

EVA

AUTUMN 2022

EXECUTIVE &
VIP AVIATION
INTERNATIONAL



Embraer

Best-selling Business

More with Less. Naturally – Mélanie Prince, Head of Innovation, F/LIST

Excited by Design – Noel Christen, VP of Operations, Citadel Completions

It's Just Jet Fuel – Marc Ramihun, Director of Sales – Business Aviation, AEG Fuels

Gypsy Red, Naval Blue & Dove-tail Gray – Emilie Harbour, Lead Designer, West Star Aviation & Julie Voisin, Global Marketing Manager – Aerospace Market & Automotive Interiors, Sherwin-Williams

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Editor's NOTES

Paul E Eden
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On 27 September, the Air Charter Association held its Air Charter Expo (ACE) at London Biggin Hill Airport. The exhibition hall buzzed with conversation and the static display – inside and out – thronged with visitors, as delegates and exhibitors renewed acquaintances and talked business.

There was optimism that Covid restrictions in China might soon be lifted, countered by concerns over the continuing war in Eastern Europe and inflated fuel prices. The word ‘recession’ was in the air.

I’ve been struggling to write meaningful words in columns like this for at least 20 years and uncertainty seems to have become a common theme. From my onlooker’s perspective that seems a terribly negative influence, but a chance ACE conversation with veteran Chapman Freeborn passenger sales executive Egle Verbickaite changed my point of view.

Egle is passionate about business and VIP charter, and about aviation. For her the uncertainty, challenges and ‘every-day-is-different’ experience are what the industry is about, and why she loves it so much.

Passion is something that shines through in this autumn 2022 edition. If you’ve picked the magazine up in Orlando’s Orange County Convention Center at the NBAA-BACE show then thank you and, hopefully, you’ll see evidence of the industry’s fervour for aviation all around you. There is no shortage of it between these covers. After almost four decades in aviation, Noel Christen, VP of Operations at Citadel Completions, still bubbles with excitement for the industry, while EVA’s conversation with Frédéric Perez, Operations Director at Swissport Executive Aviation Maroc, continued into the wider world of aviation well beyond the scope of the published article.

Meanwhile, Mélanie Prince, F/LIST’s ebullient Head of Innovation, is driven by the ideas of those around her, frequently embracing the seemingly impossible as the company creates dramatic new cabin features using natural raw materials sustainably. We are, perhaps, in danger of overusing the words ‘sustainable’ and ‘sustainability’, but the agenda they describe is real and pressing. Returning briefly to the ACE show, a fashion and luxury lifestyle journalist asked me if business aviation could ever be sustainable. The answer was long, but the message is that the world cares and business aviation is taking a lead.

Fuel, of course, is critical to sustainability and Marc Ramthun, Director of Sales – Business Aviation at AEG Fuels, explains how the company is working hard to make SAF more widely available and increase awareness. In the process, he describes how his own experience has changed him from SAF sceptic to SAF advocate. The huge aircraft print on his office wall also reveals him as an aviation enthusiast and veteran – yet another passionate personality colouring the industry.

Julie Voisin, Global Marketing Manager – Aerospace Market & Automotive Interiors at Sherwin-Williams, has spent her entire career quite literally doing just that. Her enthusiasm for aircraft coatings is extraordinary and we explore how Sherwin-Williams’ products featured in a recent West Star Aviation Citation refurbishment.

West Star’s Lead Designer, Emilie Harbour explains how she remodelled the aircraft’s cabin and created a paint scheme, leaving the aircraft good as new, even though important elements, including the seat frames and side panels, were reused. The result encapsulates the passion for excellence, care and customer experience that remain constants in business and VIP aviation, regardless of how uncertain times may be.

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Mélanie Prince, Head of Innovation, F/LIST



More with Less. Naturally

The F/LIST booth at the forthcoming NBAA-BACE show is set to cause a profound shift in perceptions of cabin sustainability. The company's Head of Innovation, Mélanie Prince hints at the spectacle to come

The F/LIST booth is surprising and delightful at every show and hopes will be high for the company's NBAA-BACE exhibit in Orlando, a town where spectacle is commonplace. Head of Innovation Mélanie Prince is reluctant to give too much away but happy to say: "This year's booth will be the springboard from which we encourage visitors to

dive into a magical new world of cabin materials. We'll be unveiling a portfolio of sustainable materials and innovative technological concepts that will make the impossible possible.

"Bio-based materials to facilitate the dream of a sustainable cabin and powerful new technology pioneered by our innovative research team will showcase how we can help designers do more with less. We will be promoting

elements from the natural world and taking it all one step further to show how nature combined with technology opens a Pandora's box of possibilities."

Sustainability and natural materials are also obvious threads running through the revamped F/LIST website, and Prince confirms that offering the best natural materials to the aviation industry has always been fundamental to the company. "Today we continue to look backwards to

our origins, in order to go forwards with new ways of incorporating nature into our offering. Our understanding of, and passion for natural products continues to expand.”

Heritage, knowledge, craftsmanship

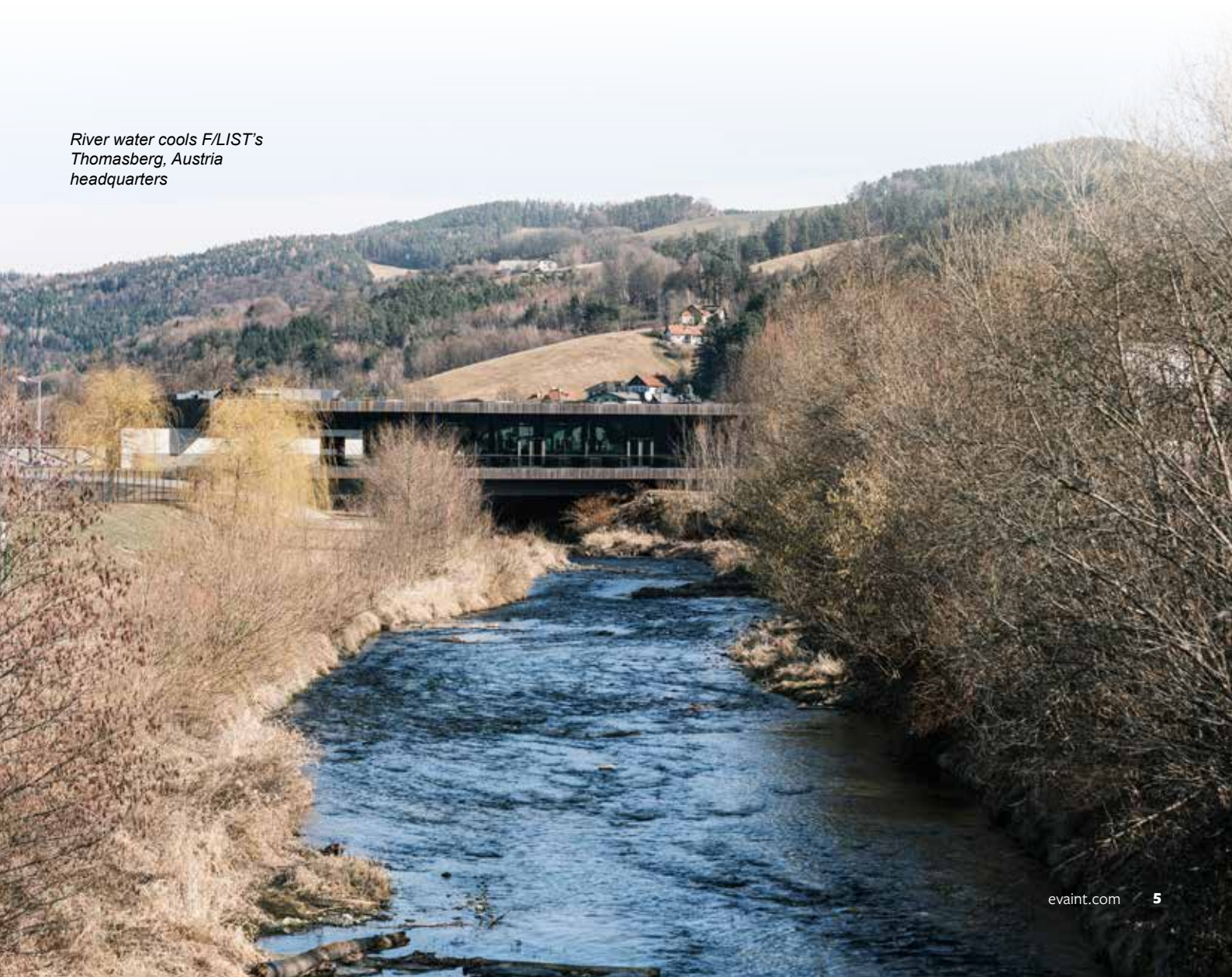
And yet the natural materials most often found in business jet and VIP cabins – wood, stone, leather and metal – have long been fundamental to the human environment. How does F/LIST reimagine the traditional in a modern way? Prince responds: “Our skilled team takes familiar materials and transforms them – natural stone morphs into stunning stone surfaces and selected trees become vibrant veneers. We combine years of heritage, knowledge and craftsmanship with contemporary technology, new materials, and cross-industry knowledge sharing to satisfy the need for lightweight, high-performing, eco-friendly concepts.”

She goes on to reveal: “We are also exploring bionic design, which emulates natural structures to create smart configurations that support loads and forces exactly where necessary. We are integrating plant fibres instead of synthetic fibres into our materials, as well as incorporating by-products and materials from biorefineries. The results are strong, light components that form the basis of cabin frameworks.

“In addition, we look outside the industry for inspiration. We often talk to start-ups creating next-generation eco-materials and collaborate to repurpose new, alternative and modern concepts to the cabin. The suite of new products that we are revealing at NBAA perfectly combines traditional materials with modern techniques; it really is quite remarkable what we can achieve.”

The simple inclusion of natural materials does not make a cabin sustainable though. F/LIST is therefore careful when it sources materials and in how it uses them. “We always aim to source responsibly,” Prince confirms. It is in our culture to establish where the materials come from and how that impacts the environment. The new materials we’re showcasing at NBAA are created using end-of-life, recycled materials and by-products, and can be reused once they have come to the end of their time in the cabin. Circular products are a top priority for us. We’re also introducing products that are grown exclusively for industrial use, use less water and resources for cultivation, and do not impact human or animal food chains. These are the types of considerations we are investigating and interrogating as we develop new products.”

*River water cools F/LIST's
Thomasberg, Austria
headquarters*





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The Thomasberg facility features an extensive photovoltaic installation

Sustainable production

Prince also insists that sustainability informs F/LIST's production activity. "Our team continuously strives to optimise every piece of material, achieve the maximum from each design and always keep waste to a minimum. Our dedicated sustainability team focuses on ensuring that all aspects of our work are guided by sustainability."

The company's Thomasberg, Austria headquarters is cooled by river water, while the production facility is entirely heated by renewable energy sources from local supply. The latest machines and systems are employed for heat recovery, and

LED lighting is intelligently combined with motion sensors to ensure the only energy used is that which is needed; "We even arrange our office furniture to maximise natural light," Prince notes.

In 2016, F/LIST created one of Austria's largest photovoltaic powerplants, covering the roofs of both Thomasberg production plants in photovoltaic cells. The installation generates 1,179 kilowatt hours/year, saving 565 tonnes of CO₂ emissions annually, equivalent to the output of 444 cars each driving 10,000km/year.

Prince continues: "Our ultra-modern plant has an intelligent energy management system that measures performance, internal

energy consumption and total consumption in real time. Excess energy is directed to separate outlets via a sophisticated control system. Over the weekend, for example, electric forklift trucks are charged with the stored energy and ready to go on Monday. And food for our on-site restaurant is sourced from local farmers and producers, with a focus on bio-quality.

"We are proud to have achieved ISO 50001 certification, which means we assume the responsibility to continuously increase energy efficiency and decrease energy consumption. Part of that involves encouraging our team to take small actions that combine to



“If a passenger/owner is sitting in a beautiful sustainable cabin environment that is functional, stylish and durable, and does not compromise on quality in any way, then they will realise that they can also have that experience in their car, yacht or residence. It is up to us to show that sustainable natural materials can perform as well, if not better than existing products, last as long, and are breathtakingly stunning.

“We therefore want the messaging to extend beyond the cabin into the passenger/customer mindset. Our new products are made of natural materials, many of which are completely







customisable in terms of colour, texture and application. Nature is liberating the cabin ambience and that is a powerful message to deliver.”

Returning to the question of exactly what F/LIST will have on its NBAA-BACE booth, Prince remains tight-lipped. “Our suite of sustainable products supports weight reduction, and is durable and functional, elegant and beautiful. We expect to set imaginations on fire with this new product collection. Nothing like this has ever been seen before and we’re also aiming to raise the bar on the way the industry thinks about sustainability in the cabin.” ■

make big changes. We ask them to turn off the lights and equipment that isn’t being used, make sure taps don’t drip and encourage them to talk and live sustainability.”

When it comes to sustainability in the cabin, Prince says the message continues: “We consider ourselves ambassadors for using natural products sustainably and believe we are in a privileged position to really influence this mindset. It’s our responsibility to introduce new thinking. We want to offer our customers intriguing, stylish, functional materials that will inspire and encourage them to think about sustainability first.


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The Praetor 600 is characterised by a deep wing/fuselage fairing and tall, elegant winglets

Best-selling Business

Embraer has only been in the business aviation industry for 20 years, after delivering its first Legacy in 2002. And yet its portfolio of four class-defining aircraft, each based on original clean-sheet designs, includes the Phenom 300 series, consistently the best-selling light jets for a decade

In February 2022, Embraer announced figures from the General Aviation Manufacturer's Association showing that its Phenom 300E had been 2021's best-selling light jet and the best-selling twinjet business aircraft across all categories, with 56 deliveries. Most remarkably, the announcement marked an era during which the Phenom 300 series had been the best-selling light jet for ten years.

Embraer has sold more than 640 Phenom 300s since the type's introduction in December 2009, an impressive total made more so by the company's relative youth as both an aircraft

manufacturer and business aviation OEM.

At the 2000 Farnborough Air Show, Embraer announced its entry into business aviation with the Legacy, a large-cabin jet based on the ERJ135 airliner. That aircraft became the Legacy 600 in 2005, coincident with the launch of the Phenom programme.

Today's Embraer Executive Jets portfolio comprises the Praetor 600, Praetor 500, Phenom 300E and Phenom 100EV. The Phenom family has evolved by embracing the latest technologies and engine enhancements to remain as desirable today as the original Phenom 100 was when it was first delivered in December 2008. Meanwhile, the midsize

Praetor 500 and super-midsize Praetor 600 continue to challenge traditional perceptions of jets in these categories.

Praetor 600

Capable of covering 4,018nm with four passengers, their baggage and reserves for a 200nm diversion, the Praetor 600 offers truly extraordinary range performance for a super-midsize jet. Remarkably, that reach is possible from a 4,436ft runway and, where airfield performance is the critical mission factor, the Praetor 600 will comfortably operate from a runway as short as 3,000ft. First delivered in 2019

as a Legacy 500 enhancement, the Praetor 600 carries more fuel under a larger wing/fuselage fairing and features taller, more elegant winglets, besides other changes for extended range.

Sao Paulo to Miami is an easy hop at long-range cruising speed, while the Praetor 600 takes London to New York in its stride; in fact, it could make the return journey too, without refuelling, should the need ever arise. And all of this at 45,000ft, where the cabin altitude remains a comfortable and best-in-class 5,800ft, helping passengers arrive feeling fresh after a restful or productive flight.

The Praetor 600's 7,528lbst Honeywell HTF7500E engines provide for surprisingly sprightly take-off and climb performance, a 466kt high-speed cruise and maximum speed of Mach 0.83. Most importantly, the HTF7500E features dual FADEC and other advanced technologies for exceptional fuel efficiency and lower emissions, plus simplified maintenance for reduced downtime and costs.

Up front, Praetor 600 pilots enjoy the only fly-by-wire controls in the super-



Large, folding tables create useful work or refreshment spaces in the Phenom 100EV cabin

midsize segment, complete with sidestick controllers. Optimised for the aircraft, the Collins Aerospace Pro Line Fusion flightdeck includes four primary cockpit screens, synthetic and enhanced vision

systems, and a head-up display, helping reduce pilot workload, improve situational awareness and create a cockpit environment that is both ergonomically optimised and comfortable during long-range missions.

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The Praetor 100EV may be flown by a single pilot

The cabin avionics are also comprehensive, but never intrusive. The Praetor cabin is about having entertainment, connectivity and environmental control available when required, summoned by the wave of a hand or the push of a button, but otherwise sitting in the background waiting to be called. Uniquely for its class, the Praetor 600 is equipped with Gogo AVANCE L5 air-to-ground and Viasat Ka-band satellite connectivity, and its Honeywell Ovation Select cabin management system helps passengers make the most of the possibilities that level of connection allows.

Conversely, the Praetor 600's cabin is surprisingly quiet. It is worth listening carefully because the lack of noise in cruising flight is initially counterintuitive. Embraer's cabins have come a long way since the first Legacy was delivered in 2002. With a flat floor and 6ft floor-to-

ceiling height, the Praetor 600's cabin is surprisingly spacious. That space is used well thanks to the standard full galley and exquisite overhead touchscreen tech panels, which remain dark and unobtrusive until needed – a hand movement is then sufficient to wake them. The optional Bossa Nova interior is stunning.

With stitching options reflecting patterns found in the pavements of Rio de Janeiro and Ipanema Beach, the Bossa Nova cabin tells a visual story inspired by Brazilian culture. The cabin of this state-of-the-art aircraft also entertains and engages. Fine leathers, smooth veneers and cool, turned metals combine and contrast to provide an interesting haptic experience as well as a comfortable place to work or rest.

The Praetors have their origins in the clean-sheet Legacy 450 and 500 designs, first revealed in 2007 and launched the following year. Seating up to 12 passengers, the Legacy 500 very closely

matched the Legacy 450, but with a lengthened fuselage. Embraer might have simply 'inserted a plug' and filled the additional cabin space, but instead it reconfigured the cabin window positions so that every seat has the same perfect view, a detail design decision carried over to the Praetor 600 and which passengers always appreciate but most likely never know about.

Praetor 500

Optimised for seven passengers but capable of taking nine in comfort, the midsize Praetor 500 is a Legacy 450 development featuring all the additional characteristics of the Praetor 600, including 5,800ft cabin altitude at 45,000ft and the same high cruising speed, in an aircraft with 3,340nm of range carrying four passengers and reserves.

Remarkably for a midsize jet, the Praetor 500 offers the same line-

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fit AVANCE L5 and Viasat Ka-band connectivity as its larger sibling, keeping passengers connected over flights that could be almost eight hours long – the aircraft can reach Europe from the US West Coast non-stop. For shorter-ranged missions, the Praetor 500 accesses many limited runways, taking off for a 1,000nm trip in just 2,842ft, for example.

Legacy 450 owners have the option of upgrading their aircraft to Praetor 500 standard. Embraer completed the first conversion for a European customer in December 2020, by which time 11 previous modifications had been completed in other territories. The work adds 440nm of range and, among other changes, involves replacing the level-sensing wiring in the fuel tanks, moving the over-wing gravity fuelling ports and fuel measurement system, and reinforcing the wing ribs. Updates to the flight control system are also implemented, including a new Pro Line Fusion avionics load.

Phenom 100EV

Just five years into its business jet journey, Embraer announced a clean-sheet entry-level aircraft in what was then considered the very light jet category. Designed for single-pilot operation – indeed, designed for owner-pilot operation – the Phenom 100 flew for the first time in July 2007, ahead of first delivery in December 2008. Since then, the aircraft has evolved through the upgraded Phenom 100E to today’s Phenom 100EV, with more powerful Pratt & Whitney Canada PW617F1-E engines and avionics upgraded from Garmin G1000 to G3000.

The Phenom 100 usually accommodates five passengers, four in a club arrangement and one in the erstwhile co-pilot’s seat, but is capable of seating seven. These are accommodated as the club four, co-pilot’s seat, optional belted lavatory and a side-facing seat in place of the standard refreshment centre, opposite the cabin door.

The latest OvalLite cabin design includes a choice of 11 themes, each making the most of the natural light falling through the Phenom 100’s large windows. A solid, stowable pocket door separates the rear cabin lavatory and optional storage cabinet from the rest of the cabin; even this private area has cabin windows.

Considering this is an entry-level jet, the avionics suite is surprisingly



Superficially similar to the Phenom 100, the Phenom 300 is larger and features swept wings. This is the latest Phenom 300E model



The Phenom 300E offers multiple standard cabin options

comprehensive, including a synthetic vision system, graphical flight planning and windshear detection, all integrated into the Garmin G3000-based Prodigy Touch flightdeck. The Phenom 100EV will fly 1,178nm non-stop and cruise at 406kt when speed is of the essence, and it will take off in 3,190ft at maximum weight.

Phenom 300E

Similar only in basic configuration and name to the Phenom 100, the swept-wing

Phenom 300 first flew in April 2008, for delivery from December 2009. Larger and faster than the Phenom 100, the Phenom 300 is nonetheless still suitable for single-pilot operation, in which configuration it can seat ten passengers. The standard configuration is for eight passengers and its larger cabin compared to the Phenom 100 allows for enhanced comfort, albeit the cabin cross section is common between the two types.

A little elementary mathematics reveals



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that since the Phenom 300 has been the best-selling business jet for the past decade, it must first have reached that level of ascendancy little more than two years after entering service. Embraer has not allowed that early success to hinder development by resting on its laurels, however, introducing the Phenom 300E in 2018. This included Prodigy Touch avionics and new cabin options, a standard further improved with the 2020-specification Phenom 300E.

The latest Phenom production standard features the OvalLite cabin, with options including the Bossa Nova Edition, which shares features with the larger Praetors. Its more powerful Pratt & Whitney Canada PW535E1 engines are good for a maximum of Mach 0.8 or a 464kt fast cruise, while range with four passengers and 100nm reserves is 2,010nm after a 3,209ft take-off run.

In the cockpit, the Phenom 300E includes all the features of the Phenom 100EV, plus a unique Embraer-developed runway overrun alerting system. The cabin is equally well equipped, with an optional drop-down monitor, the nice HD cabin control system from Lufthansa Technik and the impressive tech panels of the Praetor. The nice HD system enables portable device integration and wireless audio/video streaming.

Customer support

Embraer owns service centres in North and South America as well as Europe, with additional authorised service centres spanning the globe, while its aircraft are engineered for easy maintenance and support in daily operation. The company is also heavily committed to industry and internal sustainability goals, exemplified by its expanding Melbourne, Florida campus and customer offer.

In May 2022, Embraer revealed a deal with 4AIR through which customers enrolling in the Embraer Executive Care programme would receive 25 hours of complimentary carbon-neutral flight hours during their first year of ownership. The Phenoms and Praetors offer the best in fuel efficiency and this, combined with Embraer’s efforts to incentivise new customers into carbon offset, makes a clear statement – especially while development continues towards certifying all Embraer Executive Jets products to fly on 100% sustainable aviation fuel. ■



The Praetor 500 flightdeck



The Praetor 500 has space for a well-equipped galley



Embraer’s unique overhead tech panels appear in the Praetor 600 (as here), Praetor 500 and Phenom 300E cabins

Tractor Tales

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The Rolls-Royce Pearl 10X will power Dassault's Falcon 10X. Dassault Aviation

Pearls of Future Wisdom

Always pushing ahead, Rolls-Royce is looking forward to Pearl 10X certification even as the Pearl 700 reaches the EASA standard. *EVA* spoke with Frank Mösta, SVP Strategy & Future Programmes and Dr Philipp Zeller, SVP for Dassault, about the Pearl series and what's next

We find ourselves at a turning point in the history of aviation. The urgent imperative to

address carbon and other emissions has been recognised and the technologies through which a sustainable future will be achieved are emerging. In the longer term those technologies will almost certainly include electrical power, hydrogen as a turbine fuel and hydrogen fuel cells.

Engine OEMs, Rolls-Royce among them, are examining and progressing all these technologies, but the hydrocarbon-burning turbine is not about to disappear and that means sustainable aviation fuels are the future of high-performance, long-range aircraft for several decades. Indeed, Frank Mösta, SVP Strategy & Future

Programmes at Rolls-Royce, cautions that for engines like those in its business aircraft portfolio, sustainable hydrocarbon fuels will be required for at least 50 years.

“For the short and medium term SAF is essential,” he says. “There is the potential to use hydrogen, which is no big deal for a gas turbine. You need to adjust the burner – and the technology already exists – but otherwise it’s just another fuel as far as the engine is concerned. The challenge is with the infrastructure and how to configure an aircraft to carry it. You could even consider using hydrogen for take-off and landing, and SAF for long-range flight.”

Mösta also notes that while some of the SAF demand will be satisfied through a variety of feedstocks, synthetic fuel is potentially the optimal way forward. Combining carbon dioxide extracted from the air with hydrogen, it creates a carbon-neutral fuel free of sulphur and aromatics

which, he says, subject to certification, Rolls-Royce engines could happily use today. “This is such an exciting time to be in our industry,” he enthuses.

Pearl wisdom

Meanwhile, on 20 September 2022, the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) awarded certification to the Rolls-Royce Pearl 700 engine powering Gulfstream’s G700 and G800 flagship models. The Pearl is very much at the leading edge of Rolls-Royce’s production portfolio, a fact reinforced by the 2 September announcement that ground had been broken on a new support facility in France. Expected to open in the first half of 2023, the development will support the Pearl 10X, powering Dassault’s new Falcon 10X.

Bombardier (Pearl 15 for the Global 5500 and 6500), Dassault and Gulfstream

have all opted for Pearl engines on new-technology platforms, so how does Rolls-Royce tailor the Pearl architecture to provide unique capability to each airframer? Dr Philipp Zeller, SVP for Dassault, Rolls-Royce, shares his thoughts.

“Our strategy is around investment in big technology steps, like the Advance2 engine core, then applying it to different platforms. It’s a policy that goes back to the BR700 series, where we put the BR700 core in different applications. If you go back a decade, we were running demonstrator programmes showing a new compressor, and we put that into the Pearl 15. With the Pearl 700 we injected more new technology, on the turbine, for example, and introduced the blisked fan. Now, with the Pearl 10X, we’ve reached the next level, extracting a little more thrust, running the engine slightly hotter by injecting more new technologies.

“Every airframer wants a bespoke engine, but with mature technology and no developmental risk to the aircraft programme. They want it tailored to them in terms of performance and installation, and our wisdom is in adapting the same core through technology injection to achieve that.”

Zeller says the Pearl models are quite different in their installation, the power offtakes, mounting systems, feeds to the aircraft, and nacelle, all of which are bespoke. “That’s where a lot of our energy



Rolls-Royce introduced a blisked fan on the Pearl 700. Rolls-Royce

goes: ensuring every customer gets a perfect fit for their aircraft.”

It is incorrect, however, to assume that the evolution between variants is simple, involving a handful of engineers working over a few months. In reality, Zeller reveals, the works requires hundreds of people over several years.

“And we have to go through a new certification process for each new variant. Sometimes we can use evidence from previous efforts, but there is a lot of scrutiny involved to prove the evidence is applicable and, more often than not, it’s easier to create new evidence and engine



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data. Our development programme for the Pearl 10X therefore has an additional four engines, plus we have four for use on our Boeing 747 testbed, all before we deliver an engine to Dassault.”

All of which said, there is a degree of commonality between the Pearl derivatives, which pays dividends in supportability. “It helps with our supply chain and creates commonality in the manuals and maintenance tasks,” Zeller explains. “And I see a benefit for large operators who will see the same parts and tasks coming in and come to understand the Rolls-Royce ‘house style’. It’s important that while there is commonality, we offer what each customer wants: a perfect product and experience.”

By the time the Falcon 10X makes its first flight, Zeller says its engines will be very mature, having benefitted from Pearl 15 and Pearl 700 experience. “We’ll be building on the previous Pearl engines that have been tested on the ground and in the air, so our focus will be on those areas that are unique to Dassault. It’s a successful model which, again, we’ve used in the past.”

Parts and engineering commonality have been yielding cost and time savings for decades, but the latest-generation engines also produce gigabytes of data, some of it applicable fleetwide. Zeller says: “We’ve introduced engine health monitoring and data transfer on all our Pearl platforms.

The Pearl 700, powering the G700 and G800, received EASA certification on 20 September 2022. Gulfstream Aerospace



Technology insertions have enabled Rolls-Royce to adapt its Advance2 core technology to successive Pearl derivatives. Rolls-Royce

The software and data transfer, as well as the data we receive and process, will be tailored to the customer. We’re working with each OEM to create a bespoke setup.

“In terms of how we use the data, on any particular engine the conclusions drawn from its data are specific, but we can compare it across the fleet to help identify trends or common fixes. There’s a lot that we still have to explore, including doing

more with the processing of big data.”

So much data is generated that a key task is defining how to identify that which is immediately important. Rolls-Royce is investing in data manipulation systems, including AI, to exploit and explore the potential of its ever-expanding data lake.

Future plans

Dassault expects Falcon 10X service entry in 2025, after which the aircraft and its engines are likely to enjoy a 40- or 50-year career. Over that period there will be incremental engine and airframe evolution, so how does Rolls-Royce plan for the future? “We predict future regulatory changes for emissions and noise,” Zeller says, “and we’re already targeting the next level, what will be required in five to ten years. We have an anticipation of what’s coming by working with the regulators and industry committees, so we’ve future-proofed the engine.

“All the engine components can handle the SAF developments we see coming and we’ve tested the engine with 100% SAF. There were no issues and, indeed, some benefits, through the higher calorific content of the fuel and lower emissions. We’ve been very successful in making sure we know what’s coming and in shaping the future. I’m confident the Pearl 10X will meet future standards.” ■





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Excited by Design



The enthusiasm of Noel Christen, VP of Operations at Citadel Completions, for aviation is perhaps one of few other parameters at the company's facility that comes close to matching the quality of its exclusive VIP aircraft cabins and MRO

If a company could be used to define the term maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) in a VIP context, then that company would surely be Lake Charles, Louisiana-based Citadel Completions. Specialising in airliner-based VIP and VVIP cabin refurbishment and reconfiguration, Citadel also offers a complete maintenance and repair service, all of it wrapped in an extraordinary passion for aviation with its roots in the company's Adelson family ownership.

That passion extends down through VP of Operations, Noel Christen, whose

industry career might be the subject of a book, although he puts his success down to luck, opportunity and being blessed to work with extraordinary people. "I've been in the aviation arena almost four decades," he says. "I started with Delta Airlines, then moved to Bombardier. From there I went into commercial MRO with AAR and from there to Citadel. So that was 20 years at Delta, business jets at Bombardier and then MRO. I came to Citadel late in 2018 and moved up to lead the business last December."

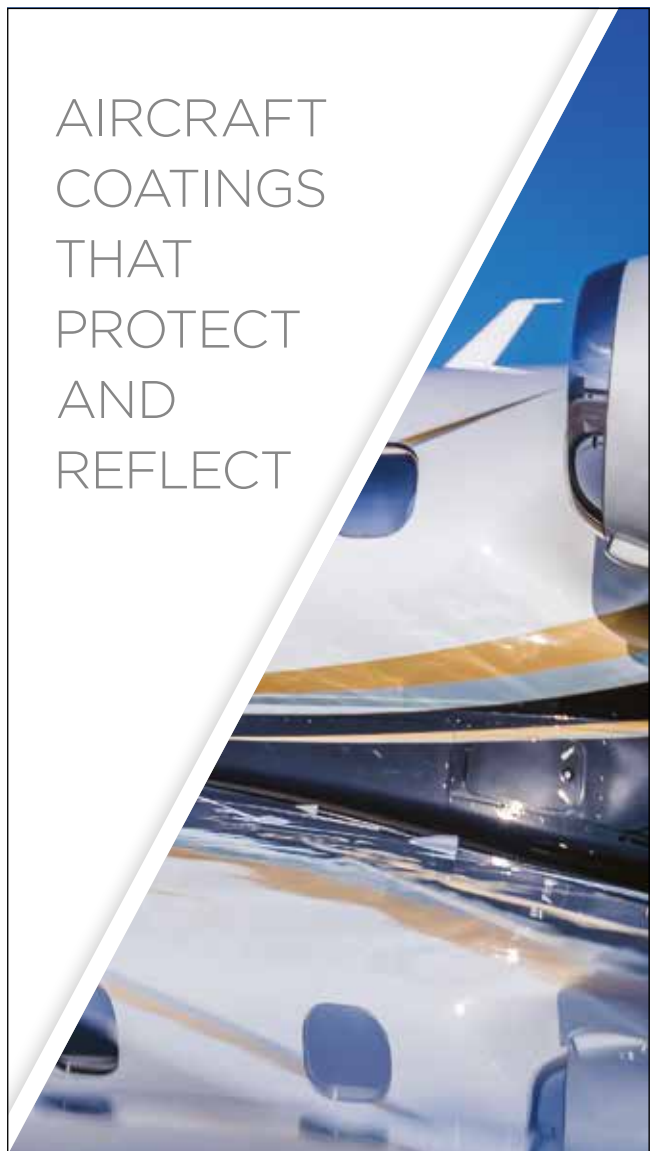
Christen says Citadel is experiencing exciting times, with an injection of so-

called 'design excellence'. "I've seen some of the renderings being produced as the team explores possibilities and they are all about creating a residential, home experience inside the aircraft. I don't know a time when I've been more excited about the ownership and direction of the company I'm working for."

In an industry where being the best is a common goal, Christen's is a big claim, but one about which he's happy to enthuse. "We're literally cracking the mould, creating designs the world has never seen before and doing it with such zest and vigour. I worry that I overuse the



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word 'excited', but no other word explains how I feel about what we're doing."

Above all else, Citadel takes pride in the quality of its work and Christen says that redelivery is always within a 'reasonable and respectful' time frame. Owners want their aircraft back in the air as soon as possible, but achieving the quickest turnaround is not always compatible with delivering excellence.

"Our mission, every day, is to blow customers' minds with exemplar quality," he continues. "We want the 'wow' factor, and we take the opportunity to create an amazing experience for our clients from day one. It's about creating a personal relationship, and listening... I think listening is one of the keys to ultimate success. Rather than telling the customer what they need, it's best to listen while they share their vision. And we continue that after delivery, staying in touch; I can tell you that the relationships we create are



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so strong that most of our MRO work is from repeat customers.”

Passion and people

Although it can and has worked on smaller aircraft, Citadel’s focus generally begins at aircraft of Boeing 737/Airbus A320 size and progresses all the way to the largest widebodies. As such, its customers have no shortage of options when it comes to regular maintenance and the fact they choose to return to Lake Charles speaks volumes for the respect they have for Christen and his team. Indeed, cabin work is almost always performed alongside engine and airframe maintenance, saving time and money by simplifying access to internal structures.

Interestingly, Christen reveals that Citadel is currently examining a non-Airbus/Boeing project but is unable to share details. Bearing in mind that the company’s hangar is a dynamic environment, on the day of the interview he noted: “It is in the hangar right now, along with a couple of 737s, two VIP 757s and two 777s. I step out onto the floor every day and think: ‘This is so cool!’ It’s unusual for me to be in my office.

“And it’s not just the airplanes. It’s my teammates too. They are such incredible folks, absolutely amazing. I think the world of them, whether it’s the marketing team fielding requests for interviews, or the people on the hangar floor. That’s the piece I’m most proud of.”

To date, Citadel Completions has not worked a green project, but Christen again dangles a tantalising carrot: “Our first green project is quickly coming together.” He is happy to reveal: “It’s more difficult to do a total refurbishment than a green airplane. We’re working a project now that will cause the world’s heart to skip a beat, but it’s a refurbishment of an existing aircraft and that always means there is much to undo and much change required. Aircraft are modified over the years, so the integration of electrical systems, and fit, form and function, are more challenging.”

Another challenge arising from cabin refurbishment or reconfiguration is what to do with the materials that are removed. Citadel takes its environmental responsibilities seriously and Christen says: “Some of that material can be reused; we might keep the structure and resurface it. I’m especially proud of the work we do with a local college. We donate many of the items we remove to them, so their students have airplane structures to touch and work with in their classrooms and shops. Other items we’ll repurpose and make beautiful pieces of furniture from them, others we’ll use as utilitarian items around the facility and some we’ll retain as teaching aids for our own trainees. There’s not a whole lot of waste.”

The broader environmental, social and governance construct means

Christen considers Citadel Completions’ programme to recruit young people into the business comparable in importance to its environmental responsibilities. “I believe one of our biggest obligations is give back. It means thinking how we excite young folk and how we persuade people to make the transition into the industry. How you do that reflects your passion for it, and how you communicate it. I’m a very excitable person, I love talking about airplanes and I think that’s contagious, but for the company it’s about creating a presence early.

“We go into schools and make sure they know the things we offer that other industries don’t. We just started a programme at the school across the airfield, for example, where we set up a mock application process and ran interviews. I was in the classroom, speaking to around 30 students, answering their questions. But it can still be difficult to get people into the industry. For me, it was the romance of aviation; today, we have to work harder to excite the next generation.”

Just from its investment in local education establishments it is clear that Citadel Completions takes its place in the Lake Charles community seriously, but there is more to its relationship with local people. Of course, first and foremost the company’s website celebrates its work and capabilities, but it also unashamedly celebrates Citadel’s place in the community. “After Hurricane Laura came through in August 2020 we had a tough time,” Christen laments. “I lost my home and watched complete strangers who didn’t have a whole lot to start with, give what they had to others who had less. That resilience and perseverance is so valuable. And the airfield, Chennault International Airport, is steeped in history. Combined with the amazing experience we’ve had with local government it creates a wealth of possibility for us.”

The loyalty of its customers speaks to the quality of Citadel Completion’s work, while Noel Christen’s enthusiasm encapsulates its people and ethos. “I am blessed to get up every morning, drive to the airport, be around absolutely incredible aircraft and, if that wasn’t cool enough, work with the most awesome people on the planet.” ■



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Gypsy Red, Naval Blue & Dovetail Gray

When a local corporation wanted its second Citation refurbished, it looked to West Star Aviation, and Lead Designer Emilie Harbour. She completed interior and exterior designs, choosing Sherwin-Williams products for the jet's striking colour scheme



Emilie Harbour, Lead Designer, West Star Aviation. All West Star Aviation unless otherwise stated

Emilie Harbour, Lead Designer, West Star Aviation, keeps an eye inside and out on her projects, managing the complexities of both cabin design and refurbishment, and exterior paint. A recent Citation 560XLS+ project for a local corporation provides

an excellent showcase for her work and a demonstration of how working with Sherwin-Williams helps her confidently deliver spectacular, consistent colour options to her clients.

For the Citation (as well as a previous project for the same company), red, blue and grey corporate colours were important, and Harbour immediately

emphasises one of the reasons she enjoys working with Sherwin-Williams. “We used the same Gypsy Red, Naval Blue and Dovetail Gray on the earlier aircraft and although the scheme was different this time, the client wanted the same colours.” Sherwin-Williams’ ability to deliver consistency across batches was therefore critical to the project’s success.

Harbour continues: “Personally, I prefer the Sherwin-Williams palette and naturally gravitate toward it. My team also prefers the brand. They’re comfortable with it, they say it sprays well, and so I know when I show my customer Sherwin-Williams options that we won’t have issues getting the paint or how it goes on.”

There is, of course, considerable flexibility in the Sherwin-Williams range to go beyond the standard palette when customers want colours matched to favourite objects or themes, and the company offers online tools to help designers and customers work together. These include an interactive Color Visualizer, which Harbour says is especially useful when clients are looking to express their own creativity or struggling to narrow down options.

Ramp impression

Although blue and red dominate the Citation scheme, the aircraft is primarily white. It is easy, especially in contrast with such strong colours, for white to appear less than brilliant and Harbour says: “Nine times out of ten I recommend Matterhorn White. We occasionally have requests for Snow White, which is a really bright white, but Matterhorn has been my go-to since I started in the industry, my favourite base colour.” Julie Voisin, Global Marketing Manager – Aerospace Market & Automotive Interiors at Sherwin-Williams, agrees: “Matterhorn White and Snow White are our most popular whites. They cover well and complement other colours.”

The combination of vibrant colours and scheme design arguably leaves the Citation looking larger on the ramp than it is. The scheme also conveys a feeling of speed, as though it could just as happily grace a racing car. “When we design schemes for some of these smaller ‘birds’ we’ll look for ways to make them seem larger and faster,” Harbour says. “Mostly, you want the plane to look exciting and for that you need something more than a standard two-stripe design.



Julie Voisin, Global Marketing Manager – Aerospace Market & Automotive Interiors, Sherwin-Williams. Sherwin-Williams

“For this Citation I took a Textron scheme and put a spin on it. Seeing it in these colours, the customer was incredibly excited, it seemed tailored to them, even though they’d seen the original scheme on other jets.”

Harbour’s involvement includes the cabin too, of course, and she says the connection between outside and in really depends on the customer. “But I am receiving more requests from clients who want the exterior to be like a welcome to the interior. If the exterior is black and silver, they want to incorporate that on the inside. That’s easily done, but some colour combinations are more of a challenge on the inside.

“When we did the first Citation for this company, we recognised that red is very important to their brand and we brought it into the cabin with red stitching. We did that again this time, keeping it subtle but effectively carrying on the theme.”

The entire cabin on the new jet mirrors that of the previous aircraft, but Harbour notes that the work was done at West



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Star Aviation's Perryville, Missouri facility, rather than at East Alton, Illinois, where she is based. "We removed the interior and painted the jet but sent all the interior items to Perryville for refurbishment, so it was a cooperative effort between two facilities."

To a European eye, the Citation cabin appears to deviate somewhat from the traditional US corporate look – and Harbour says customers are increasingly favouring new trends. In this instance the lower part of the cabin, including seats and carpet, is finished in dark tones, yet the overall effect is not at all dark.

That's the result of careful design and, Harbour notes, "Changing the lighting – installing new LED lights – helps a ton. I like to do something different for every customer, so it's a case of working carefully with them. An example of that is the carpet. With the first Citation, I suggested we should deviate from a standard linear pattern and go for something a little more abstract to help break up the floor shape. We did that and it turned out well, so the same carpet is in the new jet." The bright, plated sideedge inserts also stand out and while Harbour says plating is common to most interiors, the modern, contemporary colour is more unusual.

The finished effect of Harbour's design, Perryville's refurbishment work and Sherwin-Williams' paint is an aircraft that Harbour says looks and feels brand new, although the original cabin panels and seat frames were reused, the latter stripped, re-foamed and reupholstered. Interestingly, she says the tactile element extends to the outside, where the smooth, polished finish on the Citation looks and feels mirror-like. On the other hand, a recent Falcon project saw the aircraft matt painted. "It was a new thing for us," she enthuses, "and the first thing people do when they see it, is go up and put a hand on it. Both the gloss and matt finishes are gorgeous, but they feel very different."

For Emilie Harbour, every design is different and every customer unique. She relies on the high-end skills of West Star's craftspeople, technicians and paint specialists and, ultimately, needs to have the confidence that the products she offers will live up to her customers' expectations. And that, she says, is why she chooses Sherwin-Williams. ■



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Moroccan Expansion

From the unfortunate coincidence of opening its Marrakech Menara FBO only a few weeks before the Covid lockdown, Swissport Executive Aviation Maroc is expanding its operation.

Frédéric Perez, Operations Director, explains

“ We had the pleasure of welcoming passengers to our Marrakech Menara Airport facility for just six weeks before the borders closed, because of Covid, in mid-March 2020,” Frédéric Perez, Operations Director, Swissport Executive Aviation Maroc, recalls. “It was a short but sweet

experience, but our customers were very happy to find such excellent facilities here in Morocco.” Traffic immediately dropped off by 90%, with the few remaining flights mostly comprising technical stops.

Now, Perez says the Moroccan government’s strict Covid management means infection rates are very low and tourists and VIP passengers are coming

back. As the region recovers, Morocco finds itself in a strong position compared to many of its neighbours, which explains to some degree Swissport Executive Aviation’s interest in the country.

In less than a year, Swissport Executive Aviation will have three independent FBOs in Morocco and Perez sees trends that easily justify the investment. The

economy is developing fast, there is increasing diplomatic traffic and the country is welcoming more and more international companies. Tangier has important hubs for Peugeot and Renault, and several other manufacturers are building large facilities; Perez says the FBO will be especially important for business travellers.

Morocco has strong historic ties with France and Spain, connections echoed in the frequency of visitors to Swissport's FBOs from those countries. "We also see quite a few passengers from the UK and US, followed by Belgium, Germany and Italy," Perez notes. The company has further interests in Algeria, while Swissport's commercial business is more widely active in the region.

Perez continues: "In Morocco we also have an FBO in Casablanca where we have a private lounge. In October, we started building an FBO in Tangier and we expect to have it operational next year. Swissport Executive Aviation is licensed to operate at four airports, so we also



have a presence at Rabat, while Swissport Morocco is licensed to operate at a total of 15 airports.

"It means that although I lead Swissport Executive Aviation Maroc, I also cross-sell our general aviation handling product for other Swissport airports in Morocco and

beyond. It gives us a big advantage, being able to offer end-to-end, centralised service between different destinations."

Unique style

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at the same time has a unique African/ European style. Perez is keen to point out that each Swissport FBO offers its own experience so that while the brand is obvious, there is no corporate direction on feel and fittings. “Our customers tell us they like the Marrakechi touch – Marrakech has its own colours and handcrafts. We’ll do the same in Tangiers, which will feature the

regional blue colour in local crafts rather than the red of Marrakech.”

Swissport Executive Aviation handles passenger ground transport and has representatives out on the ramp meeting passengers – but otherwise, quite logically, it subcontracts all its aircraft handling requirements to Swissport. “This means the general aviation

ground support equipment, plus all the equipment needed to handle the widebodies – high-loaders, steps and so on – is provided by one brand.”

Perez recruits locally. “There are a few expat managers, but otherwise the team is 100% Moroccan,” he says. “The FBO manager and customer service representatives are mostly recruited from the hospitality industry, while others are former VIP flight attendants or worked for airlines offering VIP service. In the operations centre most people have an operational background elsewhere in aviation, although it’s very difficult to find people with a background in private aviation in Morocco because the industry is still quite new here.”

There is an obvious opportunity for Perez and Swissport to bring new talent into the aviation fold and he confirms that there are young trainees in the Marrakech and Casablanca FBOs. “We cooperate with flight attendant and hotel schools, and pass trainees through our facilities.” Perez would prefer a more balanced gender split in his team, and says Swissport is committed to promoting gender equality and increasing efforts to attract more females into the aviation industry.

There is no doubt that Swissport Executive Aviation Maroc is in good hands under the jurisdiction of Frédéric Perez, who embraces his work with enthusiasm. “I love that there’s no day-to-day schedule; things change hour by hour and there are always challenges, especially with diplomatic and royal flights. When we have a head-of-state passenger they usually travel on a widebody and those are very special.

“We also work with military aircraft, including US airlifters. We handled the US Air Force Boeing 757 [C-32] when Secretary of State Antony Blinken visited Morocco at the end of March, and we handle Qatari and US C-17s, and Kuwaiti and US C-130s.

“Working in aviation is a dream come true. My passion is my dream job. I’m happy to do what I do, even though it means working with flexible schedules. I started out in commercial aviation, but my focus was always on the passenger and their experience, so I moved into business aviation, where service comes first,” Perez concludes. ■



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Service Apart

Nicholas Air aims to excel in an industry where excellence abounds. Founder Nicholas Correnti explains



*Nicholas Correnti,
founder of Nicholas Air*

The tag line of Nicholas Air's logo promises 'Innovative Private Air Travel'. In an era where private air travel is booming, charter apps proliferating and operators struggling to meet demand, how is that 'innovation' expressed? Company founder Nicholas Correnti explains: "We do things differently and as private flyers' priorities have changed in recent years, they have been able to find a true home and partner in our programme."

Most recently, he says, the Covid pandemic put a spotlight on the importance of owning and operating a fleet. Oxford, Mississippi-based Nicholas Air is unusual in owning the aircraft it offers through its Jet Card programme and Correnti believes this is key to its

success. "From an operational control standpoint, it means you can prepare the cabin a certain way, communicate directly with the flightline, and have an immediate impact on the flight experience for your customer. Many of our members came to us for that kind of personal touch, among other reasons."

The company has owned aircraft since its origins in 1997, and Correnti emphasises: "By owning the aircraft, you control all the variables of that trip. Managing availability is then something that we are entirely responsible for, and we will continue to grow the fleet to match the demand we see, but the demand goes away if you aren't exceeding your customers' expectations every day.

"Our growth is entirely dependent on the success rate we have with our current members. Referrals from our existing

group constitute over 80% of our new programmes and for us to achieve that, our reputation for service and reliability must be exceptional. So, in some respects, the success of our business indicates that we are already serving our customer base at a very high level and the team is committed to continuing that trend. For us, that equates to fleet and programme expansion and while we continue to welcome new members to our company, we will back that up with more new aircraft."

Jet Cards

At the core of its business, Nicholas Air offers three flexible Jet Card programmes: one offering pre-purchased hours, plus two deposit-based options. "The latter are similar to a banking debit card," Correnti explains. "Our members fund a programme and then draw off that

account as they fly. It's very simple for the customer and allows them the opportunity to lock in rates over a long period of time, without the hassle of the dynamic pricing structures usually found in jet charter."

A range of investment levels is available. Could that lead new customers to over-invest which, after all, would benefit the company? Not surprisingly, given the Nicholas Air ethos, Correnti

reacts strongly to the suggestion. "The level of experience in our sales group means those new to our programme have trusted advisors throughout the process if they need them. In reality, prospective members often come to us incredibly knowledgeable about our programme and aircraft. Many have owned airplanes before, so they speak at a higher level about these jets and understanding the costs, while others have flown with us several times when invited by their friends or colleagues.

"Our team does a wonderful job, listening to what the customer wants and matching the programme up to that. There is no sense trying to force someone into a product – that is just not part of our service culture. The potential for a short-term money grab is not good business. It is much better to be consultative, listen to their needs, and help that customer understand why a specific programme might fit them best."

And once a member has signed up, Correnti says Nicholas Air has "...the tech



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tools in place for those that want them because you do have to shift with the times some, but we very much believe in personal contact with our clientele. Our members enjoy a friendly voice on the phone and our native Southern hospitality impacts on their experience with us. There are some things technology just cannot do in a truly world-class service organisation.”

Management and more

For people looking to “alleviate the amount of stress associated with owning planes”, Nicholas Air offers aircraft management. “They want the aircraft but have little to no desire to run their own flight department, and we can help them,” Correnti enthuses. “There is a lot of complexity in operating airplanes and we can be a true partner for an owner by leveraging our relationships and industry

contacts. In keeping their airplane to Nicholas Air’s standards, we also ensure its value stays high and that it’s in a great position when it comes to quality and mechanical reliability.”

Pilots are an important element in the reliability and availability of the company’s owned aircraft fleet and it comes as no surprise that they are all full-time, salaried and exclusive to the Nicholas Air flightline. “When a member greets a Nicholas Air pilot, they know right away that he or she is not only an incredible aviator, but has been through extensive customer service and member services training programmes, in stark contrast to the ‘get on the plane and turn left’ mentality sometimes seen in the business.

“At the same time, we have a great team on the maintenance and detailing side, ensuring the aircraft stay ready for our

members and continue to deliver the high standard we’ve established with our fleet. Throughout the company, the team is committed to providing the best product available in the industry.”

The team is very special and Nicholas Air works hard to retain it. Correnti says: “While most of the world was in disarray these past couple years, we did everything the same, with no pay reductions, furloughs or layoffs. When you offer stability like that to someone and their family you attract people of real quality to your organisation. Working here is incredibly rewarding, but it takes a level of commitment and a desire to serve that not many people have anymore. Those qualities are what sets the Nicholas Air team, and the service it delivers, apart from the rest of the private aviation world.” ■

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It's Just Jet Fuel

Marc Ramthun, Director of Sales – Business Aviation at AEG Fuels, talks through the challenges of solving the sustainable aviation fuel puzzle



Marc Ramthun, Director of Sales – Business Aviation, AEG Fuels

Sitting down to speak sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) with Marc Ramthun, Director of Sales – Business Aviation at AEG Fuels, there was a degree of trepidation at working through the recurrent problems of availability, supply and demand. Of course, those challenges came up for discussion, but so did a better understanding of AEG’s unique approach to the conundrum.

“First, we did a survey of where SAF is available, from Austria to LA,” he says. “Then we looked at how to make it accessible, because there was no single easy way to order it and we knew no one would buy it if they couldn’t find it. We were surprised to find as many as 40 locations worldwide that had it and decided to do what we do best with that information.

“We do contract fuel, bringing different suppliers together so our customers can order fuel from one place. We went to all the SAF suppliers and invited them to make their fuel available through our system, our portal. Now, flight planners can see exactly where SAF is and buy it at one stop. We believe making it easy to get has been one of the most important contributions so far to helping SAF adoption.”

AEG Fuels’ initiative should help boost SAF demand, in turn driving production and encouraging more airfields and FBOs to stock it. Nonetheless, Ramthun warns: “It’s a long-term initiative. It’s going to take years to fully implement, but we’re already seeing the price differential with regular fuel at many locations coming down.”

Ramthun acknowledges that the messaging around SAF could be more straightforward and that there is a degree of confusion. He is also cautious about the potential for SAF ‘greenwashing’. “We wanted to ensure SAF supply was sensible,” he says. “It makes no sense to produce it in LA, then truck it to Orlando for sale – not when the truck is running on diesel to get it there. It’s better to buy SAF close to where it’s produced.



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“For us, SAF bought anywhere is good; it doesn’t matter where it’s used. So, for example, we bought some SAF production in Vienna, Austria and got the credits for that production. It’s easier in Europe because it is ahead of the US in that respect. It means that without us needing to truck the SAF anywhere, a customer could fill up with Jet A in Dublin, or New York, pay for SAF on a book-and-claim model and get those credits, even though ‘their’ SAF was burned by someone else who filled up in Vienna and only paid for Jet A. It means flight departments can become exclusively SAF users.”

It is encouraging to hear Ramthun speak of flight departments and individuals actively seeking SAF or using the book-and-claim model, not because they want to be seen doing the right thing, but because they

believe it is their obligation. “These people aren’t greenwashing. They are adopting it because they really want it in their aircraft.”

Demystification

And yet there is still some reluctance. Pilots and operators highlight the lack of obvious amendments to flight manuals announcing ‘SAF is safe to use in this aircraft’, to explain why they do not fuel with it. There remains a good deal of education and messaging to be done and surprisingly Ramthun, a US Army aviation veteran whose career included a spell despatching Apache helicopters, says he was once among the sceptics.

“But you know SAF is only available blended with regular jet fuel, certified up to a maximum of 50%. At that ratio it has the same specification as Jet A. At

lots of locations SAF is stored mixed in with regular fuel and customers get SAF whether they know it or not, because it’s certified just the same. It’s not something people need to check on.

“We have to demystify SAF. It’s just jet fuel. How it’s produced is different, but chemically it’s indistinguishable from Jet A. The fact so many people don’t know that is symptomatic of the stage we’re at, but it’s also a wake-up call to us and how we need to educate the marketplace.”

Meanwhile, the US government has created a tax incentive for SAF users. Ramthun believes it will encourage purchases and help bring price parity between SAF and Jet A. “It’s a really important step that will promote adoption and, again, help increase production.”

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AEG Fuels is forward-looking and beyond SAF, Ramthun and his team are watching developments in electrification and hydrogen. The company will need to become an energy specialist, and he explains that it is already one step ahead. “AEG stands for ‘Associated Energy Group’, so we’re ready to adapt to whatever is required in the marketplace,” he declares. “Personally, I believe we’ll see hydrogen fuel cells become viable before batteries, but there is also the question of how SAF will develop. We’re seeing the first generation now, but will subsequent generations develop even less carbon as production is refined? And we’re seeing fuel efficiency improve all the time. I think that, combined with SAF developments, is the more achievable goal overall to reduce our carbon footprint.”

On which basis, what does Ramthun expect AEG Fuels might be selling in 40 years’ time? “I think SAF, hydrogen, electric charging facilities and maybe

something yet to be developed,” Ramthun says. “There are lots of great ideas out there and people are putting them forward in a way we haven’t seen in the past. They may not be the final solution, they rarely are, but they get the conversation going.”

AEG Fuels has invested to ensure its customers are able to source the SAF they want, but the route to carbon-neutral aviation involves more than making wise fuel choices.

How does a fuel company make its own operations sustainable? “We’ve moved to more efficient LED lighting, and we carefully monitor our air conditioning. We also work closely with our suppliers, looking at how they are innovating with their transportation, how FBOs are using electric tugs and those kinds of things. It was especially important to us in the Vienna SAF deal that the fuel is manufactured and then piped direct to the airport, and there is no transportation. We didn’t want trucks or

barges involved in our SAF programme,” Ramthun says.

Having established a better understanding of how AEG Fuels is delivering SAF to its customers, one important question remains. Why should they choose the company at all, when other fuel suppliers are out there looking for business? Marc Ramthun is quick to respond. “We all resell the same product, but we look at ourselves as an extension of the flight department. Besides fuel we provide trip support, carbon offset and other services. From my operations background I know that the smallest detail can mess up a trip, even if it’s just a late fuel truck. So, we want to be part of the flight department and we’ll find a way to make it happen. We’re in more than 3,000 locations for fuel, supplying our customers seamlessly through the same phone number and people. That means we make calls and always find a way to make it happen safely. That’s our big difference.” ■

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Coating with Care

Mankiewicz is continuing a decades-long sustainability effort in its paints and coatings business. Stefan Jacob, Sales Director Aviation, explains



While natural, sustainable materials are making their way into business jet and VIP aircraft cabins, there are still important roles for paints and coatings to play. Traditionally solvent-based and involving unavoidable

waste, they have in the past been difficult from a sustainability point of view. Recent developments have seen less reliance on solvents, however, and improved technologies mean less overspray and a more pleasant environment for those working with the materials.

Stefan Jacob, Sales Director Aviation at Mankiewicz, explains: “Our coatings

feature in the large cabins of airliner-based VIP and VVIP aircraft, and in smaller jets, where we work with the OEMs. Depending on the individual cabin design, our coatings may appear on the ceiling panels, seats, walls and monuments. We also have products for treating polycarbonate panels where special lighting effects are required.



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“Considering sustainability, using green energy during production was an easy but important first step for Mankiewicz and we are careful to use other energy sources – the heat generated by our machinery, for example, is used to warm our facilities in winter.

“Looking at our products, they are all available on water-based technology, with very low VOCs [volatile organic compounds], which is good for the environment and the people applying them. We’ve been working on this basis for more than 20 years. We also source our raw materials responsibly and we are examining the possibility of using more natural raw materials.”

Interestingly, Jacob says there is a balance to be struck between performance and sustainability. If a product considered sustainable at the time of application, because it was made using natural raw materials, has a limited life and requires regular replacement, then the process of stripping, cleaning and reapplication is itself unsustainable. Continuing the

subject of cleaning, within its facilities, he says Mankiewicz recycles materials internally for reuse.

And even though its products are water based, Mankiewicz has engineered them for easy drying so that MROs and OEMs need not ‘bake’ parts at high temperatures to ensure a high-quality, durable finish, saving energy by ‘turning their ovens down’.

Perhaps most significantly, where once a coating may have been regarded as a ‘cheaper’ option compared to other materials, Jacobs says modern coatings may offer an optimised, more sustainable and equally high-quality solution. “Using the appropriate coating can reduce weight by two thirds compared to some traditional products, helping reduce fuel consumption. And coatings are also suitable for replacing environmentally damaging techniques in some cases – our metallic finishes, for example, are very durable and avoid the need for electroplating, which is highly toxic, expensive and wasteful.” ■

“Using the appropriate coating can reduce weight by two thirds compared to some traditional products, helping reduce fuel consumption”



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BEYOND THE SURFACE

Handling Excellence

Qatar Aviation Services General Aviation is the business, VIP, head-of-state and government ground handling division of Qatar Aviation Services.

Senior Vice President Mehmet Murat Nursel told *EVA* a little about the organisation as it prepares for November's World Cup



Mehmet Murat Nursel, SVP Ground Handling at QAS

Beginning in Qatar on 30 November 2022, the FIFA World Cup will see an influx of business jets and private aircraft visiting the country, with requirements Qatar Aviation Services (QAS) General Aviation is fully equipped to satisfy. Established in 2000, QAS General Aviation provides premium end-to-end ground services to international airlines, heads of state, VIPs, private fleets and charter flights.

In the 12 months to August 2022, the company handled more than 4,700 private aviation movements, offering a range of services that includes provision of entry and landing permits, FBO Customs and immigration, ground handling, flight planning and weather briefing, crew transportation and accommodation, fuel, catering, hotel reservations, security and VIP transfers.

Mehmet Murat Nursel, SVP Ground Handling at Qatar Airways' QAS and QAS General Aviation, says its focus is on delivering excellence. Staff training and a strong ethos are essential to meeting the required standard and he notes that the abilities to put the customer first and take pride in Qatar are among the most important attributes its personnel possess. The international QAS team is large and diverse, qualities that could easily cause friction and miscommunication, but instead are used to advantage.

Murat Nursel explains: "We have a workforce of 8,520 employees from 59 nationalities, including people from 35 countries based in Delhi, at our Central Load Control Office outstation – we plan to have a workforce of 10,200 before the start of the World Cup. Our staff is representative of people globally and we embrace this diversity as a blend of all that is good about travel, cultures, our employees and customers who cross paths during the many stages of the transactional process."

Sustainable growth

The expansion in staff numbers comes as a welcome development after QAS was forced to lay off a small percentage of its staff at the height of the Covid crisis. Nursel says the organisation never stopped working, however, since it is part of the larger Qatar Airways group and the only ground handling agent in Doha. "Our biggest customer, Qatar Airways, flew throughout the Covid period to at least 30 destinations," he recalls, "and we handled repatriation, medical support and cargo flights. Our cargo business actually increased, in terms of flight numbers and cargo volume, mainly comprising medical equipment and supplies, including vaccines, that were dispatched all over the world.

"Back to the present, the safety, security and good health of our passengers and

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employees are our highest priorities. We work closely with national and global authorities to follow the latest advice and implement appropriate Covid guidance.”

Sustainability has become a primary concern post-Covid and under Nursel’s leadership, QAS is working to become a leader in the field. As a first step, it became the first ground handler to gain membership of IATA’s Environmental Assessment Program (IEnvA), an evaluation system designed to independently assess and improve an airline’s environmental management. A

company framework for sustainability is now the backdrop for impressive growth.

Nursel continues: “We defined human development, collaboration, customer relationships, business continuity, environmental protection and financial performance as the main pillars of QAS’s sustainability. Qatar has already hosted several events as well as preparing for the World Cup, and QAS and Hamad International Airport are both expanding as a result, in a process that will conclude before the tournament begins. Then, at the beginning of next year, QAS will consider its global expansion plans.

Considering the broader picture at home, the country’s National Vision is based on four central pillars (economic, social, human and environmental development) and aims to ‘transform Qatar into an advanced society capable of achieving sustainable development’. “QAS is working together with the state of Qatar, helping the country’s growth and development while providing the resources to address a range of environmental objectives, all aligned with the Qatar National Vision for 2030,” Nursel concludes. ■



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Looking forwards in N799MW's cabin

Sabreliner Service

Based in Greenville, South Carolina, Wyvern-registered My Corporate Jet is a family business with an unusual take on charter. Erica Lorenzo takes care of the company's marketing and charter sales, and took a few minutes out to talk with *EVA*

You operate the Sabreliner and for me, *EVA's* editor and an unashamed aircraft enthusiast, that's reason enough to fly with you. Do you have customers who feel the same way? Do customers come to you for the Sabreliner experience alone, rather than the need to go someplace?

Yes, absolutely. We have a few clients that just love the Sabreliner. It's a very reliable aircraft and the ride is very smooth. To my knowledge it is the only midsize commercial jet that can withstand up to 4g. It is also the only midsize jet approved for aerobatic manoeuvres, so it can do quite a bit.

I imagine that many people familiar with business jet charter know names like Gulfstream, Global,



My Corporate Jet Sabreliner 65 N799MW. All My Corporate Jet unless otherwise credited

Challenger and Citation, but are less aware of North American and Sabreliner. How do you ensure the marketplace sees and understands your product?

This has been a challenge and an opportunity. Of course, anyone can Google the history of the Sabreliner jet, but through marketing and advertising I think we've done a fairly good job of getting the name out there. I have lots of information for people if they request it and we are very welcoming of anyone who wants to come by and take a look at the planes in person.

On the other hand, the charter market is booming, and many customers charter based on how many people need to travel, where they are going, and price. Does the Sabreliner compete well on those terms?

Price is our biggest selling point. The operating costs of the Sabreliner are very reasonable for its size. This helps us stay competitive.

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This T-39A resides in the national Museum of the US Air Force. US Air Force

Sabreliner Heritage

It is not unusual for militaries to adopt business jets, usually as personnel transports for high-ranking commanders, government officials or heads of state, but also dramatically modified for a variety of missions. It is far less common for the story to happen in reverse, as it did with the North American T-39 Sabreliner.

Famous for its P-51 Mustang and post-war F-86 Sabre fighters, the California-based manufacturer was already working on designs for a jet-powered light transport in August 1956, when the US Air Force issued its Utility Trainer Experimental (UTX) requirement.

The prototype flew for the first time on 16 September 1958. It was powered by General Electric J85 turbojets, and its cabin was equipped with seats for six passengers. By first delivery of the T-39A in October 1960, the powerplant had changed to two Pratt & Whitney J60 turbojets. The US Air Force ordered 149 production Sabreliners, including six T-39Bs for radar training. The T-39As initially served in command support –

effectively, executive transport – and training roles.

In August 1963, the US Navy became a Sabreliner operator, when the first of 42 T-39D radar trainers were delivered. Realising the aircraft's transport capabilities, in 1969 the service began acquiring a fleet of seven CT-39E command support jets based on the Sabreliner 40. Later, it bought 12 Sabreliner 60s, as the CT-39G.

Although the T-39 was certified to commercial standards, North American introduced the first optimised civilian Sabreliner variant in 1963. This Sabreliner 40 seated nine passengers and added a third cabin window on each side. Successive production models included the Sabreliner 60, with Pratt & Whitney JT12 turbojets, five cabin windows per side and ten passenger seats; the Sabreliner 75 and 75A with General Electric CF700 turboprops; and Sabreliner 65, with Garrett (now Honeywell Aerospace) TFE731 turboprops and a new wing design.

My Corporate Jet operates the Sabreliner 65. ■

You cover North, Central and South America, and the Caribbean. That's a lot of geography for two Sabreliners – do you have access to other aircraft? If a customer comes to you with travel needs for a group of 19 people, can you help them?

We do cover a lot of ground with the Sabreliner and yes, I can always help a customer find a larger jet, but it really isn't cost effective for them to go through me. I have a network of brokers that I often refer people to if we are unavailable for a trip.

Yours is a family business. Does that affect the way you work with your customers?

I aim for the highest level of customer service. I communicate often and openly with brokers and passengers to make sure everyone is getting what they expect and need.

Your Sabreliners have refurbished cabins and connectivity, providing everything required from a modern business jet experience, but how long do you expect to keep them for? What's the story behind you becoming a Sabreliner operator in the first place?

My father was a pilot for more than 70 years. He flew Sabreliners in the 1980s and 1990s and fell in love with them, as almost all pilots who fly them do. They are very easy to fly and very reliable, so when we started our air operator's certificate in 2014 it was only natural that he would choose this aircraft to fly. I hope to continue using the Sabreliner for as long as the aircraft will allow.

You perform maintenance in house. Are spares plentiful? What about licensed engineers?

The Sabreliner uses lots of the same parts as more modern jets, so replacements aren't too hard to find. We have licensed engineers who keep the jets in excellent condition and they'll be flying for a long time.

What's next for My Corporate Jet?

We are always looking to add to our fleet, whether it's another Sabre or something larger. The sky's the limit. ■



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One Goal, No Problem

Prime Trip Support has one goal: to deliver exceptional customer service, globally. Founder & CEO Ammar AlHussari explains how the young company is rising to the challenge



*Ammar AlHussari,
Founder & CEO, Prime Trip Support*

Aircraft operators, flight departments, pilots and passengers have a wide choice of trip support providers. Their reach, experience and size vary, but few offer the variety of services revealed by just a few minutes spent browsing Prime Trip Support's website. Founded by industry veteran Ammar AlHussari, Prime Trip Support is a young company, but its team collectively boasts more than 500 years' industry experience.

AlHussari says that for its business aviation customers, Prime Trip Support is a one-stop shop.

"When a customer comes to us with a request, we compute their flight plans, identifying efficient, cost-effective route options. Then we plan alternates and contingencies, check the weather, obtain the required government approvals to overfly and operate within each country along the route, and handle all the permits, regulatory matters (including submitting advanced passenger

information system data) and any other paperwork and requirements specific to the entire route.

"On top of that, Prime obtains slots and landing permissions, and liaises with customs and immigration officials to expedite passenger screening. And we coordinate with local ground support providers for all ground handling requirements. Our goal is to provide a white-glove service to passengers and crew."

Given the level of care Prime delivers in the air, it comes as no surprise that

onward passenger and crew transport, and accommodation, also come under its watchful eye. AlHussari continues: “We arrange standard cars, limos, sometimes secure transportation and, occasionally, helicopters. And we can assist with hotel, show and event bookings, and local tours.” Crucially, customers are also allocated a dedicated single-point-of-contact Prime Trip Support agent for the duration of their time in-country.

Prime people

Its people are the key to Prime’s success. Since it was established in August 2021, the company has quadrupled the size of its team and added an Americas Headquarters to its Dubai Global Headquarters.

“Identifying, hiring and training staff is one of the biggest undertakings we commit to as a company,” AlHussari confirms. “We hire for attitude and train for aptitude. We believe that a person either ‘has it’ or does not. We’ve seen industry veterans of 20 and more years outshone by relative newcomers, and we’ve had our share of surprises when it comes to unlocking hidden potential. We’ve hired several all-stars with amazing interpersonal and communication abilities.

“We start by looking for solution-makers with an entrepreneurial mindset who don’t shy away from problems. And since we hire many people with extensive experience, we spend a good part of our training curriculum on improving customer service skills and out-of-the-box thinking. We believe that all staff should be empowered to ‘do the right thing’ for our clients and although we have solid standard operating procedures, we also encourage staff to ‘solve the problem’. We are a service company and customer experience is paramount.”

There is also a Prime Select network of approved vendors across multiple disciplines, including ground handling, FBO, catering, transportation and security. “We hold our vendors to the highest quality standards. When a subcontractor represents Prime, they must also represent our core values, our vision and our performance standards,” AlHussari emphasises.

The process for becoming a PrimeSelect member is exhaustive. Prime’s Vendor Relations and Procurement departments in Dubai and Houston evaluate vendors’ track records and industry reputation, audit their service quality, check for correct licensing and insurance, examine their dedication to compliance, seek client feedback, assesses financial stability and access to resources, and adherence to the Prime Trip Support Code of Conduct.



A busy scene at Prime Trip Support's Dubai World Headquarters in June

US presence

With agents and PrimeSelect vendors located globally, it is perhaps surprising that Prime opened a US HQ. “Clients want familiarity, staff who are in their time zone, speak their language, understand their needs and are aware of their idiosyncrasies. That’s why we position staff in the places that have the most importance for our clients,” AlHussari explains. He says more regional HQs are planned.

“We chose Houston for our US facility because it is centrally located, with an impressive infrastructure of major airports. In addition, Texas, and Houston in particular, has a huge aviation community and rich history in the industry. The area is flooded with qualified talent and several good schools and training programmes that produce strong potential team members.”

Private aviation is enjoying a resurgence after the worst ravages of the Covid pandemic in Europe, the US and other regions have seemingly passed, although it remains prevalent in parts of Asia. To this continuing challenge must be added the complexities of the security situation in parts of Africa, the Middle East and, most recently, war in Europe. It is in the nature of their business that Prime’s customers, which include head-of-state and other government agencies, must on occasion operate into challenging regions.

Prime therefore actively monitors the global geopolitical climate daily, collecting security data and intelligence from trusted sources and organisations around the world. “We use this to deliver hard facts and suggest smart alternatives to our clients,” AlHussari states. “We must consider general risk factors as well as the risk tolerance for each of our unique customers. Prime uses internal resources in conjunction with a global network of security and intelligence partners to deliver the safest services in each location.

“We can do everything from providing street-level intelligence to arranging secure transportation and providing aircraft and personal security. We integrate ourselves with our clients’ emergency response plans and we can shift focus in a split second to provide extraction and recovery options should the need arise. The key to operating in this new world is preparation. We do everything in our power to make sure our team, our vendors, our partners and our clients are prepared for all possible scenarios.”

Wherever they fly and whatever their requirements, AlHussari says Prime Trip Support’s commitment to its clients is as clear as it is simple: “Our goal is to provide an exceptional customer experience no matter their mission, location, or the complexity of their request.” ■



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