet and complimentary Wi-Fi access.

We also have excellent facilities for crew. HKBAC has always prioritized and valued the feedback of customers. The commitment to listen was initially highlighted as a crucial recommendation in our customer surveys years ago. We have kept up the good tradition and strive for continuous improvement based on our customers' feedback.

One significant example of this customer-centric improvement culture was the development of the Crew Lounge. The facility was designed with the specific needs and preferences of our crew members in mind.

The lounge not only provides essential amenities like computers, printers, and Weather and NOTAM information services but is also immensely comfortable and functional with a self-service mini-bar stocked with refreshing soft drinks, a high-quality coffee machine and individually packed snacks.

Moreover, we understand that our crew members often require a quick smarten-up and moments of relaxation amidst their busy schedules. Therefore, we have included a shoe-shining machine, a massage chair and other comforts in the lounge to help crew unwind and relax.

We are very proud of our one-stop ground handling and support services. HKBAC provides comprehensive ground handling and support services to facilitate smooth and efficient operations for both passengers and aircraft. This includes Runway Slot Coordination, Landing Permit Application, Flight Plan Submission, as well as aircraft

parking, hangarage, towing, refuelling, baggage handling, and aircraft reposition coordination services. The hangar facilities have been increased to Hangar 2 (in 2007) and Hangar 3 (in 2012) for aircraft parking and maintenance. The apron parking bays have also been upgraded to cater for new aircraft models.

HKBAC is also the first international FBO in Asia that possesses an on-site fuel hydrant. The underground fuel hydrant was implemented in 2017. This not only enhances operational efficiency but also shows our commitment to continuous improvement and innovation.

In addition, HKBAC provides aircraft maintenance services through its authorized service providers. These services include repairs, and technical support to ensure the safe and reliable operation of aircraft.

Q: HKBAC has won a number of awards. What does it take to keep things at this very high level of professionalism?

MF: As always, Hong Kong strives to lead the way in Asia by ensuring an unrivalled traveller experience. As the one and only FBO in Hong Kong, HKBAC’s hard work has been widely recognised, particularly for our world-class

technical support and customer service. Our awards and accreditations include the IS-BAH Stage 3 certifications in 2021, the “Best Asian FBO” by the 2023 Professional Pilot Magazine PRASE Survey with an unprecedented full score for the 16th consecutive year (2008-2023).

We have also been awarded the “Best Ground Handling Agent/ FBO” for the fourth consecutive time at the Asian Business Aviation Association (AsBAA) Icons of Aviation Awards 2023. HKBAC is also named one of the Top Rated FBOs in Asia-Pacific by the Aviation International News in 2023.

That said, we are determined not to be complacent. We will continue to explore the opportunities that arise from our geographic location in the GBA. As a premier FBO, with a world-class service and facility, we are proud of what we offer - safe, seamless, professional business aviation services in style.

Q: What can you tell us about the Terminal Redevelopment Project?

MF: Going forward, as Hong Kong steps up its play as an international aviation hub in Asia, and as per the National 14th Five-Year Plan, both the Central and Hong Kong Governments will be lending further support to better integrate Hong Kong with the GBA.

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“As an iconic feature of the new Terminal Building, “The Canopy” will be a first-of-its-kind installation in Asia.”



The images shown are for illustration purposes only and may not be an exact representation of the project.

HKBAC will leverage the HKSAR policies to optimize Hong Kong’s Double Gateway advantage to connect GBA cities with the international community.

Business Aviation will continue to play an increasing role in helping to draw entrepreneurs, corporate leaders, and high-value business activities across the GBA and all over the world.

Our optimism is due also to the latest enhancements in aviation infrastructure at HKIA, strengthening Hong Kong’s capacity to serve the Mainland and international travellers. For example, we can point to the HKIA Three-Runway System (3RS).

Hong Kong’s new north runway has been commissioned since 2022. As demand continues to grow, so do the facilities at HKIA and HKBAC. HKIA is undergoing a transition to its 3RS scheduled for 2024 which means its capacity will substantially increase in the long run to better serve the needs of travellers and businesses in the region.

As regards HKBAC’s Terminal Redevelopment Project, it is expected to double the Centre’s handling capacity for business jet movement upon completion of the redevelopment in

2025. The project will strengthen Hong Kong’s capacity to provide world-class business aviation services as a high-value complement of the International Aviation Hub.

The redevelopment project will include the expansion of the existing Executive Terminal Building (ETB) with an upgrade on the co-located CIQ facilities. There will also be a new all-weather canopy, stretching from the ETB to shield and serve both aircraft and passengers.

As an iconic feature of the new Terminal Building, “The Canopy” will be a first-of-its-kind installation in Asia. It is designed to cover a private jet and to serve and protect its customers from different weather conditions. Various green and smart features including solar panels, EV chargers, and smart building management systems are also provided in the new HKBAC with various green labels.

The expansion is expected to not only enhance customer service capacity and experience but will also provide the opportunity for digitalization and continuous innovation to ground HKBAC’s reputation as Asia’s Best FBO, known for its safety, service and style. Our Terminal Redevelopment Project will support Hong Kong’s “Double Gateway” to the GBA and the world. [BAM](#)

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THE STRENGTH WITHIN

Jeff Lake, President of Duncan Aviation, talks to Anthony Harrington about the company's growth since the Pandemic

AH: Jeff, the last time we spoke the world was deep in the Covid pandemic. At that time, you'd ensured that Duncan Aviation was in good shape to emerge stronger from the ensuing recession. How have things been?

JL: There is no doubt that COVID was challenging for everyone, but challenges are also opportunities. We came out of the recession of 2020-2021 stronger than ever. When the pandemic hit we had numerous strategic plans we wanted to execute through 2020 and 2021. Instead, we simplified things to just a couple of key goals.

We focused on keeping our staff safe and well and on providing good quality products and services for our clients. We achieved these goals and we ensured that we kept all our staff employed and didn't have any furloughs or headcount reductions.

We were anticipating a slow recovery but what we actually got was a V-shaped rebound once we got past the first quarter of 2021. There was a night-and-day difference and that, in itself, posed a new batch of challenges as we responded to that growth surge.

This is where keeping all our staff on and staying strong helped us enormously. We were surprised by the rebound but we had a full-strength team. Our shops became very busy and 2022 turned out to be our best year ever in the history of the company.

AH: Business aviation went through such a rapid growth phase that staff shortages became a serious issue. How did Duncan Aviation fare in the great talent scramble?

JL: We did lose some people. Competitors were increasing staff wages considerably in an effort to plug the gaps in their lineups. You're always going to get some folks who are tempted to take the increases being offered. However, we responded by adjusting our wages upwards and we gained from the great culture and reputation that we enjoy as an organisation.

We have more team members in our organisation today with under two years of service with us, than we have ever had before. But that is a good thing and puts us in great shape for the future. We work hard to train new people and get them focused on the customer experience.

AH: What is the demand for services like now, as we come to the end of 2023?

JL: For the first time since the post-COVID boom, we saw something of a slowdown in the industry in the fourth quarter of this year. That caused some in the sector to start worrying about a soft landing or a coming recession. Geopolitical concerns too, made a number of businesses row back a little on their plans.

We saw something of this slowdown in our modification business, and in discretionary spending by clients. However, our maintenance operations, such as airframe and engine, have been really strong.

“ Keeping all our staff on and staying strong helped us enormously.”







AH: The US is heading into a Presidential election year. What are your thoughts?

JL: We really stay away from discussing politics, but it is very clear that the US needs strong leadership. You want to see the political parties working cooperatively in a bi-partisan way to do the best for the country. I mean, how could a business survive if the leadership did not work together? So, it is going to be an interesting year, but we'd really love to see things working out to create a strong business environment.

AH: Duncan Aviation has built a tremendous reputation over the years. What's the key to the company's success?

JL: I really believe that our success as an organisation starts with the Duncan family. This is one of the largest, and certainly one of the very few, successful, family-run businesses in our sector. Our strong leadership team here at Duncan Aviation has developed from the leadership style of the family. They are excellent at listening, leading and delegating, while being really supportive.

Another thing that we have really benefitted from as an organisation is that we promote from within, whenever possible. We took the time, starting back in 2010 to do a lot of analysis around deciding what the future of the industry was going to look like. We realised that our aircraft inspections side was seeing strong growth and that the large aircraft side of our business was also growing rapidly.

Some of our hangars back then were not large enough to accommodate the bigger jets that were becoming popular. We looked at the growth trajectories and at the deliveries the OEMs were making. So, we made the very significant investments that we needed to make in growing our hangars in size and scale in several of our locations.



The new hangars we built were designed to take the 7500s and Falcon 10Xs so we could grow our MRO operations. However, at the same time, we did not lose sight of the requirements of our customers with smaller and mid-range jets. The result is that our MRO business enjoys a good amount of work across the spectrum, from small to large jets.

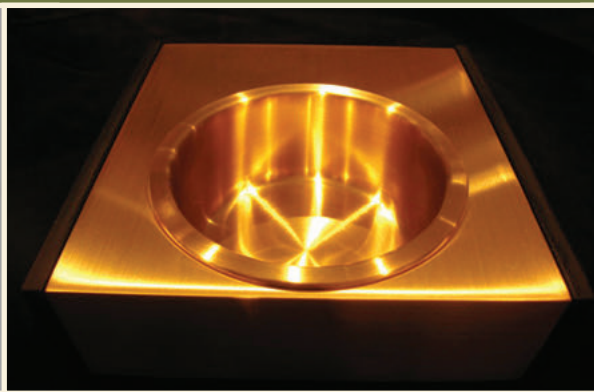
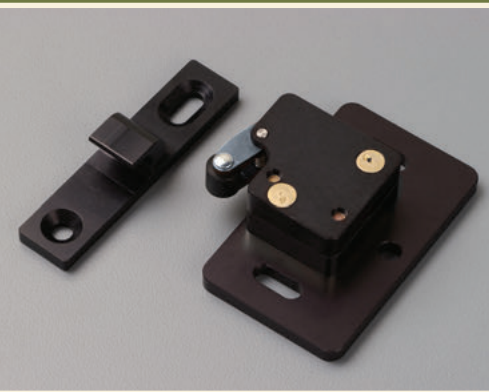
In looking to the future, we also invested in the tooling and training to support the growth of our MRO business. We foresaw demand outstripping supply when it came to technical skills and other areas. So we focused too on recruiting and developing new team members in key areas.

AH: You are unusual as an organisation in having your own training academy and your own apprenticeship program. How is that going?

JL: We started our training and apprenticeship programme a number of years ago, as soon as we saw that skilled labour was going to become a problem for the business aviation sector.

We started working with high schools, explaining to pupils about the huge range of careers and opportunities that are available in business aviation. Of course, we've always relied on the technical schools. They are a tremendous resource, but we knew that we had to do more. So we started our apprenticeship programme.

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We also do a great deal of work with veterans. About 30 percent of our workforce are ex-military. We take people who have never been on a business jet and train them up. The people who work for us know that they have a career path. They know they are working for themselves as well as for Duncan Aviation, and that if they put the time and effort into training and development, they will progress.

AH: How do you see Duncan Aviation progressing over the next several years?

JL: We have been working very closely with Pratt & Whitney for some time now and we are now a designated overhaul and repair facility for PWC engines. We'll be expanding our engine shop to accommodate the increased demand that this will bring.

We are also working closely with Honeywell and have gained additional authorization in avionics repair and exchange. We have expanded our accessories areas such as landing gear, hydraulics, brakes and wheels.

“ We’ve become very skilled at doing repairs on a whole range of aircraft parts. The supply chain issues that have been plaguing the market have caused us to accelerate our development and efforts in the manufacturing space.”

On top of this, our FBO business is going very well and complements our MRO facilities. We are looking at future expansions at all three MRO locations. In addition, we're opening a 46,000-square-foot hangar in Battle Creek in January and another of the same size in Lincoln. We'll be adding more team members in both of those locations, as well as in Provo.

We're also looking at paint shop capacity. That is going to be an issue in the sector in the next few years. We're also expanding our back shop space. So there is a great deal going on. Back when Covid hit, we had some 2,300 team members. That number is now up to 2,800 and we are still recruiting.

AH: What can you tell us about Duncan Manufacturing Services? That's a fairly new development, is it not?

JL: We've become very skilled at doing repairs on a whole range of aircraft parts. The supply chain issues that have been plaguing the market have caused us to accelerate our development and efforts in the manufacturing space. We have a lot of manufacturing equipment and the way we see it is that we are supporting the manufacturers and helping them to get around the supply chain issues that they are facing. We've added 3D printing and stintering to our capabilities. There is a good deal of potential for growth in this area and it is opening up exciting opportunities. |BAM





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