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Gulf will again drive aviation forward

Sheikh Ahmed upbeat about interiors market



The Middle East will be the driver for growth in the air transport markets in the way it was in the last industry slump and is currently doing in the business aviation market, said HH Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed al Maktoum, president of Dubai Civil Aviation and chairman of Emirates Group.

Opening the first Aircraft Interiors Middle East show yesterday Sheikh Ahmed said "At the ICAO Annual General Meeting two weeks ago, the world's airlines expressed their

joined concerns about the spiralling costs of aviation fuel, the economic downturn in the USA and the challenge of environmental pressures all of which, they say, could lead to a slump in the airline industry over the next year.

"While we hear of airlines around the world cutting back routes and cancelling orders, in the Gulf we are continuing to see growth. Although some routes may be affected others are growing at a rapid pace. That is why Emirates Airlines

continues to push for the deliveries we need for our new fleet and why we believe our growth will continue. We need and expect the 22 aircraft due to be delivered this year," he says.

Sheikh Ahmed says the aircraft interiors market is key. "The aircraft interiors market is entering one of the most exciting stages in its development. Increasingly, what is happening in the cabin through design and installation is having a huge impact on areas such as weight, connectivity and of course passenger satisfaction. This industry is producing new ideas that save weight, which in turn saves fuel and therefore saves money."

Sheikh Ahmed also outlined the advantages to aviation companies setting up shop in Dubai.

"Innovation, breathtaking and imaginative design, challenging and creative thoughts are all embraced by Dubai. You can see that when you look outside. Those same attributes are on display here at the AIME event." ■

Royal opening for debut interiors show



The first-ever Aircraft Interiors Middle East (AIME) show was officially opened by HH Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed al Maktoum yesterday morning. The royal entourage was accompanied around the halls by show organiser F&E's chairman Virginia Kern and director of aerospace, Alison Weller.

NORTHERN ARAB GOVERNMENTS NEED GREATER LIBERALISATION WARNS KHASHMAN

The head of Jordan's fastest growing charter airline has called for greater liberalisation from regional governments if the Middle East is to compete.

Praising Dubai for its approach to open skies, keynote speaker H.E Capt Mohammed Khashman, president and ceo of Jordan Aviation Airlines (JATE), said the northern countries of the Middle East remain heavily regulated by governments. "Airports and airlines face restricted ownership, restricted traffic rights and price restrictions."

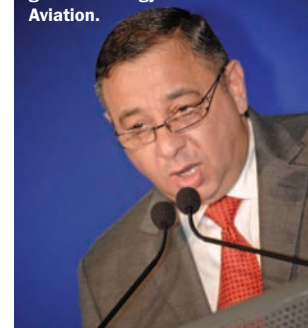
Khashman says this approach is damaging tourism development. However, he argues that Jordan was revising its approach and is aiming at liberalisation for 2010 allowing great opportunities for airline and investment.

JATE currently has 14 owned-aircraft in its fleet and has planned growth to 30 aircraft.

Khashman says that aircraft interiors were a major part of investment strategy. "After ticket price, seat comfort and legroom are most important to our customers," he says.

Praising AIME organisers, Khashman, says he welcomes the presence of the show in the region and says the exhibition allowed airlines to understand that interiors are not just pretty "but have improved functionality."

Capt Mohammed Khashman, growth strategy for Jordan Aviation.



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Guenther Gerberding – predicting better food to come.

Keeping cool with the oven that's hot stuff

A 'restaurant in the sky' is the way ahead for airlines and galley equipment is being developed to meet that projection says Guenther Gerberding, senior sales director of MGS-Modular Galley Systems at yesterday's workshop.

"Many things have changed and advanced within aircraft from the seats, entertainment and the air supply, but not much has changed with galleys," says Gerberding.

"Today's in-flight catering is pre-cooked and heated in 20-30 minutes and pre-cooked meals are limited to hot or very hot. Airlines today are looking to the future and would like to see 'restaurants in the sky' particularly in premium service, first and VIP aircraft," he says.

Gerberding showed MGS' answer to the challenge with its new multi-functional induction heating unit.

The unit offers various advanced cooking facilities including controlled heating programmes where food can be cooked in just seven minutes, easy to use one button control, steamer trays which provide good insulation keeping the food to a high standard and is particularly good for vegetables, fish and dim sum, and is safe for staff to use as the heat is retained inside and not outside of the plate.

"The galley inserts also include an egg boiler which can cook 80 boiled eggs in ten minutes, a toaster capable of toasting six slices in four minutes, plus it features a frying pan and skillet all in one and a top heater. Everything to make the perfect breakfast," boasts Gerberding.

The galley is customised so customers are able to add further inserts if required plus information will be provided to staff on how to cook the food with radio frequency identification labels added.

Plane talking - Brannelly says Mobile entry going smoothly

Emirates introduction of the first in-flight mobile telephone service has been trouble free and almost underwhelming according to Patrick Brannelly the airline's vice president for passenger communications and IFE at a key workshop session yesterday.

"The social nightmare scenarios haven't materialised. But you have to appreciate that on every flight a lot of people have valid reasons for getting in touch. Speaking to family or business colleagues. The more you can do to give people the freedom to do what they want, the more it becomes actualising their flying experience," says Brannelly.

Brannelly says the introduction was almost expected. "It's the way we are now, Brannelly says. "Mobile phones are part of our culture now. People will walk from their house to the shop 300 yards down the road, but will not go without their mobile. It is the conven-



Making the right call – Patrick Brannelly delighted with service introduction of mobile calls on Emiratesfly.

ience factor. Look at what these devices are becoming, they are changing dramatically we want the ability to text or get a call 24/7."

On the maiden flight back in March this year 56% of passengers switched on a phone. "We listed all of the concerns that people could have with this. Of all the issues, the key four were

social, cost, how to use the system and capacity – everyone is going to be on the phone at once! None of these concerns were realised, and we hadn't expected them to be. You use your phone in the air, just like you would on the ground. Passengers have been very matter of fact about the service," he says.

The aircraft does only have five lines, but Brannelly says that the average call duration is a little over two-minutes. "That means that every 30 or 40 seconds a line frees up. We're seeing more SMS than voice calls with a 4:1 ratio. If you look at the text product, we see a direct correlation between the seatback service and the text product. Usage of texts has gone up by 30-40% now that people can use their own device."

Emirates is expecting to be the first airline to introduce GPRS capability later this year to enable BlackBerrys to be used. "We see a passenger who is a much more connected passenger. It is important to look forward as portable electronic devices grow and develop, as the phones are used more and more, it'll be impossible for airlines to restrict their use in-flight. 20 years from now it will be the norm, and with more communication facilities available than today," explains Brannelly.



Interiors create the difference

B/E Aerospace (Stand 200) is at AIME hot on the heels of its acquisition of Honeywell's Consumables Solutions distribution business and describing the region as a key market. Vice president of sales Stephan Azelart says: "For too long people have looked at the aircraft and its systems and ignored the cabin. High net worth individuals want to have the same equipment and luxuries in their aircraft that they have in their mansions and palaces.

B/E is here to present its offerings to the VVIPs in the region and is displaying its Oasis first class suite, Eminence fully reclining seat and the UCT – Ultimate Comfort Technology.

Stephan Azelart with the Eminence seat.

WORKSHOPS TODAY

Today's workshops start at 10 am with president of the Middle East Business Aviation Association outlining the growing demands of the region's business aviation community followed by speakers from leading companies such as Airbus, Panasonic, B/E and LSG Sky Chefs. All workshops are free of charge and are open to all delegates.

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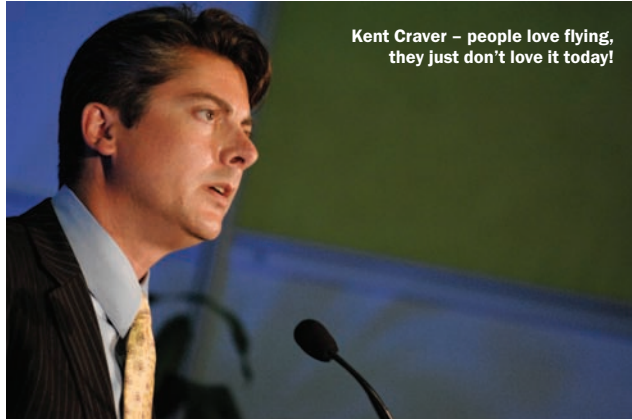
Boeing design bringing back the joy of flying

Flying today is almost an unwanted ordeal, says Boeing's regional director of passenger satisfaction and revenue Kent Craver, with the entire process stressful. "We are now addressing this issue, and while airport security and traffic problems are beyond our control there are advancements coming to address the concern."

Speaking at yesterday's workshops Craver says Boeing used behavioural psychologists to look the way people viewed flying. "We're aiming to get rid of the stress and strain, and bring the joy back to flying with the Boeing 787 Dreamliner."

The new all-composite aircraft creates a great opportunity for design. "This gave us the ability to design the interior to meet the passenger's needs."

"If you take any sports stadium, the seats are hard, uncomfortable, small and squashed together. You may have to get ten people to move to let you out, but why do people put up with that? Because they are engaged. We had to find out how to engage people," he says.



Kent Craver – people love flying, they just don't love it today!

The Dreamliner addresses this with a variety of new concepts. The entrance has been designed to be opening and create a sense of height to give the psychological separation from the rest of the journey.

"We respond better when we are welcomed. We didn't want to rely on the staff to welcome every passenger, as this isn't always possible. The entrance had to be welcoming and we chose blue because it's hard to focus on. And something that we cannot focus on appears further away, this adds the

feeling of height," he says.

"The bins have been designed around the biggest cabin baggage that airlines allow on," he explains. "The bins can be opened by doing whatever is naturally instinctive to you. You can push on the top part of the lever, or pull it, or push the bottom."

"Because of the composite technology we can have larger windows and the these windows are some 65% larger than the 777. This lets people see the sky and earth meet and give them the sensation of flying."

COMPLETIONS ON STANDBY FOR END OF REGIONAL JET

Completions centres should be on stand-by to begin work on converting Embraer ERJ-135 regional jets into corporate aircraft says the Brazilian company's airline market head as the last of these 37-seaters are removed from the US fleet.

"As you know, the ERJ-135 is the basic platform that we used to derive the Legacy 600 executive jet and it's a natural path to pursue executive shuttle applications for the type," Mauro Kern, Embraer executive VP, airline market says.

Secondary markets are also expected to assume some of the lift. "We foresee opportunities for airline use of the ERJ-135s in some secondary markets, probably being Russia and other CIS countries the most important ones," says Kern. "There is a big fleet of regional aircraft of similar sizes flying in those countries that is urgently requiring retirement, mainly with the \$130-plus oil prices."

For example, he says, there are about 280 units of Yak-40s with an average age of 30-plus years.

As US major airlines seek to slash capacity in the face of soaring fuel costs, many of the smallest and least efficient aircraft are on the chopping block. This includes 50-seat regional jets and aircraft that generally fall into that generic reference, including the ERJ-135.

Jet Aviation will make VIP Dreamliners come true

"The Boeing 787 is an ideal aircraft for VIP conversions," Jet Aviation completions VP Eugen Hartl told his workshop audience here yesterday. "It combines a spacious interior with enough range to give VIP owners the kind of intercontinental non-stop performance that they need."

Based in Basel, Switzerland, Jet Aviation currently holds the biggest order book for luxury conversions of the new Boeing twinjet. Five aircraft are destined for its new widebody hangar, which is big enough to handle an Airbus A380, with the first to arrive in 2011.

Hartl said yesterday that each 787 completion could be expected to take three to four years from start of interior design to re-delivery to the customer. Of that, around 18 months would be devoted to work on the aircraft in the hangar, and a year to the initial design process.

In these days of sophisticated computer visualisation, Jet Aviation offers an interesting approach to design development. "Our experience shows that

customers really want to walk through something physically representing their new interiors," said Hartl. "So we build full-scale mock-up interiors from materials like cardboard and plywood and invite the customer to Basel so he can try it for size and tell us what he thinks. Each mock-up takes three or four months to build but the practice has proved very useful."

Most of Jet Aviation's clients will arrive with their trusted designers, Hartl said. The company's in-house design team will then act as an interface, translating the customers wishes into a practicable engineering package. But, working with UK-based Eidsgaard Design, which styles luxury yachts and cars as well as aircraft, it has also come up with concepts to show what a VIP 787 could look like.

These include ideas for a completely enclosed private cinema, shaped to leave room for an outside corridor giving full access between the front and rear of the aircraft.

Visitors to the Jet Aviation stand can get copies of a DVD film showing a walkthrough of the VIP concept.



Eugen Hartl, Jet Aviation's VP completions and modifications outlined the design opportunities for the VIP Dreamliner



Aviation City – meeting Dubai's needs for the next century

Dubai World Central will meet our aerospace needs for the next 50 to 100 years," says Abdullah al-Qurashi, chief executive of DWC Aviation City (Stand 610). "We're getting ready for the future – we're going to do something very meaningful for the economy in what is practically the last piece of land in Dubai that is still available for major development."

Dubai World Central is the extraordinarily ambitious project now taking shape to the southwest of Dubai City. Centrepiece is the new Al-Maktoum International Airport, destined with its initial four runways to become the world's largest passenger and cargo hub. But there's much more to DWC than the airport. The 140 sq km site to the south of the Jebel Ali Free Zone will also be host to five other vast developments that include Logistics City, Commercial City, Residential City and Aviation City.

The first will ultimately handle a maximum of 12 million tonnes of air cargo annually through up to 16 terminals. Commercial and Residential cities will provide housing, services and office space for a total of 700,000 people. And Aviation City is intended to be a magnet for aviation manufacturers, MRO (maintenance, repair and overhaul) providers, research and development organisations, suppliers of support services and consultancy, and educational and training institutions from all over the world.

Among the early occupants of Aviation City will be maintenance, repair and overhaul provider Livewell, air safety training supplier Spatial Academy, Kuwait Airways, Gulf Aerospace and fixed-base operator Palm Aviation. Newest addition to the list is charter and fixed-base operator Majestic Wings, which signed up here yesterday and plans to spend as much as 200 million dirhams on



Abdullah al-Qurashi, chief executive of DWC Aviation City, making the model city a reality.

a new facility in Aviation City. Livewell and Spatial Academy are due to move in next year. Palm, Kuwait Airways and Gulf Aerospace will occupy their premises in 2009-10.

Other occupants could include European and US aerospace training and higher educational institutions.

"We are already in discussions with them and with the Airbus and Boeing training and educational operations," says al-Qurashi. "We want to develop the best of local and regional talent to provide the skilled manpower that Dubai World Central will need in the coming decades."

Sogerma sees long days of success for Solstys

The UAE's national carrier Etihad is taking EADS Sogerma's (Stand 210) Solstys business class seat, which is on display for the first time here at AIME.

The company says that Thai Airways will also be taking it for its A380 business class.

"The Middle East is a key market for us, we're very much focused on the upper segment of business and first class. Solstys is the new Etihad business class seat and in an Airbus A330 will give eight abreast with an 80-inch pitch," says Marc Gentil, vice president Sales and Marketing.

"The strategy in this region is very much about differentiation, and Solstys is the differentiator,"



Marc Gentil with the new Solstys business class seat.

he says.

The new seat is fully reclining offering a 76 inch long bed with a seat width of 21-24 inch depending on the seat position. It comes complete with IFE controls and also built-in massaging system. Gentil says that because the seat has only two actuators reliability is high and that its predecessor – currently active in the Etihad fleet – produced a reliability factor of 100% last December.

"The seat fits into strategies for the new aircraft, like the A380 or the 787 or the A350,

but it can also be integrated with any of the other long range airliners. It's a good product for those that want to differentiate," says Gentil.

Gentil is also keen to point out the ample stowage space the system offers and, that no matter where the seat is in the aircraft, the passenger will always have direct access.

"We have good experience with Etihad who have been flying our business class seats since 2005 – that's some 700 seats," adds Gentil.

INTERIOR OVERHAULS FROM LIVEWELL

Livewell (Stand 220) is promoting its new \$80m MRO facility at Al Maktoum International airport. The hangar will be opening in the third quarter of next year and will create around 400 new jobs.

The hangar will be large enough for an A380 and the company will be capable of performing any maintenance up to, and including 'C' checks for airliners, business jets and helicopters.

Chairman Manek Daver says: "Aviation in the Middle East is in its infancy and the carriers are on a shopping spree, we're here to support that growth."

Livewell has operated here in Dubai for the last two and half years with its ground handling operations as well as its interior overhauls and repairs here in Dubai as well as at its facilities in India, Malaysia, Indonesia and the UK.

Additionally it operates a training academy in Mumbai where everything is covered. From pilot and engineer training to customer reservations training.

Dream weaver leaves Irish eyes smiling

Boeing's 787 Dreamliner is an all too real source of revenues for Botany Weaving (Stand 105). The Dublin-headquartered company recently won an exclusive contract to supply fabrics for all flight deck seats in the new Boeing twinjet.

The deal is latest of many that have yielded 120 airline customers worldwide for the 150-employee company, which specialises in seat fabrics, cabin curtains and, most recently, carpets for airliners. "We continue to gain ground on market leader Lantal," says export sales manager Kevin Vidal. "We move larger quantities - up to 20,000 sq m of fabric a week - while they are ahead in

terms of revenues. But we're closing the gap."

Vidal is here at AIME to help achieve that target by keeping in touch with existing Middle East customers Air Arabia, Gulf Air, Etihad and Saudia, and by developing the Botany relationship with Emirates in the hope of landing the biggest regional prize of them all. "We also recently supplied carpet samples to Royal Jordanian and are optimistic that we will win their custom," he says. "And we have a five-year contract covering all of Etihad's fabrics and carpets."

Botany has been in aviation for half a century, having moved from an original line in cloth for women's uniforms to producing

materials for flight attendant outfits. "That led naturally to seating fabrics and then carpets," says Vidal. Today the company operates two factories - one in Dublin, the other in Donegal, Northern Ireland - and three design studios, in Dublin, London and close to Boeing in Seattle.

"We recently updated all of our production capacity and now turn out our fabrics on Jacquard looms," says Vidal. "This advanced equipment can cope with any graphic design, even the most complex." Other strengths of Botany's product line include the 100 per cent use of wool and compliance with the most stringent standards for fire resistance.

The company also has a pres-



Kevin Vidal building Botany's relationships in the region.

ence in non-aviation markets. "Around 5-10 per cent of our business is in sectors like domestic furnishings," says Vidal. "This is valuable in helping us to stay abreast of design and materials trends in the wider world."

Dyers cleans up with UAE seat maintenance



Randolph D'Souza demonstrates the repair and cleaning services offered by Dyers in the UAE.

Manufacturers and dry cleaners of seat covers for aircraft Dyers International (Stand: 435) is highlighting its design, cleaning and repair capabilities here at AIME.

The company has been operating for 35 years in Luton, England and in the last year has opened up a dry cleaning and manufacturing facility in Dubai Free Zone.

"We specialise in manufacturing soft furnishings and repairing seat covers but started out as a dry cleaning business which is still a core element of the company today," says managing director Bill Whitehouse.

Dyers offer a collect, clean and delivery service with a 24 hour turnaround seven days a week. Dry cleaning also includes that of aircraft curtains and blankets, as well as offering a carpet cleaning service.

"We clean all economy seats for Emirates, approximately 8,000 a week, at our facility here as well as British Airways, British Midland, Thompson Fly and MOD aircraft in the UK."

A large element of Dyer's is also dedicated to the design and production of airline seat covers in both fabric and leather.

Whitehouse explains: "We provide a full service from initial evaluation visits to the aircraft through to the design and production of the seats which we can turn around in just ten days.

"We offer a 'fast track' service for aircraft that change roles or interior design as well as providing an inventory service to ensure supply during a complete airline image enhancement programme."

The company also provide a support programme to ensure the seat covers are maintained in optimum condition throughout their usable life.

"We're at AIME to promote our services to delegates. We received the contract from Emirates just six months in to our facility opening here, and although we provide largely to commercial aircraft market we can provide an excellent service to private aviation too," added Whitehouse.

Schott in the dark

Mood lighting schemes depicting starlit night skies are particularly popular with Middle East airlines. "It's because they are very effective at producing an illusion of space in the cabin," explains Gerhard Zwickel, aviation manager for Schott (Stand 445c).


The German company includes in its line of cabin lighting products a combination of LED light sources and fibreoptic cable that is ideal for the creation of in-aircraft starry nights and a variety of other mood-lighting effects.

"Competing solutions require the use of one LED source for each of the simulated stars," Zwickel explains. "Our system employs robust fibreoptic cabling to deliver bright light from a single LED source to large numbers of points in the aircraft ceiling. This means that the source, with its associated heat generation, can be located in a place that is convenient for cooling and maintenance."

While fibreoptic cable can still be problematical for data communications on aircraft, it is excellent for the delivery of light. "It weighs very little, can be very robust because every one of our 1mm cables contains up to 300 fibres, and has a very small bending radius, which makes it easy to install and strap in bundles," says Zwickel.



Gerhard Zwickel throwing light on fibreoptic cables.

 For more news/show images see flightglobal.com

Anker offers 'green' in different colours

German manufacturer Anker-Teppichboden (Stand 445d) is displaying samples of its high quality eco-friendly aircraft carpets both woven and tufted. The company has a fully integrated production line which includes spinning, dyeing, weaving/tufting and finishing for commercial aircraft and has come to AIME to extend its offering to the major carriers and

the business jet market in the region.

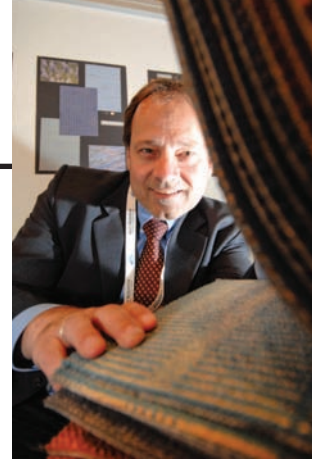
"Our carpets can be made of wool and nylon and we can produce any design and any colour to fit in accordance to our customer requirements," says sales director Alexander v. Fuchs-Nordhoff.

"We use raw materials to make high quality eco-friendly carpet, which is fully durable so

carpet doesn't need to be change so frequently."

The company partners with fabric specialist Rohi to match Anker's carpet designs.

"In 2006 we won the 'red dot: best of the best' award for our designs which we hope will impress delegates at AIME," adds Fuchs-Nordhoff. Anker's customers include Emirates, Gulf Air, Thai Airways and Lufthansa.



Alexander Fuchs-Nordhoff in the frame for environmental carpets.

Adding the golden Touch to carpets

Tisca Tiara (Stand 415) is demonstrating its Waron product which uses a new technique of embroidering carpet exclusively for the VIP and business jet market – the Swiss company says it expects it to sell well to Gulf customers.

"By reconstructing machines originally built for the production of embroideries, we have achieved something unparalleled. With no minimum order quantity and very short lead time we are able to manufacture entirely made-to-measure and customised embroidered carpets up to 1,350cm in width, in one piece and without any seams," says Matthias Tischhauser, division manager Mobility Textiles.

"This increases the service life since seams are always the weakest points in floor coverings. As another benefit, there is no waste and loss from cutting during installation since each carpet is made to measure matching the aircraft's floor plan making it eco-friendly as well as cost effective as many carpets are hand made," says Tischhauser.

Clients can choose any colour of the luxury carpet as well as combination ones to help perfect matching within the cabin interior.

"We have also developed the novel Waron Shine carpet, known as Shine Above the Clouds, which has special design characteristics of silver, gold or bronze lurex thread entwined in the wool making it shiny and elegant looking. This is particularly popular with our Middle Eastern clients so we are delighted to showcase it here at AIME."

The company is also showing another new luxury business jet



Matthias Tischhauser has a chance to shine with the new Waron carpet.

carpet inspired by aircraft in the sky. "Sky – Silk in the Sky, is made with top end raw materials including Swiss mountain silk, a high grade silk yarn, which is carefully combined and interwoven with pure new wool from New Zealand," says Tischhauser.

Customers have no restric-

tions when it comes to customisation being able to choose any design, colour, texture and pile height with widths up to 4.60m. The carpet is fully resistant and long-lasting even under heavy wear and tear, and the use of natural materials makes it environmentally friendly.

COSTS DROP THROUGH THE FLOOR WITH PVC

French textile flooring manufacturer Gerflor (Stand 410) is displaying the latest features for its Batiflex product range.

"Gerflor specialise in PVC flooring for many different markets but the Batiflex range is specifically for aircraft," says export area manager Maxime Couinaud.

The new range, features new wood and mineral designs and the company says its "technical innovation" will lead to cost saving too.

"Batiflex is used in galley areas, toilets and entrances. It is fully durable with a resistant top layer, and it is anti-slip which is particularly important in the galley and toilet areas where liquid is present," she says

Batiflex is also claimed to be the lightest non textile flooring available in the world and is replacing carpet in the aisles of many of the major airlines.

"Our customers include Qatar Airways and Emirates, and we are suppliers to a number of MROs in the region. We hope to interest other companies during the show," says Couinaud.

Lantal shows The soft touch

Cabin comfort is the main priority of Lantal (Stand 315) providers of soft interiors. "Our products include seat covers, smooth headrests, subtle wall coverings, pre-cut carpets, fine leathers and pleated curtains, as well as weight-saving pneumatic cushions for commercial and business jets," says director of sales Peter Kuhn.

"We do a lot of bespoke and customer design products, plus we have stock collections for customers to choose.

"At AIME we are focusing on our lightweight carpets and seat cover fabrics. One highlight is the carpet with a new self-adhesive backing, developed especially for the 787 Dreamliner which was approved by Boeing making us one of the first carpet suppliers able to deliver products that fulfil the 787 specification," he says.

The Swiss company provide its products to Emirates, Kuwait Airways, Etihad and other companies in the GCC.

Peter Kuhn – drawing on the local market knowledge.



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Lose your senses in the bustling Souks

Dubai Creek is the historic trading heart of Dubai. For centuries now dhows have docked here to load and unload their goods, anything from carpets and spices to kitchen sinks.

Dhows make their voyages of goods to and from other parts of the Middle East, Africa, and as far away as India. The Creek also separates two of the oldest districts of Dubai, Bur Dubai and Deira. Both areas thrive with activity and have many historical places of interest to visit, but if you only have one free day during or after the AIME and want to see the locals in full swing, plus need to pick up a gift, you should head to Deira.

Deira is packed with souks and with dhows coming and going with new products you'll find yourself in an Aladdin's Cave. Your head will be left dizzy from the sights and smells, plus all the shouting from the local hagglers. The Spice Souk is a must, big barrels of cumin seeds, dried lemons and cinnamon sticks surround you with all the colours and fragrances hitting you instantly.

Dubai is well known for its love affair with gold, so if you can't afford shopping in the posh malls, head to Deira Gold



Spice and all things nice – the Spice Souk is located on the Deira side and the Textile Souk on the Bur Dubai side.

Souk, one of the largest gold markets in the world, where you'll find every kind of jewellery imaginable. Just a couple of fragrant blocks from here is the Perfume Souk where you can pick up real designer fragrances at cut prices or some fake perfume in kitsch packaging. Remember to haggle for everything you want to purchase. It's part of life here, and expected. Prices will be marked up over 100%, eventually you'll get it down to at least a third of that.

The most interesting way to get to Deira, or Bur Dubai,

which is home to a large souk selling textiles, clothes and lots of Indian paraphernalia, is by crossing the creek by an Abra water-taxi, where you can take in the full views of life by the creek from the souks, to the bustling activity of the dhows as you sail past them. It will make you forget for a couple of minutes that you're in glitzy Dubai. Abras operate regularly from both Bur Dubai and Deira creek sides.

famous Blue Souk. This traditional styled market housed in distinctive windtower buildings sells traditional products such as gold, carvings and, above all, carpets. The Sharjah souk is reputedly the best place in the world to buy old and new Persian carpets and rugs from Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan, where you can haggle for the best price. Once you get home the carpet will double in price!

Your hotel should be able to give you tourist information, as will the Department of Tourism and Commerce (Tel: 223 0000)

And another souk

If you plan on visiting Sharjah make sure you visit the



Ride the Abra across Dubai Creek.

A night on the tiles...

Alcohol is frowned upon in many parts of the Middle East, but in Dubai licensing laws allow you to drink within the hotels and private clubs only. And that means Dubai has some great nightlife and watering holes!

Rooftop Bar
Arabian Court,
One&Only Royal Mirage
 ☎ 04 399 9999

A great place to unwind after a day at the show! Sip cocktails at the circular bar in the lounge area or head upstairs to the superb terrace and relax to the chill-out music while taking in the stunning views of Palm Island, and the vast Gulf.

Skyview Bar
Burj Al Arab, Jumeirah
 ☎ 04 4301 7777

Well you can't come to Dubai and not at least go for a cocktail in this stunning seven star hotel. Great place to treat clients before or after dinner.

Agency
Bldv at Emirates Towers
 ☎ 04 4330 0000

Swish Oriental style wine bar has over 500 wines to choose from.

Ginseng
Wafi City, Bur Dubai
 ☎ 04 324 4777

Cool Asian themed cocktail bar full of stylish people serving up delicious cocktails and spicy Asian tapas. DJs spin the decks to hip-hop, house and contemporary music.

The Irish Village
Garhoud Road
 ☎ 04 4282 4750

This Dubai institution serves up an assortment of draught beers and, of course, Guinness. There is a large outdoor terrace and live music plays each night.

FLIGHT DAILY NEWS

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