EBAA data indicates that Europe business aviation activity declined by 2% last year, despite modest growth in European GDP – and growth, too, in other forms of air travel. The subpar performance has continued during this first half of 2016, prompting EBAA chief Fabio Gamba to worry that the bizav downturn could signal the start of a “triple-dip” recession, with 2016, alarmingly, following the tough times of 2009 and 2012-13. Or, he said, it all could be “just a passing turbulence.”

Fresh out of the Greenpoint Technologies outfitting hangar in Washington state, the first fully appointed VVIP Boeing 787 stands tall in the static display at Geneva’s Cointrin Airport, its impressive stature brooking no dissent to the claim that it is the largest machine ever to appear at EBACE.

HondaJet

Steven Higgins of EASA presented the official certification for the HA-420 HondaJet to Honda Aircraft founding president and CEO Michimasa Fujino here yesterday. —See Page 3

Triple Dip? Say It Ain’t So

EBAA data indicates that Europe business aviation activity declined by 2% last year, despite modest growth in European GDP – and growth, too, in other forms of air travel. The subpar performance has continued during this first half of 2016, prompting EBAA chief Fabio Gamba to worry that the bizav downturn could signal the start of a “triple-dip” recession, with 2016, alarmingly, following the tough times of 2009 and 2012-13. Or, he said, it all could be “just a passing turbulence.”

—See Page 20
Now you have two choices for superior, ultra-long-range capability. The 5,950 nm Falcon 7X—the fastest selling Falcon ever (and with good reason). Or the new, 6,450 nm Falcon 8X, destined to become a favorite of world travelers. Both have the awe-inspiring ability to fly long distances from short and challenging runways such as Aspen and London City. The 8X is more than three feet longer, with over 30 cabin layouts. Fly far. Fly in comfort. Achieve more.
HondaJet Earns EASA Certification

On Monday, Steven Higgins, section manager for high-performance aircraft and turboprops for EASA, presented Michimasa Fujino, founding president and CEO of Honda Aircraft Company, with a freshly minted EASA type certificate for the HA-420 HondaJet, opening the door for the first two deliveries, here at EBACE. This follows FAA certification in December 2015 and Mexican approval in March 2016.

Fujino said he’s targeting Brazilian and Canadian certifications in the near future because of the market potential in those regions. More certifications could spur orders from international customers, thereby helping to justify Honda Aircraft’s production ramp-up to two to three aircraft per month. Fujino wants to increase production to four aircraft per month by the end of 2016.

In Europe, the aircraft will be well supported at eight locations, with Marshall Aerospace and Defence hosting HondaJet Northern Europe for the UK and Ireland north of its home base, Cambridge; TAG Aviation hosting HondaJet Southern Europe; and Rheinland Air Service supporting HondaJet Central Europe.

Fujino devoted considerable time during the announcement to pointing out the aircraft’s competitive features and novel technologies, including its 390-kt. cruise speed advantage, 2,000-ft.-higher cruise altitude, over-the-wing engine mount configuration, natural laminar flow nose and airfoil, and hybrid sandwich and monolithic carbon-composite construction.

—Fred George

The Top 10 Leaders for EBACE 2016

This week’s issues of ShowNews feature our 14th annual listing of the Top 10 Leaders of European Business Aviation. We pick (but don’t rank) the movers and shakers, those who are helping to drive the industry forward through clever marketing and technical innovation, or who are influential in polishing business aviation’s image with the public and politicians alike. This year’s winners are:

- Marc Bailey, CEO of BBGA (the British Business & General Aviation Association) has done sterling work, especially getting government decision-makers to realize the importance of the trade group in speaking up for business aviation.
- Bernhard Fragner, founder and CEO of Austria’s GlobeAir - Europe’s largest operator of Citation Mustangs. Six more Mustangs are being added this year to bring its all-Mustang fleet to 20.
- Patrick Hansen, CEO of Luxaviation Group, the world’s second-biggest aircraft management company. A 33% stake by China Minsheng Investment enabled the acquisition of ExecuJet, and will propel further expansion through acquisitions – though not in China.
- Clive Jackson, founder & CEO of Victor, the global charter booking company that with disruptive technology and traditional print advertising is generating 34% of its bookings from customers who have never flown privately before.
- Marwan Khalek, one year after the Gama/Hangar8 reverse takeover created the fifth largest business aviation management company in the world. Following a 15% increase in profits last year, Khalek plans rapid expansion through acquisitions.
- Antonia Lukacinova, initiator of the Sapphire Pegasus Awards for business aviation and CEO of the Pragued-based Media Tribune marketing and PR agency. The Awards are a vehicle to promote East-West business links throughout Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Russia.
- Jonny Nicol, founder and CEO of Stratatjet, claims to run the world’s only real-time booking platform for private jets. Stratatjet’s inventory management software integrates seamlessly with an aircraft operator’s existing system, allowing users to check out 500 operators quickly.
- Oscar Schwenk, chairman of Pilatus Aircraft. He leads the team that had the vision and conviction to design and produce the first all-round utility business jet, the PC-24, that is making its debut here.
- Michel Tohane, director of Aéroports de la Côte d’Azur, which saw record business aviation traffic last year at the three French Riviera airfields that the company manages. Now it plans to add 16 FBOs to its chain.
- Neil Turnbull, COO of Vertis Aviation for building up a managed aircraft fleet specializing in large-cabin jets. He’s looking for more aircraft.
Textron’s New Turboprop Designed ‘to Be the Best’

Textron Aviation revealed more details regarding its new single-engine turboprop (SETP) here at EBACE, but it was what it didn’t say that was more interesting.

Scott Ernest, president and CEO, and Kriya Shortt, SVP, sales and marketing, were clear that the aircraft will be best in class with its design, cruise speeds of up to 285 kt. and 1,600-nm range at high-speed cruise.

It will have a much larger cabin, and it will beat its only real rival, the Pilatus PC-12, in every category, Ernest says.

But wait a minute. While the two executives sang its praises, those figures barely match the performance of the PC-12NG. The SETP’s new-technology GE 1,240-shp engine, with 20% better fuel efficiency than the PT6 in the PC-12, should bring something to the party. One would think the airplane would go faster, go farther on the same fuel load as the Swiss twinjet to certification and into service. Textron, meanwhile, is keeping its cards close to its vest.

It does not replace its predecessor but is offered as a clean-sheet design, cruise speeds of up to 285 kt. and 1,600-nm range at high-speed cruise.

One category where the SETP will have made it clear “we wouldn’t do a clean-sheet airplane and make it inferior.” There were competitive details he wouldn’t disclose, such as empty and gross weights. And, he added, Textron tends to be very conservative with its estimates until flight test results come in (first flight is planned for 2018). Does that suggest that the performance figures will be revised upward when the time is right?

The danger is that Pilatus could re-engine the PC-12 with GE’s new turboprop, but it would have its work cut out bringing its new PC-24 twinjet to certification and into service. Textron, meanwhile, is keeping its cards close to its vest.

One category where the SETP will have to do some catching up is sales. Pilatus will deliver the 1,400th PC-12 this year. “They’ve had no competition,” Ernest said.

That will change in a couple of years. Textron has already taken orders for the SETP, “and some of our jet customers are telling us already they could use a turboprop as well.”

—John Morris

First Showing of Outfitted Boeing 787 VVIP

Dominating the static display – but with its most interesting features concealed within – is the first BBJ version of 787 airliner to be shown with a VVIP interior installed. The airplane illustrates the talents of completions specialist Greepoint Technologies (Booth I051) of Kirkland, Washington; the creative skills of Pierrejean Design Studio, Paris; and the expertise of fleet acquisition and management specialist, Kesre Aviation. It is also testimony to the steep learning curve facing outfitters transitioning from traditional metal airplanes to those with significant carbon-fiber structures. Upon delivery, the 787 will be managed and chartered out by Deer Jet on behalf of the undisclosed owner.

Airbus ACJ350 Is a Shy Debutante at Geneva

Making the point that it is ready to book more than the current single order for an ACJ350, Airbus is bringing the second A350 XWB airliner prototype to Geneva this afternoon only, landing around midday. Technically, it is on show, but it will remain outside the static park and inaccessible to attendees until it leaves in the evening. Seeking to boost the aircraft’s suitability for corporate transport modifications, Airbus is launching here an “Easyfit” version that simplifies the installation of specific VIP interior features in a carbon-fiber fuselage.

National and International ‘First’ for PC-24

Last EBACE was a little too soon for Pilatus to show its PC-24 prototype on home ground, but with two of the twinjets now flying and 500 hr. accumulated, the manufacturer is able to spare one for static display – but today only. Attendees who miss it are invited to Booth K115 at any time to view the full-scale cabin. This, too, represents a first public showing for the production standard of interior.

Newest Daher TBM Is the ‘930’

Announced at the beginning of April and delivered to its first customer at the end of that month, the latest in the TBM turboprop range is fresh to the EBACE lineup. Unusually for a Daher aircraft, it does not replace its predecessor but is offered alongside the only slightly older TBM 900. Daher believes the two will not steal each other’s markets, with each instead complementing its partner and increasing overall sales. The newcomer offers increased speed (330 kt., or 380 mph), new e-copilot functions in the cockpit, simplified engine management, faster starting and increased use of carbon fiber for lightness.

Legacy 450: It’s What’s Inside That Counts

Step inside, won’t you? Embraer’s Legacy 450 was here on static display last year, but two things are different now. One: It has a type certificate. Two: It now has a production interior. Currently the only example in Europe, operated by Air Service Liege, the 450 is the first jet in its market segment with digital flight controls having full fly-by-wire technology. It also features side-sticks, Rockwell Collins Pro Line Fusion avionics, graphical flight planning, Jeppesen charts and maps, and a synthetic vision system.
Barring the immutable laws of science, Embraer designers and engineers enjoy a unique freedom to create our executive aircraft. To reshape a fuselage that slips through the air while providing unrivaled cabin roominess. Or tweak the delicate balance of lift and thrust to increase efficiency. Or create control systems that help pilots always perform at their very best. All are a product of unconventional thinking at its finest. With all deference to pioneers like Newton, Galileo and Einstein—we simply don’t think their good work is finished.
MEBAA Celebrates a Decade of Growth

Next month will mark the 10th anniversary of the founding of the Middle East and North Africa Business Aviation Association (MEBAA) by Ali Alnaqbi, chairman of the organization that has come to represent business aviation in 24 countries in the region.

In that decade, business aviation there has come a long way, and MEBAA has become its voice, its advocate and an instrument for change.

“We have become the reference for anything to do with business aviation in the region,” says Alnaqbi. Regulators now turn to MEBAA for advice on issues, and few in the industry launch products without seeking an opinion.

Alnaqbi says one of MEBAA’s greatest achievements has been the fight against “gray” and illegal charters in its campaign to bring business aviation to the same standards as the West.

“We’ve been making progress big-time,” says Alnaqbi. The latest achievement came last month in a keynote speech at MEBAA’s Saudi Arabian conference, when the General Authority of Civil Aviation’s second in command, Capt. Abdulhakim M. Albadir, urged delegates to report evidence of gray charters to a newly receptive official ear. Alnaqbi says MEBAA efforts to educate the authorities and business jet passengers on the dangers of illegal charters is bringing results, with many asking up front about the validity of their flights.

MEBAA is instrumental in other areas, too. For example, its staging of a biennial business aviation show in Morocco (next year’s will be in Marrakech) has caught the attention of authorities there and persuaded them the country needs to encourage business aviation.

After discussions with MEBAA, the Moroccan government has granted the first licenses for FBOs, to Jet Aviation and Swissport Executive, which will set up 10 facilities at 10 airports.

“Can you imagine the country logged 11,000 business aviation movements last year despite having no licensed business jet operators, no FBOs and only very limited maintenance facilities? It is ripe for the development of infrastructure.” Now the government is encouraging growth, he says. —John Morris

Handover Heights Honda’s Happiness

Although Germany’s Rheinland Air Service took delivery of the first HondaJet in Europe (the seventh production) last month, Marshall Aviation Services, the type’s Northern European distributor, will go one better at Geneva on Tuesday when it receives the keys to the first of the type to fly under a non-FAA registration. M-HNDA is the “tail number” assigned to the eighth production aircraft by the Isle of Man registry, although the aircraft is to be based in Birmingham, UK, at Marshall’s recently completed sales and support center.

Falcon 8X Rests After World Tour

There’s nothing like the pure air of the Swiss Alps in which to relax after a grueling round-the-world promotional and proving tour. Recently, over four weeks, the third Dassault Falcon 8X prototype flew 55,000 nm, executing 65 types of missions, from short hops to ultra-long-range flights, in Europe, the Middle East, North and South America, and Asia and China. More than 650 flight hours have been logged in 325 sorties by the test trio, paving the way for imminent FAA and EASA certification and deliveries in the second half of the year.

Embraer Bizjets – by the Thousand

It might only be Flexjet’s fourth Legacy 500, but it was worth bringing to the Geneva static display a month after its delivery in Cleveland, because it was also the 1,000th business jet to have been built by Embraer. The airplane, complete with celebratory artwork, is part of a firm order for both Legacy 500s and Legacy 450s for the Flexjet fleet. The company’s fractional program also fields Embraer’s Phenom 300.

Embraer Ticks All the Boxes

Phenom 100E, Phenom 300, Legacy 450, Legacy 500, Legacy 650 and Lineage 1000E: A full house of Embraer business jets is arrayed on the Geneva ramp this week — not necessarily for the first time in themselves but, nevertheless, representing a uniquely complete collation of certified, in-production Brazilian bizjets. The company started selling executive versions of its ERJ-135 regional airliner in 2000 and, having made a promising start, formed a new division in 2005 to cover the field from smallest to almost the largest. Now, Phenoms, Legacies and Lineages operate in more than 60 countries and are supported by a network of 75 company-owned and authorized service centers, complemented by a 24/7 contact center.

Textron Aviation: Two Into One Does Go

Wisely, Textron Aviation is not trying to stop us calling them Beechcraft and Cessna. Although collaborating strategically under a single banner, the two product lines are still perceived by traditionalists as different. In the EBACE static park, Cessna is showing the Citation Sovereign+, Citation Latitude, Citation CJ4, Citation CJ3+ and Citation M2 bizjets, plus the Grand Caravan EX single-turboprop; while Beechcraft provides a pair of turboprop-twins — the King Air 350i and King Air 250, both with Pro Line Fusion avionics. Here last year, the Latitude is now certified, while there are three more promised for the Geneva ramp in times to come: Citation Longitude, Citation Hemisphere and the new Beechcraft turboprop.
Mexico’s Across Orders 23 Embraer Business Jets

Across, Mexico’s premium business aviation services provider, will buy a mixed fleet of 23 Embraer business aircraft comprising eight Legacy 500s, eight Phenom 300s and seven Phenom 100E jets with an estimated value of over US$260 million at current list price, it was announced here on Monday.

The aircraft will replace Across’ fleet of 15 Cessna Citations and two turboprops, while adding to the charter company’s expansion plans. The firm has already taken delivery of the first Phenom 300 and Legacy 500 “and we are very happy with them,” says Pedro Corsi Amerlinck, CEO of Across, who is type-rated in the 500.

Jet Aviation Launches JetVision

“Trying To Get” a busy principal to choose the floor plan, seats, veneer or fabric for a multi-million-dollar cabin completion can seriously delay a project. With so many variables he or she can be paralyzed by choice, or too busy to visit the design center in person.

Now decisions can be made from anywhere in the world with Jet Aviation’s JetVision portal, which gives principals, designers and engineers instant access to 3-D visuals from the Request for Proposal to delivery phase of a completion.

The secret is the digitization of the engineering and design processes at every stage of completion and integrating them into a complete picture. In fact the data is the real data. After the completion it remains available for continued interior maintenance and spare parts support.

“The springboard was our transition at Jet Aviation from 2-D to 3-D engineering,” says completions sales and marketing VP Matt Woolastion.

The JetVision portal is being evaluated on four large-cabin, VVIP completion projects at Jet Aviation and is expected to decrease the risk of delays as decision-makers can access the data from smartphones anywhere. Plans call for future access.

JetVision is available only for “green” completions and is seen by Jet Aviation as a competitive tool in winning and de-risking completions projects. It can be seen here at Booth A050.

“...the database is continuously updated as the engineering matures,” he says.

Across offers air charter solutions along with aircraft management, FBO services (it’s part of the Signature network) and a sales or fractional ownership program for Embraer’s broad business jet portfolio. Launched in 2009, it owns the most modern infrastructure at Toluca International Airport, the main hub for business aviation in Mexico, which includes hangars, VIP lounges, customer meeting rooms and administrative offices.

“Embraer’s business jets will become the backbone of Across solutions for our fractional ownership program and charter services for customers worldwide who need to fly to Mexico or the Americas for business or leisure,” Amerlinck said.

The Across fleet flies about 30% of its time in the U.S., 10% in Central America and the rest in Mexico. The operator selected the Embraer aircraft based on quality, very low operating costs, customer support and reliability, Amerlinck said. The latter is particularly important as the aircraft are expected to fly 80 hr. per month, he added.

A new focus for the company is aircraft sales, which it began two months ago “and we have already taken an order for a pre-owned Legacy 600,” said Amerlinck.

With the new fleet Across will perform its own line maintenance with 15 engineers trained by FlightSafety. It will also provide the service for any other Embraer owner in Mexico.

Across is attending the show jointly with online charter broker Avinode (Booth 088) to present their combined solution for European customers who travel from Mexico to anywhere in America and vice-versa. Embraer is at Booth 2073 and the Static Display.
Meet Josh & Julia Hochberg, Owners, Sonoma Jet Center

Is Signature Select right for you? Just ask Josh and Julia. “Signature’s marketing and sales support has been outstanding,” Josh says. “We expected that. But we didn’t realize what a fantastic all-around partner we were getting.” The Hochbergs are likely to pull out photos of two brand-new electric tugs, loaned to them by Signature. “Signature delivered these to get us through a really busy month. It was our most successful month ever. Beyond our wildest dreams.” Follow Josh and Julia’s lead. Retain your identity and your hard-earned customers and add our loyal global customer base. Join Signature Select. Profit from the power of Signature Flight Support.

“"It’s like we acquired a big brother with resources who will do whatever it takes to help us out."”

- Josh & Julia Hochberg

Join the growing Signature Select community. SignatureSelectFBO.com
The first completed VVIP 787 to be shown anywhere dwarfs other aircraft in the static park, while Airbus has brought an A350 prototype outfitted with an airline interior for a brief stop at EBACE. It is here just for today, parked not in the Static Display but at Jet Aviation’s FBO.

Airbus yesterday announced that it has addressed a potential problem for completions centers in modifying and equipping the cabins of carbon-fiber aircraft. Rather than have completion engineers request permission to drill each of hundreds of holes in the composite structure, every VVIP ACJ350 cabin will be outfitted at the factory with some 200 brackets to which bulkheads, cabinets and fixtures can be attached. Called Easyfit, the bracketry will add “just a few tens of kilos,” says Airbus. That far outweighs the grief that drilling a hole in the wrong place could cause. Airbus has just one ACJ350 on its books that was ordered early in the aircraft’s career.

Much thought and creativity must go into outfitting a cabin that can, in the ultra-long-range variant, fly up to 25 passengers up to 10,800 nm or 22 hr.

Airbus’ own Corporate Jet Center (Booth N115) is ready and waiting for its first ACJ350 completion with a range of conceptual designs.

—John Morris

Lufthansa Technik Aims to Win A350 XWB Completions

German completions center Lufthansa Technik is unveiling here its luxurious and innovative concepts for the ACJ350 XWB. The themes were developed in-house by aircraft interior architect Michael Reichenecker, who was given free range to incorporate the latest and future technologies from the company’s innovation center.

New features include a realistic-looking burning fireplace, Lufthansa Technik’s carbon-fiber Chair, the very latest in Nice HD cabin management and entertainment, and even its Patient Transport Unit stretcher designed for those who are medically challenged.

“We’ve developed a very special cabin design, leaning more toward private than business use,” says Reichenecker.

Typical clients, he says, would be in their mid-50s, and that average age is coming down as more billionaires come onstream every month. These people typically like family and privacy, he notes.

“They are heavily interested in health and well-being, so we are making a point that they will be more relaxed when they leave the aircraft than when they got on it.”

Amenities include a private VIP master area in the front, the quietest area of the aircraft, that can be isolated with huge sliding doors to create a bright suite area; a spa with steam shower and massage area in the rear, featuring heated stones and higher humidity; and a galley with Lufthansa Technik’s new induction cooker, where staff can prepare food onboard that promotes increased health.

Flooring can include LED lighting, the latest from Lufthansa Technik’s Inairvation partner, List of Austria.

Lufthansa Technik (Booth L089) is ready to take on its first ACJ350 XWB completion. It’s not likely to drill holes in the wrong place, as it already knows the aircraft well: as part of the program’s customer design group it worked closely with Airbus “and had some influence in its design,” says Wieland Timm, sales VP for VIP and special mission aircraft. The company has also been preparing for quite some time to support the introduction into service of the A350 with its parent, Lufthansa, by the end of the year, “so we are already experts on the aircraft,” he says.

—JM

This ACJ350XWB design concept from Airbus Corporate Jet includes commodious space for serious productivity or deep relaxation.

Large sliding doors bring flexibility to the ACJ350 family room.
We pioneered the light business jet market with the JT15D engine, then redefined it with the PW500 engine. The PW300 engine introduced FADEC technology and powers customers everywhere across continents and oceans. And now we’re changing the heavy-jet game with the PurePower PW800 engine. From the moment we entered the business aviation market, we knew we’d be in it for the long haul.

VISIT US AT EBACE 2016 STAND N114
U.S.-based Flexjet will launch into Europe as a private jet travel and charter operator later this year, the fractional jet ownership company announced yesterday.

With so many of its clients flying to Europe and needing transportation there, Flexjet has given the go-ahead to set up an operation on this side of the Atlantic. It has signed a letter of intent to acquire an undisclosed Air Operator Certificate, and will open with an initial eight Nextant 400XTi aircraft, with two based in London, two in Paris, and the remaining four wherever needed.

Leading the European business will be Ray Jones, managing director, international, for Flexjet, who will be based in London. He is a 12-year veteran of the private aviation industry, and was previously SVP for sales at Bombardier.

The European fleet will be dedicated to charter, primarily for Flexjet members, with excess capacity brokered out, says Jones. “A fair number already want to fly here, and we see quite a bit of opportunity,” he notes.

Beyond taking a “cautiously aggressive” approach, Flexjet has not yet determined just how it will grow in Europe. First and foremost, it aims to keep existing members in the Flexjet family; beyond that it will see what the market demands.

“We believe that a high-quality on-demand charter service will attract clients; that’s the answer for the future.”

Jones notes that successful charter operators in Europe take many forms, from high-end companies such as VistaJet to those using disruptive technologies and the Internet to attract business. “We can see the strengths in everybody’s business; there’s something in everything,” he says, and Flexjet will be watching carefully as it crafts long-term strategies in what Jones admits “is a difficult market.”

Jones says Flexjet selected the Nextant 400XTi as it provides point-to-point range across Europe necessary to join the most-traveled city pairs, and has “exceptionally low operating costs” and “arguably the most comfortable cabin in the light jet market.” With its 2,003-nm range, the 400XTi can make trips from London to Moscow, Moscow to Nice, and Nice to London again.

Flexjet last year celebrated its 20th anniversary as a fractional ownership jet company, and planned to have 180 shared aircraft in its North American fleet by the end of 2016. It was owned by Bombardier with an all-Bombardier fleet until 2013, when it was acquired by Directional Aviation Capital, which also owns Flight Options and Nextant Aerospace, manufacturer of the Nextant 400 XTi.

Learjet ‘Hush Kit’ Cuts 8 dBA

All new-production Learjet 70/75 aircraft now are being fitted with a forward cabin bulkhead and pocket door that seals off the main cabin from the galley and entry door area, providing more privacy for passengers and cutting interior noise by at least 8 dBA in high-speed cruise, says David Coleal, president of Bombardier Business Aircraft. The resulting cabin sound levels approach those of the Challenger 350.

The super-light jets respectively seat six to eight passengers for briefcase missions. They can fly four passengers more than 2,000 nm and land with NBAA IFR reserves. They were among the first Part 25 aircraft to upgrade to Garmin G5000 avionics, featuring touchscreen controls, synthetic vision PFDs and hybrid ADS-B/TCAS II traffic warning systems.

Compared to first-generation Learjet 40/45 aircraft, their Honeywell TFE731-40BR engines produce 10% more thrust at takeoff, resulting in a substantial improvement in takeoff performance.

—Fred George

—John Morris
JetVision. No need to touch down to catch up.

Jet Aviation puts Completions in your control with the launch of JetVision. The revolutionary project management app gives Clients limitless virtual access to their aircraft from Request For Proposal to in-service... wherever they are in the world.

That means unprecedented, accurate 3D visuals from the earliest stages of Design and Engineering — before the first part is even built — to on-demand progress reports, images, video, and more to keep you in the loop at all times. And when the aircraft is in service, continued interior maintenance and spare parts support are all just a click away.

VISIT US AT EBACE HALL 4 BOOTH #A050 TO FIND OUT MORE
Flying Colours Signs First Inairvation Refit

Canadian completion specialist Flying Colours has signed the launch customer for Inairvation’s pre-engineered cabin retrofit for a Global Express.

Inairvation, jointly owned by Lufthansa Technik and Austria’s F. List to develop one-stop, high-tech solutions for business aircraft cabins, earlier selected three completions companies to offer Challenger and Global retrofit: Flying Colours, RUAG and Lufthansa Bombardier Aviation Services (LBAS) in Berlin. Another partner will be announced here at EBACE.

As more owners flock to refurb their older Bombardier cabins, it doesn’t make sense to treat every retrofit like a unique product, says Philip von Schroeter, co-CEO of Inairvation. “We will start another two this year, and several a year after that.” This approach could bring completion times down to eight weeks for a Challenger and 10 for a Global.

Customers can take the whole Inairvation package, or pick and choose from its features. The Flying Colours (Booth W063) retrofit will incorporate the Nice HD cabin management and in-flight entertainment system (IFE/CMS) from Lufthansa Technik. The system’s functionality will be integrated into new ergonomic side ledges that are pre-engineered and manufactured by F. List. These modules will be delivered and installed during the retrofit process.

“It all pivots around the entertainment systems,” says von Schroeter. “No one will retrofit anymore because they don’t like the veneer. The eight-year check is the time to do it.”

Flying Colours is using Inairvation (Booth L089) as part of an extensive cabin retrofit that includes replacing the seats with Global 6000 frames and covered in exotic leathers. The lighting system will incorporate a rainbow spectrum of choices all controlled by the Nice HD CMS. A stone granite floor will be installed in the entrance galley area, including the forward lavatory, as well as the aft lavatory. Carbon-fiber veneers will be laid on the cabinetry to enhance the contemporary style of the interior. Final designs are expected to be ready by the end of June 2016.

“We explored a number of options, but the customer chose Inairvation knowing that combined with our interior capabilities it was the most cost- and time-efficient solution for him,” said Sean Gillespie, EVP Flying Colours.

The Global will arrive at Flying Colours in the fourth quarter of this year, and be completed in the following quarter. —John Morris

ATP Partners With Web Manuals

Manuals and record-keeping have become increasingly complex in all areas of business and general aviation, from operations to maintenance. But with digitization, data can be accessed, updated and stored more efficiently than ever before.

Some 43 years ago, California-based ATP (it stands for Aircraft Technical Publishers) set out to create a single-source library service for aviation technical and regulatory publications using computer technology. ATP is now the premier provider of content management and services, from maintenance and compliance tracking to inventory management, for business and general aviation manufacturers, owner/operators and maintenance organizations. It has 23,000 users in 96 countries.

Meanwhile, in Sweden, four-year-old Web Manuals has become a fast-growing European leader in providing aircraft operators and maintenance organizations with digitized documents, manuals, and safety and regulatory alerts. The firm recently extended its cloud-based services into the U.S.

ATP and Web Manuals said here that they are joining forces to digitize and streamline the management of operating manuals, including the ability to author, distribute and update content with vastly improved efficiency, cost-effectiveness and control.

“Both ATP and Web Manuals are helping the industry evolve through digitization and interconnectivity of workflows, processes and data,” said ATP CEO Charles Picasso. “It’s clear the rate of complexity and change in the industry will continue to rise. To keep pace with these changes, our customers will need to be more proactive in managing their operating manuals and related documentation.”

Bringing together the two companies’ cloud-based solutions should help clients drive greater operational efficiencies, boost regulatory compliance and improve collaboration with their customers.

“The partnership represents a strong fit with ATP’s new vision of unified process management – enabling maintenance providers to drive dramatic improvements in productivity, cost savings and aircraft utilization, while also preventing costly regulatory lapses,” Picasso noted.

Said Martin Lidgard, CEO and founder of Web Manuals: “We’ve already gained significant traction in the U.S., and we are confident that we will be able to accelerate our momentum through this partnership with ATP.”

ATP will be offering Web Manuals’ functionality through the ATP Aviation Hub cloud application. They are here at Web Manuals’ Booth S132.

—John Morris
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Gulfstream GII/III
Gulfstream G550
Gulfstream G350/G450
Gulfstream G280
Gulfstream G150
Gulfstream G100

GREENSBORO, NC
Sikorsky S-76B
Dassault Falcon 10/100
Bell 412EP
Hawker 750/800/800XP/850XP/900XP
Dassault Falcon 2000/2000EX
Bombardier Global 5000/6000
Bombardier Challenger 650
Bombardier Learjet 60
Bombardier Learjet 40/40XR/45/45XR
Bombardier Learjet 31A/35A
Beechcraft King Air 200/B200
Beechcraft King Air 90 Series
Dassault Falcon 50
Bombardier Challenger 601-3A/3R
HondaJet
Bell 407GXP*
Bell 212
Pilatus PC-24*
Pilatus PC-12/47E
Pilatus PC-12/47
Dassault Falcon 900EX EASy/DX/LX
Dassault Falcon 900EX
Dassault Falcon 900C
Dassault Falcon 7X

HOUSTON, TX
HONG KONG, CHINA
DALLAS, TX (South)
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PARIS, FRANCE
NEW YORK, NY
TETERBORO, NJ
LONDON FARNBOROUGH, UK
LAFAYETTE, LA
LONG BEACH, CA

LAFAYETTE, LA
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Cessna Citation I/I1/I11
Cessna Citation Sovereign

COLUMBUS, OH
Bomberdyer Challenger 350
Bomberdyer Challenger 650
Bomberdyer Global 5000/6000
Cessna Citation I/C/CX/CX+ I
Cessna Citation Latitude
Cessna Citation Excel
Cessna Citation Sovereign
Cessna Citation I/I1/I11
Cessna Citation III/Ill
Cessna Citation III/IV
Cessna Citation Latitude

DALLAS, TX (North)
Bell 222
Bell 421EP
Bell 430
Dassault Falcon 10/100
Dassault Falcon 20/20-5
Dassault Falcon 2000/2000EX
Dassault Falcon 2000EX EASy/
DXL/XLS/XLS+
Dassault Falcon 7X
Dassault Falcon 900E
Dassault Falcon 900Ex
Dassault Falcon 900ExEASy/DX/LY
Gulfstream G100
Gulfstream G150
Gulfstream G200
Gulfstream G280
Gulfstream G350/G450
Gulfstream G550
Gulfstream G650
Gulfstream G800
Gulfstream G1500

DALLAS, TX (South)
Airbus Helicopters H135
Bell 212
Bell 421EP-Fast Fin
Sikorsky S-76B

DENVER, CO
Airbus Helicopters AS350 B3
Airbus Helicopters H130
Airbus Helicopters H135
Bell 407GX

GREENSBORO, NC
HondaJet

HONG KONG, CHINA
Gulfstream GV/G300/G400
Gulfstream G550

HOUSTON, TX
Bomberdyer Challenger 601-3A/3R
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Cessna Citation Excelsior
Cessna Citation Mustang
Cessna Citation Sovereign
Cessna Citation Latitude
Gulfstream G550
Gulfstream G650
Hawker 400XP1
Hawker 750/800/800XP/850XP/900XP
Sikorsky S-92

LONG BEACH, CA
Beechcraft King Air 90 Series
Beechcraft King Air 200/230
Beechcraft King Air 200/200EX
Cessna Citation I/I1/I11
Cessna Citation V
Gulfstream G350/G450
Gulfstream G550
Gulfstream G650
Gulfstream G800
Gulfstream G1500

NEW YORK, NY
Beechcraft King Air 90 Series
Beechcraft King Air 200/230
Beechcraft King Air 200/200EX
Cessna Citation I/I1/I11
Cessna Citation CJ2
Cessna Citation Excelsior
Cessna Citation Mustang
Cessna Citation Sovereign
Cessna Citation X
Cessna Citation XLS/XLS+

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Dassault Falcon 10/100
Dassault Falcon 20/20-5
Dassault Falcon 2000/2000EX
Dassault Falcon 2000EX EASy/
DXL/XLS/XLS+
Dassault Falcon 50
Dassault Falcon 50Ex
Dassault Falcon 60
Dassault Falcon 900/900B/900C
Dassault Falcon 900EX
Dassault Falcon 900EX EASy/DXLX

TUCSON, AZ
Bomberdyer Challenger 601-3A/3R
Bomberdyer Challenger 604
Bomberdyer Learjet 31A/35A
Bomberdyer Learjet 40/400R/45/45XR
Bomberdyer Learjet 80

WEST PALM BEACH, FL
Piaggio A218 Avanti/Avanti II
Sikorsky S-76C+/C++
Sikorsky S-76D
Sikorsky S-92

WICHITA, KS (EAST)
Beechcraft Baron
Beechcraft Beechjet 400/MJ-300
Beechcraft Bechjet 400A
Beechcraft Bonanza
Bomberdyer King Air 90 Series
Bomberdyer King Air 200/230/2000GT/250
Bomberdyer King Air 300/350
Bomberdyer Premier IA
Cessna Caravan V360/1/500
Cessna Citation CJ3
Cessna Citation M2
Cessna Citation Mustang
Hawker 400/400XP
Hawker 750/800/800XP/850XP/900XP

WICHITA, KS (LEARJET)
Bomberdyer Learjet 250
Bomberdyer Learjet 40/400R/45/45XR
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Textron’s New Turboprop Emerges

Textron Aviation is opening the order book for its new clean-sheet single-engine turboprop, the company announced here yesterday as it lifted the veil on performance specifications for the aircraft.

For the past few weeks, customers coming to its Wichita, Kansas, Beechcraft delivery center have been stepping inside a mockup of the new turboprop, which has yet to be given a name, for a look. The mockup of the up to nine-seat (pilot and eight passengers) cabin will be unveiled at AirVenture Oshkosh in July.

Both Cessna and Beechcraft had long wanted to enter the single-engine turboprop market. Now that the two companies have become integrated after Beechcraft’s sale to Textron, the turboprop’s advanced design process has been able to select the features and technology from the best of each, says Michael Thacker, Textron Aviation SVP, engineering. It also has listened to customer input. “Developed with the pilot and passenger at the forefront, we have designed this airplane to be the clear winner in this segment, from class-leading performance and ownership costs, to superior cabin comfort and versatility,” Textron Aviation president and CEO Scott Ernest said here at EBACE yesterday.

The turboprop will have a range of 1,600 nm at high-speed cruise with one pilot and four passengers, and will cruise at speeds up to 285 kt. Full fuel payload is 1,100 lb., and service ceiling is 31,000 ft. Introductory price is US$4.5 million.

Features include Garmin G3000 touch-screen avionics suite, weather radar, GE’s new 1,240-shp turboprop with FADEC and single-lever power and propeller control, and an all-new 105-in. diameter McCauley five-blade composite propeller. Construction will be primarily from metallic materials. First flight is planned for 2018.

The cabin will be 63 in. tall by 58 in. wide and feature a flat floor, executive-style reclining seating with USB ports at every seat that can be easily removed to carry cargo, and an optionailable aft lavatory seat. It will be accessed via a 24-in.-wide by 59-in.-high forward door, and the aircraft will also have a 53-in.-wide by 59-in.-high aft cargo door.

“Space is primarily what customers want,” says Christi Tannahill, Textron Aviation SVP of interior design and engineering. The SETP will be suited for owner-pilots, special mission, commuter and cargo, transport and medevac.

The SETP will compete with the Daher TBM very fast turboprop and the directly comparable and highly popular nine-seat Pilatus PC-12, of which the 1,400th should be delivered this year. The single-engine turboprop market has grown about 12.5% in the last five years and that pace is likely to grow as Europe later this year allows single-engine turboprops to conduct commercial IFR operations with passengers. Now Textron Aviation would like a part of that action in addition to its ubiquitous workhorse Cessna Caravan.

—Molly McMillin and John Morris

Jet Aviation St. Louis to Install JetWave

Jet Aviation St. Louis has signed its first contract to install Honeywell’s JetWave satellite communication terminals in a Global Express. “The JetWave terminals provide much faster, high-speed connectivity [and] no one else makes this terminal,” says avionics rep David Loso. The unit offers speeds up to 15 megabytes per second.

Honeywell’s JetWave multichannel terminals operate on Inmarsat’s GX, Ka-band network, enabled by three satellites covering the entire globe. The terminals in the MCS-8000 model for business aircraft share the same antenna controller, modem and router hardware, using a tail-mounted antenna.

The Global Express installation will be part of a major refurbishment. Jet Aviation is at Booth A050. Honeywell is at U123.

—Kirby Harrison

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European business aviation did not fare very well in 2015, with the number of departures down in all but a handful countries across the continent. European business aviation activity fell 2% last year, data from the European Business Aviation Association (EBAA) reveal. The decline took place despite a relatively positive economic and political environment that has been marked by oil prices reaching an all-time low, a freeze to the turmoil in the Crimean Peninsula, and a timid yet robust recovery of most southern European countries. GDP in the EU grew 1.8% in 2015.

This de-coupling of the growth in GDP and business aviation activity could be a worrying sign, EBAA CEO Fabio Gamba told reporters at a media event in Brussels. GDP growth ratio and business aviation traffic historically are strongly correlated – a decline/increase in the number of business aviation departures anticipates by six months GDP development. “The fall in business aviation activity could be announcing an economic slowdown in Europe,” he said.

Business aviation in Europe last year performed worse than other air transport segments. Low-cost carriers (LCCs) increased the number of departures by 5.4% compared to 2014, cargo airlines by 0.8% and legacy airlines by 0.6%, according to Eurocontrol data.

The poor performance continued in the first months of this year. The number of average daily business aviation departures in Europe during January-February decreased 4.3% to 1,315, when compared to the year-ago period. The drop is on par with the year-on-year decline recorded in January-February 2015, but it is a lot higher than the 0.3% decline witnessed the same period in 2014. Operators performed on average 122 business flights out of Europe per day less in that period this year than they did four years ago.

The EBAA head is concerned that the industry is heading for a triple-dip recession – referring to the downturn in 2009, 2012-2013 and now 2015 – but the dip in activity might also be “just a passing turbulence for business aviation. Maybe 2015 is a particular year and not the start of a longer trend.”

Turboprop activity declined the most with a 3.1% drop in departures, while light jets activity fell 1.8%. With a near 36% share, light jet activity still accounted for the largest share of total business aviation activity in Europe last year. Midsize jets flights were the most affected, reporting a 7.8% decline on 2014, whereas heavy jet activity declined 3.7%. The only segment recording an increase was bizliners, up 4.3%. However, their activity remains marginal, with just 1,412 departures out of a total of 653,274.

The slowdown was across Europe, as well as across most key business aviation airports and most airport pairs. “Eight out of the 10 busiest [business aviation] airports are in red territory, with many of them reporting a continuous contraction over the past five years,” Gamba said. The biggest declines over the 2011-15 period were at Rome-Ciampino (down 7%), Geneva-Cointrin (down 4.7%) and Moscow-Vnukova (down 4.5%).

Paris-Le Bourget remains Europe’s leading airport for business aviation, but it handled on average 60 business aviation departures a day in 2011 and just 62 last year. The airport saw average daily business aviation departures drop by 4.7% in 2015 compared to 2014, while Geneva registered a year-on-year fall in activity of 10.7% to 41 daily departures on average. Eurocontrol data show. Two airports in the top 10 of busiest business aviation airports defied the downward trend and posted a slight increase in daily activity last year, and both are in the UK: London Luton and Biggin Hill. When taking the five-year period into consideration, only London Luton and Farnborough posted growth in average daily departures.

Most of the busiest airport pairs for business aviation also lost ground last year, including Paris-Le Bourget-Geneva (Europe’s busiest route), Paris-Nice, Milan-Rome and Moscow-Nice. Some routes did grow, most of them touching the UK.

And most markets experienced declines in 2015. Eastern Europe had the biggest drop in activity, with Russia posting a 40% decline in departures versus 2014, while Turkey saw activity contract by 6.3%. The latter, Gamba, noted, “is a surprise, and the fall could be due to the weakening of the country’s economy.” Activity in Nordic countries fell, except for Finland, where the number of business aviation departures grew 3.2%. A few smaller markets saw gains, including Ireland (up 3.1%), Greece (up 2.5%) and Belgium (up 1.3%). Activity in the UK was flat.

But, said Gamba, “there is also some good news.” Business aviation retains a 7% share of the overall traffic in terms of short- and long-haul flights leaving Europe, unchanged for the last 10 years.

— Cathy Buyck
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Argus Buys UAS Safety Institute

Argus International has completed the acquisition of the Orlando, Florida-based Unmanned Safety Institute (USI), a privately held unmanned aircraft system (UAS) safety training, certification and management business.

“It has been our objective to actively participate in the UAS sector, as we have already seen the overlap between UASes and our existing clients in the airline, business aviation and rotary-wing businesses,” says Joe Moeggenberg, Argus president and CEO.

“USI recognized that a strong safety foundation to any aviation application is critical to the success of the marketplace,” adds its president, Aaron Greenwald. “Keeping this in mind, USI built its position based on adoption and modification of time-tested aviation safety practices proven for over a century in commercial aviation: reducing human errors, improving technology over time and building safe organizations.

When it comes to drones, “time-honored safety practices” are key, says Argus president and CEO Joe Moeggenberg.

“It is with these time-honored safety practices that we have established ourselves as a respected brand in the Unmanned Aircraft Systems [UAS] industry.” Being part of Argus will accelerate the development of UAS safety products and services, he says.

The USI was founded in 2014 as a professional flight safety organization for operators, enterprises and bodies focused on integrating and operating UASs safely for commercial and civil uses. It provides flight safety standards and training. Argus (Booth E066) is a data and information aviation services company.

—Molly McMillin

Bombardier CEO Hopeful of Canadian Government Investment

Garnering an investment from the Canadian federal government is a “complex” proposition and Bombardier is “working” on it, although timing is uncertain, according to CEO and president Alain Bellemare, speaking to Aviation Week after delivering the May 19 luncheon speech at the Wings Club in New York.

Bellemare, who took office 15 months ago, acknowledged missteps and miscalculations by the Canadian manufacturer in recent years, but he asserted it is on track now for success. “We have been through a pretty rough patch, but we have turned the corner,” he said.

The Quebec government announced in October that it was investing US$1 billion to take a 49.5% stake in a new subsidiary that Bombardier will form to complete development, manufacture and support for the C Series airliner and ease that program’s drain on Bombardier’s cash.

Asked about possible Canadian government investment in the embattled aerospace manufacturer, Bellemare offered hope but no timeline or details. He repeated a few times that negotiations were “complex,” without adding more.

In a lighthearted moment, on whether such an investment could come within the company’s five-year strategic plan at least, he said, “I hope so!”

That plan calls for de-risking Bombardier in 2015-2016, earnings growth in 2016-2020, and deleveraging the balance sheet 2019-2020, according to a slide shown during the presentation.

Since last year, 80% of the company’s leadership has changed, according to Bellemare. Meantime, Bombardier is tracking to its 2016 financial plan. With the recent Delta Air Lines agreement for up to 125 C Series aircraft, Bombardier has reached a turning point, he said.

“When the Delta order really changed the game. We have strong momentum.”

—Michael Bruno

Silvercrest Certification Delayed Until 2018

Delays in development of Safran’s Silvercrest engine cost the company a one-time EUR654 million (US$720 million) charge in 2015, helping drive operating profit for the year down more than 12% to EUR1.7 billion. CEO Philippe Petitcolin says the company’s Snecma motors division had agreed to a revised development schedule with Silvercrest anchor customer Dassault Aviation, which has selected the engine to power its new Falcon 5X.

He notes that Safran (Booth U103) is making progress on a redesign of the engine, which has faced multiple challenges in development, and its certification has now been pushed back more than two years to early 2018. Safran says it has identified fixes that will address problems plaguing the engine, and that Snecma is in the midst of producing and verifying new hardware that will enable the fuel-efficient powerplant to meet specification.

“We have an engine that is already starting to fly but not with 100% of the changes” that will be necessary to extend the Silvercrest’s operational life and optimize fuel performance per Dassault’s requirements, Petitcolin said, adding that the “engine with everything” will be flying before the end of this year.

“We are producing parts just to verify that our understanding [of the problem] was good and we have a solution,” Petitcolin told investors during an April 26 conference call, predicting that the verification process should be complete by mid-year, when the company will seek to validate the hardware fix.

—Amy Svitak

—Molly McMillin
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Chinese Backing Helps Drive Luxaviation Expansion

China Minsheng Investment Corp.’s 33% stake in Luxaviation made possible the acquisition last year of ExecuJet Aviation Group, forming the world’s second-largest corporate aircraft operator after NetJets. Now Luxaviation Group plans a further spate of acquisitions.

Luxaviation acquisitions are “absolutely continuing,” confirms Group CEO Patrick Hansen. “We’re currently looking at three deals, and none are European targets.” He won’t be drawn further but adds, “All I can say is that they’re all profitable. Right now we have a team working on another deal that hopefully will be closed in the coming weeks.”

The Chinese investment in Luxaviation doesn’t signal any aspirations for that market, says Hansen. “Let’s look at the reality: CMI acquired BAA [Business Aviation Asia] and they’re already in China, so it would be completely unjustifiable competing with each other – it is their home market. So why should I go into a market where I have to compete with my cousin?”

A CMI/Luxaviation joint press release from April 2015 noted that “General aviation is a vital segment of CMI’s development, and in November 2014, CMI acquired 61.25% of the shares in Minsheng International Jet, which has become one of the largest business jet management operators after wholly acquiring Asia United Business Aviation Limited.” Despite its name, CMI is not linked to the Chinese business jet powerhouse Minsheng Financial Leasing Co.

Hansen says he is constantly on the lookout for opportunities. “It will depend on the size of our company, the state of the market, and I do not know when we will finish,” he says.

He notes that a lot of companies are currently suffering in Europe. “I always say I’m not going to buy a problem, especially if it’s a problem where you don’t have huge growth opportunity. In Asia it’s different. You can buy a problem company as it’s not necessarily a problem when it comes to the future.”

Luxaviation and CMI Group’s Luxaviation has acquired new businesses and Luxaviation’s cabin crews have acquired new uniforms. As part of the integration is almost complete, says Hansen. “We’re on the last stretch, but there is always more integration that we can do.” Nothing goes as smoothly as it does on paper and he says that some of the synergies that management predicted are perhaps running three to five months late. Some IT work continues within the Belgian company formally known as Abelag, which became part of the Luxaviation Group in 2013.

“If someone told me five years ago that we would be the size we are now I wouldn’t have believed them,” says Hansen. When asked if he’d made any changes to the original business plan, he said that it depends on which plan you look at. “Even two years ago we had not expected that we would be able to get our hands on ExecuJet... even though I’d been working on it for quite a while. When ExecuJet came through, it of course changed some of the issues that we had. If we hadn’t got ExecuJet and had gone for something smaller then the integration process would have been handled differently. Now that we’ve got ExecuJet we do everything off the ExecuJet platform. Two years ago this was simply unforeseen.”

Luxaviation’s managed aircraft fleet has grown to 262, thus maintaining its position as the world’s second-largest operator behind NetJets. “We have a sales team that has a much better argument than anyone has had before - we have the advantage of size, purchasing power and aircraft availability,” Hansen says.

“Not many companies can argue with that.”

Luxaviation is at Booth S073.

—Mike Vines

Luxaviation’s Recent Acquisitions

So far this year Luxaviation CMI has acquired two companies and successfully won a bid in India to build an FBO/MRO operation.

In January, it acquired European Business Aviation Services’ FBO and ground handling services at Munich International (the biggest handling area at Munich’s GA terminal), thus making it the 21st FBO in its EMEA, Africa and Australasia network. All are operated under the ExecuJet brand.

In February, the company, with Indian partner The Bird Group, won one of the two licenses to build and operate a new FBO and MRO facility at Indira Gandhi International Airport in New Delhi.

In April, the company was scheduled to extend various licensing activities in Mexico. In the meantime it opened its first FBO there, to be operated under the ExecuJet brand at Del Norte International in Monterrey. ExecuJet Mexico has been operating since 2002 and already has offices in Monterrey and Toluca with 13 aircraft under management.

—MV
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Gama Aviation Looks for More Acquisitions

In April, Gama Aviation reported its first annual results since the reverse takeover of Hangar8 in January 2015 made it a world-leading aviation services company. Group profits rose 15% to US$62.4 million and total worldwide revenue stood at US$413 million. The company is run by Marwan Khalek, the man who cofounded Gama in the 1980s with a single Beech King Air. “Key to further rapid expansion will be acquisitions,” he says.

The company now boasts a world-wide managed business jet fleet of 145 aircraft, has bases in the U.S., UK, Middle East and Asia offering charter, flight support and maintenance, and is responsible for the daily operation of around 55 aircraft for the U.S. Wheels Up membership program (currently around 15 Citation XLSs and 40 King Air 350s) - which is soon to be introduced to Europe.

The first deal was done early this year with the acquisition of Aviation Beauport Ltd., a privately owned Jersey, Channel Islands-based FBO that offers handling, parking and hangarage services and charter, in addition to operating four aircraft under management. The total cost of the deal was around GBP5,325,000. Gama’s board expects the acquisition to be earnings enhancing in the first year. The company aims to improve the line maintenance service provision to the airport. “This bolt-on acquisition is an excellent strategic fit for the Group, and allows us to extend our product offering in both our European air and ground operations,” Khalek says.

Although this was a relatively small acquisition, many others are in the pipeline. And while he couldn’t give details, Khalek added, “I think it’s safe to say that if I was speaking to you next Christmas time and there weren’t a few more announce-ments by then, I’d be very, very surprised.

“Obviously, certain markets are more challenging than others, but at this stage, I’m driving strategy and driving the execution of that strategy. I’m driving transactions - I can’t be very specific but I can tell you that we’re working transactions across all parts of our geographical spread and beyond... we’re constantly looking at potential targets.

“We have a matrix and a head of strategic development and if I looked at the pipeline that she’s managing, I would expect to see between 15 and 20 potential strategic targets. If not I would think she was doing something wrong.

“We are taking the company as far as we can,” Khalek added. Part of what Gama achieves is taking complex requirements and making them run smoothly toward a successful outcome. The U.S. operation of Wheels Up is a classic example. “One of the things we always talk about is the strength of our operational platform and the viability of our business model,” Khalek says.

The company has introduced 55 aircraft over a two-year period flying many sectors and missions every day. “This is a significant, a really significant, increase in our activity level.” Gama Aviation is at Booth V045.

—Mike Vines
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Stratajet Hits the Stratosphere With Charter App

Jonny Nicol, founder and CEO of Stratajet, spent four and a half years trying to make the code that would allow his price comparison app to deliver the holy grail of business aviation – instant real-time online booking.

Stratajet’s philosophy is based on the fact that 40% of all private jet flights in Europe fly empty legs. Last year around 260,000 private jets flew without any passengers aboard, according to the company.

Data from 2,107 airfields in 44 European countries has been collated by Stratajet (Booth F051) to allow users to access aircraft availability with all the variables taken into account – from landing fees to your nearest airfield suited to the aircraft type – while getting a solid quote in 10 sec.

To make this instant, Stratajet’s inventory management software integrates seamlessly with an aircraft operator’s existing system, allowing users to check out 500 operators quickly.

Nicol describes his product as an “adaptive empty-leg engine that optimizes existing empty legs by diverting the nearest aircraft to a customer destination.” This maximizes efficiency while allowing private jet travelers to charter a flight at a reduced price.

Many people said he was mad even to try to make this work, and even if he did, online bookers would never hire anything larger than a Citation Mustang. How wrong they were: Stratajet has taken an ACJ booking each week for the last four weeks.

He compares the “light bulb” moment when it all came right last year with the World War II Enigma code breakers at the UK’s Bletchley Park. Picture the dispirited team late at night: The computer finally stops running, the room goes very still and a team member inspects the result, then doesn’t believe it and has to rapidly crosscheck.

“We were right on the limits of computer science in terms of process and power and it was a phenomenally difficult process,” Nicol says.

As an example of the complexity of the software program, landing fees are phenomenally complicated, with 247 sets of variables within Europe. Landing fees can change several times a day at the same airport for the same aircraft type. Nicol gave an example where a landing fee could vary from around GBP300 to GBP3,000 in the space of a few minutes.

“In the 24-hr. period immediately after Stratajet was commercially launched on April 21, we produced more quotes for private jets than the entire industry in Europe had managed to do in the previous year,” Nicol says. “Yes, it’s huge!” So huge in fact that Stratajet is now valued in the tens of millions pounds sterling.

Nicol takes a percentage cut on the front end of all bookings “So operators can up their prices and be as creative as they like,” he says.

Watch out North America: Stratajet is to launch there soon. But first Nicol and colleagues have to meet with more than 400 operators in 48 states in the next nine months. —Mike Vines

In Nicol’s Own Words...

“We’d got the search speed down to 20 min. to look at 500 aircraft around London and Geneva as a test, and over two years we got it down to 4 min. by doing incremental changes.

“We ran out of money – we were six guys in a room. None of us had been paid for three months, but we decided we were going to go on until it was done. It was really late at night when we did this relatively simple multi-threading PCU cash system on a bastardization back end, and it came in at 16 sec. One of the guys said, ‘I must have left the cash things open or something,’ but on checking, sure enough it came back at 16 sec.

“There was just total silence and it got very emotional. After four and a half years we’d finally cracked it. I’d spent all my money from the sale of my previous companies and been to the bank for another GBP50,000 as a personal debt. We went from having a completely worthless company to one now valued in the multi-millions, with valuations going up at over GBP1 million a day.” —MV
On June 23, the British public will vote on whether the UK should remain in the European Union. Whichever way it goes, it’s a massive decision for Britain and the EU, with opinion polls forecasting that the result is on a knife edge. Departure will have serious ramifications for European business aviation.

Polls vary between 42% and 44% to remain while 40-46% want the UK to leave the EU. It’s very close, and with 11-19% of the electorate undecided, it’s anyone’s guess. The question is, how will it affect European business aviation if Britain votes to leave? ShowNews asked some well-known insiders for their personal views on “Brexit,” as it has become known.

James Dillon-Godfray, head of business development at London Oxford Airport says, “Our industry could be radically affected in a number of different ways. A fall in the value of sterling is bad for UK-domiciled operators, as fuel pricing is based on the U.S. dollar. Most of the financial sector, including pundits from the banks, are saying there is a high likelihood of sterling dropping considerably...as low as US$1.10 to the British pound [it’s currently around US$1.44].” He admits, though, that a low pound might be good news for UK MROs and service providers, as labor in the UK would be cheaper than in the EU.

A major concern to many over Brexit is cabotage. “Currently around 42% of domestic business aviation in the UK is undertaken by non-UK-registered aircraft (or non-UK Air Operators’ Certificate holders). That’s nearly 6,000 flights operating domestically point-to-point within the UK,” says Dillon-Godfray. He questions if those could be regarded as cabotage flights post-Brexit.

Neil Turnbull, COO of Vertis Aviation, gave the example that a UK-registered aircraft couldn’t pick up passengers in Paris. “It would be a cabotage problem, and I think it would be incredibly destructive to the industry. One would hope that if we vote to leave [Turnbull is British] the Open Skies legislation would remain. If not, this would be terrible for the whole industry, as operators with bases across Europe would suddenly find that they couldn’t do it [operate] any more. I think it would be catastrophic if we changed the current arrangement. It would be like going back to the 1980s.”

“There are so many questions and so many gray areas to be answered,” commented Dillon-Godfray. He and many others are asking: What happens to UK companies currently covered by EASA regulations? Will it be possible to opt for a sort of “EASA Light” variation? How would it affect UK pilot employment terms for those working and living in mainland Europe? Others comment that aircraft resale and acquisition and import/export could be dramatically affected, not immediately perhaps, but within two or three years.

“Those promoting Brexit say that all will be sorted out within a couple years and all will be fine, but pretty much everyone you speak to in the aviation sector seems to think it will take several years, even decades,” says Dillon-Godfray.

—Mike Vines
Greenpoint’s 787-8 Takes Center Stage

Unique among the aircraft in the Static Display at EBACE 2016 is the first outfitted BBJ 787-8, the conclusion of a close collaboration between completions specialist Greenpoint Technologies, Pierrejean Design Studio of Paris, and aircraft acquisition and management provider Kestrel Aviation.

Greenpoint’s role in the completion process began in January 2013, with the firm investing nearly US$1 million in research and development. Weekly engineering and design meetings incorporated technical disciplines from IFE integration and electrical load analysis to sidewall attachment and window integration.

The early investment was critical to understand the various differences incurred with a BBJ 787 interior completion and allowed the Kirkland, Washington-based company to manage the aggressive schedule.

"From the beginning, we approached the 787 with an innovative mindset," said Greenpoint design director Annika Svore Wicklund. That mindset involved all three partners in the project, from such initial challenges as decompression and floor structure attachment to leather panels and the absence of hardwood banding on the cabinetry, she said.

With its carbon fiber fuselage, much of Greenpoint’s previous experience on legacy metal aircraft was of limited relevance to the BBJ 787. An entirely new data set was needed from Boeing to facilitate design and installation of a VIP cabin.

The 787 is an all-electric aircraft. Its complex electrical design and unique software architecture presented Kestrel with “a steep learning curve.” The aircraft’s cabin alone contains some 26 mi. of new wiring, with more than 17,000 terminals that require connection to the electrical architecture without causing power overloads or interference.

“Our engineers conducted extensive research to learn the unique features inherent in making changes to this complex aircraft,” said Greenpoint engineering VP Bruce Kay. “Examples of areas posing the most challenge with integration of the 787’s power distribution system to ensure that current return requirements were properly addressed included defining system logic, wire routing, termination, and shielding for thousands of wire bundles installed for the VIP interior and systems.”

For those fortunate enough to receive an invitation to visit the BBJ 787 at EBACE, the tour begins at the main door with a grand entry foyer of high, domed ceilings, hardwood flooring, leather bulkheads, custom artwork and extensive accent lighting. To the right of the entry, via an undulating lit corridor, is the main lounge - a multi-use space for entertaining guests, dining or relaxing, with several divans, tables and 55-in. flat-screen monitors.

To the left is the master suite, which holds a bedroom and master washroom/lavatory and described by Greenpoint as “a sanctuary for rest and rejuvenation.” The California king bed, oversized shower and dual sinks provide ample space for two.

Among the cabin highlights is a circular lavatory dividing the main lounge and aft cabin, where there are 18 lay-flat first-class seats and six premium economy seats. Throughout the cabin are dedicated tablets for cabin control of everything from seats and entertainment to flight attendant requests.

For the cabin crew there are private, custom sleeping quarters with individual storage space for each member, as well as flight attendant areas in the forward and aft cabins.

Kestrel and Pierrejean focused on the five traditionally recognized human senses for guidance in design. The objective was to minimize the physical toll that a passenger would experience in an aircraft capable of 17-hr. nonstop point-to-point flights anywhere on Earth.

For the sense of sight, the goal was an “oasis of peace” and soft earth tones, with smooth, flowing lines, an absence of sharp edges and intuitive control of...
natural and artificial mood lighting. For the sense of touch, the team wanted a design that felt organic, with surfaces inviting emotional as well as physical connection.

Noise and vibration are very physically debilitating, Kestrel noted, so Greenpoint set the bar high with extensive soundproofing. And for scent and taste they focused on air distribution and filtration and segregation of zones with hard and soft barriers.

Pierrejean has an extensive record of design innovation that includes large VIP aircraft and mega-yacht interiors. Its style, according to Kestrel, “is a fusion of European Modern and Asian tradition, which is deceptively easy on the eye.”

With Kestrel, Pierrejean developed the cabin concept from initial sketches and layouts through 2-D and 3-D drawings and renderings. This material was then transferred to Greenpoint for detailed engineering design, manufacturing, installation and certification.

The aircraft is scheduled for an official delivery to Kestrel in late June, after a 30-month process that included 18 months in the hangar.

“The genesis of the project was the vision of Kestrel’s client that the 787’s characteristics would make a unique, ultra-long-haul corporate aircraft,” said a spokesman. “This is now a reality.”

“We learned a great deal from our first 787, which is already flowing to our second 787,” added Greenpoint EVP Bret Neely. Greenpoint is at Booth 1051.

—Kirby Harrison
This unprecedented access allows BBGA to focus on strategic issues with direct access to government ministers through these departments. “We were also able to get support for unblocking red tape associated with visas and business aviation [and we were] able to get support for unblocking red tape associated with visas for training Chinese business aviation pilots in the UK,” Bailey says.

Dame Deirdre Hutton, chair of the CAA, was happy to go on the record as saying, “I think the BBGA is doing an excellent job representing the interests of such a diverse range of organizations with different activities and business models. We at the CAA recognize the importance of enabling sustainable growth in the British business aviation sector for the aviation industry, its consumers and the wider economy. A strong business aviation sector encourages high-net-worth individuals and businesses to look to the UK as a home for their investments, promoting employment and economic growth.”

Says Bailey, “If there was only one area where we should park all competitive issues and work together, then securing jobs for the next generation in Aviation Services has to be our top priority.”

Aviation Services is the new title given to a sector that includes leisure flying, and business aviation through commercial general aviation up to the scheduled airlines. “So it’s about making an inclusive community rather than fighting for your own bit of space.” The new title replaces the old Aerospace heading, which is now regarded as having too many OEM overtones.

“It’s vital for BBGA and other associations to work together as close as we can both in the UK and in Europe in order to get rapid resolution and support from Government and the European Commission on issues that are currently affecting us,” Bailey says.

The BBGA is also trying to reduce and rationalize the number of forums to just key representative organizations. “Because, whether it be UK Government Minister or the EU Commission, they love to speak to one organization,” said Bailey. By joining with other associations he instanced the power of solidarity.

“When you can say, ‘We represent 700 members and around 500 of them are SMEs,’ this gets their attention.” The improved organizational scheme has already made for better access to the EU’s transport director general and EASA’s senior executives.

—Mike Vines
Europe’s largest Citation Mustang operator, GlobeAir of Austria, is adding another six to bring its fleet to 20 of Cessna’s very light jets.

GlobeAir is showing that the niche market for very light jets may be growing. Last year the company posted a profit of EUR2.3 million on revenues of EUR17.5 million, and the number of flights operated rose from 5,100 to 6,000.

“Our charter sales rose 20%,” says founder and CEO Bernhard Fragner. “At the moment I think our product is at the right place at the right time.” Overall, he notes, very light jet activity in Europe is 22% up year-on-year, whereas most other sectors are flat or around 2% down.

Fragner says Europe is struggling economically, except for the UK and Germany, and that a lot of his customers previously used midsize cabin aircraft such as the Citation XL and XLS to fly just one or two people.

“They survived the 2008 financial crash through streamlining their own companies, cutting costs and giving better value,” he explains. “Basically, in 1.5 hr. and with just one or two passengers they can get to most places in Europe and don’t need to fly in an XLS,” which, according to Fragner, is around 30% more expensive than a very light jet. “Sometimes we fly four passengers aboard our Mustangs, but our average is 1.4 passengers per flight... so with our niche I believe we can continue to grow.

“What helps us significantly is our fleet size, in that we can guarantee a flight, whereas an operator with only two to three aircraft cannot. Given my fleet size I can always find a solution.”

So is the term “Air Taxi” dead? “We learned in Europe that this business is still discreet, and that people are not willing to share the cabin – we tried the cabin-sharing model and found it doesn’t work in Europe,” he says.

Fragner believes that the great differentiator and the most stable market at the moment is London, so its aircraft are distributed among that city’s airports, of which the busiest are Luton and Biggin Hill. Across the Channel, Paris-Le Bourget, Geneva and Nice are next busiest. “We have aircraft permanently based at those airports,” Fragner says.

The six new aircraft will be spread across the network to meet growing demand in the London area and in Zurich, while Munich will also have a permanently based aircraft.

Fragner’s advice is to question every expense. “A simple thing that we questioned was why should a GBP100 landing/handling fee cost GBP110 every time we used the same airport? We found the handling agent was charging a GBP10 administration fee each time, as he had to forward the fees to the airport authority. So we opened an account directly with the airport and now pay monthly rather than per-flight.”

Market development is still a key to continuing growth. “Our industry is really great at marketing itself within the industry, but we have to market ourselves better and address the potential customer base directly,” says Fragner, who tries to spend two days per week talking to new potential customers, and every week he finds one or two that have never heard of business aviation.

“These are millionaires and entrepreneurs, very successful people, and they are the last to learn how they can save more time efficiently. Their perception is that business aviation is just for the top celebrities, that using Gulfstreams and the like costs hundreds of thousands of dollars per flight. We offer them a 50% discount on their first flight, then once you have them at the aircraft they come again.”

—Bernhard Fragner, founder & CEO of GlobeAir

—Mike Vines
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The economic slowdown and shrinking overall demand for business aviation services in Russia has not affected the expansion plans of A-Group, which operates FBOs at Moscow-Sheremetyevo and St. Petersburg-Pulkovo airports. The company ended 2015 with a 47% increase in the number of passengers served compared to the previous year.

There were several things that attracted new clients, says Olga Guerassina, A-Group commercial director, confirming that the most of the passenger growth was accounted for by Sheremetyevo operations. She points out that the opening of a new toll highway to the airport enabled the clients to avoid Moscow’s infamous traffic jams, while the helipad located next to the business aviation terminal allows them to use helicopter transfers. “Another very important advantage today is our competitive fuel prices,” Guerassina says.

A-Group is preparing to celebrate its 10th anniversary this year with serious expansion. By year’s end it expects to open a new ramp at Sheremetyevo, and a third hangar next to the terminal that will almost double storage capacity - from 35 to 60 aircraft.

“The crisis will end sooner or later, and it’s better to meet a growing market with a new terminal and renovated facilities than with a construction site,” he adds.

—Maxim Pyadushkin

Domodedovo FBO Hosts Business Class Travelers

Moscow’s Domodedovo Business Aviation Center (Booth U055) is expanding services for travelers flying business class on the commercial airlines as private jet operations have been decreasing for the past two years.

“We see significant growth in demand of our service by airline passengers,” says DBAC deputy general director Vladimir Klementiev. “This allows us to retain and even increase passenger flow in our terminal despite [the economic] crisis.”

Out of all of Moscow’s airports, Domodedovo is the farthest from the city center, about 20 km. DBAC thus faces strong competition with FBOs at Vnukovo and Sheremetyevo located closer to the Russian capital.

But the opening of a new road junction at the end of 2015 improved Domodedovo access, Klementiev notes, and passengers can also get to DBAC by helicopter - the FBO has two helipads. He points out too that the DBAC VIP terminal can serve as a transfer point between helicopter, private jet and scheduled flights.

DBAC was founded in 1995. The company plans to build a new terminal with a capacity of 60 to 90 passengers per hour. “We plan to finish the first part of reconstruction by the FIFA World Cup that will take place in Russia in 2018, Klementiev says.

“The crisis will end sooner or later, and it’s better to meet a growing market with a new terminal and renovated facilities than with a construction site,” he adds.

—Maxim Pyadushkin

Jet Aviation Gets Vnukovo MRO Nod

Jet Aviation reports U.S. FAA approval to provide scheduled and unscheduled maintenance, airframe and engine repairs, avionics modifications, inspections and defect rectifications on U.S.-registered aircraft at Moscow Vnukovo Airport.

The approval, which follows a recent audit of Jet’s MRO facility next to the Vnukovo 3 FBO, clears the way for work on aircraft manufactured by Bombardier, Embraer, Falcon, Gulfstream and Hawker.

“We are delighted to expand our service offerings to support American business aviation aircraft owners and operators and look forward to welcoming them to our facility in Moscow,” said Jet Aviation Moscow Vnukovo general director Vitaly Aleksikov.

Jet Aviation Moscow Vnukovo is a line maintenance, AOG and authorized warranty line service facility for Bombardier aircraft, as well as an authorized line service facility for the full line of Gulfstream and Embraer jets.

Jet Aviation is at Booth A050.
Rolls-Royce’s Engine Support Grows as Buyers Realize Benefits

When it comes to supporting business jet engines in service, Rolls-Royce’s CorporateCare engine maintenance program has evolved from sparking market interest to generating market demand. Now seven out of every 10 new, large Bombardiers and Gulfstream will likely be enrolled in the program.

The pre-owned market no longer sees Rolls-Royce’s CorporateCare as adding resale value to an aircraft, but rather as a detractor if it isn’t enrolled, says Stephen Friedrich, the engine-maker’s VP for sales and marketing of civil small and medium engines.

“We now are on target to reach 2,000 aircraft covered by CorporateCare this year, and more than 70% of all new Rolls-Royce deliveries are enrolled,” he says. “We have a 70-80% market share versus our competitors in winning support contracts on current-production Rolls-Royce engines.” The sign-up rate exceeds the number of new deliveries as aircraft five, 10 or even 20 years old are enrolled.

The manufacturer’s CorporateCare program brings guaranteed maintenance costs to new and in-service Rolls-Royce BR725, BR710, Tay and AE 3007 engines. Operators pay a fixed cost-per-flying hour fee for a comprehensive range of scheduled and unscheduled engine maintenance events and benefits. To support an expanding fleet, Rolls-Royce has more than 50 authorized service centers around the world. Growth was spurred most recently by service entry of the Gulfstream G650 and the even longer-range G650ER.

Friedrich notes that buyers are very risk-averse – they want to transfer the financial risk of maintenance. And they also enjoy the benefits of Rolls-Royce’s emergency support service. “We claim to be the industry leader in averting missed trips and AOG [aircraft on ground] resolution,” he says. “We’re now at 97% resolution of engine issues in under 24 hr.”

They also enjoy increased asset liquidity when it comes to selling an aircraft. “Our analysis shows that aircraft enrolled in CorporateCare sell twice as quickly as those outside the program.”

Rolls-Royce is at Booth A073. —John Morris
ACA Plans Major Expansion of FBO Chain

“Unless there is some accident, we are going to announce at EBACE the acquisition of 16 additional FBOs in Europe, Africa and other places,” says Michel Tohane, director of General Aviation Business at Aeroports de la Côte d’Azur (ACA).

This year another of ACA’s top executives is in the ShowNews Top 10. In 2015 it was Dominique Thillaud, chairman of the Management Board, and this time it’s rightly the turn of Michel Tohane.

It’s been a very busy time for him and is about to get even busier as the company expands its International Standard for Business Aviation Handling (IS-BAH)-rated Sky Valet brand further across Europe and beyond. Last year it bought the UniJet FBO at Paris-Le Bourget from the Luxaviation Group, and Spain’s largest FBO chain – with eight locations – from the Gestair Group. These have been added to ACA’s existing Sky Valet FBOs at its owned airports at Cannes-Mandelieu and Golfe de Saint-Tropez, making 11 locations in all. “Now we’re looking at 16 more,” says Belgian-born Tohane. This will bring Sky Valet’s tally to 27 bases (ACA also owns Nice Airport but does not have an FBO there). According to Tohane it’s all about matching the consolidation of Europe’s business aircraft operators. “Big fleet operators and flight support companies are becoming huge and very important as they bring a lot of traffic flow and ask for consistent high quality service across a range of locations. So when you visit big companies like UAS International Trip Support you can imagine the weight it carries when you can say ‘I have 28 destinations in Europe.’ Then you can really start talking about discounts, volume deals, marketing actions, whatever,” he says.

New legislation was passed last October to increase aircraft landing weights from 22 tonnes to 35 tonnes at ACA’s Cannes-Mandelieu specialist general aviation airport. “This took 18 months to achieve with a big team and included Dassault engineers. We had to convince the neighbors and the politicians,” said Tohane. “Parking has been rearranged so we are now able to attract more large aircraft.”

Sky Valet’s Spanish airports include Barcelona, Girona, Ibiza, La Coruña, Madrid (which is also its 24/7 operations center), Palma de Mallorca, Santiago de Compostela and Valencia. ACA is at Booth E035.

—Mike Vines
The certification process was instigated in January by Stéphane Ledermann, founder of Brussels-based Smart Air, following delivery of the aircraft to a private owner a month earlier. “Operating into La Mole was an important requirement for the owner,” says Ledermann, who manages the jet. “We investigated [the airport] before buying the aircraft and began the certification process soon after it arrived in Brussels.” The aircraft is operated by Air Service Liege (ASL), also based in Brussels.

Cédric Gurdand, Smart Air’s chief captain, performed one complete and one aborted landing on March 12 to demonstrate the aircraft’s and crew’s capabilities to EASA officials. In accordance with strict EASA requirements that are unique to La Mole due to its location between mountains, all aircraft – both chartered and owner-operated – must be able to stop within 60% of its 3,871-ft. runway. The rules for the airport were further tightened recently, reducing the operable length of the runway by 164 ft. This means that aircraft once allowed to fly into La Mole, including the Falcon 50 and 7X and Embraer Phenom 300, are now restricted. Approval for the Legacy 450 was granted for up to seven passengers and two pilots, while the Latitude has demonstrated it can meet the latest runway restrictions with up to five 200 lb. passengers, two pilots, and baggage.

While not an operator itself and with no AOC, Ledermann describes Smart Air as the equivalent to a “multi-pronged car dealer,” offering new aircraft brokering and management services to clients.

The Legacy 450 is being offered for charter flights to Saint-Tropez and will undoubtedly prove popular during the busy summer season on the French Riviera. Arriving directly into La Mole instead of nearby Cannes or Nice is even more critical for VIPs in the region, as road congestion makes even short trips very lengthy, and heavy restrictions on helicopter operations during long periods of the day have hampered ease of movement.

The airport management is working on several possible solutions to resolve the runway length issue, but the terrain limits its physical expansion.

The Legacy 450 deal marks Ledermann’s return to aviation after taking a break for five years. His previous venture in 2008 offered fractional ownership shares of Diamond D-Jets, but with the cancellation of that program he was forced to refund deposits to would-be future customers. He declined to disclose how many aircraft he is now managing for clients but has ambitious plans to restart the charter concept using entry-level aircraft with low operating costs.

—Rupa Haria
Embraer Executive Jets Cements Its Arrival

Eleven years after launching Embraer Executive Jets in 2005, the Brazilian company has made significant progress toward its goal of winning 36% of the world’s business jet market.

It was indeed an ambitious plan, says Marco Túlio Pellegrini, president and CEO of Embraer Executive Jets. Despite launching the Phenom 100 very light jet and Phenom 300 light jet into a depressed market for business aircraft, followed by the Legacy 450 and 500 into markets that have never completely recovered from the 2008 global financial crisis, Embraer has done well to win a market share of 17%.

Major milestones, Pellegrini notes, include delivery in April of Embraer’s 1,000th business jet (a Legacy 500 to Flexjet), and the Phenom 300’s record of being the industry’s most-delivered business aircraft for the third straight year. More than 330 Phenom 300s are now in service.

At the same time, Embraer Executive Jets’ revenues continue to outpace the world economy, with projections for growth from US$1.75 billion to US$1.9 billion this year from US$1.6 billion in 2015.

“This is an unprecedented growth rate,” says Pellegrini. “We kept on growing right through the recession.” These revenues come mostly from sales of new aircraft, including the very-large and ultra-large cabin Legacy 650 and Lineage 1000E. “Customer support is still only a tiny part of our revenues as most aircraft are still in warranty,” he notes.

Embraer Executive Jets, Pellegrini adds, reached US$1 billion in revenues faster than any other business jet manufacturer, even when all data is recalculated into current dollars. This, he says, reflects Embraer’s pitting the latest technology and innovation against competitors that were fielding 20- to 30-year-old designs such as Hawkers and early Citations. “We came in with design for high utilization and good operating costs, and longer maintenance intervals due to our airline heritage. For example, the Legacy 500 has a maintenance interval of 750 hr. or 12 months – essentially a full year. That was our design criteria.”

Nearby 23 Legacy 500s had been delivered by the end of 2015, plus three Legacy 450s.

The Phenom, he adds, created a challenge for the existing manufacturers, and forced them to react. “We brought innovation such as fly-by-wire and value – we were a catalyst.”

Now the midsize Legacy 500 is set to become the best-in-class in the industry for years to come, he believes. But Embraer must keep innovating to keep it there.

“All OEMs are forced to improve or they won’t survive,” he says. “We have plans to keep improving our products. There is so much to do in terms of performance, cabin comfort, technology, in-flight entertainment and connectivity. You need to be ahead of the customer with features that today they can’t even imagine.”

—John Morris
EMERGING AIRCRAFT

Just a Little More ‘Go’ Than ‘Stop’
Business Aircraft About to Enter the Marketplace

Don’t you just love the guy who can’t decide whether he’s in the fast lane or the slow lane? Or the one who seems to be broken down by the roadside, then fixes his problem and shoots straight across into the outside lane? The following survey examines newcomers to the business aircraft market but contains so many stop-go, fast-slow projects that it could be a treatise on weekend driving.

In aviation programs, though, erratic behavior is more often the consequence of financial fluctuations than gremlins in the gasoline flow. Projects that seemed to be blissfully coasting toward first flight or certification targets suddenly have nothing to report – except, perhaps, that all previously issued date estimates should be increased by one. Others, apparently languishing in the doldrums, miraculously produce a prototype or two and relaunch into frenetic activity.

But let us not induce pessimism. Of six aircraft struck from the survey since the last EBACE, hope has been (temporarily) abandoned only for one. The remaining five are now certified and in production. Not a bad outcome.

—Paul Jackson

Props and Turboprops

Recent certification of the Diamond DA62 and Nexant G90XT sees these twins depart at full throttle, while the ONE Aviation (Kestrel) K350 is pushed to the back of the hangar until more funding materializes.

A sudden flurry of activity in the Czech Republic brings the EV-55 Outback back. Here-and-gone is the latest TBM from Daher, the 930, which was both introduced and entered service last month.

AIL-410 NG

Aircraft Industries of the Czech Republic has resumed manufacture of the Soviet-era Let L-410 19-seat utility turboprop to satisfy a steady market. Last July, it flew the prototype of a “new generation” version, fitted with General Electric H85 engines, Garmin G3000 avionics, modernized cabin, a wing redesigned with extra fuel capacity (hence no tip tanks) and a longer nose for additional baggage space. EASA certification is planned for next year, while Russian approval (and local assembly) is also a priority.

ASI F406 Caravan II

Reims Aviation Industries was acquired in March 2014 by Chinese-owned Continental Motors Inc. and renamed ASI Aviation. After two remaining incomplete airframes are finished in France the program will be transferred abroad, probably to Mobile, Alabama, where the 12-seat F406 will be face-lifted with new avionics, electrical and hydraulic systems, a new autopilot and an engine change: -135 versions of its existing P&W PT6As, or Continental pistons, the latter rumored to be either the GTSIO-520 and/or the new diesel CD-310.

Beechcraft SETP

A long silence followed Beechcraft’s announcement of a nine-seat Single-Engine TurboProp (SETP) project at the 2012 NBAA Convention, this only broken at the same event three years later when General Electric announced that it is building the engine. Seen as a PT6A counterpart covering the 1,300-2,000 shp range, the new GE turboprop will be ready for its first test run in 2018.

Textron Aviation is launching the still unnamed SETP at Geneva this week. The TBM 900/930 and PC-12 had better look out. Wooing customers with an introductory price of US$4.5 million, the Garmin G3000-equipped utility airplane boasts a 53-in.-wide, 59-in.-high cargo door; 1,600-nm range; 31,000-ft. ceiling; and 285-kt. maximum cruise speed. McCauley is supplying a five-blade composite propeller.

CAIGA Leadair AG300

In 2010, China bought the rights to the “old” Epic company’s family of large kit-bult jets and turboprops. The five-seat Epic Escape is to be first in production, becoming the AG300. This made its “official” first flight in July 2014, powered by an 850-shp General Electric H85 turboprop, and was scheduled to gain local type certification in 2015. For undisclosed reasons it did not fly with wheels retracted until Nov. 23, 2015, implying some delay to the project. Range is 1,350 nm and cruise is 324 kt. Price: about US$1.5 million.

Diamond DA50-JP7

This five-seat version of the DA40 flew in 2007 and has taken time to find its optimum engine. After earlier false dawns, “Jet Prop 7” flew in Austria on Jan. 19, 2015, on the 465 hp of a Ukrainian AI-450S turbine built by Motor Sich JSC in collaboration with Ivchenko Progress. Certification is planned in mid-/late 2016, and to woo the expected Russian market, the standard “Speed” version will be partnered by a large-wheeled “Tundra” model with slotted flaps and enlarged door. That achieved, a piston-diesel version is to be offered with the eight-cylinder, 440-hp Austron Engine HIPE AE440 being developed under the EU’s Clean Sky initiative. The engine was first flown on Nov. 6, 2015, in a test-bed helicopter.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 42
Dec. 19 was the day the factory-built, to-be-certified version of the discontinued, six-seat Epic LT kitplane took to the skies. A second conforming prototype is imminent. When last publicized, sales totaled at least 60, but the fact that half of them are in Russia (where Epic’s owners are based) might ring economic alarm bells. Priced at US$2,995 million typically equipped, and claimed to be the “fastest single-engine turboprop on the market,” the pressurized E1000 offers three-screen Garmin G1000 EFIS and 1,385-nm range at 325 kt. with its 1,200-shp (de-rated) PT6-67A turboprop.

**Evektor EV-55 Outback**

While its ultralight airplane and engineering consultancy business has prospered, Evektor has been less fortunate with the attractive EV-55 and for a lot of the time since the prototype’s June 2011 maiden flight, the Outback has appeared to languish - due in no small part to a failed Russian partnership agreement. But affairs began moving ahead on April 8 when the second, production-conforming prototype took to the air. There’s now cash in the bank sufficient to achieve certification by December 2018. For overdue replacement of aging FAR Part 23 workhorses like the Piper Navajo and Cessna 400-series twins, it is an economic, rugged, 10-passenger transport with high, cantilever wing and fixed landing gear, powered by a pair of 350-hp Lycoming TEO-540-A1A flat-sixes intended to run on avgas or mogas. The aircraft will cruise at 170 kt. over 450-nm range with full passenger load, or 720 nm with eight. Pure-freight and six-person executive versions are among the options.

**Tecnam P2012 Traveller**

Rolled out at the manufacturer’s new, purpose-built factory at Capua, Italy, on March 31, the Traveller prototype will fly next month and looks to EASA and FAA certification by December 2018. For overdue replacement of aging FAR Part 23 workhorses like the Piper Navajo and Cessna 400-series twins, it is an economic, rugged, 10-passenger transport with high, cantilever wing and fixed landing gear, powered by a pair of 350-hp Lycoming TEO-540-A1A flat-sixes intended to run on avgas or mogas. The aircraft will cruise at 170 kt. over 450-nm range with full passenger load, or 720 nm with eight. Pure-freight and six-person executive versions are among the options.

**Cirrus Vision SF50**

Last August, Cirrus was “in the final stages of certification” of the SF50, then anticipated before the end of 2015. That failed to transpire – perhaps not altogether unfortunately because first ground was not broken for the customer center at McGhee Tyson Airport, Knoxville, Tennessee, until November. Meanwhile “more than 500” customers await the FAA signing-off the three conforming prototypes that all flew in 2014, thanks to Chinese investment.

Cirrus is less inclined to bandy payload/range numbers than it was but does quote a cruising speed of 300 kt. on the 1,800-lb.-thrust of the spine-mounted Williams FJ33. Disposable load is 2,428 lb., of which up to 2,000 lb. can be fuel. Like its piston-engine SR stablemate, the Vision is equipped with a recovery parachute as standard for its maximum five-plus-two occupants. Price is equivalent to US$1.96 million in 2011 dollars.

**Flaris LAR1**

Having discovered a meaning of the word “soon” of which 19th century dictionary compiler Noah Webster was pardonably ignorant, this Polish manufacturer...
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has yet to achieve the first flight promised imminently at the aircraft’s June 2013 Paris Air Show debut. One difficulty has been overcome, however, with banishment of the original, spine-mounted and low-powered 1,460-lb.-thrust PW615F in favor of the 1,910-lb.-thrust Williams FJ33-5A.

With its new engine the LAR1 will have a range of 1,200 nm when all five seats are occupied. Cruise is 380 kt. and certified ceiling FL 280. Optimized for the private pilot, the US$1.5 million LAR1 features ease of handling, operation from grass airfields of moderate length, automobile-like cabin, wings detachable for economical storage and a parachute rescue system. First aircraft built are to be in the Experimental category. Later European CS23 certification will lead to FAA approval.

Stratos 714
A modicum of new funding has allowed Stratos to begin parts fabrication for the prototype of its Williams FJ44–powered, largely carbon fiber personal jet, but the company promises nothing dramatic in the short term. The 714 designation indicates Mach 0.7 (415 kt.), one engine and four people, who, with their baggage, can fly 1,500-nm NBAA range at up to 41,000 ft. Landing speeds and distance requirements for the 714 are considerably below twin-jets, making many more airports accessible to Stratos owner/pilots, while sidestick control, EFIS cockpit, docile handling and fully integrated autopilot lighten the workload.

Very Light and Light Jets
The HondaJet departed these annals on Dec. 8 upon FAA certification, leaving Pilatus pushing ahead and SyberJet taking a more laid-back route to resumed production.

Pilatus PC-24
Two PC-24 prototypes took to the air last year – in May and November – and one more will soon follow to participate in the 2,300 hr. of trials that will lead to certification and first deliveries in 3Q 2017. The Williams FJ44–powered twin can lift up to 12 (including a single pilot) from unpaved runways of 2,690 ft. There’s a large-volume cabin with freight door and rapidly removable seats, permitting easy reconfiguration for transport, medical evacuation and other roles. A “jet PC-12” in fact.

Cruising at 425 kt. the US$8.9 million PC-24 will cover 1,190 nm with a 2,500-lb. payload, or 1,950 nm with four passengers. Pilatus ACE avionics, developed with Honeywell, include a synthetic vision system, autothrottle, graphical flight planning, TCAS II and localizer performance with vertical (LPV) guidance capability.

SyberJet SJ30
Having shown its NWORX Cabin Demonstrator at last year’s NBAA Convention, SyberJet is on the final run-up to relaunching manufacture of Ed Swearingen’s SJ30 later this year. After two previous owners of the company had built only four production examples between them, SyberJet took control in April 2011, building a new facility at Cedar City, Utah, and commissioning the Honeywell SyberVision avionics suite comprising four 12-in. LCDs. The standard SJ30i will be partnered by the SJ30x, which combines more powerful FJ44-3AP-25 engines, replacing the regular -2A version. Despite its age – it first flew in 1991 and was certified in 2005 – the US$8.5 million SJ30i delivers high performance, including Mach 0.83 maximum cruising, FL 490 operating ceiling and a three-pax, NBAA IFR range of 2,130 nm.

Midsize and Super-Midsize Jets
The Cessna Latitude and Embraer Legacy 450 were both certified last year, while the Cessna Longitude, which remains, differs considerably from its 2015 incarnation. Reiteration of the old designer’s adage, “Never put a new engine in a new airframe,” might be timely.

Cessna Longitude
The Model 800 that Cessna “re-announced” in Las Vegas last November has been repurposed lower in the Textron Aviation portfolio, compared with the machine revealed at EBACE 2012. It also drops the Safran-Sneumo Silvercrest engines currently causing much anguish to the Dassault Falcon 5X, giving its manufacturer the confidence to promise a first flight within the next few months and certification in the back half of next year. That said, it is still a typical Citation, with metal monocoque structure, 28.5-deg. wing sweepback, T-tail, twin podded engines and manual control, apart from fly-by-wire rudder and roll spoilers.

The US$23.9 million Longitude has accommodation for a maximum of 12 in its stand-up, flat-floor cabin. However, eight would be more normal, while FAR Part 135 operations with nine are permissible. Benefits for those in “the office” include fully automated autothrottles.

AAT CJ800
Dassault is no longer the only company offering both supersonic fighters and business jets. China’s 611 Design Institute of the Chengdu No. 132 Aircraft Factory has been working on the CJ800 for some years, confirming its continued interest by releasing, in January, latest artist’s impressions of exteriors and interiors. The move suggests China is pressing ahead with its previously announced plan to finalize design of an indigenous business jet during 2016 and place it in production by 2020. The aircraft will be marketed by AVIC Aviation Technologies (AAT) and is stated to have long range, a large cabin, high cruising speed, digital fly-by-wire, integrated avionics and a “new-generation propulsion system.”
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and Garmin G5000 avionics with synthetic vision as standard. Two 7,550-lb.-thrust Honeywell HTF7700Ls impart a maximum speed of Mach 0.84 and a range, with four passengers and the usual reserves, of 3,400 nm.

Cessna Hemisphere

Outgrow the Citation Sovereign and you used to have to say “goodbye” to Cessna. But the “largest, widest and longest-range” of the current Textron Aviation business aircraft, the Hemisphere launched at last November’s NBAA Convention, is one of the company’s ways of giving a next-step-up option to loyal customers. There will be some wait, however. This clean-sheet, US$35 million design will not fly until 2019 but, once in service, will offer an 8 ft., 6 in.-wide, stand-up, flat-floor cabin seating 12 passengers in at least two reconfigurable zones. Range target is 4,500 nm, and while the two engines remain unspecified, it is probable that Cessna is expecting the Safran-Snecma Silvercrest to come right for when needed.

Gulfstream G500 and G600

During the last 12 months, Gulfstream has flown four prototypes of the shorter-fuselage, “three-cabin” G500 and completed both the first production example and the prototype G600. With its Gulfstream Symmetry flight deck, the G500 is scheduled for certification in 2017 and deliveries the following year. Following some 12 months later is the 5 ft. longer, “four-cabin” G600, both models accommodating 19 passengers. Prices are US$44.7 million and about US$54.5 million, respectively.

Pratt & Whitney turbofans provide the power for eight-passenger, Mach 0.85 flights spanning 5,000 nm (G500 with PW814s) or 6,200 nm (G600 with PW815s). Mach 0.90 cruising is possible, with some loss of range.

Ultra-Long-Range Jets

Troubles begat more troubles. Bombardier sees Dassault steal a march on its latest business jets as the consequence of program delays.

Bombardier Global 7000 and 8000

Shortly after the last EBACE, Bombardier confirmed suspicions that these related aircraft were two years behind schedule, the long-fuselage 7000 not now due to enter service until the second half of 2018, and the 8000 at an unspecified interval thereafter. More cheerfully, the first of four 7000 prototypes was revealed last September to be structurally complete and should be flying shortly.

The two are derivatives of the Global 6000 long-range twinjet, with different fuselage stretches: 11 ft., 3 in. for the 17-seat 7000, and just 2 ft., 3 in. for the 13-seat 8000. Similarities with the past end there, for they have a new transonic wing of increased area and reduced thickness and a pair of 16,500-lb.-thrust GE Passport 20 turbofans. The 8000 covers 7,900 nm under NBAA conditions with four crew and eight passengers, while the 7000 will reach 7,300 nm with four crew and 10 passengers. Long-range cruise for both is Mach 0.85, but 0.90 is attainable over shorter distances. Cost is in the region of US$73 million (7000) to US$71 million (8000).

Dassault Falcon 8X

This Falcon 7X derivative was announced at EBACE in May 2014 and three prototypes were flying by the time of the following year’s event. If all is well, the 2016 Convention will see announcement of certification by both EASA and the FAA, and handing over of the first customer’s machine.

Differences from the Falcon 7X include a 3 ft., 7 in. fuselage stretch in fore-and-aft segments; a Falcon 5X cockpit, including third-generation EASy avionics; 5% extra power; and a more efficient and lighter wing. Maximum load is 19 passengers and three crew, but, more normally, eight-plus-three can travel 6,450 nm with NBAA IFR reserves at Mach 0.80, in a cabin atmosphere of 4,000 ft. at FL 410. Price is around US$57.5 million.

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Large Jets
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Airbus ACJ319/320neo
The “new engine option” (neo) available to airlines was officially extended to business operators last May. Deliveries of green ACJ319neos begin in mid-2018 and ACJ320neos before the end of that year.

Airbus ACJ350
From a peak of eight orders, just one of these $US300 million airliners remains on the books for an undisclosed business operator, intended delivery date unknown.

Boeing BBJ MAX
Airliner 737 MAX prototype flying began on Jan. 29 and Boeing Business Jets has had an equivalent on offer since the first BBJ MAX 8 was ordered in April 2014. The latter’s delivery to a cabin outfitter is due in 2018. An initial contract for a longer BBJ MAX 9 was announced on June 17, 2015, although received some time before then.

CCAC StarLiner 100
In Geneva a year ago, newly formed Chongqing Commercial Aircraft Corp. announced plans to place in Chinese production the former Alliance StarLiner, a U.S. 50-seat airliner that was first promoted in the early 2000s. CCAC is offering a business jet version for US$22.9 million, to be available in 2020. Powerplant, avionics, and much else, have yet to be announced.

COMAC ARJ21 Xiangfeng
An executive version of the 90-seat ARJ21-700 airliner obtained one order and two MoUs in 2014 from two Chinese companies. Fokker Services of the Netherlands has been appointed to design a suitable interior for installation by Shanghai Aircraft Manufacturing.

Embraer Lineage 1000E2
The Brazilian manufacturer introduced a new sub-variant, based on the second-generation E-Jet airliner (specifically the 190-E2), at last November’s NBAA Convention. Engines (PW1900G), wing design, avionics, control system, power generation and many more features are improved, as is fuel economy and range. The airliner prototype will fly shortly. It and the new Lineage will be available from 2018.

Supersonics
Private funding of an avant garde project is laudable, but Aerion has progressed to the next rung of the ladder.

Aerion AS2
The age of the supersonic business jet drew closer last year as Aerion deepened its relationship with Airbus and signed its first firm fleet order in November. 20 for Flexjet, to be delivered from 2023 after a two-year flight-test program. Range estimates for the tri-jet are 4,750 nm at Mach 1.4, increasing to 5,300 nm at Mach 0.95. The basis of those figures is unclear, as no powerplant for the current design has been chosen. On the touchy question of noise, Aerion says its technology allows “boomless” cruise up to Mach 1.2 using atmospheric diffraction.

Spike S-512
Spike Aerospace of Boston, Massachusetts, is self-funding a design incorporating a pair of unspecified 20,000-lb.-thrust engines. Development costs and time-to-market are both minimized by dispensing with anti-boom measures, on the basis that most flying will be over water, so a high-subsonic leg between coastline and airport will extend journey times only slightly. A “Multiplex Digital” cabin, the windowless walls of which are covered by thin display screens projecting entertainment, is another cost-saver. The S-512 will cruise at Mach 1.6 and cover 5,850 nm supersonic, or 4,050 nm subsonic. Some serious cash injection would now appear to be required.
Gulfstream G500 Misses EBACE; on Track for 2017

Scott Neal, SVP worldwide sales and market for Gulfstream Aerospace, says that the US$44.65 million, 5,000-nm-range G500 and US$54.5 million, 6,200-nm-range G600 are on track for entry into service in 2018 and 2019, respectively. Gulfstream elected not to sidetrack one of its four G500 flight test aircraft to make a debut at EBACE 2016 to keep the program on schedule.

The four G500 flight test aircraft now have completed nearly 250 flights, amassing more than 1,000 flight hours. The G500 has soared to 53,000 ft., flown to Mach 0.995 and stayed aloft as long as 7 hr., 26 min. Neal said that the aircraft have demonstrated “outstanding reliability,” in large part due to wringing out components for nearly 50,000 hr. on the G500 iron bird mockup at the firm’s Savannah R&D campus. A G500 static test article has completed ultimate load limit tests.

Neal emphasized that the G500 and G600 are designed with the “voice of the customer” in mind, offering unparalleled range at Mach 0.85 normal cruise, lower fuel consumption and carbon emissions than Gulfstream’s previous generation of large-cabin aircraft, wider cabins, G650-size windows and Gulfstream’s new Symmetry flight deck, featuring 10 touchscreen displays and civil aviation’s first active side-sticks. More importantly to customers, they offer essentially the same legroom between seats as the G650, the lowest cabin altitude in class and 100% fresh air.

The first G500 production aircraft now is being outfitted with an interior, in preparation for extensive F&R proving flights. In light of Gulfstream’s steep learning curve with the G650 interior kit, the firm is devoting special attention to maturing the G500 interior to make the aircraft’s entry into service smoother for the first customers.

The G600 is well on its way to first flight by 4Q16, ahead of Gulfstream’s original 2017 projection. The G600 iron bird mockup has made its “first flight,” the first flight test aircraft fuselage and wing have been mated; and the second flight test aircraft is in production, along with a ground structural test article. Pilots will be able to use a common G500/G600 type rating to fly both models. But the type rating will not be shared with the G650 due to large-scale differences in cockpit layout.

The progress being made on the two new models comes at an opportune time for Gulfstream. Company president Mark Burns says deliveries of current production aircraft are “kind of flattish,” with 2016 results expected to parallel 2015 deliveries. But the firm is banking on its financial strength, its track record of delivering on its promises and its top-rated product support to uphold its brand loyalty with its customers. The Gulfstream fleet has grown from fewer than 2,000 aircraft in 2010 to more than 2,500 aircraft in 2015. Its international fleet has grown by more than 45% during the same five-year period, with more than 220 Gulfstream aircraft now based in Europe. “Product support is integral to our strategy.”

The firm has its long-standing service facility at London-Luton; six authorized service providers in Continental Europe, including new sites at Jet Aviation in Vienna and Altenrhein Aviation in Berlin; plus a US$120 million cache of parts at a distribution center at London Heathrow Airport that supplements its parts inventory at Luton.

“We’re looking to expand our footprint at Luton,” Burns adds.

Gulfstream also is expanding its FAST field and airborne support network, adding more customer support trucks and making more than 750 support trips in 2015. As a result, AOG times are being cut substantially.

While the overall business aircraft market currently may be “flattish,” Gulfstream officials are confident their firm, with the solid backing of parent General Dynamics, will experience strong growth in coming years.

—Fred George

NetJets Europe’s First Latitude Debuts Here

NETJETS EUROPE unveiled its first Cessna Citation Latitude here. On an inaugural flight from London Farnborough, company president Mark Wilson said, “NetJets was announced as the largest customer for the Citation Latitude back in 2012. We now have 25 firm orders planned and an additional 125 options available. In addition to the demonstrator aircraft, we will receive three aircraft later this year.”

“The Latitude is proving to be a very popular choice of midsize aircraft for our customers, and we are selling shares at a fast rate, reflecting our increasing market share in Europe.”

The Latitude has been fully customized with NetJets cabin interior and technical specs. “Latitude is a midsize aircraft, but with the amenities of a large-cabin jet,” Wilson said. “All of the materials you see onboard the aircraft are hand-selected by our design team— from the ergonomically designed seating through to the high-gloss wood veneers and cooled catering storage. “The aircraft is equipped with Inmarsat’s SwiftBroadband and a satellite-based Wi-Fi system accessible across the globe. Our Latitudes will have an in-flight entertainment system manufactured by Gogo. Owners will be able to access an entire library of content via iPads onboard or via their own device by using the specific NetJets entertainment app.” NetJets is at Booth N098.
A huge, black five-blade carbon-fiber Hartzell prop distinguishes the 2016 PC-12NG and is largely responsible for its greater speed, range and performance. BCA’s Fred George flew the aircraft earlier this year.

The new prop’s computer-refined blade airfoil and thin chord section are more efficient at converting torque into thrust than the aluminum four-blade prop it replaces. Harder to spot are drag reduction improvements that, combined with the prop, raise cruise speed by up to 5 kt., improve runway performance, and reduce time to climb to cruise altitude by 10%.

Configured for the PC-12 NG, the now standard four-screen Primus Apex Build 10 avionics suite is largely based on Epic as tailored for Dassault EASy. If you’re comfortable with the EASy user interface and color conventions, you’ll be at home in the Pilatus cockpit.

We climbed at 1,700 fpm and after intermediate level-offs reached FL 210 in 18 min., cruising at 271 KTAS – 5 kt. slower than book speed because the wind was howling west-east at 50+ kt. and even stronger at FL 210. We were fighting a mountain wave sinkhole just to stay level, and as we were on the upswing of the wave it was time to turn back to Borrego Valley for pattern work.

But by the time we descended through 8,000 ft. we had entered an invisible, wind-powered meteorological washing machine. We added 1,000 more to the climb to FL 210 and when we arrived there it was time to descend back down to FL 210, in 18 min. The prop was still howling away, although now we were on the opposite side of the wave. The wind was fighting us, but we were able to stay level.

There’s no mistaking a 2016 Pilatus PC-12 NG for earlier versions of the aircraft. The third iteration of this 22-year-old model sports a five-blade Hartzell prop with scimitar-shaped blades made of black carbon fiber.

Now that General Electric is developing its new 2,000+ thermodynamic GE93 turboprop, another variant of the PC-12 seems possible. As a result, the PC-12 is likely to remain in a class of its own for years to come.

Large clouds of sand and dust were blowing up from the desert floor, so we called it a day and headed back to Montgomery.

Overall impressions? The 2016 PC-12 NG is quieter, smoother and more capable than earlier models. It can fly at 240 KIAS on arrival for synching with jetliners arriving at major airports but can slow down to 80 KIAS on approach to fit in with traffic at small GA airports. The cabin is comfortable, and the IFE will keep passengers occupied on the longest missions.

The PC-12 is the largest, heaviest and most expensive model in the single-engine turboprop class. But it continues to sell strongly. Pilatus will deliver its 1,400th in 2016 – more than twice the number of the closest competitor.

With single-engine turboprop commercial operations in North America becoming more popular and EASA moving toward permitting single-engine turboprop charter operations, demand for 8+ passenger aircraft in this class is increasing. In addition, now that engine reliability is better than one in-flight shutdown per 100,000 flying hours, more corporate flight departments are eyeing the PC-12 as a reliable, cost-effective alternative to twin-turboprops for trips up to 600 nm.

—Fred George

For the full Pilot Report, see the May 2016 issue of Business & Commercial Aviation. Pilatus is at Booth K115 and the Static Display.
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Look for the Preliminary Agenda on [www.SpeedNews.com](http://www.SpeedNews.com) on June 21
Market Doldrums Are Disappointing but Don’t Deter Dassault

Safran’s Silvercrest engine is but one of many problems dogging Dassault at the moment, although the less bad news is that the storm cloud is emptying its contents on the whole business-jet-manufacturing fraternity without discrimination.

“The market slowdown is a disappointment to us,” reported Éric Trappier, chairman and CEO of Dassault Aviation, at a pre-show status report. “We wish for a stronger market for the Falcon... but there is still uncertainty.”

The woes facing the bizjet industry span the globe, believes Trappier. Corporate profits are weak in the U.S., and a forthcoming election there heightens companies’ nervousness; Russia and Brazil present “challenges;” China’s official austerity dampens the market; political instability in the Middle East weakens demand, its effects exacerbated by the low price of oil.

Dassault Falcon’s president and CEO, John Rosanvallon, echoed his colleague’s opinion, citing Honeywell’s recent 7% downward revision of its bizjet forecast; an “anemic” first quarter in the U.S.; “concern” over the European market; and the fact that the global inventory of secondhand business jets on offer has risen by 115 in the last quarter.

Unusually for a business aircraft show, Dassault spent some time describing its success in marketing the Rafale fighter during 2015, the obvious inference being that this end of the seesaw has, fortuitously, gone up just as the opposite end has come down.

Silvercrest still holds back the Falcon 5X, but both Dassault and Snecma, the engine’s manufacturer, are stressing that all problems have been identified and are being addressed. Plans now are for engine certification in the first half of 2019 and Falcon 5X entry into service in 2020.

But it’s not all doom and gloom. Dassault is currently celebrating 100 years in aviation, during which time the company built 8,500 aircraft. Of those, 2,451 were Falcon business jets produced since 1965, 2,092 of which are still in service.

—Paul Jackson

Air BP Readies for Rio 2016 Games

Air BP (Booth S131) is ramping up its commercial and general aviation fuel operations ahead of this summer’s Olympic Games (Aug. 5-21) and Paralympic Games (Sept. 7-18) in Rio de Janeiro. Recognizing the importance of convenient and efficient turnarounds, Air BP will offer its Fast Track Fuel Service Guarantee for general aviation traffic at Rio de Janeiro International Airport and Cabo Frio International Airport. Fast-Track guarantees refuelers can attend to a client’s aircraft within 20 min. of landing, providing the arrival airport is given 3-hr. notice. For those who can plan further ahead, GA flight crews can book a predetermined fueling time that suits the pilots’ and passengers’ schedules.

Gama’s First Middle East IS-BAH Registration

Gama Aviation Plc (Booth V045), the global aviation services company, has been awarded International Standard for Business Aircraft Handling (IS-BAH) for its FBO at Sharjah International Airport. The accreditation, made by the International Business Aviation Council, is the first for a Middle East-based FBO and only the 15th successful implementation worldwide. This registration follows an announcement earlier this month that Gama Aviation had been given formal approval to expand its operations at Sharjah with the building of a new business aviation facility.

Gulfstream G650ER Adds Speed Record

Gulfstream Aerospace’s G650ER recently claimed another city-pair record, this time linking Sydney to Los Angeles. The G650ER departed Sydney Airport at 7:11 a.m. local time on March 11 and landed at Los Angeles International Airport at 1:51 a.m. local time on March 11. The 6,620-nm. flight took 12 hr., 40 min. at an average cruise speed of Mach 0.86. The record was approved by the U.S. National Aeronautic Association and is pending approval by the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale in Switzerland for recognition as a world record. The G650ER can travel 7,500 nm. at Mach 0.85 and 6,400 nm at Mach 0.90. It has a maximum speed of Mach 0.925.

Breaking Out the Bubbly for the Middle East

A limited number of bottles of champagne will be given away here by the F&E Aerospace team to companies booking space at this year’s MEBAAB 2016 business aviation show to be held Dec. 6-8 at Dubai World Central Airport. It’ll be first come, first served, for those signing on the dotted line at Booth 1040. More than 9,000 visitors are expected to visit the 460 exhibitors during the three-day show. The number of business jets in the Middle East North Africa region is predicted to grow over 80% by 2023, according to the Bombardier Business Aircraft Market Forecast.

GlobalParts.aero Named Hot-Stop ‘L’ Dealer

Baker Aviation, master distributor for Hot-Stop “L” Fire Containment Kits, in affiliation with Industrial Energy Products, manufacturer of the Hot-Stop “L” product line, have designated GlobalParts.aero as the first U.S. stocking dealer. Hot-Stop “L” safely contains fires, explosions and smoke emissions from lithium-ion powered devices without the aid of a water supply. However, Hot-Stop products allow for the use of water, for airlines and operators complying with SAFO FAA recommendations. The Hot-Stop “L” solution has been successfully demonstrated twice in live fire evaluations at the FAA Technical Center in Atlantic City, New Jersey, and further independently fire-tested by flight departments and airlines.
GE’s Passport Wins FAA Certification

GE Aviation’s Passport, the engine selected by Bombardier for its Global 7000 and Global 8000, received FAA type certification on April 29.

The approval came after more than 2,400 hr. in test and 2,800 cycles, including 100-plus hours of flight tests on GE’s Boeing 747-100 flying testbed. The engine was certified at three thrust ratings, with 18,000 lb. the highest. The engine for the Global 7000 is rated at 16,500 lb. thrust.

The Passport benefits considerably from GE’s large commercial experience, including a high-performance core similar to LEAP and derived from the eCore program. GE built on earlier advanced technology such as the blisk, as well as composites from military engines.

A composite fan case was created to reduce weight, as well as a unique 52-in. front fan blisk for lower cabin noise and vibration. Nexcelle, a joint venture of GE and Safran, contributed a slimline nacelle with clamshell cowl opening to reduce weight and drag.

The engine also signaled the debut of oxide-oxide (Ox-Ox) CMC materials used in the exhaust mixer, center body and core cowl. A lightweight material, it is resistant to the high temperatures common in the exhaust area. GE claims the engine offers 8% lower specific fuel burn than other engines in its class, and meets CAEP/6 NOx emissions and Stage 4 noise requirements.

According to Bombardier, the Passport was designed specifically for the Global 7000 and was developed as an Integrated Propulsion System to allow lower fuel burn, lower emissions and lower cabin noise.

To date, 10 engines have been delivered to Bombardier, and the pending test flight program is building momentum. “We continue to focus our efforts on the flight test program,” says a spokesman.

The Global 7000 is expected to enter service in the second half of 2018, according to Bombardier’s 2015 financial report. That’s two years later than planned when the aircraft was announced in 2010. The company won’t say when the Global 8000 might appear, but it too is facing extensive delays.

GE is at Booth A013.

—Kirby Harrison

Flexjet Is the Mystery Buyer of 20 Challenger 350s

BOMBARDIER confirmed yesterday that Flexjet is the previously undisclosed customer that purchased 20 Challenger 350 jets. The order, announced on April 1 last year, is valued at approximately US$534 million, based on 2016 prices for standard-equipped aircraft. “The Challenger 350 jet and its predecessor, the Challenger 300, proved to be our best-seller in 2015,” said Flexjet CEO Michael Silvestro.

“Flexjet is in the business of providing travelers access to the world’s most luxurious fleet of private jets, and this extraordinarily capable and comfortable aircraft holds tremendous appeal for our owners and has been an important driver in the impressive growth Flexjet has been experiencing lately,” he said.

Bombardier began deliveries of Challenger 350 aircraft to Flexjet this past January.
Pratt & Whitney geared turbofan engines. "Billionaires don’t want to talk to a call paramount. “All our clients have my own repeat customers, and attention to detail is paramount. To date 90% of its business is from niche operator, specializing in luxury transportation. We’ll repeat that in theneo. Often the seats we have in G-NOAH are manual, and or updatable, and reliable. For example, the interior must be robust, Bousfield notes, as larger galley fitted out like a real kitchen. The galley. We always try to prepare food on board.”

“Quality will be absolutely key, price is important, and location of the completion center comes into play as we will be managing the project. “Technology will be the last thing we will spec, but we’re not drawn to be the first with whatever. It must be interchangeable or updateable, and reliable. For example, the seats we have in G-NOAH are manual, and we’ll repeat that in the neo. Often the simplest things are the nicest things.”

Bousfield proudly describes Acropolis as a niche operator, specializing in luxury transportation. To date 90% of its business is from repeat customers, and attention to detail is paramount. “All our clients have my own cellphone number, and they can call 24/7. We have to meet their every expectation,” he says. “Billionaires don’t want to talk to a call center.”

328 Design Wins STC for Falcon 50EX Cabin

328 Design GmbH (Booth A065), part of Germany’s 328 Group, has received the first STC for the Dassault Falcon 50EX from the U.S. FAA under the FAA/EASA bilateral safety agreement. The STC covers extensive cabin refurbishment including the replacement of the legacy cabin management system/in-flight entertainment with Rockwell Collins’ Fusion CMS/IFE including T-PED (transmitting portable electronic device) connectivity via WiFi. Additional features include a complete cabin refurbishment, the installation of new LED cabin lighting and galley modification. The project was completed in collaboration with Duncan Aviation (Booth G089) at the company’s facility in Battle Creek, Michigan.

EASA Launches Drone Collision Task Force

The European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) has created a task force to scientifically and methodically analyze the potential risks of collisions between unmanned and manned aircraft. The group, including representatives of aircraft and engine manufacturers, will review “all relevant” occurrences, including those reported by European member states, and analyze existing studies on the subject of “impact between drones and aircraft,” EASA stated in the May 4 announcement. “The task force will study the vulnerabilities of aircraft – windshields, engines and airframe – taking into account the different categories of aircraft – large aircraft, general aviation and helicopters – and their associated design and operational requirements.”

Air Charter Guide’s 30th Anniversary Party

Penton’s Air Charter Guide, the original worldwide guide for on-demand business and personal aircraft charter services and part of the Aviation Week Network, is celebrating its 30th anniversary with a cocktail party here today from 4 to 6 p.m. at the Aviation Week Network Booth X106. The business aviation team of AC-U-KWIK, Aircraft Bluebook, Business & Commercial Aviation, and Fleet & Data Services will also be on hand. Published twice a year, the Air Charter Guide comprises free listings for licensed charter operators.

MedAire Talks Zika Travel Risks at EBACE

MedAire will host an educational pop-up session on the Zika virus at 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday, May 25 in the Inspiration Zone at EBACE. Dr. Michael Braidy, MedAire medical director for Central Europe, will speak about the spread of the virus and its impact on security protocols, regulations and disinfection. “Many in the aviation industry are concerned about the implications of the Zika virus to passengers and crewmembers,” said Braidy. “During the session we will discuss the latest information around Zika transmission, what we know about its possible evolution and preventive measures to help minimize exposure.”

JetMagic Applies for DCA of Aruba AOC

JetMagic has applied for an Aruba AUA-OPS 1 Air Operator Certificate and established a company named JetMagic Aruba with headquarters on the island. Aruba’s AOC will enable Jet Magic to operate its VVIP Boeing aircraft to perform worldwide commercial air operations, with Aruba as its principal place of business. The project has been approved by the Aruba Department of Civil Aviation, and the certificate should be issued in early June 2016. JetMagic is managing large VIP aircraft with a current fleet of two Boeing BBJs, one B757-200 and one B777.
FAST FIVE

Interview by William Garvey

1. The Boeing celebrity at this year’s EBACE is the brand-new 787 lording over the Static Display. Is it the first BBJ Dreamliner?

Actually, no, it will be the third to enter service. And it’s so fresh out of the Greenpoint Technologies completion center in Moses Lake, Washington, its interior has yet to receive FAA certification. The first 787 BBJ was outfitted with an airliner interior, and the second one, which went to the Government of Mexico, has a mix of first-class seating aft and more executive-type accommodations forward. The Greenpoint aircraft is by far the most luxurious of the three. At this point we have sold a total of 15 787 BBJs to governments and private operators. Six more are currently in completion centers.

2. Gulfstream, Dassault and Bombardier used to send green airplanes to completion centers but realized they were missing out on a lot of value, while getting blamed if the outfitting disappointed the operator. So, they took the work in-house. Is Boeing likely to do the same?

Quite unlikely. We do offer customers a turnkey service whereby they pay us for a completed aircraft and we have dedicated staffers with expertise in managing such work who then carefully oversee the outfitting done at one of our 14 approved completion centers around the world. But no, I don’t foresee people with Boeing badges ever doing completions. There is an exquisite range of imaginative things people do with interiors. We’re superb at building airliners, but designing interiors of business jets is not something we do. That said, there’s definitely a risk we run in allowing others to do the completion. If something breaks, it’s still a Boeing. But my group has deep experience as a customer of the completion centers, and as such we can identify trouble and solutions early on.

3. Well, would Boeing consider investing in an existing center?

As I highlighted in the previous question, I don’t think so. The Boeing Company is an expert in building the aircraft; the completion center industry does what it does, brilliantly, and has evolved into some incredibly competent centers of excellence. For us, Boeing, to break into that business would be...difficult. There are certain elements of the process you leave to the requisite experts and the centers are among those, just like the thousands of suppliers that assist Boeing in building the aircraft. So, we’ll keep doing what we’re doing, and leave them to do what they do so well.

4. Airlines buy Boeings by the score and more and, obviously, get discounts as a result. But BBJs are usually single buys, which presumably means the price is higher and margins better.

A logical assumption, but our customers get great value for their money across all models. These are exceptional machines and our success confirms the fact that our customers agree.

5. The BBJ division has been in operation for 20 years, and in that time it’s recorded sales of just 238 airplanes ranging from 737s to 747s. Meanwhile, big Boeing has sold thousands of planes to the airlines. Why does it bother continuing your tiny operation?

When the original BBJ was first conceived by our former CEO, Phil Condit, the intent was to extend the Boeing name and capability to important people who might be unfamiliar with us. The idea was the BBJ would give us a chance to put a Boeing product in the hands of people who shake and shape the world. We think that’s a good idea. For example, the Mexican government’s 787 BBJ transports the president of Mexico at least once a month. I think that’s marvellous. And so does Boeing. So, our group’s value is difficult to quantify, but does it work? Yes!
THE WORLD’S MOST ADVANCED LIGHT JET IS CERTIFIED AND BEING DELIVERED.

In December 2015, the HondaJet received Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) type certification, and Honda Aircraft Company began deliveries. Join the celebration and learn more at EBACE 2016, Booth N072 or hondajet.com.