

# EVA

High Net Worth Profile:  
**Herbert V. Kohler, Jr**  
Executive Chairman  
of Kohler Co

EXECUTIVE AND VIP AVIATION INTERNATIONAL AUTUMN 2015

## Rani Awad

**CEO, Atlantic FuelEx**

Company profiles include: AMAC, AVMATS, EJM, Jet Sense, Global Jet Capital, Meridian, TAG Farnborough Airport, Advent Aerospace, Tanury Industries, Duncan Aviation, Kaman Aerosystems, FAI rent-a-jet AG, JETNET and Air Charter Service

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first thought

### Let the good times roll

Markets have been so volatile lately that it is perhaps courting fate to say things look as if they are on the up at last. However, as I write this in the fourth week of October, equity markets are rebounding strongly off September's lows and the US economy is doing er... all right.

From the interviews with operators and aircraft brokers in this issue of *EVA* it is clear that the charter market in the US is back to something approaching its former glory, though prices continue to be somewhat under pressure. So with a bit of luck 2015 may well end on a cheery, or at least a better, note.

We are delighted to say that EVAA's EBACE After Party held on Tuesday 19th May at Halle 22 was a rip roaring success, with the massive Halle venue easily accommodating some 1600 guests, who danced till the small hours and enjoyed our open bar, courtesy of our great sponsors, Satcom Direct, World Fuel Services, Colt International and Global Jet Capital, as well as Nextant Aerospace. See the photo gallery "mash-up" at the end of the issue to get a flavor of the good time that was had.

We are pleased to announce that for the first time ever, EVAA will be hosting an After Party at the Dubai Air Show, at the Pulse Dubai on the evening of Wednesday 11th November. This is thanks to major sponsorship from Rani Awad, CEO of Atlantic FuelEx, who features on our cover this issue, and Satcom Direct, with support from Tom Tanury, Chairman of Tanury Industries.

It is coming up for three years since Rani last featured on *EVA*'s front cover and in that time Atlantic FuelEx has gone from strength to strength as you will see in the cover story. Rani makes a very telling point in his interview with *EVA* which is worth pulling out and highlighting here. This concerns business aviation's virtually exclusive focus on price when buying fuel. Rani points out that with commercial airlines, who are monster buyers of fuel, price is always the third consideration. Their first and primary concern is the depth of insurance cover supporting their chosen fuel provider. The second priority is product quality. Only after they are satisfied on those two points do commercial airlines move on to consider who has the cheapest fuel. Having a billion dollars of insurance cover, which is what Atlantic FuelEx has, and maintaining stringent product quality standards inevitably adds to cost, but skimping on these things can have dire consequences – just saying! Operators and owners, you have been alerted!

Finally, this is our biggest ever issue, with far too many CEO profiles for me to mention them one by one. Our high net worth individual profile this time round is Herbert Kohler, Executive Chairman of Kohler Co, one of the oldest and largest privately-held companies in America. Kohler is an absolutely inspirational entrepreneur and I'd urge everyone to take the time to read Margie Goldsmith's scintillating article.

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# The Atlantic Wave powers on

Anthony Harrington talks to Rani Awad, CEO of Atlantic FuelEx

**T**he last time Rani Awad, CEO of Atlantic FuelEx, featured on the front cover of EVA was back in November 2012. Since that time, his global fuel company has gone from strength to strength, building out from its Dubai base to the point where it now holds 100% of the refuelling contracts in Nigeria and Kenya for a number of Middle East commercial airlines, as well as having major military and commercial refuelling interests in Afghanistan. Next up, and currently in the planning stages, is a move into Europe with a representative office in the United Kingdom.

One of Awad's more significant coups in the last few years has been to craft an arrangement with infrastructure developers IL&FS, who have a very substantial fuel and bunker oil storage facility at the port of Fujairah in the UAE. The port is located some 70 nautical miles from the Straits of Hormuz, through which some 40% of the world's oil supplies pass each year.

"What Atlantic FuelEx is able to bring to IL&FS's maritime fuel storage operations at Fujairah, is a network of suppliers and customers. For our part, what we gain is the ability to store large quantities of fuel which we can buy at advantageous prices and then make available to our customers at very competitive rates," Awad explains.

The maximum volume that can be stored is very substantial, at 633,000 cubic metres. "The major clients at the facility are mostly oil traders doing bunkering deals to fuel shipping. When they do a trade they bring the product and store it in the IL&FS facility, then send it retail to their customers. There are two very extensive deep water berthing areas at the sea port of Fujairah, OPT1 and OPT2. OPT1 is dedicated to our facility which means that we have easy offload and easy onload, with 24/7 free slots for all vessels," Awad explains.

The significance of this for his fuels business is hard to overestimate. "It is all too easy for a potential customer, be it a commercial airline or a business jet operator, to think that we are just a fuel reseller. When they think like that they naturally rea-



son that they will have to bear a higher price in dealing with us because they are dealing with a middle man who has to add his bit to whatever price his supplier is quoting him. We now have a perfect counter to this because we can point out to the potential customer that we have the storage capacity to enable us to bulk buy when the price is very much in our favour, which enables us to provide them with very competitive pricing," Awad says.

"This was always my target. If I am only in the downstream market it is hard to bring anything really new to the table. Now I can play in the upstream and downstream markets to bring an unbeatable price to the end user," he adds.

However, Awad is very keen to point out that both commercial and general aviation customers need to be aware that price is only part of the story. In many ways a more important issue is the depth of the insurance cover on offer from whoever they contract with as their refuelling provider. Atlantic FuelEx is able to provide clients with \$1 billion worth of insurance cover, double the depth of cover on offer from the best of the other refuelling

companies, and many times more than the industry average as far as general aviation is concerned.

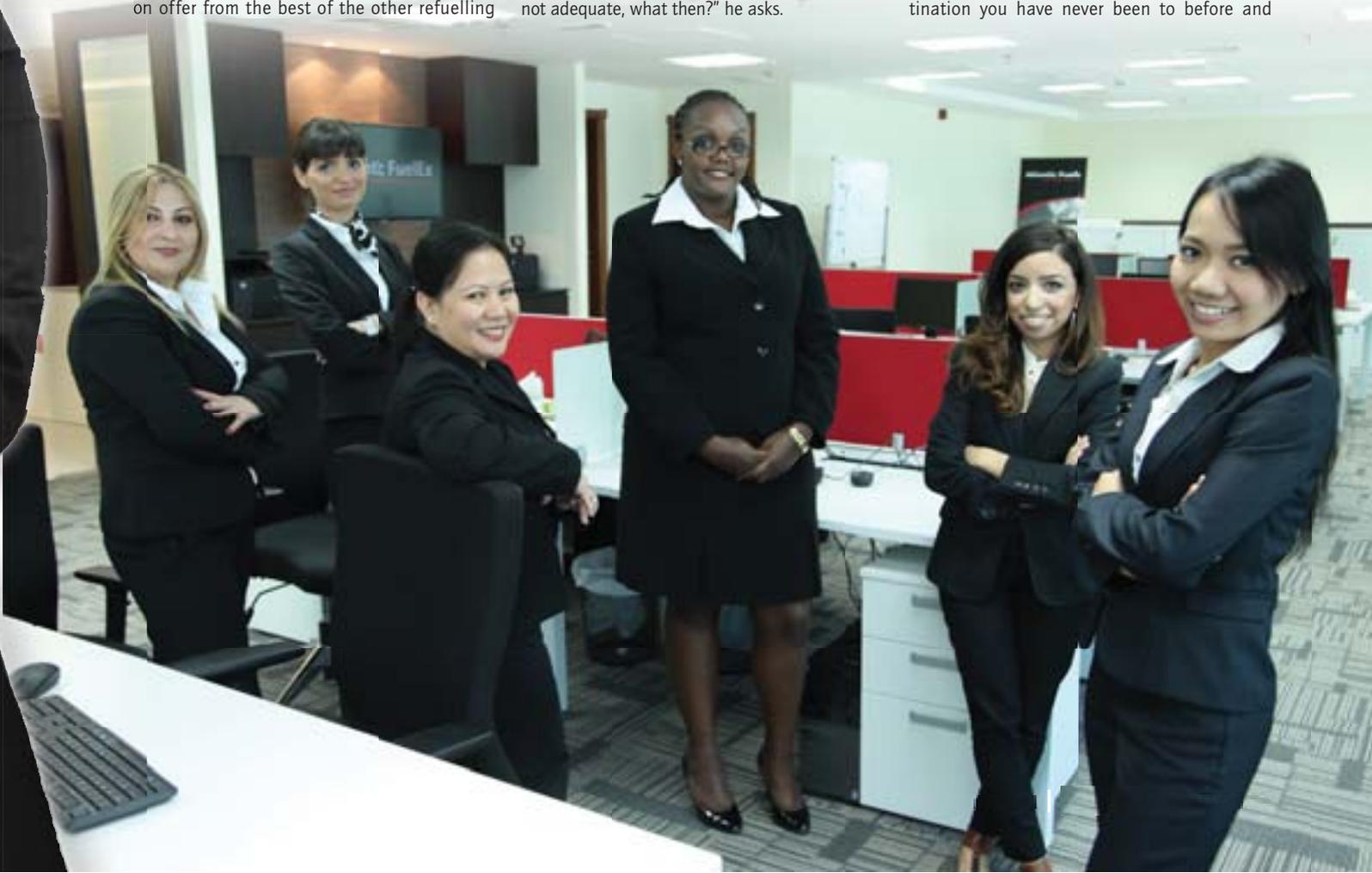
"It is an astonishing fact that in all my 14 years working in fuel I have never yet seen a general aviation fuel tender that prioritised insurance or paid sufficient attention to product quality. They focus virtually exclusively on price and the fuel supplier with the lowest price wins. This is crazy. If you compare it to commercial airlines, price comes third on their list of priorities. First is the depth of the insurance cover on offer. Second is product quality and then we get to price. As a reseller we put an enormous amount of effort into ensuring that product quality meets the specifications laid down by IATA for commercial jet fuels. Even a tiny amount of water contamination in jet fuel will turn to ice when the aircraft is travelling at 30,000 feet and higher, and the ice will damage the engines.

"When the owner or operator is then faced with a stinging repair bill, they should be able to fall back on the fuel supplier, who in turn will fall back on their insurance. If the insurance cover is not adequate, what then?" he asks.

Quite apart from fuel contamination, every operator knows that ramp operations can go wrong. Awad cites an incident suffered by one commercial airline when the driver of a refuelling vehicle had a blank moment and went to move his vehicle with the hose still attached to the aircraft, damaging the aircraft's fuel tank. Any contact between an aircraft and one of the many vehicles moving around it during ground handling operations can generate enormous repair bills. "My sincere advice to business jet charter operators and aircraft management companies, as well as to owners, is look at price by all means, but do not forget that insurance and product quality are at least as important," he notes.

Another piece of advice Awad has for business jet operators and owners is to move away, wherever possible, from the practice of 'quote by flight', where the operator or a corporate flight department will routinely ping round several suppliers before each and every flight to find the cheapest quote to refuel the aircraft.

"This is a sixteenth-century business practice. It makes sense if you are going to a destination you have never been to before and





**We can point out to the potential customer that we have the storage capacity to enable us to bulk buy when the price is very much in our favour**

Rani Awad

may never go to again. But if you fly with any frequency to a particular destination it makes much more sense to select the best supplier and then stick with them. That way you can negotiate a sensible rate and enjoy the benefits that come from having a proper relationship with your fuel supplier," he counsels.

Atlantic FuelEx has a dedicated Jet A1 storage tank at the IL&FS facility in Fujairah. "We can import fuel from various places, wherever the market price is in our favour, and we can resell it to smaller suppliers at various destination airports where they do not have ready access to plentiful supplies at the price we can offer," he comments.

The arrangement with IL&FS also opens the door both to Atlantic FuelEx trading bunker fuels for vessels and to the company providing jet fuel to military customers. "I already have a contract from Qatar that lets me ship 120 cubic metres of fuel and we have buyers for this, so that gives us a very healthy arm to our upstream activities," Awad notes.

For business aviation customers, Awad points out that where Atlantic FuelEx has contracts with commercial airlines, business aviation customers benefit directly from the uplift in scale provided by those commercial airline contracts. "Where we are selling a million US gallons to a commercial customer, we can meet the needs of a business aviation customer who only wants 1,000 US gallons at

the same competitive price level as we offer to the commercial airline. That is a tremendous price advantage, and it comes together with the quality assurance that we are contracted to provide to commercial airlines and the \$1 billion of insurance cover that we have on our operations," he comments.

Two other recent milestones for Awad have been the opening of representative offices in Nigeria and Kenya to support its commercial and general aviation refuelling operations there, and the development of a major fuel storage facility in Afghanistan. "I have an agreement with a Nigerian oil company which enables me to be very competitive in my pricing for fuel at five airports in Nigeria and Kenya. This has enabled us to become the sole fuel supplier for Arab Air Carrier Organization (AACO) at those airports. Our customers include Egypt Airlines, Saudi Airlines, Gulf Air, Air Arabia and others. This is the first time that AACO have contracted for 100% of their fuel needs in Nigeria from a single supplier and is a tremendous coup for us," Awad affirms.

The Afghanistan fuel terminal has a 120,000 metric ton capacity. Atlantic FuelEx built the terminal through 2013 and it became operational in 2014; it serves Kabul and Kandahar airports as well as US military bases. This provides Awad's operation with yet another solid revenue stream to power future growth.

With the precipitous drop in the oil price being a huge concern to both developed and developing economies, Awad is very interested in ensuring that Atlantic FuelEx helps to promote clear thinking and deep analysis around pricing futures and the supply/demand balance. "We took a lead role in sponsoring the AACO Fuel Forum in Dubai, which was held from the 19th to the 20th of October. The main topic of the forum was precisely the fact that the current low oil price is among the most significant forces in the global economy today. It has dramatically changed the equation of aviation business for airlines and fuel suppliers. The forum was very useful in that it brought together fuel suppliers and their customer airlines to really talk through the effects of this drop," he comments.

The technical sessions in the forum considered the latest updates and ameliorations around the standards that have been put in place by the industry to regulate operations at fuel facilities and to ensure quality and safety during refueling operations.

"My whole philosophy is to focus on customer service and quality to ensure we build lasting customer relationships, while constantly looking for opportunities to build integrated upstream and downstream capabilities. This is so that we can combine the highest produce quality with very competitive pricing," Awad concludes. So far, that approach looks to be working a treat! ■

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# Projects just keep coming



**T**he upturn in the US economy may still be no better than modest, but it is more than enough, it seems, for owners and operators to get busy upgrading and renovating their fleet interiors.

AMAC has certainly been enjoying the upturn in the economy and has benefitted too, from winning a number of heavy maintenance projects through 2015.

In late October AMAC announced that it had both won a new project and returned to major maintenance and refurbishment projects back to service. The new project involves an undisclosed Head-of-State client putting an A340 into AMAC's Basel facility. The A340 is there for a heavy maintenance check and at the same time AMAC have been requested to carry out various cabin modifications and upgrades. These include a seat and divan refurbishment, a SATCOM upgrade and a carpet replacement. AMAC was chosen by the client in view of the company's extensive experience in working on customized VIP aircrafts and aircraft cabins.

AMAC also completed work on an A320, which was returned to another undisclosed Head-of-State customer following a heavy base maintenance check that, once again, included a SATCOM and cabin connectivity upgrade, giving the client access to GSM while on board.

A separate project involved the completion of work on a BBJ following a cabin refurbishment and maintenance work. The BBJ was sold on to a new customer who selected AMAC to install a new design concept in the cabin. This involved changing the colours and materials of the seats and divans. The facility's track record in meeting tight deadlines was a major factor in this project win, according to an AMAC spokesperson, since the project had both a very short lead time and limited ground time available.

AMAC provided complete and comprehensive support with regard to the prebuy inspection, all rectification, refurbishment and maintenance work as well as the asset transfer to the new owner. AMAC has also provided assistance to enable a smooth transition to the customer's newly appointed CAMO (Continu-



**The heavy base maintenance project included landing gear overhauls. The cabin refurbishment was performed and certified on time despite a very challenging window of opportunity**



ing Airworthiness Management Organisation).

These October successes follow hard on the heels of a very successful September for AMAC. During September AMAC was able to announce the successful return to service of two A319 VIP aircraft. The first was after an STC level modification and heavy base maintenance work on the aircraft.

The customer took advantage of the down time necessitated by the maintenance, to have AMAC carry out a refurbishment of the interior, including the laying of a customized VIP carpet, replacing the existing one, and the re-upholstery of all seats and divans. AMAC also installed a

new in flight entertainment system offering HD monitors as well as audio video on demand with wireless streaming to personal electronic devices. A second stand alone high speed SATCOM system was installed to offer passengers further connectivity. The cabinet modifications enabled AMAC to develop additional storage capacity and more space in the cabin - all of which was very well received by the client.

The heavy base maintenance project included landing gear overhauls. The cabin refurbishment was performed and certified on time despite a very challenging window of opportunity. The ground time available was restricted in order to

meet the customer's operational requirements and expectations.

The other project involved a second C-Check on an A319 aircraft. This was performed in a very challenging ground time to meet the customers' requirements and expectations. Various cabin rectifications were carried out along with avionic cockpit upgrades. During the C-Check, an upgrade of the SATCOM system was performed to incorporate SWIFT broadband capability to the cabin. The customer made it known that he is completely satisfied with the on-time delivery of his A319 and AMAC's high quality of workmanship. ■



Herbert V Kohler, Jr, Executive Chairman of Kohler Co speaks with Margie Goldsmith

# Living on the

**K**ohler Co. is one of the oldest and largest privately held companies in America with a wide portfolio of products, ranging from kitchens and bathrooms to engines and generators, premier furniture, five star hotels and golf courses. Its Executive Chairman, Herb Kohler, doesn't believe in wasting time. In one month, the 76-year-old, who has been with Kohler for 53 years, might fly on one of its jets to France where Kohler Co. owns a power systems company or to England where it owns a shower business or to Indonesia for its furniture or to Morocco, China, Mexico or Texas where it owns potteries. He might fly to the Dominican Republic to talk about the future with Pete Dye who has designed all of Kohler's US golf courses or to St Andrews, Scotland, where Kohler owns the Old Course Hotel and Hamilton Grand and might stay to play some golf before flying back to his home in Kohler, Wisconsin, the garden village with the same name as his grandfather who founded Kohler Co.

When he's not working, this busy chairman relaxes by challenging himself on the golf course, breeding Morgan show horses, whitewater rafting, battling Atlantic salmon, and driving four-in-hand carriages. The more intense the activity, the more Kohler likes it. Laura Kohler, one of his daughters has said, "My father challenged us to take risks and push ourselves; his theme growing up was, 'You're going to know the value of the dollar - there are no free rides.'"

He sent all three of his children to Outward Bound to experience the physical and mental challenge of the wilderness, but did not encourage them to go into the business. "I didn't even talk about the company unless they specifically asked questions," he says. "I thought it was more important for them to pursue their dreams and discover their own talents." But each of the three in due course received an offer because Herb Kohler felt they had the potential to be

good leaders. Says daughter Laura, "He didn't care what we did as long as it was focused on achievement. He believes we are in our positions because we can do the job, not because our last name is Kohler."

The family business dates back to 1873, when John Michael Kohler, a young Austrian, received a half interest in a rural Wisconsin foundry and machine shop as a wedding present from his father-in-law, making cast-iron farm implements. A breakthrough came in 1883 when Kohler heated his horse trough/hog scalding to 1700°F, sprinkled on some enamel powder he had invented, and said in his one page catalogue, "when furnished with four legs will serve as a bathtub." That was the company's entry into the plumbing business. In 1900, Robert J. Kohler took over after his father died. When he in turn died in 1905, Walter J Kohler ran the company for the next 35 years. In 1941, Herbert V Kohler, Sr ran the company until 1968, growing Kohler to a \$100 million a year company. When he died, Herbert V Kohler, Jr became the Vice President of Operations, and four years later, at just 33 years old, was elected Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer. Today, Kohler Co. sells \$6 billion a year.

Since Herb Kohler has been with the company, he has received over 200 design and utility patents for plumbing products. With Kohler at the helm, the company has grown over 43 years at an average compound rate in book value of 10.2% per year compared to the S&P 500 of 7.7% per year. Kohler Co has become a world leader in the manufacture of kitchen and bath products, upscale interiors, small engines and large power systems, hospitality and golf. Under his leadership, the company converted a dormitory built for immigrants working in the original iron foundry into a five-diamond five-star resort hotel. He also created four Pete Dye-designed courses in Wisconsin and two of the world's highest-rated resort hotels - in Wisconsin and St

Andrews, Scotland. Over a 22-year period (1998 through 2020), the company will host seven Major championships on its Wisconsin courses, including two of the US Women's Open, three of the PGA Championship and the Ryder Cup. Every year, the Old Course Hotel in St Andrews is the host hotel for the Dunhill Championship and every fifth year, the British Open.

The Kohler offspring consider their father larger than life and it's easy to see why. In 2002, Herb Kohler was named National Entrepreneur of the Year in Manufacturing. He served as Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Choate Rosemary Hall in Wallingford, Connecticut from 2005 to 2010. In 2006, he received the Legend in Leadership Award from the Chief Executive Leadership Institute of the Yale School of Management. And he has been inducted into the US Business Hall of Fame as a "legend of business". We caught up with him during a break in his hectic schedule.

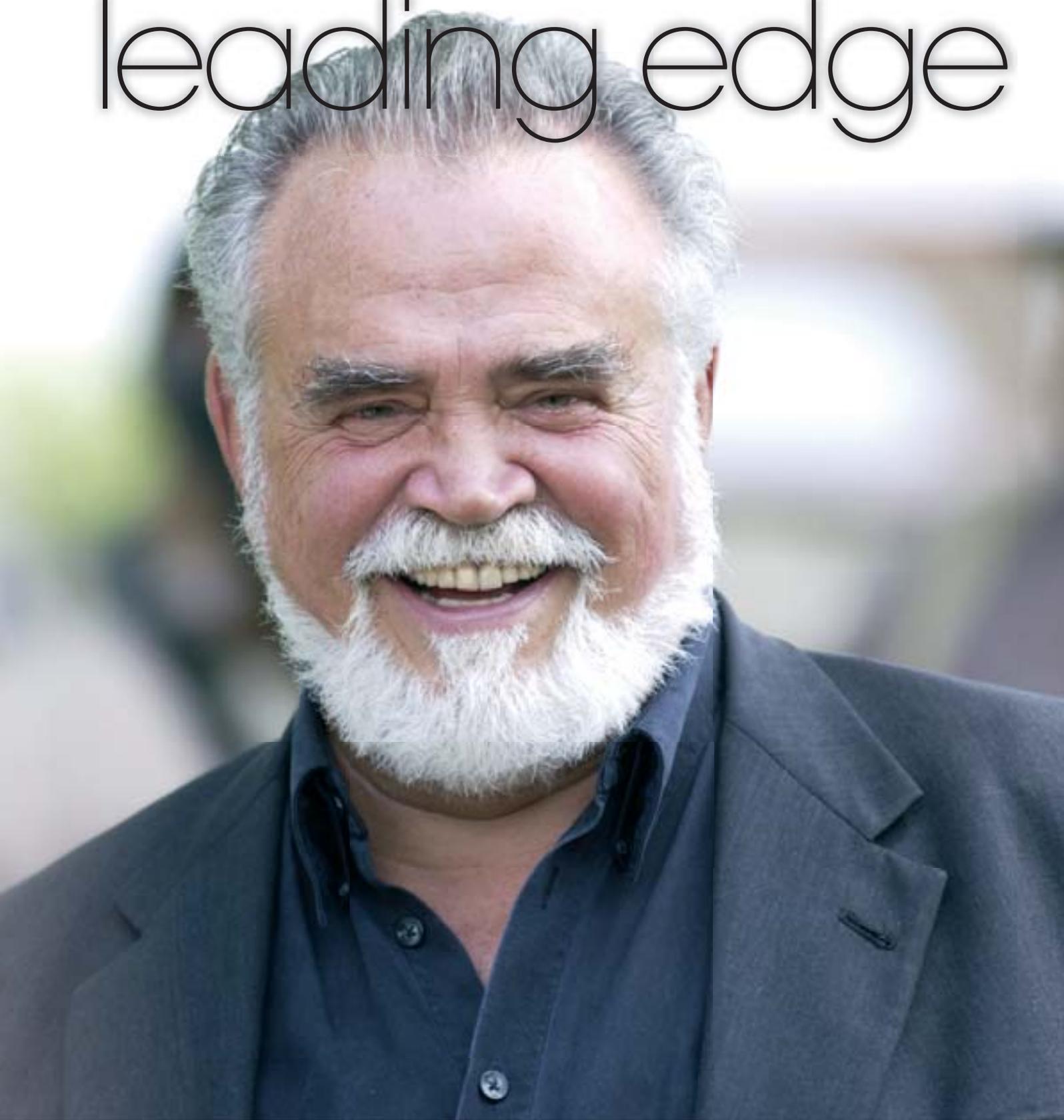
**Q:** What was it like being a Kohler growing up? Did your father raise you to take over the company?

**A:** Yes, he tried to, but that caused me to rebel.

**Q:** What did you do to rebel?

**A:** For a period of time I didn't talk to him very much. I set off to do my own thing and understand my limits. I went off to Switzerland to the University of Zurich and studied physics and advanced math in high German (there's nothing like physics and math to make the mind more analytical). It was probably the hardest thing I've ever done in my life because I had to listen to lectures and study in German in two very difficult subjects. When I returned to the US I went to a small college in Illinois and majored in theatre and wrote poetry. I fell in love with one of the students and we married shortly after she graduated magna cum laude. We went off to Yale and I got my degree in business administration, went

# leading edge





to work for a company in the East, and one day my father found me, called me up and asked me if I wouldn't come to the company, and I said, "You think I've spent the last three years wanting to come back to the company?" I said, "Father, I'm sorry, I can't do that." Three days later I called him back and said, "There is a condition under which I would come back, and that is if you promise not to protect me in any respect, that you stay away from me regarding the work I've been given and the discipline I receive. Let me make my own mistakes and suffer the consequence." And darned if he didn't make that promise. So I went back to Kohler."

**Q:** What was the scariest thing about it?

**A:** It wasn't scary because I'd worked there many of my summers, each in a different division.

**Q:** What year did you go back and what was your title?

**A:** I went back as an R&D technician in 1966.

**Q:** How did you work your way up to the top?

**A:** I became a general supervisor of warehouse packing and shipping, and then a manager of factory systems.

In 1968 the president of the company, aged 56, and my father, chairman of the company, aged 76, passed away the same week. Three senior executives remained. Two days after the second funeral, the treasurer became president,

the labour attorney became Chairman and Chief Executive, and I became Vice President of Operations. That was perhaps the scariest time because the man to whom I had been reporting now reported to me, and I had to paddle like hell or sink. Fortunately I was able to stay afloat and I started to make my mark. When the chairman decided to retire in 1972, I was elected Chairman and Chief Executive and the rest is history.

**Q:** What were some of the new products you implemented?

**A:** Every product category, whether engines or generators or plumbing products, every category needed some degree of upgrading. I determined that it was important to try and be number one in every category that we engaged in. So



as we upgraded each category - be it faucets or toilets or bath tubs, etcetera, we always tried to do something that no one else had ever done. And in the process, we created a pretty spectacular line of products and came up with some weird things like a product called 'The Environment'.

**Q:** What was it?

**A:** The Environment was like a big bookcase inset into the wall - except it wasn't a bookcase. Behind the wall was a bathtub. On the top of the bathtub I placed a number of boards with cushions which you could remove if you wanted to take a bath or a shower. Most of the time however you used The Environment by lying down on the cushioned surface, and next to you, as you were lying down, was an electronic control board. You could choose whether you wanted rain, steam, dry heat, or Chinook winds to dry you off. You could pick any of these elements and then put in the amount of time you wanted for each, and set them off in the sequence selected. You just lay there and let it happen.

One of the more amusing and embarrassing moments in my life took place when *People* magazine decided to put a picture of me in its Inventor section lying in The Environment with nothing more than a small towel draped over my midsection, and there I was, rather exposed for the world to see.

**Q:** In 1978, everyone disagreed with you about turning The American Club, which was then a former immigrant dormitory, into



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a hotel. You said: "If we become experts in the service business, it will have a positive impact on the manufacturing business."

What did you mean by that, and did it?

**A:** I was hoping to show the people who worked across the street in manufacturing, a living example of what five-star five-diamond service was all about.

**Q:** Who was living across the street?

**A:** All the people who made the products: the engines, the generators, the bath tubs, the toilets – all those people who worked very hard every day, but never saw the customer. I wanted to show those people and the people who worked in sales and marketing a living ongoing example of five-diamond service. I was finally able to persuade the board of directors of which I was Chairman, and who had turned me down twice before, to turn the remnants of this building into a boutique resort hotel, The American Club. It continues to be a great example of five-star five-diamond services.

**Q:** Why did you decide to build golf courses?

**A:** The clientele of The American Club kept asking for them. They thanked us for taking them to a public course a half hour away, a private

course 20 minutes away; but they kept saying, you have this boutique resort hotel and acreage around the village: why in the world aren't you building your own golf course? I know nothing about golf, but was given a pile of suggestion slips, so finally one day I went to see my vice president of business development who happened to be a 3 handicap, and said, "I think I've got to do something about this – as a young CEO, I can't let these people go without an adequate response." So we figured out a way, found an architect and off we went.

**Q:** Of all the Kohler products under your realm which one are you the most passionate about?

**A:** Have you ever had children? Which one do you like best?

**Q:** Okay, I understand, never mind. One of your daughters said you lead by example and you wouldn't expect anyone to do anything you wouldn't be willing to do yourself. How would you describe your management style?

**A:** I'll let my wife answer that one.  
*Herb Kohler's wife, Natalie Black Kohler, replies:* He is demanding, tough, fair, generous

to a fault – he'll get upset with some people, but it's not personal; it's out of frustration, and after that, he is generous and loving to those same people that he just yelled at and they were worried about losing their job. The loyalty that he generates is really quite remarkable; the people who have worked with him have worked for him for many years. I worked for him for 32 years, which is not the easiest path when you're also married and all you want to do is go home and complain to your husband about your boss. He's charismatic, which is why people follow him. He is a true leader with all the good qualities and all the bad, and because the good far outweighs the bad, his leadership style mirrors the man he is.

**Q:** What's the most important thing that you have learned about business?

**A:** Well, we were able to articulate a mission and some guiding principles, simple statements, and we stuck to them regardless of the circumstance, regardless of the product line, regardless of the economy, regardless of what foreign country we were operating in. We discovered that when we do that, when we are consistent, we are able to achieve great things within the field and that the economics follow.

**Q:** What's the biggest business mistake you have ever made?

**A:** Buying a French distribution company that we should never have bought because it



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competed with some of our customers. I wanted to use it to expand into Germany.

**Q:** And did you sell it?

**A:** For a lot less than we bought it.

**Q:** What's the smartest thing you ever did for Kohler?

**A:** Being very persistent about pursuing our mission and living up to our guiding principles; living on the leading edge of design and technology in product and process and maintaining a single level of quality in all product categories regardless of price point. We normally sell from the lower end of the mid-market to the high end of the mass market so we have this very broad range of price points because of differences in design detail, in functions and in materials. We try very hard never to have differences in quality. Maintaining this single level of quality across all these products and services – hotel rooms etcetera – combined with living on the leading edge, really establishes the reputation of Kohler. Doing that consistently is an important contribution.

**Q:** Did you ever consider turning this private company into a public one?

**A:** Heavens no! Not even for a second. The benefits of privately held companies are considerable. You don't have to screw your business around and change strategy initiatives on a quarterly basis. You always look to the long term. That's so important for a solid business. A business needs to be nurtured over the long term, not jerked around by the quarter.

**Q:** You've received some important awards including the Legend in Leadership Award



from Yale School of Management and being inducted into the US Business Hall of Fame as a "legend of business". How does it feel to be a legend of business?

**A:** I personally couldn't care less.

**Q:** Which of your many philanthropic endeavours are you most proud of?

**A:** I think on the one hand financially building the John Michael Kohler Arts Center from scratch which today is a leading institution in the field of American art, both visual and performing. Equally important is the Kohler Environmental Center I created in Wallingford, Connecticut as part of the Choate School. No other secondary school has anything like it. Up to 20 students live, eat, learn and discover in this facility on a 24-hour basis on 268 acres of land with lots of water and elevation changes. And they do all sorts of things on the leading edge of environmental technology with the sun and on the land

and in the laboratories. I have never found one of these kids that wasn't really enthused. They are always very excited about what they are doing. They are the people that will really talk sense about the environment. These kids are solid – it's wonderful to see.

**Q:** What is leadership to you?

**A:** Leadership is passion for an idea; in our case, for a mission. One of the most effective means in which you can move an organization is to get your people to be candid with each other. If you have an organization built on candour and you lead it with passion for an idea like a mission, you will have a very, very effective organization.

**Q:** You seem to work 24/7. What do you do to relax?

**A:** I love what I do. If I can catch here and there a game of golf, raft a river, fish, hunt, or drive some horses (I can do many of these things in places I go to on business trips), I'm a happy man.

**Q:** Do you always travel by private jet?

**A:** I'd say 97% of the time.

**Q:** What was your first private aircraft experience?

**A:** It was in a Piper Navajo piloted by a man who was a minister – he always conducted Sunday services in the Village of Kohler. He was captain of our fleet and he flew the first flight of our company-owned aircraft. It was a flight to Nevada through the Rocky Mountains. We intended to land in Reno at 10:00 PM. Fortunately there was a full moon and a clear sky and we were able to wind our way through the Rockies flying



at about 12,000 feet, which is the highest we could go. A great number of these peaks were snowcapped high above us. It was a magnificent white-knuckle experience. It was something I never could forget.

**Q:** So the first plane you bought for the company was the Piper Navajo. And now what do you own?

**A:** Two Learjet 75s, a Global Express XRS, and a Gulfstream GIV-SP.

**Q:** What was your most recent purchase?

**A:** An upgrade of the two Learjets from the 45 to the 75.

**Q:** You bought the Global before that. Why did you choose the Global?

**A:** We wanted a great aircraft with long legs, and it was the longest legs you could buy at the time. We wanted a lot of space and good fuel economy and a good price.

**Q:** Do you have any plans to purchase any more jets and if so which would it be?

**A:** We're always upgrading, but there's no need for us to upgrade from what we have right now, at least in the near term. We're very comfortable with our Gulfstream, we love our Global and we like our Lears. Each has a different purpose and each does its job very well.

**Q:** How big is your aircraft staff?

**A:** One director, 10 pilots, two schedulers, and four maintenance technicians.

**Q:** How much thought do you give to catering on flights as opposed to leaving that to your director?

**A:** Usually my wife, if she's on the flight. In any case, we order from The American Club, our own hotel, so they know what we want, they know what we like; for the most part we're running without a stewardess, though occasionally we'll take one. It all works out very nicely — we're very well taken care of.

**Q:** Does an aircraft management company manage your aircraft?

**A:** No. We do all that.

**Q:** Do you ever put your planes out for charter?

**A:** No.

**Q:** How close an eye do you keep on expenses? Do you scrutinise the bills or do you take the view that if the maintenance and running charges fall within an expected range, that's fine?

**A:** We have a budget for each aircraft. The budget always covers all aspects of running that aircraft. And we have a long experience with most of these aircraft, so it's very, very seldom that we are surprised by anything that happens.



**Q:** Who does your aircraft maintenance?

**A:** Most maintenance is done in-house by our four technicians. Heavy maintenance and large scheduled inspections are completed by authorised service facilities. We request RFPs from various service facilities and choose one for each job based on cost, expertise, schedule, and location. Past vendors we have used include Jet Aviation (St Louis), Gulfstream (Appleton), Comlux (Indianapolis) and Flight Star (Champagne).

**Q:** Which FBOs and executive handling companies do you use around the world?

**A:** We are not exclusive to any particular FBO or handling company. We research cost, capabilities and reputation if there are multiple FBOs at a particular airport. FBO companies we have used are Signature, Landmark, Atlantic and TAC Air, to name just a few.

**Q:** When buying your own aircraft, which completion centre do you use?

**A:** Our past four new aircraft were completed in the aircraft OEM's facilities. Gulfstream-Appleton for our G-IV, Bombardier-Montreal for our Global Express, and Learjet-Wichita for our Lear 75s.

**Q:** What about your aircraft interiors, who chooses them? Does your wife choose them, or does the designer choose them?

**A:** We ask for a presentation of alternatives from the aircraft interior design department and then my wife and I design and select. Our Global has an interior like no other private aircraft.

**Q:** What makes it unique?

**A:** The Global has electronic chairs that enable eight passengers to sleep horizontally, each in their own private curtained or walled compartment. Each has their own personal wrap of bed linens and pillow. They can dine individually or in groups of four. We can make long trips comfortably, have confidential business meetings with two to eight people, get the work done and return rested, with or without an assistant.

**Q:** Why not just take off with your wife on one of your jets and go play? Why do you keep on working when you could be flying all day?

Because I love to work.

**Q:** What do you want your legacy to be?

He loved to discover and live on the leading edge. ■



# Duncan Aviation – keeping them flying

An interview with Aaron Hilkemann, President, Duncan Aviation

**D**uncan Aviation is a full-service MRO providing every aircraft service operators need to have. These services include major and minor airframe inspections, engine maintenance, major retrofits for cabin and cockpit systems, full paint and interior services and pre-owned aircraft sales and acquisitions. Duncan Aviation also has international aircraft components solutions experts available every day of the year via a single telephone number (+1 402.475.4125). They are able to handle any aircraft system problem with immediate exchanges, rotables, loaners or avionics/instrument/accessory repairs and overhauls. Complete service facilities are located in Lincoln, (Nebraska), and Battle Creek (Michigan). Additional locations include Provo, Utah, and more than 20 other facilities strategically located throughout the United States to provide customers with local support and the quickest response to avionics, engine and airframe Aircraft On Ground (AOG) situations.

**Q:** What is the 'people culture' at Duncan Aviation that enables you to continue to deliver top-quality services?

**A:** We take great pride in hiring the right people. The atmosphere combines friendly peo-

ple who enjoy what they do with strong technical aptitude and a desire to continually improve. The company is very responsive to customers while maintaining balance for team members.

**Q:** How long has your organisation been in the MRO arena?

**A:** Duncan Aviation celebrates its 60th anniversary in 2016. Donald Duncan founded the company in 1956 when he acquired a Beech distributorship in Omaha, Nebraska. We moved the company to Lincoln, Nebraska, in 1963 and began expanding services almost immediately. By 1981, we were not only providing extensive maintenance work on airframe and engines and performing avionics installations, we were painting exteriors and performing completions. Today, we have more than 2,150 team members located at more than 25 facilities in the United States. These locations include two full-service MROs in Lincoln and Battle Creek, Michigan, and a facility in Provo, Utah, that also performs extensive MRO services. The other facilities provide avionics line and installation and serve as launch offices for our engine Rapid Response teams, which provide AOG services worldwide for operators needing engine assistance. We support the most popular business aircraft flying today, including those manufactured by

**We listen to customers to determine exactly what they need and then we respond to meet those needs**

Aaron Hilkemann



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paths. Technical positions have levels where pay is tied to their education and performance. And all company members are encouraged to participate in LEAN initiatives and innovative thinking that solves issues and makes work more efficient and higher quality.

**Q:** Do you look to multi-skill your engineers across a variety of aircraft types or do you have some specialist sections?

**A:** We provide nose-to-tail services across



Bombardier, Dassault, Embraer, Gulfstream, and Textron.

**Q:** What are the basic requirements for a high-quality MRO operation?

**A:** The basics that ensure a high-quality MRO operation are really no different than they are in other business environments. We listen to customers to determine exactly what they need and then we respond to meet those needs. We communicate with them openly from quoting through project completion and we strive to meet the projected aircraft out dates while keeping the project within budget.

**Q:** How do you keep up quality assurance?

**A:** Quality starts with ensuring that the right people are hired at Duncan Aviation and that they are in the right jobs. Training begins on day one with several days of orientation that expose them to the company culture and processes. All technicians receive annual training based on their needs, the company's needs and their preferred career



a variety of aircraft types. To ensure quality and efficiency are at their highest, technicians do require a certain amount of specialisation. Our airframe technicians belong to teams that have a main airframe type and a back-up type. For example, a technician might be part of a Falcon team with a secondary specialisation in Gulfstream aircraft. Because of the wide variety of services we provide, specialisation in aircraft models and service types is necessary.

**Q:** What about owner/operator education?

**A:** It is very easy for an owner to fall into the trap of laying up the aircraft when they get

strapped for cash and not doing the standard maintenance checks, which lays them open to huge expense to get airworthy again.

Much of what we do could fall into the operator education category. We strive to share information within the industry, thus raising the expectations for all operators and the bar for all service providers. For example, we publish straight talk books written by our technical experts that help explain things like Next-Gen and ADS-B to operators in plain English.

**Q:** MRO is a very competitive market; how do you get loyalty from your customer base?

**A:** You are correct. MRO has become more and more competitive over the last few years. However, we believe that the business is mainly relationship-based. We have great people who perform excellent work. They develop partnerships and friendships with our clients by serving them well and helping them do a great job for their respective companies. And if there is an issue, we do the right thing for the customer. Those behaviours are the best way to ensure customers remain loyal. ■





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Q&A with Sophie Lesnoff, Head of Customer Services and Terminal Operations, TAG Farnborough Airport

# ...You're it!



**Q:** How long have you been working for TAG Farnborough Airport and what does your role entail?

**A:** I joined TAG Farnborough Airport in 2007. As Head of Customer Services and Terminal Operations, I am responsible for everything which interfaces with the customer, from crew and passengers to aircraft operators to brokers. My Operations team deal with all handling and flight planning requirements. They also assist passengers and crew with a range of requests while they are at the airport, focusing on a personal, one-to-one service.

**Q:** How has TAG Farnborough Airport become what it is today?

**A:** Farnborough has an important place in aviation history. It was the UK's first airfield and home to the country's first powered flight in 1908. The airfield has been in continuous operation ever since, with TAG Farnborough Airport taking over as owner and operator in 2000, transforming it from a military airfield to the UK's only dedicated business aviation airport.

**Q:** Do you see any trends in terms of traffic from particular countries in the world?

**A:** TAG Farnborough Airport is a growing airport serving customers from around the world. We are receiving more and more airliner-derived aircraft with large groups of passengers on board. Many of these aircraft are coming from the US, Middle East and Asia. To enhance the services we provide and to accommodate larger groups, all the administrative staff from the terminal building have moved into a new office building at the airport, making space available for additional facilities.

**Q:** TAG Farnborough is currently transforming its terminal building. What changes are you making?

**A:** Delivering bespoke services and facilities for business aviation customers continues to be our focus. Following recent customer feedback, we are upgrading our award-winning terminal building with additional lounge space for passengers as well as enhanced crew facilities, including a second 'snooze' room and a gymnasium. We also recently opened a fast-track entrance to the airport for the exclusive use of passengers and crew. Our tailored services and facilities provide a seamless travel experience and make TAG Farnborough Airport the business aviation airport of choice when travelling through London.

**Q:** How will the redesign of the terminal improve the FBO customer experience?

**A:** Having managed five-star boutique hotels before joining TAG Farnborough Airport, I have been able to bring in my experience and skills to contribute to the interior design of our facilities, creating an exceptional airport experience for passengers and crew. In addition to providing high-quality services, we offer an environment where customers can relax or work. Besides this, the additional facilities allow us accommodate larger groups of passengers whilst offering privacy to individual passengers and crew.

**Q:** TAG has a fantastic record of coming out top in international and European FBO surveys. How do you ensure you meet customers' expectations?

**A:** We strive for excellence and take a can-do approach. Feedback from our customers is important to us and we continue to identify ways to improve our services and facilities to meet their specific needs. We already offer a range of amenities including concierge service, direct ramp access for customers wanting to drive up to waiting jets and the Aviator Hotel conveniently located on site. ■

**Delivering bespoke services and facilities for business aviation customers continues to be our focus**

Sophie Lesnoff



# California dreaming Meridian breaks ground at Hayward

Having won award after award on the east coast with its FBO at Teterboro Airport, and with clients constantly travelling to the San Francisco Bay area, in 2014 Meridian decided to take the plunge and develop a full blown west coast FBO and aircraft management operation.

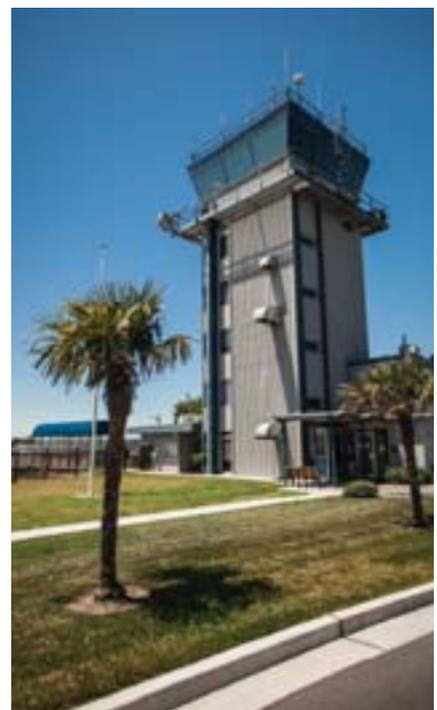
On 1 January 2014 Ken Forester, CEO at Meridian signed a 50 year lease with Hayward Executive Airport, the former WWII fighter base, now dedicated to business aviation. The airport itself has over 540 acres of land, and Meridian's lease is for 15 acres, with plans for a full-service FBO and hanger facility. On 4 August this year work on the foundations began, preceded by a ground breaking ceremony on the site.

The company's expansion to the west coast began in 2012 with the opening of a charter sales office at San Jose International Airport. This was followed up by with a second sales of-

fice in November of that year, at Sonoma County Airport in Santa Rosa.

As Forester explains, the expansion to the west coast is a natural and logical progression. "Many of our clients at Teterboro have business interests and connections in the San Francisco area. Plus, of course, there are a good many businesses in the Bay area and the surrounding region that run their own jets, including the Silicon Valley folk, the venture capital firms and the big technology companies like Apple. The region is also home to a significant number of high net worth individuals who either own their own jets or who charter. All these people use business aircraft a good deal, and charter frequently, so there is an excellent hinterland there for us to develop into," he told EVA.

As a location, Hayward has a lot to offer, Forester says. The airport is on the east side of the San Francisco Bay, about seven miles south of Oakland airport. Straight over the San Mateo Bridge takes visitors straight into Stanford and





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**We are always a little skeptical on build completion dates, but I expect to be open for business by Labor Day 2016, and possibly a month earlier than that if all goes well**

Ken Forrester

Menlo Park, along with Palo Alto and other key business and high tech districts. "Quite a few of the high tech firms are now basing themselves in San Francisco, so it is a very exciting area, with a lot going on. The great thing about Hayward is there is no commercial traffic here and no curfew, plus there is very easy ramp access and the airport itself is very good."

"The north side of the airport has been well developed for years now. There is an FBO there, ATP Jet Center, but it is nothing like we are building here on the south side of the airport. We're going to be developing the site in two phases. In the first phase, which we have now begun building, we will have a 6,300 square foot terminal, a 30,000 square foot hangar and 3.5 acres of ramp space. The next phase will see us adding another 12,000 square feet of terminal space and two further 40,000 square foot hangars. Plus we plan to increase our ramp area by a further seven acres," Forrester comments.

The Bay area itself has four major airports, with further airports at Santa Rosa and Napa Valley. The only corporate airfield, however, apart from Hayward, is SFO, which is a huge commercial airport. (FYI, San Jose and Oakland also accept corporate traffic, which are close to Hayward.)

Meridian has already hired its west coast Director of Business Development, Greg Johnson, who is overseeing the building of the FBO and related facilities. The build and design company responsible for the Hayward FBO is Tectonic Management Group, out of Denver.

"From the start we decided we wanted a world class FBO, of the same high standard as our Teterboro FBO. Right now we are getting the foundations and footings in and if the weather holds we

are looking for completion by 1 August 2016. We are always a little skeptical on build completion dates, but I expect to be open for business by Labor Day 2016 (5th September), and possibly a month earlier than that if all goes well. Snow, of course, is not an issue on the coast in California but they are promising us an unusually heavy El Niño rainy season, with a lot of snow pack up in the mountains. However, this is California, so the weather is not likely to be a huge factor," Forrester says.

Once fully operational Meridian Hayward will offer fuel, maintenance services, great passenger and crew facilities and other amenities. It will be the West Coast base for Meridian Air Charter and Meridian Aircraft Management.

Forrester says that he and his team are already having some very fruitful and promising conversations with aircraft owners and operators in the region, including some corporates with their own jets. "By the time Meridian Hayward opens its doors we are hoping to have a reasonable client base already set up here, with say five or six airplanes under management. It is likely that some of those aircraft will be based in San Jose and possibly other airports, but some will want to move directly to our hangars here. Right now we have one mid-sized aircraft, one super-mid and a couple of large cabin jets that are likely to join our managed fleet. Our history as an aircraft management company is heavily weighted towards large cabin aircraft, so this is where most of our leads are taking us," he says.

In preparation for the opening at Hayward, Meridian have already hired a charter sales person based in Orange County LA, just a 45 minute flight away from Hayward. "That gives us a solid reach into Southern California while Hayward is a great base for our central and northern California sales operations. We're keen to cover the entire state. There is a tremendous amount going on here, and it is a very exciting place to be," Forrester concludes. ■



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1956



Aircraft Sales

1963



Lincoln, Nebraska

1963



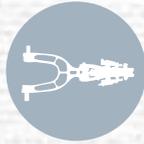
Fuel Services

1966



Avionics & Instruments

1978



Accessories

1979



Paint

1981



Engines

1981



Interiors

1984



Parts Consignment

1985



Avionics Satellites

1992



Aircraft Acquisition

1998



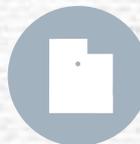
Battle Creek, Michigan

2000



Engine RRT

2010



Provo, Utah

2017, 2025, 2040...



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# Engineering the future

**Steve Jourdenais, President of Advent Aerospace, talks to *EVA* about the 20th anniversary of Jormac Aerospace and the future of its parent company, Advent Aerospace**

**A** wholly-owned subsidiary of Advent Aerospace, Jormac Aerospace is a renowned engineering consultancy and hardware products house, focused on structural systems and components for the aviation industry. This year (2015) the company celebrates its 20th anniversary, having been founded on September 30th, 1995 by Steve Jourdenais and Mike McAllister.

The company started out as a 'moonlighting' operation by Jourdenais and McAllister, with the two structural engineers committed to solving engineering problems for clients in the evenings while holding down their day jobs.

"Mike was doing structural analysis in his free time for clients and I was doing the same

thing for some companies I knew. We started swapping ideas and sharing each other's work at night, helping where we could, and pretty soon the idea of starting our own company emerged," Jourdenais recalls.

What drove the urge to form their own company was at least in part the recognition that the amount of work they were doing in the evening was unsustainable in the medium term. "We recognised we had to let either our day job or the night job go and we ended up letting ATR go and setting up a business working from home," he says.

Initially a large part of the work they were doing involved passenger-to-cargo conversions of Boeing 727s. Then Boeing launched the BBJ and that proved to be a real turning point for Jormac. Chrysler Technologies Airborne



Systems (CTAS) in Waco, Texas, hired Jormac to do stress analysis on their BBJ completions projects. (CTAS later sold the facility, at TSTC Waco Airport, to Raytheon.)

At one point CTAS had an overwhelming number of BBJ projects and under that pressure they turned to Jormac and asked if, instead of just structurally analysing CTAS's designs, the company would consider actually doing the designs itself.

"Then their procurement department had trouble sourcing and building some of the parts we designed, so we started to build stuff we were only designing before, outsourcing the build to third parties for the most part. We'd

bring the parts back into our shop, kit it up and send it off to CTAS. We specialised in ceilings and sidewalls but we did all sorts of modifications work, depending on what the customer wanted," he comments.

"There were a lot of companies doing interior components, but what differentiated us was the wide scope of what we could do, everything from antenna installations to significant structural modifications. We were not just a shop making secondary structures.

"In 2006, Jormac was acquired by Yankee Pacific Aerospace and suddenly we had a lot more funds available to grow the company. We had

**You cannot get consistent high quality without people feeling good about the jobs and what they are doing**  
Steve Jourdenais



**Strict control of the engineering and manufacturing workflows ensures an accurate, state-of-the-art product**  
 Steve Jourdenais

targets set that were a little higher than Mike and I had been setting for ourselves and we had to go out and get them, so that was a significant impetus to growth," he adds.

In the nine years since the company became part of Yankee Pacific, Jormac has steadily expanded and is now housed in a 48,500 sq ft manufacturing facility in Largo, Florida. Yankee Pacific has since changed its name to Advent Aerospace and Jourdenais is leading Jormac and its sister company, Cabin Innovations, in new directions within the aircraft interiors market.

One of the keys to Jormac's success, Jourdenais says, is that growing a vast enterprise was

never the focus. "Our attention and primary goal was always the wellbeing of the people in the company as well as our customers. If you make sure your people are happy and feel valued, then the product going out the door will be to the high quality standards that you are setting for yourself and the customer is the beneficiary. You cannot get consistent high quality without people feeling good about the jobs and what they are doing. This transcends anything that you set by way of growth goals for your operation. It is what gets me up in the morning and keeps me wanting to be a part of business aviation," he comments.

As president of Advent Aerospace, Jourdenais now has the task of growing a family of companies, rather than just one. "Cabin Innovations in Lewisville, Texas, is Jormac's sister division that specialises in turnkey VIP galleys. And like Jormac, Cabin Innovations is a leader in its chosen specialty," he says.

Defining the direction of Advent Aerospace, Jourdenais explains, "We are taking the proven processes and procedures that gave Jormac staying power over the past 20 years and adapting them to Cabin's operation. Likewise, Jormac is learning a few tricks from Cabin Innovations. Strict control of the engineering and manufacturing workflows ensure an accurate, state-of-the-art product. Vigilant programme management keeps the customer informed and the project on schedule. Combining talents across Jormac and Cabin as team members rather than separate companies maximises the value to the customer."

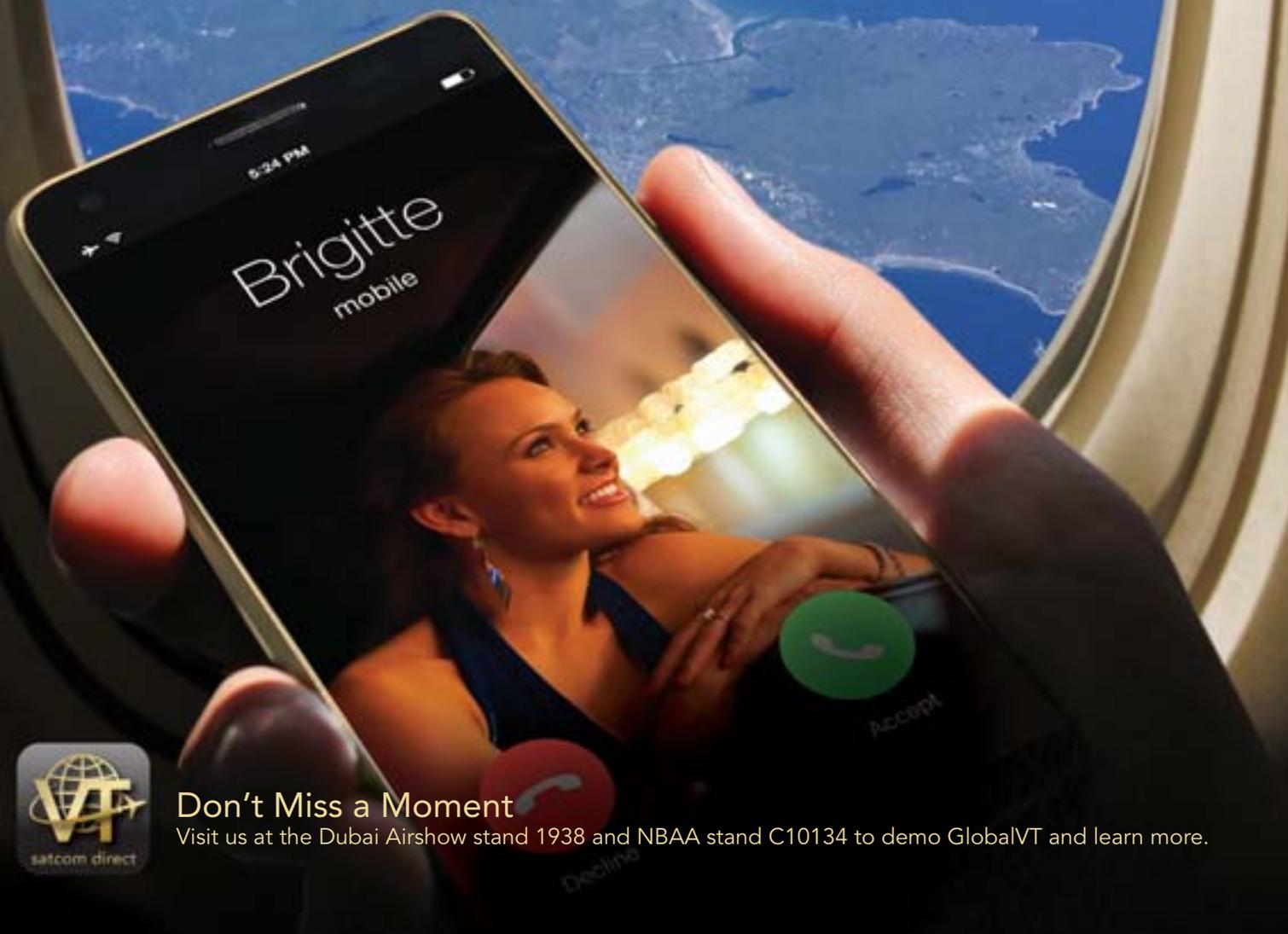
Over their histories, Jormac and Cabin Innovations have touched and had a hand in a great many completions projects. Jourdenais estimates that by itself, Jormac has been involved with at least 90 BBJ completions. "These aircraft are some of the finest engineering and design achievements mankind has ever produced. These aircraft are truly lovely things and it is an honour to be a part of what man can do with an aircraft. There are a lot of people in this industry that love to do things to a level and standard that has never been done before till this moment and that is constantly inspiring," he concludes. ■



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# Gold plating the dream

An interview with Thomas A Tanury, Chairman, Tanury Industries



**T**anury Industries specialises in high-end metal finishings. If you happen to be lucky enough to travel in a BBJ with gold-plated taps and a golden basin, it is highly likely that you are admiring just a few of the thousands of items that Tanury Industries has produced for private jets.

Thomas Tanury, the current owner and Chairman of the company, took over the family jewellery electro-plating business in the early 1970s. The firm was started by his father and uncles almost 70 years ago. As a family firm the company had an excellent reputation in the jewellery trade but once Thomas had acquired sole control of the business, having bought out his uncles by the start of the 1980s, he looked for ways of taking the firm's electro-plating skills into new markets. This strategy has proved hugely successful and since 1999 Tanury Industries has had a thriving line of business focused on the major business jet completions centres and other business markets.

"We now provide electro-plating to about 20 different industries, with a particular focus on very high-end, high-quality precious metal finishing in gold, silver and platinum," he explains. Moving into the VVIP completions market brought a whole range of new challenges, not least in terms of the

different scale involved in some of the objects the company was asked to gold plate. Also, Tanury provides a much heavier hard gold plating than its competitors, at no additional charge.

"We were accustomed to finishing a wide range of products, from bathroom fittings to lighting fixtures, but when we became involved with business jets we found we were being asked to plate much larger items. For example, relatively recently we were asked to produce a 24-karat gold-plated stair rail for a 747. The rail itself was 14 feet long. So we have developed the facilities and techniques required to plate very large items and that has given the designers we work with a lot more scope to produce imaginative, luxurious and strikingly elegant interiors," he comments.

The process of electro-plating items for aircraft is not straightforward. The weight constraints on aircraft mean that the parts that have to be plated are very often made of aluminium rather than steel or brass. "We take the aluminium and we give it a very high polish. We then do a zinc coating that metalises the aluminium and prepares the part for electro-plating. Then, over the zinc coat we lay a copper plate coat and we repolish that. Then we repeat the process with another layer of copper and typically a layer of nickel after that. The nickel gives it a nice, bright, hard, shiny finish. And only after that do you go for the final coat, whatever that may be. It might be champagne gold, silver or something else, depending on the designer's wishes," Tanury explains.

At the end of the process the plated part is of the highest quality possible and ideal for installation in a VVIP completion. A gold part would generally be finished with a clear coat to give it scratch and wear resistance.

Ever since Tanury Industries entered the business aviation market, demand has been steady and has been helped by the fact that the company has been chosen as an OEM supplier to several major companies.

Some of the projects Tanury gets involved with are enormous in scope. "We have just

Thomas A Tanury

completed a Boeing 747-800 that involved over 6,000 pieces, a few of which were over 14 feet in length, including the gold-plated staircase rail."

"We are always working to very tight time frames and the pressure is enormous. We can handle the electroplating work for two big jet completions simultaneously, and projects tend to follow hard on each other's heels. You have to be on your best game 24 by 7," he comments.

In addition to VVIP completions on private jets, Tanury Industries is often asked to provide a range of electroplating finishings for other luxury assets, from royal palaces and mega-buildings to luxury yachts. "In each case we work with the designers and decorators to create a unique finish. Our R&D team are constantly working on new looks and new ideas. People quickly tire of the same old concepts. Gold plating is all very well, but designers are often looking for more – they want unique finishes," he adds.

Sometimes the design will call for elaborate etching of the metal as well as giving it a luxury coating. Tanury says his company has a great deal of experience at working with etching specialists. "We work with many companies that can help to create designs. We are well



Gold-plated sink basin

placed to give designers new ideas and access to new processes that they might not be aware of. Our message to designers is: come and talk to us, brainstorm with us. For example, I recently worked with some designers in Dubai and I was able to show them processes and ideas that they had never thought of and just did not know were available. They were very excited, and this is the kind of value add that we can bring to the design process, quite apart from providing an extremely high-quality finished product with an endless array of creative finishes as can be seen by reviewing the website at [www.tanury.com](http://www.tanury.com)," he notes.

One of Tanury Industries' specialities is the process of physical vapour deposition, or PVD. "With PVD we can create colour that you cannot get via electroplating, and it also gives you tremendous corrosion resistance. For certain appli-

cations it is really the best choice. This is where sitting down with us can really help to open a designer up to new ideas and pave the way for them to do something very creative and very different," he notes.

Tanury Industries is based out of Lincoln, Rhode Island in the US, where it has a 75,000 sq ft facility and some 200 employees. "For a metal finishings company we like to think that we are very much on the cutting edge and are very sophisticated in our methodologies, which works out extremely well for our VVIP clients," he comments.

Looking back on the journey that the company has been on since its beginnings in the jewellery trade, Tanury says the company has changed beyond all recognition. "When I took over the company the staff were all technicians and tradesmen. Today I have PhDs, engineers and chemists on the staff, along with lawyers. We are considered to be one of the premier electroplating companies in the world, based on our technology and our people," he concludes. Thomas Tanury can be reached via e-mail at [thomas@tanury.com](mailto:thomas@tanury.com) ■



The Tanury Industries executive team

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# The sum of its parts



When Butch Giessman left Midcoast Aviation in 1978 to start up his own business selling aircraft parts from his garage, he could have had little idea just how far AVMATS would develop through the course of the next thirty-seven years. As well as a parts distribution business, AVMATS now has in-depth engineering and composite manufacturing and repair capabilities - to the point where even airframe OEMs and the company's competition call on its services.

Giessman's son, Justin, now President of AVMATS, recalls that at the time his father launched the company, because of taxes, few companies wanted to carry much by way of a comprehensive parts inventory. That created the opening for Butch Giessman, who began with an inventory of spare parts purchased from another operator, and then moved on to buying working aircraft and breaking them down for spares. In those early years, he specialized in the Sabreliner fleet. AVMATS can justifiably claim to have been a forerunner in providing alternatives to high priced OEM parts and for generally improving the availability of parts.

"Today's competitive parts-pricing and the

choices enjoyed by operators are largely due to AVMATS' unwillingness to accept the status quo in the industry as far as parts-sourcing is concerned," says Justin Giessman.

"In many instances, reducing the aircraft down to its parts can generate far more revenue than the aircraft is worth as a flight-worthy asset," he notes.

Butch Giessman named the company AVMATS, an acronym for Aviation Material and Technical Support. AVMATS still frequently reduces aircraft for their parts; however, AVMATS now has a very sophisticated array of back shops. Every item taken from an aircraft that is being broken down for parts is now processed through one of AVMATS' back shops to restore it to near-new and comes complete with an FAA 8130 airworthiness approval tag.

"The engine parts go through our turbine shop, the structural parts through our structural shop and the components through the components shop. The depth of our capabilities is what sets us apart from the competition," Justin Giessman notes.

The maintenance side also has its origins in Butch Giessman's earlier approach. "He would sell parts all day, then go out and install them for the customer in the evening and sign them off. Things reached the point

where my father opened up a maintenance shop in a hangar he leased, just to meet the demand stemming from the sale of the parts," Justin Giessman remembers.

This grew into a separate subsidiary, called Corpair Supply Company, now AVMATS Component Support, specializing in accessory and component overhaul capabilities. In fact, customer demand has driven virtually each new development in AVMATS' history, and everything it has accomplished has been attained by developing and nurturing the additional skills internally. As Giessman notes, AVMATS has never acquired another operation. All growth has been generated internally.

"For example, we started the MRO station because customer demand reached the point where, instead of sending brakes and wheels out to be fixed, it made more sense to do them in-house. That meant additional employees, so the business grew yet again," Justin reflects.

AVMATS now has approximately 200 employees, with the bulk of its operations in the St. Louis, Missouri area. "We have facilities at Spirit of St. Louis Airport and MidAmerica Airport, where the company developed a 27,000 square foot FBO. We also have a parts and services facility in Bournemouth, England, which we started about 15 years ago," he explains.

A man with a shaved head, wearing a white button-down shirt and a dark suit jacket, stands in front of the fuselage of a large aircraft. The aircraft's structure, including rivets and panels, is visible in the background. The lighting is bright, suggesting an outdoor setting.

**In many instances, reducing the aircraft down to its parts can generate far more revenue than the aircraft is worth as a flight-worthy asset**

Justin Giessman

In all, AVMATS' subsidiaries now occupy more than 10 acres at four physical locations, supporting 46,000 square feet of hangars and attached shops, plus over 100,000 square feet of warehouse facilities, 20,000 square feet of dedicated component and accessory overhaul space and 42,000 square feet of engine and APU shop space.

The move to Spirit of St. Louis Airport began in the late 1980s with the construction of four hangars and shop facilities at the airport. This enabled AVMATS to expand into maintenance and structural repair services for the Falcon, Hawker, Sabreliner, Beechcraft, Learjet, Challenger, Gulfstream and Citation models. "We added a full complement of avionics parts and installation sales along with the construction and certification of a complete, state-of-the-art instrument shop," Giessman observes. This led to AVMATS establishing dealerships with all of the major avionics manufacturers. Today, AVMATS is an authorized Honeywell Line Service Center for the TFE731 and CFE738 engines. We also have capabilities on the Pratt & Whitney JT12 and JT15D and GE CF700 Engines, as well as the Honeywell GTCP 36-150 Series and Sundstrand T-62T Series APUs," he comments.

"We specialize in certain OEMs and models, including Falcons, Hawkers, Gulfstreams, Learjets and the Sabreliner fleet. We also overhaul JT15D engines. That has worked out very well for us since the aircraft come to us for maintenance work on the engines, and we end up doing a good deal of upgrading and refitting while the engines are being serviced," Giessman says.

AVMATS' main specialty is the legacy fleet, but it has also done a significant amount of work on new jets. "One of the things our engineers are really good at is being innovative when it comes to devising repair solutions. For example, the Hawker 800 has a problem with corrosion on its leading edges. We are able to machine new leading edges and fit them."

"One of the unique things about AVMATS is that our deep capabilities mean that many of our competitors are also our best customers. They use our back shops to machine or refurbish parts for them, and they compete with us on maintenance contracts," he says. The beauty of this, from his perspective, is that if AVMATS

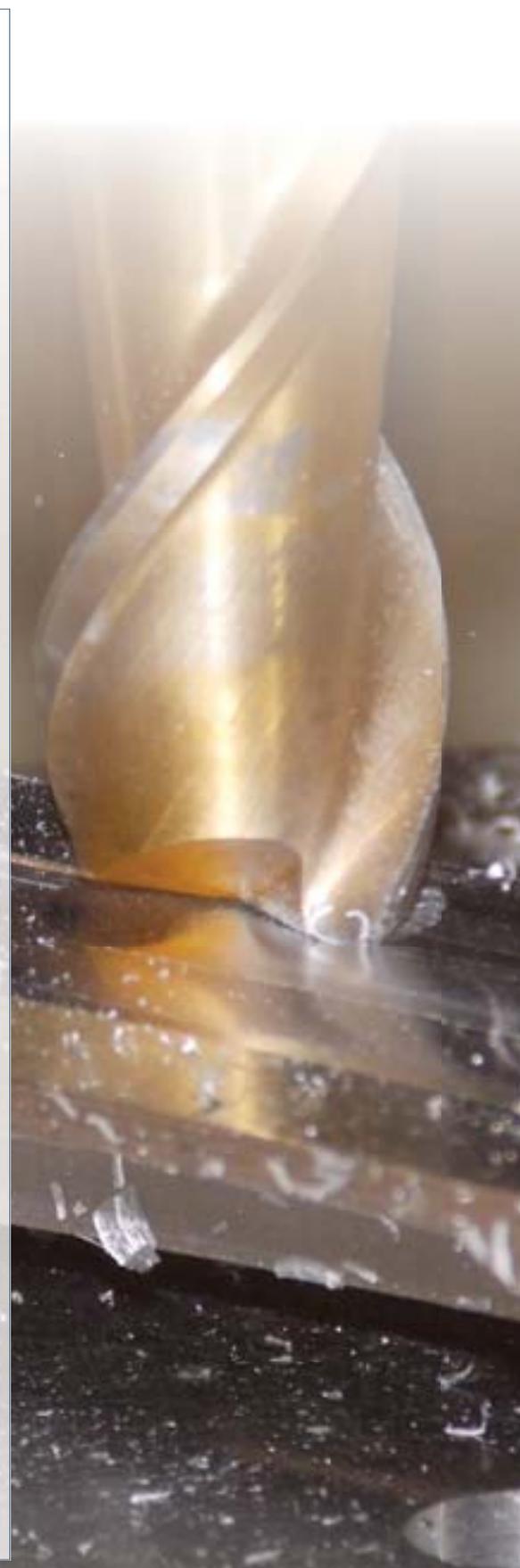
loses out to one of its competitors on a major inspection contract, there is a good chance that it will still see some action on any shop work that is required.

"We'll still get a piece of the pie, even if we don't get the whole pie. So we respect our competitors and they respect us. You don't throw your competition under the bus in conversations with customers because these are the same guys that are feeding your shops! We're always looking at the big picture. Even some of the larger MRO stations do not have as deep of a capability set as we do," he notes.

One of the more recent specialties AVMATS has added to its portfolio of skills is composite fabrication and repairs. "Again, we got drafted into this via customer demand. Several customers wanted us to help them and there are plenty of MROs that need this service. We have moved into building interior completions shell kits for the Global Express line and for Challenger 600 series aircraft. We opened that up in 2013, initially to meet a growing demand for repairs to composite shells and airframes. We brought over Bill Keener, a 40-year veteran of the composite industry, and he brought deep knowledge of composite fabrication as well as repair, which got us started on the composite shell kits and PSU panels (the lighting and air vent panels above passenger seats), as well as composite side panels."

Opportunities just keep coming. For example, AVMATS has developed a program to reskin thrust reverser doors on the JT15D engine because these parts have a tendency to crack. "We developed a complete reskin program which fixes this problem completely. So not only do end users come to us for this, the MROs come to us as well. It all helps to spread the word about our deep expertise," Giessman says.

With all this success, does Giessman feel the need to look for private equity funding to add scale to the business? Not at all. "It all depends on where you want to go with your business. If you want large scale, then that takes more capital and you have to go to the big Wall Street players. When you do this, it drives your hand henceforth. We have a passion about maintaining aircraft, but we do not sit here saying we want to grow it huge. What we want is to grow it strong!" ■



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# Thinking big

EVA talks to Jim Larwood, President, Kaman Aerosystems

**T**he nearly two billion dollar turnover Kaman Corporation is an engineering powerhouse with interests and expertise across a broad spectrum of applications, from power transmissions and bearings, to airframe and rotor composites.

Founded by aviation pioneer Charles Huron Kaman in 1945, Kaman is divided into two major units Kaman Aerospace, focused on manufacture and subcontracting for the global commercial, general and military aerospace and defence markets; and Kaman Industrial Distribution, which targets the \$35 billion power transmission and motion control markets. Kaman Aerosystems is a division of Kaman Aerospace that provides engineering solutions for the military and general aviation markets.

Jim Larwood, President of Kaman Aerosystems, talked to EVA about the company's expanding role in providing engineering expertise, components and structures for the business aviation market.

"We currently have a good deal of business in general aviation. In 2013, for example, we were chosen by Triumph Aerostructures, who make the wings for the Bombardier Global 7000 and



Global 8000, to manufacture the Fixed Leading Edge (FLE) assemblies for both jets. These are being manufactured in our Jacksonville, Florida and Chihuahua, Mexico facilities," Larwood comments. "It is a project that we are delighted to be part of and it showcases our capabilities in precision manufacturing," he adds.

At present, Kaman Aerosystems has a 60-40 balance between military and commercial

projects, but Larwood points out that the aim is to shift that first to a 50-50 balance and then to tip it 60-40 in favour of commercial aviation. "About 18 months ago we set out to ramp up our visibility and our ability to develop new business in the general aviation space and this initiative is already starting to bring significant rewards," Larwood notes.

"The Aerosystems business really got going about two and a half years ago. The goal was, and is, to provide our OEM Tier One customers with an opportunity to outsource complete packages of work on a 'one-stop-shop' basis. We can remove the hassle of managing multiple suppliers through the many stages involved in procuring outsourced manufacturing," Larwood adds.

The way the industry normally works involves multiple contracts with a range of suppliers. For example, a source package might come from an OEM like Boeing. It may have an engineering design and data package, along with components, assembly and test requirements. Kaman's capabilities allow it to manufacture all aspects of these requirements within its facilities.

One of the company's historic areas of expertise, dating back to one of Charles Kaman's most significant projects, is in composite manufacturing. Kaman was personally responsible for the first composite helicopter rotor blade, and the



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**We can remove the hassle of managing multiple suppliers through the many stages involved in procuring outsourced manufacturing**  
Jim Larwood



Kaman Aerosystems made over 50% of the composite components for the Textron AirLand Scorpion programme

company prides itself on being a world leader in composite manufacture. "We have five facilities around the world dedicated to composite manufacture and research. One facility is located in the United Kingdom, one in India, and the other three in the United States," Larwood explains.

Larwood himself started out his career in composite manufacture in 1979 when it was simply termed non-metallic. "I gave a presentation back in my early aerospace days, where I said that composites would come to dominate the airframe market. Today, as we saw with the Boeing 787, which we had a part in, composites are huge. To make a 70% by-weight composite airframe, which is what the 787 is, demanded a huge amount from the supply base, but it really brought composites to the point where it is now a very stable and proven approach to airframe construction," he comments.

One of the reasons why composites are now so popular with the leading business aviation airframe OEMs is that this approach allows the OEM to leapfrog everything that they can do with metallic structures. "Our focus on the Boeing 787 has been on doors and door surrounds, where Kaman has provided significant engineering 'industry assist' and where we have been able to use composites to do integrally moulded structures. In

addition, we do a range of other composite parts such as flight control panels and winglets. And as a helicopter company we do a lot of rotor work in composites," he sums up.

The division contributed significant carbon manufacturing process knowledge, tooling design and build expertise in support of the Bombardier Learjet 85 (LJ85) delivering a one shot cure, carbon door structure, fully assembled and shipped to the point of use, ready for installation. Kaman manufactured doors for the LJ85 until Bombardier announced that it was suspending work on the Lear 85 indefinitely.

"We had an interesting role there building the main door and the emergency over-wing door. Unfortunately the announcement about the suspension of the Lear 85 programme came just after we shipped the first doors to the flight test program. We would certainly love to see that programme restarted," Larwood says.

Kaman Aerosystems also designs and builds tools, both for its own programmes and for its customers, including assembly jigs and moulding tools. The company is well abreast of developments in 3D printing as an alternative manufacturing process, but Larwood envisions that 3D printing still has a long way to go to match composites in terms of cop-

ing with loads on primary structures.

"Strength in composites comes from the fibre direction and the grain pattern and we fully understand the process and how to work with it. Today, I would say that we are students of 3D printing and its applications. There are places where it will work and places where it will fail. But we are strong advocates of technological innovation. Aerosystems has a Chief of Technology on staff and we look at every new development and emerging technology. Our focus is to provide the best value for our customers and our shareholders," he comments.

In addition to its established pedigree in the military world, one of Kaman's major customers in the commercial aviation industry for the last 30 years, has been Boeing. Kaman has also been recognised as a Boeing Supplier of the Year in 2012 for engineering expertise and services in support of Boeing programmes.

For the last two years or so it has mounted a major exercise to apply its expertise in primary structure manufacturing to the business aviation market and to make itself and its capabilities known to the sector. "I am delighted to say that we are being very well received by the OEMs. They recognise that we have some solid engineering expertise to bring to the table." ■



Manufacture and assembly of two major sections of the Boeing wing to body fairings for the Boeing B747-8

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# Flying to the rescue

Interview with Siegfried Axtmann, Founder and Chairman of FAI



**T**ime and again, when looking at the history of successful business aviation companies, one's attention is drawn to the managerial flair and skill of the founding director or directors. FAI rent-a-jet, Germany's largest GA operator by fleet utilization, with 21 aircraft, is a clear example.

Siegfried Axtmann, FAI's founder and chairman, is a real estate specialist who came into business aviation almost by accident. As he explains, in the mid-1980s his group of companies had a helicopter, kitted out with an executive interior, that was something of a source of irritation since it was not being satisfactorily managed or utilized.

However, the fact that the Axtmann Family holdings was familiar with helicopter operations was to prove significant. In 1989 a private club



with two rescue helicopters, spun off that part of its activities as a separate, wholly owned subsidiary called IFA Flugbetriebs GmbH. That operation quickly became too much for the private club to manage and it was put up for sale. The idea of acquiring a modest sized operation with an experienced flight department and helicopter operations team was attractive and Axtmann Holdings bought the company from the private club, renaming it FAI.

"I am a construction engineer by profession and you can say that I came via the side entrance into business aviation. It is a sector that I have become very fond of," Axtmann says. Two years later that basis in flight operations provided by the acquisition enabled Axtmann to take over the flight department of GRUNDIG, as an outsourcing operation.

That acquisition gave him an entrance into

general aviation. However, to his professional eye that general space looked to have too many players, all competing on price and quality of service. Those two factors, price and quality do not sit comfortably with each other. It is extremely difficult to open up a lead on your opposition on sheer quality of service when you are getting undercut on price.

Instead, Axtmann decided to expand the notion of a "rescue" service into a full blown air ambulance and medical evacuation service. He also focused FAI on providing NGOs such as the Red Cross and other emergency and crisis relief organizations with air transport and close air support services. This gave the company two niche areas to expand into.

"The beauty of having a niche business is that you immediately have a better protected and more profitable revenue stream. Everyone

can do general aviation, but the barriers to entry are a lot higher with an air ambulance service", Axtmann comments.

He points out that the key ingredient to running a successful air ambulance operation is confidence in an operator's experience. "You need to build up a long term relationship with the insurance industry, since insurance underpins virtually all medical flights. Winning that trust is a core problem for any new entrant in this field," he says. FAI built its reputation slowly over time, doing a mix of general aviation and medical services to start with and gradually ramping up the air ambulance service as the business developed. As the level of enquiries rose, the brand gained momentum across the sector.

"The key to profitability in air ambulance is the level of enquiries that you get. A sustained level of enquiries allows you to get a good utili-

sation rate. One case a day will not fill up your network. Within a year we will get as many as 10,000 enquiries. Not all of them will be actioned and some of the cases that are serious will be in areas that your aircraft are not positioned for and so you cannot make a profitable flight out of that particular call. If you want to be profitable in this business you need at least one in five of the calls to generate business," he comments.

In this sense the air ambulance service has a very similar model to a freight forwarder. Both businesses want the unoccupied mileage to be as small as possible and you want to keep the non-patient carrying hours down to a minimum.

Inevitably, running an air ambulance service is a lot more complex than running business charter services. This is a bedside-to-bedside service, so the logistical challenges are always a lot tougher.

The European standard for air ambulance work is that every flight carries both a doctor and a paramedic. As Axtmann explains, it is an

industry standard in Europe that the doctor is a full time practitioner, so air ambulance services create a roster of doctors and paramedics from local hospital and clinical practices who are willing to sign up to a certain number of days per month and to be diligent in meeting their roster duties. FAI currently has some 50 part-time physicians and paramedics on its roster. In addition to its main base, where it has a 9,000 square metre FBO, FAI operates satellite offices in Dubai and Miami, as well as line stations in Baghdad, Kabul, Entebbe, Abidjan, Bamako and Dakar.

2015 will be a great year for Axtmann and FAI. Not only is the company expecting another record year, with revenues anticipated to be in the region of 80 million euros, in July of this year Axtmann finally bought out its Greek shareholder, MIG Aviation Holdings, a 100% owned subsidiary of Marfin Investment Group. MIG had originally taken a 49.9% stake in FAI back in 2008.

The original idea, as Axtmann notes, was that MIG would bring both money and potential clients to the table, but then L. B. Day followed by

the Greek crisis hit and MIG was too busy to be more than a passive shareholder. "Basically, they wanted to exit and I was able to buy them out. That gave me back 100% of FAI," Axtmann says.

It also frees him up to look at potential acquisition and to focus on driving further efficiencies in FAI's fleet of 21 aircraft by consolidating the entire fleet around a single OEM, namely Bombardier. "We are now in the final stages of having just two aircraft types for our air ambulance service, Challenger 604s and Learjet 60s. We have three Global Express and we keep that either for VVIP-charters on a case-by-case basis. We shall have a conversion kit certified by end of this year which means we can install up to 3 ICU in the cabin of the Global Express," he explains. There is a solid niche market for long haul "intensive care" transport.

"This is the first generally available Global Express that is air ambulance capable. So far previous air ambulance Globals have been the preserve of governments and the military," Axtmann says. At EBACE 2015 FAI announced the induction of its eighth Learjet 60 into its air ambulance fleet. Four more Learjet 60s are scheduled to be delivered before EBACE 2016, replacing Learjet 55s. This will bring the total Learjet 60 complement up to 14, along with four Challenger 604s and the company's three Global Expresses.

FAI recently acquired a small charter operator, Fly Alpha, that also happens to be based at FAI's home base of Albrecht Dürer International Airport in Nuremberg, Germany. While charter is not its main business, Axtmann says that the charter side of the business is doing reasonably well, with the three Global Express aircraft easily notching in average per aircraft 600 charter hours a year.

He is particularly pleased with the fact that FAI has again made the shortlist for the 2015 best air ambulance service provider award. The presentation of the International Travel & Health Insurance Journal's ITIJ Industry Awards is scheduled to take place on 5 November at the Megaron Athens Concert Hall. "We won the award in 2012 and it is very gratifying to be amongst the four finalists again this year. I shall, of course, be delighted if we win, but making the short list is a huge boost to all our team and highlights the tremendous effort that everyone puts in every day," he notes. ■

**If you want to be profitable in this business you need at least one in five of the calls to generate business**  
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# Building a world-class aircraft brokerage

An interview with Charlie Bravo Aviation owner René Banglesdorf

**S**elling pre-owned aircraft consistently for good prices is an art backed by science. The art comes in the age-old craft of showing the buyer his or her dream in a tangible, purchasable form, and doing so in a way that turns a one-time customer into repeat business. Even if they don't upgrade for five or ten years, when they do, you want them coming back to you because what you did for them first time round was solid.

The science comes down to knowledge, knowing everything about the current state of the market for every model that you sell, who owns them, who's likely to sell them and for what. This has been the guiding principle that has shaped René and Curt Banglesdorf's aircraft brokering business, Charlie Bravo Aviation, from day one.

Before getting into the aircraft sales business in 2002, René and Curt were working in publishing and marketing in Washington DC. Then they moved to Texas where Curt worked, and René did some marketing, for an aircraft sales company. This gave them an insight into the aircraft brokering business.

"Curt and I talked it over and we decided we could do more working for ourselves. It was early 2008, just before the financial markets around the world were crashing and the bottom fell out of the aircraft sales market. Nevertheless, we got deals done and made it through the first five years in reasonable shape. Now we are on a fairly aggressive growth track



and the market in the US is looking much more promising," René Banglesdorf says.

In September, Charlie Bravo closed its 15th sale so far for 2015 and Banglesdorf is confident that the company, now up to seven staff, will sell between 20 and 30 aircraft by the year end. This is about par for the course for a decent year for the company and makes Charlie Bravo one of the more successful aircraft brokering businesses.

"One of the unique things about our business is that each staff member focuses on a particular OEM. For instance, my Citation analyst looks at all the Citations available on the market on a daily basis and keeps track of aircraft that are not on the market but whose owners might entertain an offer. This analyst knows the asking price for that model of aircraft and more than that, they have a very good sense of what a particular Citation owner will take for his or her aircraft. The analyst will also know if there are any historical issues with the aircraft, such as corrosion, whether it

is a single owner model, heavy or light usage, whether it is doing charter and so on. They track all the things that make an aircraft more or less valuable, and we keep pretty sophisticated records on all the markets and models that we cover," Banglesdorf explains.

Today the company buys and sells jets, turboprops and helicopters all over the world. Charlie Bravo's initial focus was pre-owned business jets; however, the business expanded into turboprops in 2010 and in 2013 it added helicopters to its specialisms.

So what makes the business grow? Banglesdorf reckons that the best leads generally come from word of mouth. "People we have done work for before are tremendous assets to the business. They refer us to others that they know are looking for aircraft. They know that we are knowledgeable and they know that in recommending us they are helping a friend, client or colleague to find someone that will really be able to help them," she says.

On top of that, regular advertising of aircraft for sale brings in a steady stream of leads. Plus, in the course of phoning around the market the company's analysts get a pretty good feel for aircraft owners that are getting ready to upgrade their aircraft to a newer model or a different OEM's product.

"Another great source of leads for us is being diligent about following up on people who visit our web site and request buyers' guides or other information from us. If someone wants a market report on the pre-owned market or some segment of it, that is generally a pretty



Clearly newer aircraft sell faster than older models. Any aircraft with a good pedigree and a reasonable price is going to sell

René Banglesdorf

good sign that they are getting serious about buying an aircraft," Banglesdorf notes.

Frequently, an owner will have their chief pilot do research in the run-up to any upgrade, or they will do research themselves. Following up on these hits can also generate strong leads. "Of course, if we get direct requests for information, then we follow those up and try to find out a good deal more about what it is that they have in mind," she comments.

Charlie Bravo is happy to sell new aircraft if the opportunity arises, but Banglesdorf says that this probably constitutes no more than 5% of the company's business.

So how is the market today? "Four or five years ago we were seeing some distressed sales, with owners under severe financial pressure from the global economic downturn. However, today what we tend to see is people getting fair value from the market for their aircraft. There are very few distressed sales," Banglesdorf says.

"Clearly newer aircraft sell faster than older models. Any aircraft with a good pedigree and a reasonable price is going to sell, however. We recently brought a 15-year-old aircraft with low time and only two owners to the market. It went fairly

quickly. However, prices are either still falling – or at best, not coming back up. On the plus side, inventory across the pre-owned fleet is thinning out and there is a good chance that this will help prices to stabilise or even rise a bit," she notes.

Banglesdorf points out that the competitive landscape in pre-owned pricing has changed a good deal since the crash. "In 2005, if you were spending two to three million dollars US you'd be looking at a Citation V. Today you would be looking at a Hawker 800XP or a G100, or on the higher end of that at a G4," she comments. The basic point is that you can get a lot more aircraft for your money – so this then pushes the emphasis towards operating costs and maintenance costs as the real focus for buyers.

"There are some interesting trade-offs to consider. Where you could buy a 2005 Hawker 800XP for \$3.5 or \$4 million, you can also think about a really nice Challenger 601 for \$2 million. The difference in price will more than make up for the increased operating costs of running the Challenger," she notes.

"Some of the manufacturers are doing an amazing job with their newer models that are now on the pre-owned market. The Embraer

Phenom 300 has done very well. The Legacy 500 is very well thought of in the market. And on the new models now appearing I am very interested to see how the HondaJet sells. They have better performance numbers than they were expecting, so it will be very competitive with the current crop of light jets," she comments.

As always in recent years, there is continued interest in mid-size aircraft that can fly coast to coast across the US and that have a wider body. But Banglesdorf says that Charlie Bravo is also seeing a pick-up in demand for pre-owned light jets, particularly in North America.

So what does the future hold for Charlie Bravo? "I would love to see the business grow to 40 to 50 transactions per year, but my vision is different than many of my competitors. As a female business owner, I have noticed that only 4% of business aircraft are owned by women. I'd like to see that number increase as more business women take advantage of such a great competitive tool. I am presently working on a large PR project that I hope will raise awareness about the benefits of private aviation—and it may involve a book published sometime in 2016," she concludes. ■



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EVA talks to Cat Air Service general manager, Robert Whitehead, about the joint venture between the company and Air Service Basel

# Joining forces

**G**round handling specialist Cat Air Service, based at Zurich Airport, is a joint venture between Air Service Basel and Cat Aviation. The partnership was developed to provide a niche, tailor-made service for esteemed private aircraft operators arriving at the General Aviation Centre (GAC). With the experience and knowledge of an elite FBO facility in Basel (Air Service Basel) and the operational understanding and customer requirements of a private jet operator (CAT Aviation) this alliance provides the ultimate in aircraft and customer service.

"I joined Cat Aviation in May 2014 and they had six aircraft under management at the time. We saw a real requirement to introduce ground handling capabilities to service these aircraft and began talks with Air Service Basel to form the joint venture. The company, Cat Air Service, was founded in June 2014 and after five months of preparation was launched in November 2014," Whitehead recalls.

Cat Aviation provided an immediate customer base, and in its first full month of operation, Cat Air Service handled over 40 aircraft movements, of all the business aviation traffic passing through Zurich Airport at the time. Today, a year after launching, Cat Air Service has increased its customer base and is handling more and more business aircraft movements a month.

"We provide a complete, all-round service for owners and operators - everything from organising landing permission and aircraft slots to making arrangements for taxis, limousines and hotels. We do all this in advance of the aircraft's arrival at Zurich. We meet and greet the passengers on arrival and escort them through the GAC for clearance. They have the privacy of a private lounge or the convenience of stepping into their transport for a smooth onward journey. Our facilities provide a peaceful setting for the crew to unwind in our dedicated crew lounge," he notes.

In September 2015 Zurich Airport won the coveted European Airport of the Year from World Travel Awards for the 12th year

in succession and along with commercial operations can accommodate all sizes of business aviation jets. "What is important for our customers is that they do not need to undergo the main terminal experience; we take them through the dedicated GAC facilities for customs clearance, meeting them and guiding them through the whole process," Whitehead says.

"Fixed base operations for business aviation is always challenging and we compete and differentiate our business on customer service - that's why our customers keep returning. They pay for that value-added benefit. Corporate aircraft operators and passengers don't want cheap, they want value for money and expect a quality service provider. It is important to give that individual touch, every time - a nice smile, a very big welcome and a smooth transit. Behind the scenes everything is being done to maximise their comfort," he notes. "We have got a chic, smart facility, but the most important part is to offer a fantastic service at good value. We don't want

to charge high sums of money but if we offer a fair market price for an outstanding service we believe we can gain market share."

Another difficulty at Zurich Airport, a busy commercial gateway, is that it is very much ruled by airport slots. "It is clear that the majority of traffic at Zurich Airport is commercial airlines, so for business aviation slots can be hard to come by at short notice. Moreover, the airport is often at maximum capacity and delays can be a regular occurrence, making operating in and out of the airport, as a business traveler, challenging.

"There is no doubt that Zurich is a busy airport; however as a prominent centre for business and commerce it is very convenient. The closest airports are over an hour away so Zurich is a major hub for private jets. Peak commercial times restrict traffic from business jets. If you are in Zurich and you have a business meeting at 8.00am in Paris, you are not able to guarantee a departure slot and this can leave no other alternative but to depart the night before. We can support

our customers to understand the complexities of slot restrictions and help them to work out viable flight schedules to get to their destinations in a timely fashion," he adds.

"We are steadily developing our business through offering the best service possible, a memorable customer experience and continuous personal attention. We've got great people on board with extensive know-how. I myself have been in this industry for over 30 years and am well known at Zurich Airport with a reputation for first-class service. We are very hot on training standards and quality control and are continuously improving through SMS," notes Whitehead.

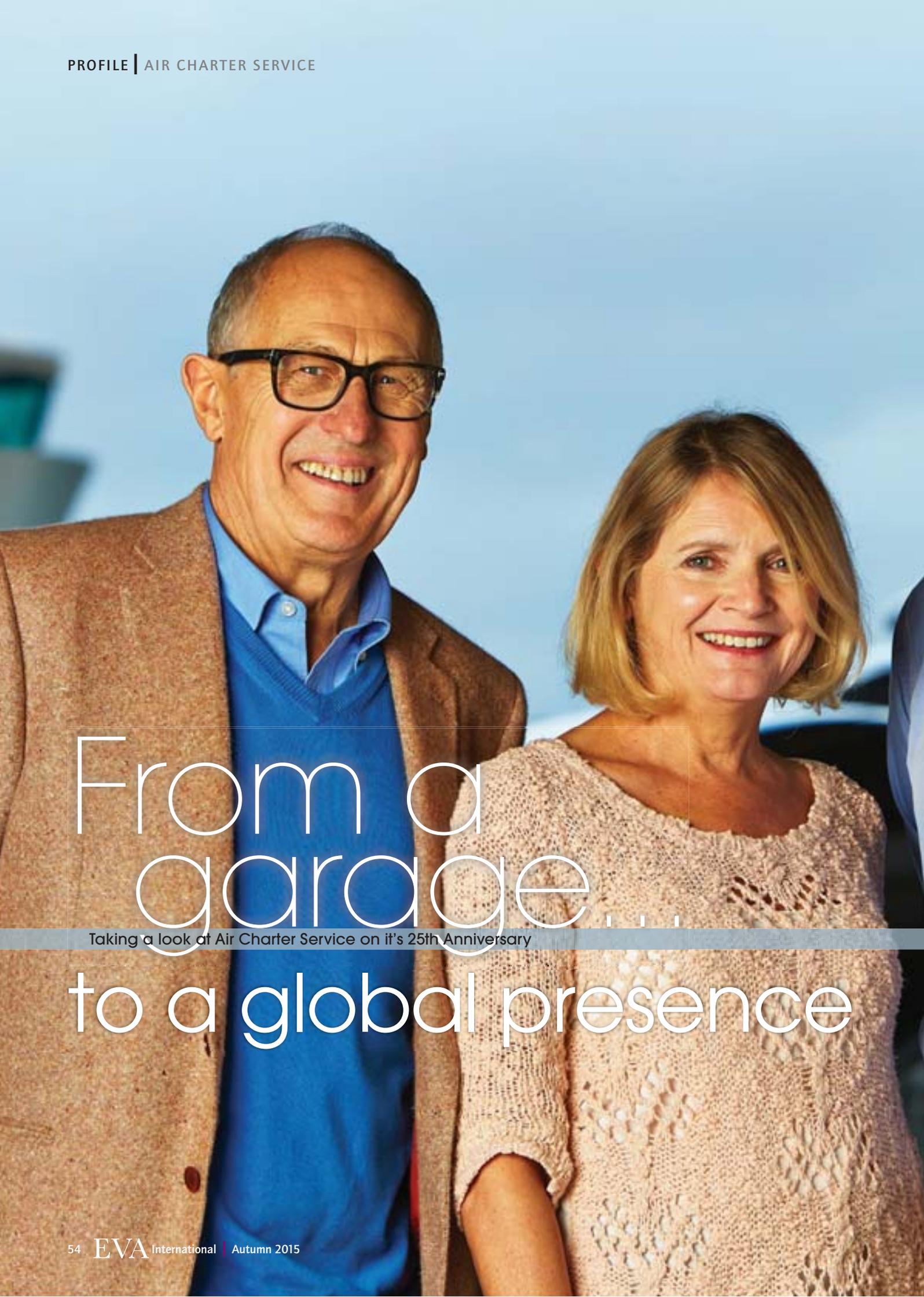
"Anticipating customer requirements each and every time is key. Regular visitors have their particular wishes and we remember what is important to them for next time. The passenger, the operator, the crew and the aircraft are our priority; every visit they will receive unrivalled attention to ensure they are looked after in every way," he concludes. ■

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# From a garage...

Taking a look at Air Charter Service on it's 25th Anniversary

# to a global presence



ACS first office

Aircraft charter specialist Air Charter Service celebrate their 25th anniversary this year. ACS Chairman Chris Leach and his wife Tina founded the company in the basement of their family home in South West London back in 1990. To provide a context, IBM had launched the IBM PC seven years earlier and Microsoft had just recently passed the \$1.1 billion revenue mark. The Dassault Falcon 2000 would not see its first flight till March 1993 and Bombardier wouldn't start work on studies for the Global Express till 1991.

Life works in strange ways sometimes. Business was tough in the early days and Chris and Tina Leach rented a room in their house to a student who turned out to be a manic plane spotter, who'd spend hours memorising the serial numbers of business aviation aircraft. That student was Justin Bowman, the current Group CEO of ACS.

From those small beginnings, ACS has grown to the point where it now has 20 offices around the world and is opening more all the time. Chris Leach makes it clear that his ambition now is to see ACS grow to the point where within the next five to ten years it can truthfully claim to be the world's largest charter brokerage house across all three sectors.



The company has recently announced spectacular half year results for 2015, with a 41% increase in business for the six months ending 31st July. Commenting on the results Leach said: "The overall increase in revenue, charters and profit is extremely pleasing. The strong figures have been evenly spread around the world. The only region in which we did not see growth was Russia," he noted.

The strong growth in the cargo charter market was particularly pleasing, after two years of virtual stagnation. "Our cargo department has had a booming start to the year, recording a 60% increase," Leach said. The private jet division enjoyed a fruitful first six months, showing 24% year on year growth.

"ACS remains debt free with a strong balance sheet and bank funds of £11.7 million worldwide at the end of our half year, up from £8.8 million last year, a 33% increase. These figures do not in-

clude deposits from our Lindbergh Card customers, as we hold these in separate bank accounts on behalf of our clients which are not mixed with our own trading funds," he added.

James Leach, group marketing director at ACS points out that the old saying about every cloud having a silver lining certainly proved to be the case as far as this year's US West Coast port strikes were concerned. With the ports blocked there was a tremendous drive by companies to use air charter to move goods that would normally have gone across by ship in either direction.

"We did extremely well out of that. It put me in mind of the Icelandic ash cloud which caused havoc to commercial airline services but created a huge demand for charter on the part of executives and wealthier passengers left stranded at a number of destinations. We moved aircraft and pilots to the edge of the cloud and people raced



**There are already clear signs that OBC is boosting our results. It is too early to put exact numbers to this. We will have a better idea once the service has been running for two years, but so far it has smashed all the targets we set**

James Leach



across Europe to take advantage of a charter trip home," he recalls.

However, in the current market, charter does not need one off events to boost demand. It is doing very nicely, thank you, and particularly in North America. In April, ACS launched a new look On Board Courier (OBC) service. This is a personalised, hand-carry service, with an experienced courier accompanying a time critical consignment door-to-door from collection to delivery. The ACS cargo department arranges for all of the logistical requirements, including flight bookings, utilising its global network and state of the art flight booking systems.

"There are already clear signs that OBC is boosting our results. It is too early to put exact numbers to this. We will have a better idea once the service has been running for two years, but so far it has smashed all the targets we set. We are averaging one OBC service order every 12 hours.

We have had an OBC service for a while, but now, with the new look service, OBC is a dedicated department, headquartered in Frankfurt and we are much more professional now about marketing this service to corporates," Leach says.

Cargo bookings too are growing well. "Over the last five years we have at least doubled our cargo charters and our private jet charters. This has not necessarily resulted in doubling our revenue, as we are doing a larger number of smaller transactions, but it is very welcome growth," he comments.

The growth into new markets has also helped to generate sales. "The geographical growth has given us a lot of scope to enter new markets that we could not really be effective in without a local presence. We have just opened a new office in Miami, for example. We have always had a bit of a foothold in the market in Florida but having a local presence will be a real boost," he notes. ■

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# Global Jet Capital gets down to business

Anthony Harrington talks to Shawn Vick, Executive Board Chairman of Global Jet Capital

In October 2014 Global Jet Capital launched at NBAA, with the express aim of helping prospective jet owners finance new and pre-owned large-cabin, long-range jets. Occupying a space formerly inhabited by big international banks, Global Jet Capital is a unique and massive new entrant to the business jet financing market. It is backed by three global investment firms, GSO Capital Partners (a Blackstone company), The Carlyle Group, and AE Industrial Partners. Together, these three have provided a funding capability in excess of \$2 billion. This has enabled Global Jet Capital to hit the ground running and Executive Board Chairman, Shawn Vick, reckons that the company is well on the way to building a very significant book of business.

Vick, who also holds the position of General Partner at AE Industrial Partners, says that Global Jet Capital is already involved in advanced funding discussions on a number of projects. The aircraft under discussion include Gulfstream G650s, Challenger 605s, an ACJ and a Falcon 7x.

The company's management team has an impressive pedigree in the business aviation space. Vick has had leadership roles in three airframe OEMs, most recently – along with fellow executive board member, Bill Boisture – at Hawker Beechcraft, where Boisture was the CEO. David Rowe, the third executive board member, is a former Gulfstream vice president and the founder and managing partner of AE Industrial Partners, which specialises in investing in aerospace and power generation companies.

Vick is very satisfied with the progress made since the launch. "We've seen very positive results across maybe three or four different dimensions. The brand awareness that we have been able to generate in the market since NBAA 2014



has been very pleasing. Aimee Talbert Nardini joined our team as Director of Marketing and has done a great job in getting our brand out there on a global scale. We are way ahead of what we expected as far as visits to our web site are concerned. Our teams have travelled to every continent, pursuing business, and we have a number of very significant deals in the process of being underwritten and in the pipeline," he confirms.

Turning to the thinking that inspired the

launch of Global Jet Capital, Vick explains that the original concept for the company's business model came out of four-way conversations between Global Jet Capital managing director Claude Franco, and the three executive board members, around the time of the 2008 financial crisis. "We started evaluating the possibility of launching an aircraft financing business that would specialise in operating and finance leases for large-cabin private aircraft. The idea, from the outset, was not just to provide leasing solutions but also lending products such as progress payment financing and senior and junior loans for private aircraft. We saw an opportunity to move into lines of business that the traditional global banks, under pressure from the regulators, were moving out of as they sought to shrink their loan books." By 2014, with demand for private aircraft showing modest recovery, the timing seemed right.

"If you take away the unusual peak in demand private aviation saw just before the financial crash of 2008, and you also remove the steep drop in demand caused by the crash, and then look at the way global sales of new aircraft have progressed over the last decade and a half, we are pretty much back on track. We are nowhere near the peak of 2007 but on a normalised curve; sales are back to normal or near normal and there is plenty of business out there to be done. We will continue to be prudent with our sponsors' capital but the quality of our interaction with the market has been excellent," Vick comments.

There are some adverse geopolitical factors at present, including turmoil in parts of the Middle East and the slowdown in the Chinese economy, along with the anti-corruption drive by the Chinese government. But North America, Europe and Latin America are generating

strong sales opportunities, Vick says. Africa, too, has potential. Vick points out that Global Jet Capital recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the African Business Aviation Association (AfBAA), in terms of which the company becomes a preferred provider of financing solutions for AfBAA members looking to finance the purchase of private jets. The financing that Vick and his team could make available to purchasers in Africa could well have a significant impact on private aviation across a number of African states.

"One of the defining features of our market is that the tremendous burden of oversight and compliance, along with the capital charges imposed by the regulatory regime on traditional banks, has made them take a step back from various forms of lending, including aircraft financing. That reality has created ideal conditions for us, and added to this is the fact that we have a small and highly agile team, able to pursue deals on every continent. Plus, unlike the banks, we have an investment committee that is solely focused on this particular line of business so we can make decisions very rapidly," he explains.

A typical deal would be where a buyer has purchased a pre-owned aircraft that is now just six months away from being delivered and is in pre-purchase. The buyer's need for acquisition finance has now crystallised and they want a rapid decision. "Provided we get the information we require on the asset and the creditworthiness

of the buyer, we can evaluate both sets of information and have a decision for the buyer in less than 10 days. Plus, we can fund the deal after signing within 10 to 15 days," Vick says. That kind of speed on big ticket asset financing puts Global Jet Capital in a unique position to win business.

"A key part of this process is to get a face-to-face meeting with the principal and his/her advisors as fast as possible. That is the surest way to understand their requirements," Vick adds. Sometimes the need is for progress payment financing. Or the client might be buying an interim pre-owned aircraft, having placed an order for a new jet that will not be ready for delivery for four to five years, and therefore requires financing for the 'stepping-stone' aircraft that is going to get them to that new jet.

The availability of finance from an active provider is also a huge boost to OEMs. "It means that they can sell a pre-owned aircraft today, for which we provide operating lease financing and secure the order for a new jet in their pipeline, knowing that we have agreed the future funding requirement with the owner, subject to them meeting our credit requirements when that payment becomes due," he notes. That line of reasoning is highly attractive to OEMs and Vick and his team have already had some very fruitful discussions with OEMs. "This whole process of dealing with the OEMs is greatly facilitated by the fact that a

number of my team have had years working for OEMs. I have been involved in managing the front end of the business for three OEMs, so as a team we really understand the process of introducing active buyers – along with the absolute requirement for confidentiality throughout the negotiations," he notes.

"The process starts with detailed support for our field team when an information request about financing is initiated, and no one outside that sales relationship needs to know about the prospective sale. If the project is of interest and looks as if it will meet our criteria, we move forward at a pace that seeks to match any urgency in the buyer's requirements," Vick comments.

Given that the buyers of mid- to large-size private jets are, by definition, very wealthy individuals or large corporations, it might be thought that many prospective purchasers would want to fund the purchase out of their own pocket or, in the case of corporations, off their own balance sheets. However, Vick points out that buyers are highly sophisticated when it comes to finance. They know that they can secure funding at highly competitive rates, well below the level that they could earn on those millions of dollars if they put that money to work in their businesses or through investments, instead of sinking it all into an aircraft. "The reality is that all these aircraft in the \$40 million to \$60 million range are bought on financing and we intend to make sure that we get our fair share of that business," he says. ■

**Provided we get the information we require on the asset and the creditworthiness of the buyer, we can evaluate both sets of information and have a decision for the buyer in less than 10 days**

Shawn Vick



# Building a brand

EVA talks to Castle & Cooke Client Relations Manager MaKayla Hambek about the increasing international traffic its FBOs are seeing and the company's ongoing expansion

Castle & Cooke Aviation is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the privately held company, Castle & Cooke, Inc, a development, real estate and operating company with a diverse portfolio of assets and services, ranging from world-class resorts to brick and building material manufacturing. The parent company's history goes back to 1864 when Samuel Northrop Castle and Amos Star Cooke launched a number of successful businesses in Hawaii, now trading as Dole Foods. David H Murdock is the owner, chairman and CEO of the parent company.

The aviation division of Castle & Cooke has three FBOs, at Van Nuys, Honolulu and Washington (the latter being adjacent to Boeing's facility). Located in the heart of the San Fernando Valley, Van Nuys is generally acknowledged to be one of the world's busiest general aviation airports, with non-commercial aircraft averaging over 238,000 take-offs and landings annually.

As MaKayla Hambek, Castle & Cooke Client

Relations Manager, explains, business has grown significantly over the last few years and recently the company extended its hangarage at Van Nuys substantially. "We now have 12 hangers on the field, with the newest hanger being 38,000 square feet. Plus we have also extended our ramp area so that it is now 205,000 square feet," she says.

"There is no doubt that space is limited here, but you have to figure out ways of expanding. We are busier here now than we have ever been," Hambek notes.

Around three years ago Castle & Cooke began putting a lot more marketing effort into building its brand in business aviation and is now a regular at the major business aviation trade shows like ABACE, EBACE, and NBAA's BACE. "We are now much more widely recognised as a significant FBO operator. It helps, too, that Van Nuys is now once again able to provide customs clearance for international business aviation travellers. In May this year the airport opened a 1,500 square foot US Customs and Border Protection

(CBP) facility, enabling Van Nuys to accept and clear international flights, and that has been a great boost for our international clients," Hambek explains.

The new CBP facility means that operators and owners flying from overseas destinations can once again fly directly to Van Nuys when they have business in the Los Angeles and San Fernando Valley area, instead of having to break their journey with a stop at Los Angeles International Airport, before making the short hop to the Castle & Cooke FBO at Van Nuys. Along with the CBP services at Castle & Cooke's other two FBOs, at Washington and Honolulu, this means that all three FBOs are able to welcome direct private and corporate flights from international destinations.

In 2006 the CBP facility at Van Nuys, along with on-call customs clearance services at all airports within the Los Angeles basin (with the exception of Los Angeles International Airport) closed. It has taken more than eight years of work by the Van Nuys airport management, in



**There is no doubt that space is limited here [at Van Nuys], but you have to figure out ways of expanding. We are busier here now than we have ever been**  
MaKayla Hambek

close collaboration with Castle & Cooke plus Signature Flight Support and other key tenants at the airport, to re-establish CBP services at the airfield. From the opening of the new CBP facility in May, to August, some 75 international flights were cleared and the number is growing all the time.

Hambek points out that Van Nuys is well able to cater to long-range, large-body business jets. "We can land a BBJ very comfortably. We had an ERJ 190 (an Embraer regional jet) come in recently. The main runway at Van Nuys (there are two parallel runways) is 8,001 feet, which gives plenty of scope for larger jets. The really nice thing about Van Nuys is that as a dedicated GA airport with no commercial airlines there are no slots. We get aircraft letting us know when they are 50 minutes out or less – sometimes the first we hear is when they are taxiing up to our ramp. However, we are always ready to welcome passengers, however short the notice, and to provide them with a first-class service, including arranging hotels

and limousine transportation to wherever they are headed," Hambek says.

The FBO team tracks all incoming flights, using the latest software to analyse flights and arrivals. "We have a team of some 25 people at Van Nuys and we carry out comprehensive training. Flight safety and the highest standards of customer service are an absolute priority for us," she points out.

Hambek says that all three Castle & Cooke FBOs have seen a significant increase in aircraft movements over the last two years. "Our sales here at Van Nuys increased by some 40% in 2014, by comparison with 2013, and we are looking set to experience a similar increase in 2015 by comparison with 2014," she comments. Two years ago Castle & Cooke became part of the Universal Aviation network of FBOs and Hambek says that this has been partially responsible for the marked increase in traffic – particularly international traffic.

The Castle & Cooke Aviation FBO in Honolulu is located on the South Ramp, just off La-

goon Drive, with direct access to the Taxiway. The FBO was recently renovated and includes an 18,000 sq ft hangar and over 7,000 sq ft of customer service lounge and amenities. In addition Castle & Cooke is able to provide some 60,000 sq ft of Class A office space at the facility, making it ideal for client meetings plus short- or long-term project work for clients with business interests in Hawaii. The FBO offers a full range of services, including fuelling and support services, aircraft cleaning and maintenance and a comprehensive concierge service.

The Washington FBO is right alongside Boeing's establishment. Formerly Fliteline Services/Everett Jet Centre, it has been providing fuelling and aircraft ground services to aviation clients at Paine Field for over 35 years. It was acquired by Castle & Cooke in 2007. Paine Field is home to over 500 aircraft and is the site of Boeing's largest manufacturing facility, which produces the B747, B767, B777 and the B787 Dreamliner. ■

# Emerald VIP Services

Emerald VIP Services provides high end chauffeur and concierge services including bespoke luxury tours throughout Ireland, South Africa & the U.K. We can also provide Airport VIP meet & greet services, Helicopter transfers, Jet charters and Luxury Yacht cruises.

Founded in 2011 and originally providing concierge services solely in Ireland, Emerald recently expanded internationally by opening offices in Scotland and South Africa managed by industry veterans well versed with working with HNWI and the corporate jet industry. By the end of 2015 Emerald will have also opened offices in France and Thailand. 2016 plans include further locations in Asia, Africa as well as Australia and New Zealand.

In 2015 Emerald launched 2 innovative products. AirportGateway (www.airportgateway.aero) is available at selected airports for all



types of travellers flying on commercial aircraft regardless of whether it's in Economy, Business or First Class. Our one stop service will have you collected from the home or place of work by one of our chauffeur driven vehicles, met kerbside at the airport and taken directly to the aircraft gate, fast-tracking airport formalities, all for a nominal all-encompassing fee.

Our second new offering is Crew Concierge which is aimed at corporate crews looking to maximise their down time when they visit any of our locations. Whether it is a tour of ancient Ireland, a balloon safari in South Africa or whisky tasting in Scotland we will arrange personalised half or full day tours at very reasonable pricing.

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For further information on Emerald VIP Services and EVS Aviation please contact Steve Gulvin, Director of Sales, Marketing & Strategic Planning at [steve.gulvin@emeraldvipservices.com](mailto:steve.gulvin@emeraldvipservices.com)

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# Brilliant by design

A conversation with Jim Dixon, Head of Aviation at Andrew Winch Design

**T**hirty five or so years ago a young designer with a passion for sailing took up a position with John Bannenberg, a pivotal figure who became known as the "Godfather of Superyachts".

Bannenberg practically invented the concept of the superyacht back in the '60s, in conjunction with several shipyards, and Andrew Winch – the young designer in question – could not have had a better introduction to the art of generating luxurious concepts.

Winch left Bannenberg's establishment after several years in order to set up Andrew Winch Designs, together with his wife, Jane. That was almost 30 years ago. Today, as well as having a full pipeline of design work on wide- and narrow-body private jets, the studio has the distinction of having been awarded the design contract for the first ever VIP completion of the Boeing Dreamliner, the B787-9.

As Jim Dixon, Head of Aviation at Andrew Winch Designs notes, the jet was delivered green to Jet Aviation in May of this year and the studio is now well into the task of making the jet live up to the Dreamliner rubric. The studio has good experience of wide-body completions in the past, having realized an A340-300 and a B767 for key clients. In addition to the stretched version of the

Boeing Dreamliner, the studio is currently working on an ACJ320, half way through the build phase, and a BBJ-I that will be ready for service in mid-2016.

**Q: How much of a stretch is it to move from designs for super yachts to designing the interiors for private jets?**

**A:** Of course, we are still dealing with a space that the principal wants to see epitomized into their ideal vision of a luxurious interior. Moreover, although we have three divisions in the company - aviation, yachts and architecture - very often we are dealing with the same principles for all three, so there is a good deal of cross-collaboration between the departments on style, approach and so on. The one thing you definitely know with an aircraft when the project crosses your table, is its dimensions. It can only be a set length and a set width. With a luxury yacht, the owner's ambitions may grow in scale while the yacht is still on the drawing board and you find you have another 10 metres in length to deal with!

**Q: It obviously makes sense that if an Owner is taken with your design for his or her private jet, and plans to buy a yacht, that they call on you to quote for that project as well, since it is a specialism of Andrew Winch**

**Designs. How usual is it for this to happen?**

**A:** Our philosophy is to have a large number of projects for a select and relatively small number of clients. Our separate divisions have experienced sustainable growth in recent years precisely because of the synergies involved. When someone has asked you to design their ideal living space in the sky, it is natural enough for them to ask you to take on the challenge of designing their ideal residence as well – and the same goes for their yacht.

**Q: What of the technicalities that go with aircraft design?**

**A:** Certainly, the technical details of designing for private and corporate jets are significantly more constraining than they are for a yacht or a residence. Safety is absolutely paramount so you have to be very safety conscious and pay very close attention to FAA and EASA rulings. We do this in very close co-operation with the completion centre's knowledge base and project team. Another constraint, of course, is weight. We have to be very conscious of the trade-off between weight and range in aircraft. Again, this is where a close dialogue with the completions team is very important. We may be thinking of a particular material as part of the design, and they may well have come across a new, advanced material





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that is more lightweight but that can do the job and look as good. So this on-going dialogue is a very important part of the vision.

**Q:** How often do you walk into the completion centre to look at progress on a project and end up saying "Oh no, not like that!"

**A:** It happens, but again, if we are working very closely together, then any unacceptable deviations from our concept can be caught at a very early stage. We are always working with the Owner's representative, who liaises between the design studio, the completions team and the Principal, and if there is good communication then everything stays pretty well on track.

**Q:** Now we come on to the impossible question, "What makes for a good design?"

**A:** We always spend the initial meetings with the client trying to get as holistic a view as we can, both of their lifestyle and interests, and of the role the aircraft is going to play in

their personal and business life. Every Owner is looking for something unique and individual to them, and the art is to achieve this in each particular case. The outcome always changes depending on the individuals, but the process that leads to the generation of the design has very common themes.

What we try to establish early on is the broad brushstrokes, such as whether the owner will be sleeping on the aircraft a good deal, whether they like watching television or movies in bed, or in a home cinema type surround, whether there are staff as well as VIP guests travelling, and so on.

**Q:** Do they generally engage you for the life of the project, or just for the initial design stage?

**A:** A client commissions us for the full design and gestation, from first sketch to the detailed visuals, and then to monitor the translation of the design into the real world of the aircraft interior as it is taking shape. This adds to the

technical 'project management' of the completion by scrutinizing the design at every stage. We are 'creators', rather than 'builders', and take the time to ensure our ideas and details are interpreted accurately on the Client's behalf.

**Q:** You must get some fairly unusual requests?

**A:** Every client is different and each has their own ideas. We are working with a client just now who does not want the aircraft cabin to look like an aircraft cabin. He wants it to look and feel like a luxurious living room on the ground, so we are paneling over the windows and using viewing screens to create the effect of a room.

Another client wanted to be able to sit in the main cabin and yet feel like he was flying the aircraft. So we arranged a 47 inch screen on the bulkhead that entirely mirrored everything the pilots were seeing out the cockpit windows. Every client, in a way, wants their aircraft to be the equivalent of a residential apartment in the sky. ■



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A conversation with Robert Molsbergen, President EJM  
and COO NetJets Global Aircraft Management

# When the big get bigger...

While growth in the rest of the world stutters along, the US economy has recovered to the point where the US Federal Reserve is now contemplating introducing rate increases again. There are still problems, but real incomes are rising, albeit slowly, and GDP growth is looking reasonable. Not surprisingly, therefore, Executive Jet Management (EJM), the world's biggest aircraft management company, is expanding its US sales team.

EJM President Robert Molsbergen talked to EVA about the company's expansion plans in the US and in Europe. "Over the last several months we have added quite a number of sales people in the field, both for our managed aircraft activities and on charter operations. What we are looking for from this is a very active and expanded deal flow and there are already signs that this is coming to fruition. Our pipeline is very strong and we are taking on aircraft at a healthy rate," he comments.

EJM's focus has long been on the larger cabin aircraft, but Molsbergen reckons that the company is also seeing rising demand in the US for small and medium aircraft. "It looks as if business aviation is getting back to a healthy mix of large and smaller cabined aircraft, instead of sales being dominated solely by long-range jets. It is pleasing to see what looks like a continuing

trend of increased sales in the mid- and small-cabin categories as well as continued strength in the large cabin sector," he comments.

Models such as Citation XLS and XLS Plus and Lear 75s are coming back into the mix, while EJM has also signed management deals recently for G500s and G550s plus two Gulfstream 650s. The total fleet under management, excluding the NetJets fleet, now totals 224, making EJM the biggest operator in the US.

The company's scale and the feedback among the owner communities that this generates helps to keep the prospect list healthy, but Molsbergen points out that EJM still has to work hard to convince prospects that they will get the kind of personal attention they are looking for. "People worry about our size and whether they will have the relationship they are looking for. Our job is to ensure that we treat each account as a personal relationship," he says.

This is achieved by appointing dedicated representatives to each customer. "The client gets a dedicated team on all aspects, from billing to maintenance, to owner services, pilot support and training support. Personalisation is essential because every account is different and there is always a bespoke element that needs to be managed in detail," he comments.



The logistics of running an aircraft management business on this scale are huge. "Our world would not exist without the help and support of our vendor network. This has traditionally been very strong. We have great relationships out there with a wide spectrum of vendors and because of our scale we have tremendous buying power. This enables us to leverage excellent prices for our owners. On top of this we have a pretty unique management model. The aircraft owner only pays the management fee, all the savings we negotiate are passed straight back to the owner. That is part of the value add that we bring," he notes.

"People will typically say that we are more expensive than other management companies. But if you look at what owners pay in a year in terms of all the additional costs with some other management companies, and contrast that total figure with the savings that we find in fuel purchases, maintenance and so on, our prices look pretty competitive," Molsbergen adds.

Building on its strength in the US, EJM has

turned its attention over the last few years to Europe and China. The China project has gone quiet given the chilling effect of the country's anti-corruption crackdown, which has made people reluctant to be seen to be purchasing private jets. However, the European project is very much on track and EJM has added to its European sales team in recent months. "It is early days for our new sales people. It takes some six to eight months for new sales people to start to be effective in our market, so we look for that to bear fruit shortly," he comments.

Currently, EJM has 10 aircraft under management in Europe. This has been achieved from a base of zero in 2014, and Molsbergen's goal for EJM in Europe is to push that number up to 12 by December, which, he notes, looks on the cards.

EJM benefits substantially from being part of NetJets and the European operational team work very closely with their NetJets colleagues. This helps enormously when it comes to dealing with the various country-specific differences and

variations. It also means that EJM has a valuable prospective client pool, comprising people who start with fractional ownership and ultimately want to upgrade to own their own jet.

Since the new buyer already knows NetJets there is an established relationship and level of trust that tends to point them in EJM's direction when they start looking for an aircraft management company to take care of their new jet.

"A lot of the new business opportunities we get are not generated by marketing events. They are very much the product of word of mouth. Our partner relationships are key here, and these partners comprise aviation attorneys, banks and aircraft financing companies and of course referrals from our pilots, who are at the sharp end of dealing with owners and operators," he comments.

Molsbergen points out that EJM's partners, crew and maintenance technicians are all in effect sales people for the company. "We have about 600 crew spread all across the US, and they are excellent ambassadors for EJM," he notes. ■



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# A stroke of entrepreneurial genius



**J**ETNET was launched in 1988 by Vincent Esposito, who came into business aviation as a pure entrepreneur with a sharp eye for a potential niche business. "Vincent had associates that owned business aircraft and who bought aircraft in the pre-owned market. The complexity of the pre-owned space suggested to him that there was an unfulfilled need for an information service aimed at all those involved in that market, from brokers and dealers to financial institutions and legal firms," explains JETNET Vice President of Sales Paul Cardarelli.

The company launched in July of that year, at a time when the vast majority of people had yet to buy their first desktop computer. "Vincent acquired an FAA database of registered aircraft. He created an in-house inter-

face to that database and started developing data on each of the aircraft," Cardarelli notes. The service, focusing just on business jets and turboprops, was then rolled out to a handful of subscribers.

"At the time, prior to the Internet, which really only began to achieve critical mass in the mid-1990s, the only way to move data around electronically was via satellite. So the service for the first couple of years was all over satellite feeds, with database updates scheduled thrice daily," he explains.

The subscriber cost at the time was not far off today's, at around an annual rate of \$12,000 and varying according to a menu of options. Today, the service is still largely focused on dealers and brokers and covers around 21,000 in-service business jets and some 15,000 turboprop aircraft. JETNET has also added a helicopter data-

plus a commercial aircraft database. This year, for the first time, the company expanded its information service into the super yachts market, adding a comprehensive database of in-service super yachts.

Vincent Esposito passed away a few years after the launch of his company. Today the business is run by his two sons, Vincent Jr and Tony Esposito. Cardarelli points out that JETNET's covenant with its subscribers makes it quite clear that JETNET is not in the business of selling jets itself, but is a pure information gathering and market analysis service. "We are strictly a medium of information for people," he notes.

So how comprehensive is the information set provided by JETNET? "We're extremely thorough," Cardarelli says. "We have every airframe on the database. When we say we are going to research the Lear 45, for example, we report everything, even the destroyed airframes. Every jet and turboprop model that you would regard as being a



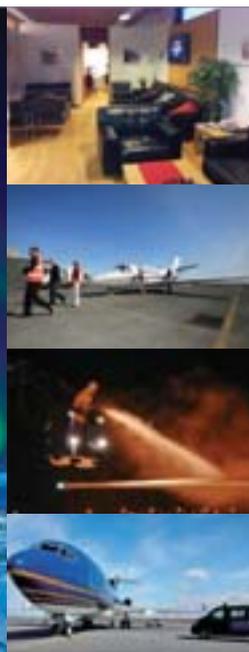
Rolland (Rollie) Vincent is President of Rolland Vincent Associates

business jet is on the database, including the old G2s, the Lear 23, the Jetstar 731 and King Air 90s, along with the old Mitsubishis and Turbo Commanders," he explains.

JETNET now has nearly 50 full-time researchers out of a staff of 75. The researchers are in regular telephone and email contact with aircraft owners and operators around the globe.

Between them they have the full complement of language skills. "We are very focused on Brazil because of the vast fleet of business aircraft there, so we have Portuguese speakers. We have Arabic speakers covering the Middle East, all the European languages and so on. And we have recently hired our first Mandarin-speaking researcher to cover the growing number of Asian operators."

Every business day JETNET researchers speak with hundreds of aircraft owners, operators, dealers and brokers, financiers and OEMs and others. What emerges from all this contact is not just a fully up-to-date database of aircraft, but an excellent global view of the state of the business aviation market. "The conversations our researchers are having with operators are extremely comprehensive. As an owner you'll be used to hearing pretty regularly from a JETNET researcher. They'll be asking things like: Is Bob Smith still your chief pilot? Is the aircraft still based in London Luton? And so on."



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In 2011 JETNET launched the JETNET iQ business aviation forecast initiative to annually survey 2,000 operators across the globe in demographic proportion to the fleet. This is done on a rolling basis with 500 operators surveyed each quarter. "We ask very insightful questions about how they see the market, what they see as the challenges and obstacles to growth in the market, what they are thinking about in the way of their next aircraft purchase, and do they anticipate to fly more or less in the near future," said Cardarelli. JETNET iQ also has a broader set of questions asking operators what they think of various leading brands for aircraft, engines and avionics. From all this a detailed quarterly report is produced along with a forecast for business aircraft production over the next 10 years. JETNET iQ is produced in association with the aviation consulting firm Rolland Vincent and Associates. "Rollie has an extensive background in market strategy, working for a number of the OEMs, and has been closely following the slow recovery that has taken place since the 2008 crash," Cardarelli notes. Right now, he says, there are clear signs of a recovery in business aviation, albeit not the V-shaped recovery that people had been hoping for.

"The pre-owned market continues to be a bit soft in spots, but it has recovered. We've seen a slight slowdown in large cabin orders, but there is steady progress being made, even if the good news is all centred on one economy, the US,"

he adds. Rolland Vincent adds that he believes that US corporates are already showing signs of coming back into the market to upgrade their fleets. Many moderate to heavy corporate users of business jets have not added to or upgraded their fleet since the crash, and some of their aircraft will already be looking a bit aged, and will be over the psychologically important 10-year line.

"Germany, the UK and Mexico are also showing stronger new and pre-owned orders. If you take those three plus the US you are dealing with three quarters of the global fleet right there," Vincent adds. Of course, no one expects to see the 1,200 aircraft sales a year that we saw in 2007 returning any time soon. But sales in the high 600s for 2014, and the same kind of levels expected for the full year 2015, are respectable. "If you eliminate 2007 then you have to go back a long time in the records to find 700 aircraft a year being sold," he says.

Cardarelli points out that if you view current sales in dollar terms instead of in numbers of aircraft sold, the figures look a great deal better and more impressive. "We are going to see some \$21 billion in US dollars in delivery values this year. Plus the average price today per aircraft is around \$30 million. Go back 10 to 15 years and a Hawker would have been a mid-market jet at half that value. So we have seen a tremendous upward shift in the average value of aircraft and we expect that to continue," he concludes ■



### PAUL CARDARELLI, VICE PRESIDENT OF SALES

**Paul Cardarelli is part of the very foundation that built and supports JETNET.** He has been with the company from its inception in 1988 when he began his career there working in the research department. There he gained his knowledge of the business aircraft sales trade and the market in which it occurs. In 1994 he was promoted to Sales Director, and today manages a staff of 13 with responsibility for all JETNET subscription sales worldwide. In 2011 he participated in the launch of the JETNET iQ business aviation forecast service tailored to the strategic planning needs of OEMs and tier I and II suppliers.

Cardarelli is JETNET's delegate to the NBAA Leadership Council, a member of the Business Aviation Subcommittee of the Transportation Research Board of the National Academies, and a member of the board for the the National Aircraft Resale Association (NARA). He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration with a concentration in Human Resource Management from the State University of New York at Oswego. He earned his private pilot certificate in 1981.

Cardarelli and his wife Cynthia reside in Iliion, NY, where he is a Unit Commissioner for the Boy Scouts of America and a member of the Iliion Winter Club. They have two children, Danielle and Nicholas.

**The researchers are in regular telephone and email contact with aircraft owners and operators around the globe. Between them they have the full complement of language skills**

Paul Cardarelli



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# Selling jets and building relationships a winning combination



EVA talks to Jet Sense Aviation, LLC founder and CEO Brett Forrester



**Q:** How did you get started in business aviation?

**A:** My father has been in the aviation business his entire life. He was a Beechcraft distributor in South Africa. I've been flying ever since I can remember and have been in the business for my entire working life.

**Q:** What led you to launch Jet Sense?

**A:** I started Jet Sense two and a half years ago. I put in 20 years working for General Aviation Services, a company founded by Dan Dickinson. I enjoyed it, but the time had come to move on and do my own thing. I funded the business with my own capital and the company continues to be privately owned.

**Q:** Jet Sense specialises in the buying and selling of aircraft. What do you need to succeed as an aircraft broker?

**A:** Clearly you need to build up a solid client base. We buy, sell and lease aircraft on behalf of a wide range of customers, from private individuals to Fortune 500 companies. This year we will move about 25 aircraft, which gives us a very good revenue base to continue to grow.

We are in the business of looking after our customers and we go to great lengths to be as knowledgeable about the pre-owned market as possible. Customers vary widely in the extent to which they have already defined what it is they are looking for when they set out to upgrade their existing aircraft. A typical scenario is the customer expresses an interest in buying a certain model of aircraft, then asks us how that fits with what is happening in the market. From there, we are able to guide our customer through the process of buying their aircraft.

**Q:** Do you have a market niche, such as mid-size, or light jets that you particularly focus on?

**A:** We have sold everything from a small Beech King Air up to a Gulfstream 550. Typically though, the aircraft we buy tend to be mid-cabin jets for resale.

The other thing is that due to our extensive knowledge regarding the pre-owned market, our reputation for being able to find the appropriate model to meet the client's needs quickly, is growing. If a client comes in and defines their goal as: "I want an aircraft to fly away in within the next 10 days," Jet Sense is capable of meeting that goal.

Innovation is another trait of Jet Sense. If someone wants to sell an aircraft right away, but also wants to participate in the transaction as a business partner, we can accommodate them. We can do a profit share that allows some income now for the aircraft and has the potential to become a future business partner in a separate transaction.

Jet Sense has experience with handling unique opportunities. Remember the Legacy jet whose wing tip hit the Boeing in the Amazon? Gantt Aviation and I partnered to obtain the Legacy from the Amazon and today it's a normal flying aircraft. If you want to know more, we can talk on that separately because it was quite the adventure!

**Q:** It seems that your willingness to take on a measured amount of risk by buying an aircraft for later resale is being well received by the market?

**A:** We calculate the risk very carefully. However, this is a pure, entrepreneurial business and it is based fundamentally on accurate information, knowing the market and knowing the aircraft that you are taking a position in. A broker without that skill set will lose opportunities while trying to accumulate that knowledge after the request

comes in. Some aircraft sales and purchases take a long time to complete, but the right answers, given promptly, are the key to good business. This is what Jet Sense specializes in.

**Q:** How important to Jet Sense is the forging of partnerships with other organizations?

**A:** Partnerships are vital and a key component for us. They are a great way of leveraging additional capabilities and amplifying our reach, resources, and skills base. We have excellent partnerships in the USA, in South Africa, and in Europe. Our partners contact us, they tell us a client is looking for a particular type of aircraft, they ask if we can help, and we always try to succeed for them.

**Q:** In employee terms you are still a modest sized business. What are your ambitions?

**A:** We have four employees right now and we rely significantly on our partnering deals, which we do a lot of, to generate momentum for us. Working together with the network of partners we have built makes us feel larger. We attend EBACE and NBAA to make sure that we fly the flag for Jet Sense.

**Q:** What is your sense of the market right now?

**A:** What we see is that some prices are still falling, while in other categories, some stability is returning. There are buyers out there, and there have been every year since the crash of 2008. You just have to have a pretty competitive aircraft to sell and you need to know what it is that your buyers want. If a guy wants a low time aircraft you are never going to sell him a higher time aircraft, and vice versa.

Another clear trend in the market is that banks do not like funding aircraft that are over 15 years old. They really push clients towards newer aircraft if they are going to want to finance their purchase - and everybody these days wants to finance a purchase rather than paying cash. Jet Sense has the ability to help with the financing.

**Q:** Are you seeing pre-owned aircraft selling faster these days?

**A:** If your aircraft is competitively priced, I would say that four to six months would be the typical market time for a sell. When you purchase an aircraft, as we do, for onward sale, you have to know where the current market is with a fair



degree of precision. In this we take more risks than the average broker, but we support this risk position with an extensive amount of market research.

Then there is the subjective element. People have to feel that they are getting value for their money. However, everyone measures this differently. If an aircraft has very low time on it and has hardly been flown, do they see value in paying \$1 million more for a little less flight time on the aircraft? Some people will value that greatly, while others will not.

The aircraft that move the fastest, are the ready-to-go airplanes, with new interiors, upgraded avionics and state of the art in-flight entertainment systems. If you put these things into your aircraft, you may not get dollar for dollar return on that investment, but it will certainly accelerate

the sell time. If you put \$1 million into upgrades, you may only see an \$800,000 return on that investment, but you gain the benefit to the speed of the sale. Most buyers just want to buy the aircraft and start using it and are unwilling to wait four or more months for a refit.

**Q:** Are you planning on growing your head count soon?

**A:** We definitely need more personnel as our workload continues to grow, but partnering deals allow us to the ability to power through excessive work periods. We are always open to more partnerships. We already essentially have an office in South Africa, given our partnering deals there, and we would like an office in Europe soon, and one in South America. But all this will come... ■

BBJ's world class paint job sets new standards for skill and elegance

# Shades of grey



**W**e've seen whacky paint jobs on BBJs and austere ones, but Jet Aviation Basel's design and successful implementation of waves in 19 shades of grey, running nose-to-tail down a 737-700 completions project, is far and away one of the most challenging, subtle and sophisticated designs yet to grace a BBJ.

Some waves start off grey at the nose, strengthening to black in the middle of the fuselage and fading back to grey at the tail. Identical waves run on both sides of the fuselage, and from a paint application standpoint the challenges were enormous. The color transitions had to be seamless and smooth to the eye with the same "fade" taking place simultaneously on both sides of the fuselage. Translating this into the real world of potentially messy paint and spray equipment and implementing it on the curved surface of a BBJ was a daunting challenge.

The inspiration for the design was initially conceived of by the BBJ's owner and spouse. They saw it as complementing the aircraft's interior design, which had been created by the Jet Aviation Basel Completions Center, working closely with the principal.

Jeremie Caillet, Director Project Management at the Jet Aviation Basel Completions Center, explains that the inspiration for the external paint design scheme was heavily influenced by the mini-



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malist yet luxurious style chosen for the interior. "The principals had a good idea of what they wanted, drawing on the stark colors of black and white, mixed with taupe which characterize the BBJ's internal design. The challenge was to come up with an external design that was elegant, simple and completely original, and in keeping with the quality one expects from a VVIP design," he comments.

"Our internal design team prepared numerous 2D designs and 3D renderings, working towards final approval by the principals, who were closely involved at every stage," he says.

Marius Peens, paint shop manager, Jet Aviation Basel, told EVA that the initial idea was to use six shades to achieve the transition from black to light grey and back again. "When we began working out the details, however, it became clear that the project would work best with sixteen different custom mixed shades on top of the black, white and actual grey that were our starting points," he explains.

This meant that much of the success of the project would hinge on a successful collaboration with the paint manufacturer and their local distributor. "We recommended and ended up us-



ing Sherwin-Williams Jet Glo Express polyester urethane topcoat, which gave us a sleek, durable finish, along with a clearcoat to protect the finish and ensure that it stayed shiny for years to come," Peens adds.

Serge Volpatti, Field Technical Advisor at PSG, Sherwin-Williams' distributor in Europe and the Middle East, was on hand for much of the project, providing technical advice. "I was contacted by Jet Aviation Basel as to our views on the best way to achieve the fade from one shade to the next. Marius and his team put together a mock up board representing the full length of the BBJ. By running repeated training exercises on the mock up, it became clear how best to achieve the fades without too much playing around with the paint gun," he notes.

Peens explains, "We ran through a complete paint practice run four times on the full scale mock up. We had to change colors 38 times as we moved down the fuselage and we used laser pen markings on the fuselage to indicate to the painters precisely when they needed to move to a different pot of paint. While painting the aircraft, the painters on both sides of the fuselage had to stay in constant contact and paint at the



same pace, changing at the same points."

The four practice runs paid off handsomely. When it came time to actually paint the waves onto the aircraft, everything went smoothly through the course of a single afternoon's paint session. "It was easily our most difficult project," Peens adds.

Normally a VIP paint job on a BBJ takes around three weeks. Given the difficulty of this particular project, five weeks were needed to complete the paint project.

The team spent four weeks doing trial paint runs on mock ups. Then the whole design was spray painted by two teams - one on either side of the aircraft - in a single, mammoth, three hour session.

"There is no doubt that this was the most exciting, and the most complex paint project we have ever undertaken," says Caillet. "This aircraft was our 25th BBJ completion so we've

been at this a long time but we'd never before undertaken such a challenging livery design. "No matter how complicated a paint job might be, our team is able to deliver beautiful results."

The Center has already gained several new projects as a result of other owners being highly impressed by the design. "Other principals have seen the aircraft and inquired where it was designed and painted - and that has been tremendous for us," he notes.

Julie Voisin, Global Product Manager, Sherwin-Williams Aerospace Coatings, adds: "This is a great example of Sherwin-Williams being able to supply a high quality topcoat and clearcoat while working with our European partner, PSG, to meet the needs of a terrific customer in Jet Aviation Basel. We are delighted with the quality of the finished project, with so many mixed and applied custom colours, and all in a great looking coating that will last for years." ■

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How would you like to emerge from a 12-hour overnight business jet flight to the other side of the world with everyone on board totally refreshed? One key, according to Christopher Mbanefo of Yasava, is a remarkable space-science-inspired seat that reclines to your ideal sleeping position. By Rick Adams

# The flight couture of long-range comfort

From the moment he started to talk, I liked Christopher Mbanefo. The CEO and founder of Swiss business aircraft interiors specialist Yasava, impressed me as both passionate and authentic, a combination of qualities which seems all too rare. We met in Montreux, site of the famous jazz festival, where the YASAVA Creative Center is located overlooking Lac Lemman with the Alps in the background, and what I expected to be a brief, somewhat mundane discussion about aircraft seats turned into a compelling three-hour conversation about a new way of looking at the corporate jet experience.

Mbanefo has the habit, perhaps unnerving to some, of asking, "Why are things the way they are?" As a student pilot, when he inquired about the positioning rationale for the avionics and controls, his instructor told him to ask the mechanic. Who told him to ask the aircraft designer. So he became an aerospace engineer and ended up leading the certification flight test programme for the Pilatus PC-9 single-engine turboprop, which won the U.S. Air Force Joint Primary Aircrew Training System in the mid-90s with partner Beechcraft. Later he sold Bombardier aircraft in Nigeria, taking the Canadian OEM's market share from zero to 70%.

During a decade of demo flights, Mbanefo said he heard a lot of feedback from aircraft users. Some of that feedback was that the typical interior layout of all large-cabin aircraft is virtually the same, regardless of manufacturer. Even the conference table positioning is identical – always on the left. "It's totally a cookie-cutter approach," Mbanefo stated. "The configuration hasn't changed from the G2 of the 1960s to the ultra-long-range aircraft of today."

What has changed, he explained, is the duration of flights. Twenty years ago, the maximum

range was about eight hours. Today it's up to 13 or 14 hours non-stop for some business aircraft. "The human body is not designed for that. The aircraft are exceeding the capability of the human body."

What's the value of getting from Tokyo to New York more quickly if the non-stop flight leaves everyone physically and mentally miserable? "A night flight is a horrible experience. It's basically glorified camping."

So for passengers in high-end, long-range business jets such as the Bombardier Globals, Dassault Falcon 7X, and Gulfstream G650, Mbanefo focused on creating a cabin interior concept that could be customised to the lifestyle the user is accustomed to on the ground.

## Making Waves at EBACE

Last May, at the European Business Aviation Convention & Exposition (EBACE) show in Geneva, Yasava unveiled the Aïana Wave seat as a key element of their Astral interior design. The Aïana Wave, Mbanefo told me, is derived from considerable aero-medical research by NASA, recently declassified, regarding the body positions of astronauts aboard the weightless Skylab. When a person is in their "neutral body position" (NBP), the vertical distance between the brain and the heart is minimized, your muscles can become totally relaxed, and the heart subsequently doesn't have to work as hard.

So-called 'lie-flat' seats don't provide the desired NBP. Mbanefo described them as "a sheet of metal with foam, covered with expensive leather. You tell yourself they're comfortable because you're paying a lot of money for them."

"Body comfort is determined by the proximity of the center of body mass to the spinal cord. A good body support system must allow for changes

in body positions," Mbanefo said. "Multiple body positions also allow for better circulation, improved breathing, and a reduction of the dangers of deep vein thrombosis." In the Aïana Wave, a person can lie on their side as well as their back and still maintain the straight spine position associated with optimal comfort.

The avant-garde design of the Aïana Wave seat is less about aesthetics and more about "functional luxury." Developed in collaboration with a Yasava partner in Italy, the seat relies on gravity, carbon fiber and titanium materials, and a system of patent-pending "smart mechanics" in the tradition of Swiss clocks to adjust to an individual's NBP. The unusual name, aïana, is from two quite similar-sounding and similar-meaning phrases in two languages which evolved an ocean apart – in the Kiswahili of the African Great Lakes region, interpreted as "beautiful flower," and as "forever blooming" to the native American Iroquois in the Adirondack Mountain area of upstate New York.

The upshot of the Aïana Wave "human support structure" is that everyone on a long-endurance business aircraft can enjoy an optimally reclined "Z-bed" position for sleep.

## Interior Design by Hierarchy

Yasava's quest for a superior seat was necessitated by their modular Astral approach to cabin interiors, which is predicated on a zen-sounding but very pragmatic concept called "social cultural intelligence." It's simply a matter of lifestyle requirements translated into the dynamics of a small number of people confined together in a small metal tube for several hours.

If the usual group of aircraft passengers are all more or less equal in the social hierarchy – for example, the board of directors of a company – the

seating/conference/sleeping layout can reflect that equanimity.

However, if there is a "vertical hierarchy" with a clear top dog, the aircraft calls for a layout which caters to the distinct pecking order. An executive who is not used to interacting with personnel all day (private office elevator, chauffeured limousine, flanked by security) might be quite uncomfortable spending long hours in the same cabin as his staff. His wife or mistress may be intimidated sitting opposite a bodyguard, who is afraid to take off his sunglasses and make eye contact. "The executive ends up retreating to the smallest, noisiest part of the aircraft, leaving the main cabin to staff," described Mbanefo.

An Astral design for such an executive might feature a private "VIP lounge" with double Aiana Wave seats that convert into a double bed and a lavatory with shower. The Aiana Wave seats in the main "VIP cabin" would all also convert to NBP single beds. And for staff there'd be a row or two of reclinable Quadra seats in the



forward section of the aircraft.

Mbanefo said to start the process of developing a custom business aircraft interior, he asks two questions: "How many guests?" and "How many staff?" The answers to those two questions drive the basic configuration.

"Luxury is an item, a service, or an activity that

is uniquely tailored to my requirements and my lifestyle, whatever that is. The ideal is to design the interior for the user's lifestyle, then wrap the aircraft shell around it."

Yasava's customer design centre is in Lausanne, Switzerland, and they're exploring possible additional locations in China and North America. Mbanefo can also bring the design visualization tools to the customer's site. To execute an Astral design, they leverage "selected completion centres" in North America and Europe. "We're trying to make the process as simple as possible," Mbanefo said.

The company name, Yasava, comes from an African myth story which is similar to the Phoenix, the bird re-born from the ashes, according to parallel legends in Egyptian, Persian, Oriental, Greek, and other cultures. In this context, it would seem, the ashes are conventional seating technology and the colorful bird is the "flight culture" of aircraft interiors and seating designed to regenerate the spirit of the high-end bizjet passenger. ■

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# The continued growth



**F**or its seventh year running, the Trip support group AFRICAN OPEN SKY (AOS) has seen strong growth and increased demand, with traffic growing by 45% versus an overall average of around 30 percent for this sector throughout Africa. This strong growth has inspired the Cote d'Ivoire-based private company to consolidate its network across Africa by opening offices in Djibouti, Tanzania and Burundi in February and March 2015.

In addition to the above-mentioned locations, AOS, which was formed in 2009, today

owns a total of 18 offices in Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Gabon, Guinea Bissau, Guinea Conakry, Kenya, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Sao Tome, Togo, and United Arab Emirates (the latter was opened especially to assist its expanding Middle Eastern client base). In all the company has more than 30 local representations across the continent. As AOS founder and CEO Max O Cisse notes, AOS is incontestably the Trip Support company with the most directly-owned offices.

As Max O Cisse, (named by THE EUROPEAN - CHASE PUBLISHING as the Aviation



**One of fundamental differences with other companies is that our offices are fully established as locally registered businesses and are approved by national civil aviation and airport authorities to coordinate flight operationsg**

Max O Cisse, owner and CEO of AFRICAN OPEN SKY



Business Personality of the Year 2014 - Africa) explains, "One of fundamental differences with other companies is that our offices are fully established as locally registered businesses and are approved by national civil aviation and airport authorities to coordinate flight operations. This certification is vitally important because local authorities consider support companies, effectively, to be the same as aircraft operators in terms of legal accountability for flights."

He adds: "Since the legal consequences of breaching these regulations can be quite severe, it is vital for operators to have the expert assistance and support of a legally established local trip support company. Thanks to AOS, nothing is easier nowadays in Africa than getting short-notice permits or calling

on an AOS supervisor who will be ready to arrange and pay all requested charges on behalf of a crew, even in countries known to be complicated,"

AOS's main activity is rendering flight services to governmental, commercial, corporate, and private operators. The company provides its own handling supervisors network in each African country and assists customers with short notice permits plus technical, passenger or cargo ground-handling services. Other services include arranging transportation, hotel accommodation, catering, refueling, maintenance, aircraft security, flight planning, computerizing ATC, weather-NOTAMs, and all others services in connection with handling activities - at unbeatable prices and without a third-party commission. ■

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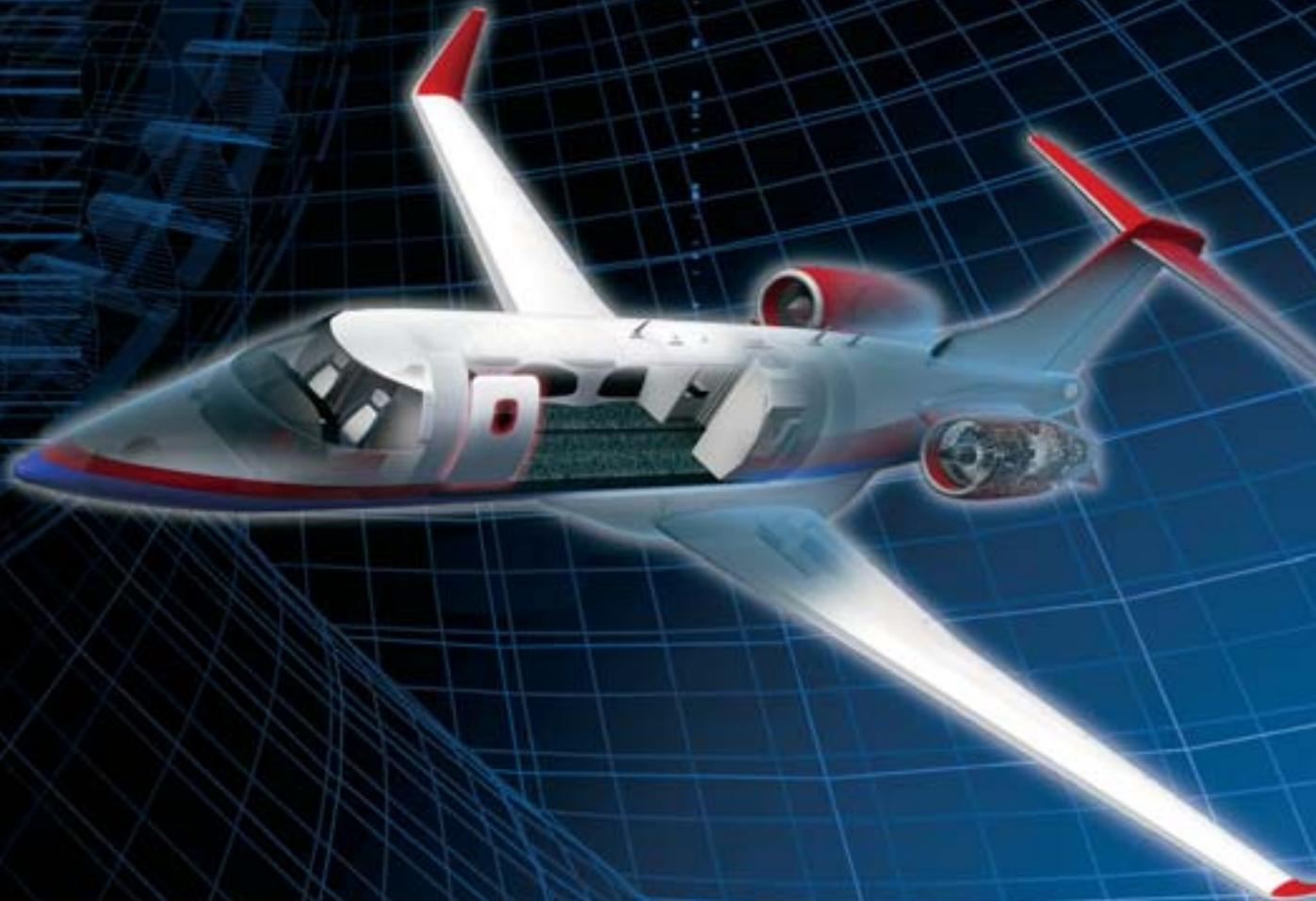
## EBACE after party



**E**VAA's EBACE After Party, held on Tuesday 19th May at Halle 22 was a tremendous success, with some 1600 people from across the business aviation industry enjoying an open bar till 5.00 a.m and dancing the night away. There is a comprehensive photo gallery on EVA's web site but here are a selection of photos to provide a taste and a reminder of a great night.



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*(For more information, please read our article on page 74)*



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