

# Jetstream plugs the gap for Eastern Skyjets

Dubai-based Eastern Skyjets has leased a Jetstream 41 for its corporate shuttle activities.

The company – exhibiting at MEBA on booth C321 – operates a mixed fleet of corporate and passenger jets with future plans to expand into a range of different market sectors including VLJs (Very Light Jets).

Group Business Director Tariq Khan says that the Jetstream 41 will fill a gap in the market where there is a current need for more modern and cost-effective forms of air transportation within the region.

He says the current choice of aircraft available to the short sector traveller is somewhat restricted.



“By the introduction of a younger fleet of low cost aircraft, this will open the doors to new routes and sectors previously untapped,” he says

In addition to its private jet charter services, Eastern Skyjets has paved the way

for civilian operations into hostile environments. The company has developed a reputation of being a highly skilled operator familiar with the difficulties of flying into areas such as Afghanistan and Iraq.

The Jetstream 41, which

was delivered to Eastern Skyjets in Dubai on December 27, will primarily be used for shuttle services targeting international agencies, multi-national corporates and the leisure market.

The company will also

use the aircraft to cater for the growing needs of the ad-hoc air charter market.

The aircraft was prepared to Eastern Skyjets specification at the Eastern Airways Jetstream 41 refurbishment and customisation centre at Prestwick, Scotland.

# Shh...Royal Jet gives a new lease of life to whispering jet

The ubiquitous BAe146 “whispering jet” is a familiar sight and subdued sound at metropolitan airfields around the world.

The aircraft has a renowned ability for short-field performance and a reputation for reliability that belies its years.

And the workhorse regional jet is finding a new lease of life in the corporate and private jet markets. No more so than here in the Middle East.

One Avro RJ85 operated by Royal Jet of Abu Dhabi (chalets 37/38) was due to be at the static park until pulling out at the weekend.

This aircraft has recently joined the fleet and is offered to the executive charter market in the area. It is configured in a 42-seat business-class layout and it sure to be in demand as a comfortable regional transport that is also capable of getting into airfields that other jets cannot access, so making it a very valuable business tool for Royal Jet's offering to the Gulf market.

The new Royal Jet RJ85 is



The BAe146 Whispering Jet: Valuable business tool for Royal Jet.

one of four BAe 146/Avro RJs that are either operating or being customised for service in the Gulf area, three of which have been placed in the past 18 months.

Royal Jet is the VIP charter arm of the Amiri Royal Flight, which in its own right has an Avro RJ70 under conversion at Jet Aviation Basle in a three-class luxury interior. This aircraft is scheduled for

completion within the next few months.

In neighbouring Bahrain the Bahrain Defence Force has two RJ85s. The first, bought new from BAE Systems several years ago, has a normal 5-abreast passenger layout in the rear of the aircraft but with a forward VIP section. A second aircraft will be to the same standard and is being customised by FlyBe in the UK.

BAE Systems Regional Aircraft, which has a trading portfolio of nearly 130 BAe 146/Avro RJs, believes that there is a growing market opportunity for the aircraft in the corporate role.

Although originally designed as a regional airliner, the aircraft has many attributes that make it suitable for use in specialised niche markets such as private, corporate and charter. Apart from the four aircraft in the Gulf there are a further 10 aircraft operating in these roles across the world – several in the UK (including with No 32 The Royal

Squadron), the USA, Indonesia and Uzbekistan.

Former Raytheon and Jet Aviation sales executive Andy Whelan, , has joined BAE Systems to market for the BAe 146/Avro RJ portfolio, he says that this aircraft is aimed at a very specialised sector of the corporate/VIP aviation market.

“It combines an airliner size cabin for the price of a mid-size business jet and it offers unmatched airfield performance, allowing access to the most difficult and remote airfields in the world.”

“We believe there is a market opportunity to replace many of the ageing second-generation airliners such as the Boeing 727, Boeing DC-9 and BAC One-Eleven that are used in corporate and VIP aviation. These aircraft are becoming increasingly more difficult to support and are invariably noisy when compared to the BAe 146/Avro RJ which is expected to be Stage 4 noise compliant.”

## Jet Aviation completes Saudi jet

Jet Aviation Basel has recently completed an Airbus A320-200 in a VVIP fit for Saudi Arabia-based Saad Air. The aircraft was completed in ten months and features handcrafted artistic paint elements and consists of an executive seating area, two bedrooms with en-suite bathrooms as well as combined conference/dining area and first class seating in the rear.

Following the delivery of the A320, Saad Air has awarded Jet Aviation the contract to complete its new green VVIP A340-600.

The A340 is scheduled to arrive at the Basel facility in April next year and delivery to Saad Air in mid 2009.

The Basel centre has been awarded several completion contracts over the past few months including a Boeing 747-400, 757-200, an A330-200 and two A319 Corporate Jetliners.

## Quest nears its debut flight

Quest Aircraft is this week preparing to fly its first production Kodiak single-turboprop utility aircraft as it progresses towards US certification by the end of the first quarter.

Aircraft 001 is complete and is being readied for flight at Quest's Sandpoint, Idaho facility.

The Kodiak from the outset has been designed to offer STOL performance and the ruggedness for ‘off-piste’ operations and features Garmin's G1000 glass cockpit.

The Kodiak prototype has flown more than 500h, and the turboprop will be joined by 001 for the final function and reliability testing required for certification.

The first Kodiak for a customer, aircraft 002, is in final assembly. Quest says it has a three-year backlog of orders for the \$1.3 million, 10-seat Kodiak, with 12-14 aircraft expected to be delivered this year and production planned to ramp up to one a week.

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