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# FLIGHT

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# WORLD CLASS MRO MOVE FOR SAUDI

## Deregulation delivers \$300m opportunity for MAZ Aviation

A new \$300 million company was launched yesterday to deliver "world class" maintenance and support services to private aviation in the Middle East – and Saudi Arabia's drive to deregulate its aviation industry played a critical role.

On the eve of MEBA 2008, MAZ Aviation announced the creation of a trio of companies under a holding company Ajwaa Alalam Group (chalet 19).

The three companies will deliver aircraft and fleet management services, aircraft maintenance and logistics support.

At the heart of the business is a \$70 million 10,000 square metre maintenance and support centre being built at King Khalid International Airport, Riyadh.

"Globally, the Middle East is one of the most important markets for business and private aviation, yet it is one of the most underserved in terms of services and

support," says Mohammed Al-Zeer, chairman of Ajwaa Alalam Holding.

"We will provide the aviation community in the Middle East with the same level of service people experience in the United States or Europe.

"Our aim is to change the current status by establishing world class services which will ensure that the Middle East business and private aviation community receives the highest degree of reliability and dependability."

Al-Zeer paid tribute to the Kingdom's civil aviation authorities, currently at the heart of a strategy to deregulate many areas of the aviation industry.

"Deregulation is now playing a tremendous role in making investment opportunities that much better by reducing the administration side of approvals," he says. "From the day we submitted the initial application to the day we received approval, it



Mohammed Al-Zeer reflects on the Saudi opportunity

took just three weeks. Before, it would have taken years. The civil aviation people are going out to their way to move from one of the most regulated markets in the world to one that is deregulated. We would not have embarked on this venture if it had not been deregulated."

The three companies in the group are:

Ajwaa Alalam Aviation Services (AJWA SERV) specialising in providing

aircraft and fleet management services.

Ajwaa Alalam Technical Company (AJWA TECH) specialising in providing aircraft maintenance services.

Ajwaa Alalam Logistics (AJWA LOGISTICS) which provides spare parts and logistics.

Al-Zeer says Riyadh was chosen as the new firm's base because it is the centre of the Middle East's private aviation business. The

kingdom not only has the biggest private aviation market, but the longest-established and "most stable".

The Riyadh facility will be able to handle all types of aircraft up to Boeing 777s and Airbus A340s and will become operational in the first quarter of 2011.

■ MRO provision is a key issue at MEBA – see stories on Page 4 and 10

## AMBITIOUS PALM UNVEILS NEW FBO PLAN

Palm Aviation (stand 1000) has unveiled plans for an \$11-million (AED40m) facility at Dubai World Central's Aviation City to be completed by the end of 2009.

The 80,000 sq ft fixed based operation (FBO) will be part of Palm's ambitious plan to grow revenues by 35 per cent annually over the next five years.

Samir Dabbagh, executive vice president and chief executive, believes the aviation sector will grow at more than 30 per cent annually for the next five years and says: "We also expect the Middle East maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) market to continue to grow at more than nine per cent per annum over the same period."

"We are growing quickly and developing the infrastructure to extend our flight support service to the commercial and private aviation sectors across the region and beyond, an essential element for the aviation sector to develop more effectively. We are very well positioned to achieve our ambitious revenue targets by extending our services to air traffic in-bound to the Middle East and Africa from Europe and the CIS."

This year's MEBA, is set to be a huge success. According to F&E Aerospace, which organises the show, deals are expected to smash last year's \$907m orders record.

The event has tripled in size since 2007, with some 5,000 visitors expected along with 250 exhibitors from Europe, the US, Asia and the Middle East.

There are more than 70 aircraft on the static park, several of

## Show set for record... and word of caution

which are in the region for the first time. They include a wide range of models from the world's major manufacturers, including Airbus, Boeing, Bombardier, Cessna, Dassault, Gulfstream, Embraer, and Hawker Beechcraft.

The show does not appear to have been affected by current

global economic instability. "There is a waiting list for aircraft wanting to be on the static park," says Ali Al Naqbi, founding chairman of the Middle East Business Aviation Association (MEBAA) the industry body behind MEBA.

However, there are likely to be warnings today from the region's

leading charter organisation, Abu Dhabi's Royal Jet, that as many as 40% of the current orders for lighter jets could be put on hold or even cancelled.

The top-of-the-range large jet market seems likely to remain solid and the mood at the show build-up was buoyant. Al Naqbi

says: "The only cancellation we had was from someone who wanted to use his own jet himself."

Following such a full house, MEBA could change venue in future and tour other key sites in the region. However, Al Naqbi points out: "We insist that any show location has the same high standards as we employ here and will not move unless that happens."

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# Sun rises on expanding Empire

Dubai-based Empire Aviation Group (stand 8) is using MEBA 2008 to announce a new joint venture partnership in Saudi Arabia, which will replicate the company's full portfolio of aviation services in the UAE, covering aircraft sales, management and flight operations, and executive jet charter services.

The new company will be operational from a base in Riyadh before the end of 2008.

In a hectic schedule Empire, which is exhibiting from its own dedicated stand for the first time, will also announce new sales, services and relationships.

The firm is also welcoming guests to the chalet alongside business jet and special mission aircraft manufacturer, Hawker Beechcraft Corporation, for which Empire Aviation Group is a regional distributor.

Empire currently manages a fleet of eight aircraft, seven of which are available for charter, having already added four new aircraft to its Dubai-based fleet in 2008.

The company expects the fleet to grow to 11 aircraft by the end of 2008, based on the very strong performance of its aircraft sales division.

Empire aircraft sales have powered ahead in 2008 with 20 firm orders from clients in the region – a combination of



Ready for take-off: Paras Dhamecha at the helm of a rapidly-growing business

new Hawker and Beechcraft aircraft and various other pre-owned models.

The fleet consists of aircraft from every major business jet manufacturer, as Empire grows rapidly within the expanding regional market for private aviation.

The firm's rapid expansion is also reflected in its staffing and facilities; headcount will rise to 80 by the end of 2008

and the company has just unveiled plans for an 80,000 square feet hangar facility at Dubai World Central, which will showcase its products and services and operate as world-wide headquarters of Empire Aviation Group.

Steve Hartley, executive director and head of aircraft sales, says: "We have achieved a great deal in our first full year of operation

and we continue to grow rapidly across all aspects of our business.

"Aircraft sales are holding up well and demand for the Beechcraft Premier II business jet, which is an excellent entry-level aircraft, continues to increase."

Executive director Paras Dhamecha adds: "The private aviation sector continues to develop quickly

across the region with new world class infrastructure being added and, while economic activity may be slowing, we remain very confident about the prospects for the medium to long term.

"Our new joint venture in Saudi Arabia will be a major step in our development into a regional force in private aviation."

## Strong product line on offer from HBC

Hawker Beechcraft (HBC) is building on its recent success in the region by showcasing five of its aircraft at chalet 36.

The OEM has brought its flagship composite fuselage super-midsize Hawker 4000, the midsize Hawker 900XP, the Hawker 400XP, the Beechcraft Premier IA and the Beechcraft King Air 350.

Sean McGeough, HBC vice president, international sales, says: "The Middle East is one of the world's fastest-growing regions for business aviation and very important for us in terms of business aircraft sales."

He adds that there are a number of contributory factors, including acceptance of business aircraft to stimulate trade and the fact that Dubai and Bahrain are major regional financial hubs.

"Our aircraft allow people to travel more efficiently for business or leisure purposes," says Ted Farid, HBC vice president, new business development.

HBC has also announced that it has opened a new international sales office in Vienna. McGeough says: "For years, Vienna has been the hub of Eastern European commerce and positioning our new sales office in this location allows us to augment our international growth."

In more good news for Hawker Beechcraft several local charter operators have added its products to their fleets.

Bahrain's Rizon Jet is adding a second Hawker 900XP, scheduled for delivery in 2009. The company already operates a Beechcraft Premier IA and a Hawker 900XP.

Dubai-based MAF will also take delivery of a new 900XP by the end of the year and HBC has delivered two Beechcraft King Air 350 turboprops to Saudi's Medevac, with a further three to be delivered by the end of the year. Gulf Jet is also to take delivery of the first region's first Beechcraft King Air 350ER.

To cater for the growth in demand, HBC recently opened a new sales office in Dubai and support comes from Jet Aviation in Dubai, which is an authorised service centre for all Hawker mid-size business jets.

## ExecuJet unveils new airport plans

ExecuJet is planning to build a bigger and better Fixed Base Operation (FBO) with full maintenance provision at the new Dubai World Central airport that opens next year.

Mike Berry, ExecuJet's chief in the Middle East, says: "We have secured the plots, which will allow us to build a much bigger facility. We are in the planning phase and are internally running our business plans against different scenarios."

Plans for the new facility will complement ExecuJet's existing operation at Dubai International, where it has 60,245ft<sup>2</sup> with 24,358ft<sup>2</sup> of hangar space.

"From a customer perspective, if he or she wishes to land at Dubai International and house the aircraft there, we can still do that," explains Berry. "We'll provide the same standard of ExecuJet services at Jebel Ali. A customer won't need to land at one airport and



ExecuJet Middle East's Mike Berry

then ferry for maintenance. We can offer a full suite of services at both facilities."

Berry says that the company needs to expand because the current facility is full. "Our current FBO doesn't allow us to enhance our services," he says.

The new facility gives ExecuJet a fantastic opportunity to expand its aviation services, says

Berry. "We're not offering anything new, but will be expanding our maintenance support, like we do in other parts of the world, beyond Bombardier."

"A whole new ball game opens up when you start to include other manufacturers' products. If we can capture 20% market share, that more than doubles our revenue on maintenance capability," he explains.



## Cessna's third Smart move

Cessna (stand OD1) has recently delivered a third Citation Sovereign to Egypt's Smart Aviation.

This aircraft was handed over at the end of last month and is part of a six-aircraft order.

"The Sovereign has an important role to fill, as we are introducing the concept of executive air charter to a new market," says Smart Aviation chief executive Sameh Anwar.

"I am pleased to report that the fleet is performing very well. Not only does the spacious interior and ample range cater to our customers' needs, but the aircraft are also proving dependable and cost-effective to operate."

Trevor Esling, Cessna's vice president for international sales says: "We are delighted that Smart Aviation is enjoying success with the Citation Sovereign. Its combination of high-temperature performance, spacious cabin and stowage, and APU-supported air conditioning, coupled with its excellent range and payload, single the Sovereign out as an aircraft particularly well suited for the Middle Eastern market."



## Prestige unveils new 'flying ambulance' venture

Abu Dhabi-based Prestige Jet announced today that it has launched a new subsidiary, Prestige Flight Ambulance (PFA), to cater for the huge demand for its medical evacuation and repatriation services from the region.

The new venture is an extension of the medevac service the company launched earlier this year. Chairman His Excellency Gaith Ben Hamil Al-Gaith says: "We recently won the UAE Ministry of Health tender because we provide a service of the highest standards. The outstanding services of our highly trained team of medical and aviation professionals, their customer focus and attention to detail, generate a high demand."

PFA will operate two dedicated aircraft permanently positioned in Abu Dhabi, a Challenger 604 and a Lear 55, to carry patients to any destination in the world. Both aircraft are fully equipped with state-of-the-art medical equipment and staffed by experienced practicing paramedics. PFA also provides an all-female crew when required.

Faris Deeb, managing director, says: "Since the beginning of the year we have been tasked with more than 45 medical evacuation missions, including critical cases, from the health ministry, local health authorities and private medical hospitals. Our success rate is 100%. No competitor can come even close to what we offer."



Flying Colours' Eric Gillespie shows off the CRJ conversion here at MEBA

# Execuliner makes a MEBA pass with Flying Colours

Flying Colours Corporation (stand 1037 and static display) is displaying the CRJ Execuliner here at MEBA.

The example on display belongs to MAC Aircraft sales (stand 1037). The aircraft was originally a CRJ200 regional jet – MSN 7481 – but now sports a new 16-passenger executive interior as well as Flying Colours' CRJ auxiliary fuel system, which increases its range to 3,000nm.

The Execuliner removes the standard 50-seat airline interior of the CRJ200 and replaces it with an executive configuration that can be tailored from a variety of options to a customer's personal taste.

"With the hype surrounding CRJ conversions in the industry, we are excited to be the first company in the world delivering this type of

aircraft to our customers," says president John Gillespie.

"This aircraft was on display at the NBAA convention last month and got a lot of attention from many different people in the industry. We are looking to have the same response from potential customers and visitors at MEBA. The CRJ Execuliner conversion has been attractive to individuals or groups looking for an aircraft with a super large cabin and low operating costs."

Eric Gillespie, sales and marketing manager adds: "There are many companies offering CRJ conversions, but we're the only ones delivering."

"This aircraft is the second to be delivered. And we currently have six more 'in-house' with two more due to be delivered before the year end," he adds.

Gillespie says that the turnaround time is around seven and a half months "and with OEM backlogs so long it's cost effective. Compared to a Challenger 850 that will cost between \$28-million and \$30m. You can get an Execuliner for between \$18m-\$20m. A Global Express size cabin for the cost of a Challenger 604."

One of the Execuliner's strong points is the soundproofing. Gillespie says that the aim is for 54dB noise levels. "We're using the Global Express sound proofing kit. It's really quiet in the cabin."

But it isn't just the owner appeal that Gillespie sees as being key to marketing the aircraft successfully. He says: "This is a great aircraft for chartering. You can really make money with it."

## Medical boost for Bombardier CRJs

Passengers and crew on VIP/corporate-configured Bombardier CRJs supplied by Project Phoenix will soon enjoy the reassurance offered by the emergency in-flight medical service from MedAire of the USA (stand 1008).

The two companies will sign an agreement here today under which Canada's Project Phoenix will offer CRJ owners a free MedAire medical package, including a one-year subscription to the 24/7 MedLink Global Response Centre service. In the event of an in-flight medical emergency, crew members will be able to contact MedLink



doctors via satellite phone or radio. They will also receive first-responder medical training and will have access to a MedAire-developed aircraft first-aid kit and a heart defibrillator. The

equipment will be installed during CRJ interior fit-out by Project Phoenix partner Flying Colours of Peterborough, Ontario. CRJ owners and crew are also being offered the oppor-

tunity to buy other offerings from MedAire, including its emergency medical kit and pediatric kit.

The first Phoenix CRJ to feature the MedAire package will be delivered in January to Macau-based business charter operator Jet Asia.

Project Phoenix announced its programme at last year's Dubai Show to overcome the long delivery times currently common among business jet manufacturers. Led by several former senior Bombardier executives, Phoenix offers what it calls a viable and cost-effective alternative to new business aircraft in the 2,200-3,000nm-range category.

## Joint venture launched

Today will see the launch of AVISA Gulf, a business partnership between AVISA Aviation Safety Systems Ltd and AJA, Al Jaber Aviation's newest venture.

Dr Mark Pierotti and Justin Gotscher have been appointed joint managing directors.

Gotscher says: "The Al Jaber Group (Stand 415) has diversified into aviation after conducting a detailed study into the region's requirements. With the addition of AVISA UK's European aviation safety approval knowledge and professional expertise to form the new business, AVISA Gulf is a continuation of this diversification strategy."

AVISA Gulf's Abu Dhabi base gives airlines, fleet and individual operators and Maintenance Repair Organisations (MRO) the opportunity to source expert services and training locally.

Mohammed Al Jaber, AJA chief executive, says: "AVISA Gulf brings specialised aviation technical services that are not currently available in our region. These services are in accordance with European aviation standards and will assist new start-ups or existing operations to take better control of their activities."

AVISA Gulf's debut contract is a CAMO service agreement for AJA's 21-strong VIP and executive fleet.



## Twinjet opens Middle East business

Executive jet operator Twinjet Aviation (stand 200) has opened a Middle East business with the appointment of its first ever representative in the region, it was announced on the eve of MEBA.

Neil Turnbull joined Twinjet on November 1 and will represent the operator and its sister firm, The Charter Company, throughout the Middle East. He will be based in the UAE.

The appointment comes as Twinjet marks a successful first nine months in the Middle East, having operated a Challenger 604 aircraft from the region since February 2008.

Turnbull was previously owner of Flight Management, an air charter broker recently acquired by The Charter Company, and has more than 20 years' experience in executive aviation.

Keith McMann, chief executive officer of Twinjet, says: "The Middle East is a key growth market for Twinjet and Neil's extensive experience will be vital as we develop our operations. We are currently in negotiations to open an aircraft base in the region in the next few months and plan to introduce additional aircraft to our Middle East fleet."

Turnbull adds: "I am delighted to join forces with Twinjet and I'm looking forward to helping drive the expansion plans."

A VistaJet operated  
Bombardier Learjet 60



## Business is moving fast at VistaJet

VistaJet (stand 524) claims to be the fastest-growing private jet company outside of the USA.

Here, at MEBA, it is highlighting its presence in the Middle East, offering its full suite of "innovative flight solutions".

The company says this move signals its commitment to the region and enables it to expand its flight solutions further into the growing Middle Eastern market.

VistaJet has a thriving jet charter business in Dubai running an all-Bombardier business jet fleet.

Following the company's \$1.2 billion order for up to 60 new Bombardier jets at EBACE, the VistaJet fleet will soon number 90 medium to ultra-long range aircraft. In June, the acquisition of Skyjet International – Bombardier's charter services division – established VistaJet as one of the world's largest private jet companies.

"We are launching a major initiative that will encourage, stimulate and support the private jet business in the Middle East," explains chairman Thomas Flohr. "Our key aim is to couple affordability with pure luxury by offering superior

alternative solutions to the traditional jet charter and fractional / whole ownership offerings.

"Our flight solutions open up a new chapter in business aviation, revolutionising the way people use business jets. Under VistaJet's whole aircraft ownership programme, for example, our customers may purchase a new Challenger 605 aircraft and begin flying immediately. They pay one simple quarterly payment based on their hourly commitment, which, in many cases, is lower than the traditional direct operating costs of the aircraft. There are no fixed fees, no maintenance expenses, and no monthly management fees. This is an exceptional package for an aircraft of this capability and range."

VistaJet projects a 50 per cent increase in its revenues this year and expects its fleet to be logging around 80,000 flight hours annually by 2012. The company has also launched its business in Asia recently, by placing aircraft at the newly-opened Subang Airport in Kuala Lumpur, where it is establishing an operating base for the Asian market.

## A StarJet is born at MEBA

Western Aviation of ETA Star Group in Dubai and Aviation Concepts/Sojitz Group of Japan are joining forces to provide comprehensive professional aviation solutions.

The new organization – StarJet (stand 700) – will offer a wide range of services like aircraft sales and leasing, world-wide charter, turnkey aircraft management, maintenance and FBO services.

Private jet charter is Western Aviation's core specialization. The company provides charter solutions through its private and secure terminal facilities, charter consultants, ground transport arrangements, on-board catering and entertainment, on-board telecommunications and cabin attendants.

Now, the new StarJet organization will offer the total range of professional aviation service solutions, says AJ Kamal, general manager Western Group.

"Western Aviation's tie-up with Sojitz to form StarJet is part of our strategic move to establish global leadership in providing quality transport solutions," he says.

Yohei Sakurai, vice president charter sales Sojitz Group/Aviation Concepts, adds: "The Western Aviation/Sojitz collaboration will bring a comprehensive and seamless array of aviation service solutions to the Middle East."

Western Aviation is also displaying three aircraft at MEBA 2008 – a Hawker 900XP (static park location 33); a Falcon 900EX (location 51) and a Challenger 605 (location 52).

Mohammed Fairouz, assistant general manager of Western Group, says: "Since 2005, Western Aviation has had a remarkable record in private jet chartering in the region. In order to stand up to the expectations of customers, we acquired a brand new Hawker 900XP, which is an acclaimed jet in its class. Keeping in mind our long-term ambitious plans, we have also signed for a new Hawker 4000 super mid-sized jet, which will provide our customers an unmatched private chartering experience."

Ihsaan Deeb, business development manager Western Aviation, says: "The new collaboration leading to the formation of StarJet will enable us to offer a wider range of Aviation services to a broader spectrum of consumers."

## Palm lands Jordan agreement

Dubai-based Palm Aviation (stand 1000) and Jordan Aircraft Maintenance (JorAMCo) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) at the beginning of the month.

The agreement will see Palm provide global flight support, ground handling and re-fuelling services to JorAMCo's customers during their maintenance visits to Queen Alia International Airport in Amman, Jordan.

Bashir Abdel Hadi, CEO of JorAMCo says: "We are delighted to have signed this MoU with Palm Aviation; its ground handling and re-fuelling services will be

promoted to the operators and airlines who are using our facility and they will definitely need this service for positioning and re-positioning of their aircraft."

Samer Dabbagh, executive vice president and chief executive of Palm Aviation adds: "The relationship with JorAMCo is very important to us as we are expanding our operations across the region. The continued success and growth of the aviation sector in the Middle East is, to a great extent, linked with effective flight support services and we aim to deliver the world class aviation infrastructure that the region needs."



Samer Dabbagh (l), Palm Aviation, and Bashir Abdel Hadi (r), JorAMCO

## Oxygen 4 breathes easy in the Middle East

Oxygen 4 Aviation sees the Middle East as a major factor in its plans to improve on last year's \$28m revenue.

Director Craig Middleton says that the company has seen a 20 per cent growth in the region in the last 18 months.

"The Middle East is a relatively new and unique market for us and we're very

keen to explore the opportunities it offers," he says. "It is a niche market, with expectations and requirements quite removed from those we cater for in Europe and the rest of the world. There is strong demand in the Middle East, especially for wide-body jets with full cabin service."

Oxygen 4 was established in 2005 and, while UK-based, the company is active in Europe, primarily chartering private jets from Germany, Austria and Switzerland. Russia, the Middle East and Asia are pinpointed to provide growth opportunities over the coming months.



A Bombardier Challenger 605





# Driving ambition of First Class Cars

British company First Class Cars (stand 59) is aiming to show it can match on four wheels the standards of comfort and service set by the VIP jets and helicopters in the static park.

The only chauffeur-driven operation at MEBA 08, the company is aiming to win the custom of the growing number of Middle East operators who regularly fly into the UK and Europe, offering them a seamless, high-quality VIP service on the ground.

"We are considering the possibility of positioning vehicles here in Dubai," says chief executive Graham Coate. "And we are pursuing three-to-four-day bookings under which we would supply a driver and luxury car to the client for the duration of his stay in the UK."

The company's 35-strong fleet includes examples of the Mercedes S-Class saloon

and Viano, Chrysler Grand Voyager, Bentley Continental Flying Spur and Rolls-Royce Phantom. All sport a highly polished black exterior and a sumptuous leather and wood interior.

Headquartered at London Luton Airport and including music and film companies among its blue-chip clientele, First Class Cars has deployed a vehicle tracking system that provides position updates every 60 seconds. This is matched by a flight tracking system to monitor aircraft arrival times in order to minimise costly waiting time for clients and charter brokers.

"Business jets and helicopters often have to be diverted because the weather closes in, the client changes his mind about where he wants to go, or meetings overrun," says Coate. "We can be there to meet the aircraft at the shortest notice."



## Satellite smorgasbord from EMS

EMS Satcom (stand 113) supplied the satellite communications antennas installed on most of the big bizjets in the static park.

But technology marches on, and now the Ottawa-based Inmarsat aeronautical equipment manufacturer is in Dubai to promote a lighter and more high-performing successor to the best-selling AMT-50.

Announced at last month's NBAA show in Orlando and designed to optimise the delivery of Inmarsat's 432kbit/sec-per-channel SwiftBroadband service, the tail-mounted, mechanically steered AMT-700 builds on more than 15 years of field experience with the AMT-50.

"It incorporates several technological advances originally brought to market in our AMT-3800 phased-array product and now being applied to maximise SwiftBroadband data throughput and system capacity," says product development vp John Broughton.

Weighing less than five

pounds and also more compact and higher-performing than its predecessor, the new antenna is aimed at smaller business aircraft like Cessna's newly announced Citation Columbus. With its lower power consumption, higher gain and a small footprint, it is specifically designed to meet or exceed SwiftBroadband requirements. It is due to be commercially available from next May.

Also featured at the EMS stand is the Sky Connect Iridium-based satcoms service offered by Atlanta-based parent company EMS Technologies.

EMS Technologies acquired Sky Connect, a satellite applications provider headquartered in Maryland, with the aim of building a service business of its own in the rapidly developing Iridium aeronautical sector. Sky Connect specialises in Iridium-based combined tracking and voice systems for general aviation and has hardware flying on more than



The fairing atop the fin of the Falcon 900 houses an EMS satcoms antenna

2,000 aircraft. Its integrated solution comprises hardware, accessories, airline and Web-based mapping.

The company doubled its sales in 2005-07 and is forecast to grow by more than 25 per cent this year. Its customers are concentrated mainly in the US offshore

helicopter market but it has also won business in the fire-fighting, emergency medical transport, law enforcement and air transport sectors.

For more news/show images see  
[flightglobal.com](http://flightglobal.com)



Authors Liz Moscrop and Sanjay Rampal with the Etihad pilots at the launch

### Celebrating the greatest women in aerospace history

Aviation is fuelled by as much by testosterone as Agave – but many of the bravest and most pioneering aviators have been women.

These unsung heroines of the skies – and beyond – are celebrated in a new book, 'The 100 Greatest Women in Aviation' by Liz Moscrop and Sanjay Rampal.

Liz is at MEBA to promote the book, and will be signing copies for people purchasing the book from the Aerocomm stand (stand 923) at noon today.

Several Arab women are included in the book including Aisha Al Mansoori and Salma Al Balooshi, the first two female cadets from Etihad, who made a special appearance when the book was launched in the summer.

"It was a great surprise to be included in the book. It's very inspirational for women in particular," says Al Balooshi.

The book covers 100 profiles of some of the bravest and most inspirational women in flight history. Profiles include Harriet Quimby, Patty Wagstaff, Amelia Earhart, Amy Johnson and Valentina Tereshkova, the first woman in Space.

Visitors can buy copies for Dhs100 at the stand.



## Flying doctor demo

A new enhanced and lighter weight Tempus IC personal doctor for business jets is being introduced at MEBA by RDT (stand 542).

The UK-based company will be giving demonstrations of the product, which allows even non-medically trained personnel to collect and transmit a sick passenger's vital signs such as blood pressure, pulse and heart condition from any remote land, sea and air location to a ground-based medical response team.

It is specifically designed for use in limited aircraft cabin space or at the passenger's seat.

RDT's air transport customers include Emirates and Virgin, which has installed Tempus on board all its long-haul fleet of aircraft.



# Wonder of winglets boosts productivity

Less than ten years ago the world's first large-cabin aircraft with blended winglets debuted at the Dubai Air Show. Now the descendants of that Dubai Air Wing BBJ number nearly three thousand and technology developer Aviation Partners (stand 925) is keen to push the fuel-saving credentials of its brainchild.

"We've radically changed the productivity of large-cabin VIP and head-of-state aircraft," says sales vp Gary Dunn. "A wingletted Boeing offers big cuts in fuel burn and emissions, plus 5-7% more range and improved climb performance. No other modification will give you anything close to the productivity improvements provided by blended winglets."

Aviation Partners' blended winglets are standard on the BBJ. They are also available for the 737-300 and -500, and will be certified soon on the 767-300ER. The company has retrofitted 12 corporate/VIP 757-200s – the latest, for Athens-based Gainjet, which will enter service this month – and recently completed the world's first wingletted VIP 737-300. Geneva-based PrivatAir is the first VIP operator to commit to a retrofit for the 767-300ER.

"The bulk of the global BBJ fleet is based in the Middle East and demand in the region for VIP 757s and 767s remains strong," says Dunn. "We look forward to enhancing the performance of many more Middle Eastern large-cabin VIP

transports over the next few years."

AP's blended winglets are also certificated or in development for Dassault, Gulfstream and Hawker airframes. More than a hundred Hawker 800/800XPs – including two Hawker 800XPs in this region – have been upgraded. "We expect to add the Hawker 750 to our existing supplemental type certificate soon," says Dunn. "Our network of authorised installers was recently extended by the addition of Dubai Aerospace Enterprise-owned Standard Aero in the USA."

Certification for the Dassault Falcon 2000 is due in the first quarter of next year, and AP says that it already holds a backlog of orders. Programmes for the Falcon 900 and 50 are under way.

Aviation Partners' winglets bringing benefits to BBJ operators



## New package for VLJs

ARINC Direct (stand 330) has announced an economical package of web-enabled flight support services for VLI operators and other GA aircraft with less than 12,500lb take-off weights.

The VLI package costs \$1,500 yearly and includes a full suite of support services online. It has comprehensive flight planning, weather, aircraft tracking, runway analysis and weight and balance applications. As well as being accessible through any normal internet connection, the

suite is also compatible with PDAs, smartphones and BlackBerrys. There is also an option for users to purchase fuel through ARINC Direct.

"Nearly 400 Eclipse and Cessna VLJs have started flying in the last two years and this is the first suite of flight support applications that is cost-effective for them," says Bob Richard, ARINC senior director, Flight Support Services. "ARINC is happy to support this fast-growing and underserved segment of today's business aviation market."

*Flying Colours Corp.*

## THE CRJ EXECLINER

Take a regional jet, add the industry leader in executive aircraft conversions, then add your imagination. The result is the CRJ ExecLiner from Flying Colours Corporation.

We've stripped away the standard high-density interior and regional range and transformed the CRJ into a luxuriously appointed executive jet equipped with a certified auxiliary fuel system that offers maximized performance and range – comparable to aircraft costing literally millions more.

Contact Flying Colours to learn the full story on the CRJ ExecLiner.

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## UNCOVERING THE POTENTIAL OF THE CRJ



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# RUNWAY RIVALS

The UAE is offering more airport choice for business aviation.

Murdo Morrison reports

In the desert behind the industrial Dubai suburb of Jebel Ali, the world's biggest airport in area – and perhaps eventually in traffic – is taking shape. Part of the Arab emirate's long-term ambition to create the leading global hub for air freight and long-haul passenger travel, the six-runway Al Maktoum International is also intended to become a major business aviation centre in the next decade, and with 80 hangar plots available, home to a number of fixed-base operations and maintenance facilities.

Dubai World Central – the 140km<sup>2</sup> commercial, leisure and residential development of which Al Maktoum International is part – has signed deals with a number of operators to open premises at the airport's so-called Aviation City. They include US business aviation services start-up XJet World, which plans to open in early 2010 the airport's first fixed base operation, a \$35 million "clubhouse" with covered parking for up to 25 aircraft.

The development will mirror the company's members-only facility in

Denver, where 13 (soon to be 20) aircraft owners pay a one-off fee for dedicated hangarage, handling and lounge access. "We don't like the term FBO, which tend to cater for the pilots rather than the owners and are very much dependent on the margin they can get on fuel sales," says chief executive Josh Stewart, who founded XJet World 16 months ago. "Our business model is pitched at very high net worth individuals who expect seven-star service in every aspect of their lives, and we provide that." Construction on the 1,500m<sup>2</sup> facility will begin early next year with the business eventually employing 60 people.

Several of the business aviation tenants at the existing Dubai International Airport, currently the region's biggest private aviation hub, could follow. Swiss business aviation services companies ExecuJet and Jet Aviation both have large FBOs in the airport's free zone where space is at a premium.

Al Maktoum's main rival to become the region's business aviation hub could scarcely be more different. The Al Bateen air base is

10km from Abu Dhabi city centre and was the emirate's airport until Abu Dhabi International opened in 1979. Although it is home to Abu Dhabi's two newest business aviation operators, Falcon Aviation and Prestige Jet, its gatehouse and squat, drab buildings make it unmistakably a military station.

However, this is set to change. At the Paris air show, Abu Dhabi Airports (ADAC) announced plans to turn Al Bateen into the region's first dedicated business aviation airport, with work on the \$50 million project starting next year when the air force begins a 30-month phased

departure. The move will free up the expanding international airport, base of flag-carrier Etihad, to focus on scheduled services, with freight and some low-cost flights being routed through the oasis city of Al Ain.

Al Bateen's big advantages will be its proximity to the city and the fact that it will be exclusively for business aviation, says Mohammed Al Bulooki, vice president airline marketing and aeronautical revenue at ADAC. "The business aviation customer doesn't feel special. He doesn't want to have to wait for a 747 to take off. The message is that this is your airport, not just your

aircraft," he says, adding a none-to-subtle knock at his rival: "This will not be a six-runway airport with a business aviation piece on the side."

The response to the move from operators has been "overwhelming" says Al Bulooki: "I am receiving phone calls and emails from potential tenants on a daily basis." However, one potential tenant that has not yet committed is the emirate's biggest charter operator Royal Jet, which has an FBO and its offices at the international airport. "They have constraints where they are and have expressed a lot of interest."

A major problem in the

Middle East has been lack of parking spaces for business aircraft. Al Bateen will have 50 parking stands and "I don't want to disclose yet how many maintenance facilities", he says. Because it started as a civil airport, the 3,200m runway can handle aircraft up to an Airbus A320 or Boeing 737-800 – a requirement given the number of Airbus Corporate Jets and Boeing Business Jets operating in the region.

One of the first changes will be the replacement of military guards with civilian security personnel. "The whole military feel will go," says Al Bulooki. Upgrades to the airfield infrastructure will follow, with tenants bringing their own investment to the site in the form of FBOs and hangars. Referring to TAG Aviation's showpiece business aviation terminal at Farnborough in the UK, acknowledged as one of the best in the world, he says: "Here we have space for five or six TAGs." The airport, he claims, will be "double the size of Farnborough on the day it opens" with an expected 30 to 40 aircraft movements a day by 2012.

Above: Dubai's Executive Flight Centre is set for the new airport of Jebel Ali. Right: The shape of things to come at Al Bateen



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## Changing deals for Gulf pilots

One of the biggest problems for fast-growing Gulf-based business aviation operators in recent years has been recruiting and retaining experienced pilots. While the sun-soaked, family-friendly and tax-free lifestyle of the region has always lured expatriates, high prices, shortages of suitable accommodation and horrendous traffic, especially in Dubai, has removed much of the lustre.

Lay-offs of airline pilots throughout the world will adjust the supply and demand equation in the operators' favour temporarily. However, attracting pilots with the suitable flying experience and social skills to work for high-end business aviation operations remains a challenge for many, and operators often have to dig deep to provide the sort of remuneration packages expected by the best candidates.

"We have seen some easing, but this doesn't mean we are getting them cheaply," says Faris Deeb, chief executive of Abu Dhabi operator Prestige Jet. "I need the best of the best."

One of the biggest advantages a business aviation operator with a mixed fleet has over most airlines is that it can offer pilots the opportunity to move up through the types. "I would always rather upgrade someone to a larger jet and get a person in at the bottom. It means we can keep people we like and keep them motivated," says Paras Dhamecha of Dubai-based Empire Aviation. The job also tends to be more varied, with pilots going to Zurich one day and a remote part of Russia the next. It is also more customer-focused. Unlike anonymous airline pilots in the cockpit, business aviation pilots are expected to be highly visible ambassadors for the brand.

A huge problem, however, is pilots flitting between operators, despite their work permits contracting them to a single employer. Deeb believes the Middle East Business Aviation Association needs to take a lead by asking its members to sign a "gentleman's agreement" not to poach pilots from each other.



# BAE here to build on ABJ Mid-East success

BAE Systems Regional Aircraft (Stand 722) is at MEBA buoyed by the success of its revamped Avro Business Jet (ABJ) corporate versions of either the BAe 146 or Avro RJ which it says is proving to be a significant niche player in the Middle East market.

Three Gulf governments have chosen the ABJ to meet their regional VIP air transport requirements.

The most recent ABJ deliveries into the region have been to the Bahrain Defence Force (BDF) which took delivery of a VVIP RJ100 in April after conversion at Inflight Engineering Limited at London Stansted Airport. This aircraft joined two RJ85s already in service with the BDF.

In addition, the Dubai Air Wing accepted its first RJ85 in the summer after conversion to executive configuration by Avmax in Calgary, Canada. The second RJ85 for the Dubai Air Wing is currently under conversion to a VVIP layout at Avmax and is due for delivery later this year.

The third government to have chosen the ABJ is Abu Dhabi where the Amiri Flight has one RJ70 and one RJ85. The VVIP-configured RJ70 is operated by themselves and the executive charter-configured RJ85 is operated under management by Royal Jet.

Andy Whelan, director sales for BAE Systems Asset Management says that a combination of factors is

attracting buyers to the ABJ with performance, price and cabin size being key. He says: "these unique aircraft can be acquired for regional airliner prices, which represents exceptional value for money."

"The interior cabin dimensions are practically the same as the BBJ and so the ABJ lends itself admirably to bespoke interior configurations with several customers opting to re-fit their cabins with high-specification VVIP interiors. The four entry/exit doors and front and rear galleys allow for a split cabin which means that Principals can retain their comfort and privacy in the front cabin completely independent from their staff in the rear cabin. Many competitor aircraft only have one door at the front which prevents

them from having a split cabin as this would contravene existing safety legislation."

Whelan adds: "Other advantages are the aircraft's independence from ground support equipment and the two large underfloor baggage bays that can accommodate all the luggage needs of clients in either a private or corporate configuration."

Whelan says that the aircraft has been designed to operate on its own from remote airports and a number of modifications are available off the shelf such as unpaved runway kits, and forward and rear airstairs.

"The aircraft's outstanding airfield performance is renowned," says Whelan "and this enables the ABJ to get in and out of difficult airports denied to other jets, but which are

much closer to the end destination the client wants to reach and with the added advantage of more privacy. For instance, one ABJ has recently been flying into and out of dirt and grass airfields in Africa with elevations of 6,000ft and runway lengths of 3,000ft."

Whelan says that BAE Systems has experienced an upsurge of interest in the ABJ in the past year. Recent commitments by governments, high net-worth individuals, companies and charter organisations means that there are now around 25 ABJs either in service or under conversion for this market.

For more news/show images see [flightglobal.com](http://flightglobal.com)

## Hemisphere CRJ conversions breathe new lease of life

New at the show this year is the Hemisphere 200XR programme from Tailwind Capital and Global Principal Finance Company (Chalet 18).

The company takes low time and cycle Bombardier CRJ-200LR regional jets and converts them into a baseline 15-seat VIP aircraft with delivery available in 2009.

The completion allows a variety of optional configurations that can include club seating, divans and even a private bedroom.

PATS Aircraft's auxiliary fuel system is a standard and increases fuel capacity by just under 600 gallons. This in turn gives the retrofitted regional airliner a range

of up to 3,000nm.

The aircraft will be certified dually by the FAA and EASA as well as being SFAR 89 compliant.

"We believe the Hemisphere 200XR represents a unique combination of ultra-large cabin luxury, attractive pricing and early delivery slots that other manufacturers cannot offer," says Tailwind president Joel Hussey. "Our aircraft are available for customer delivery in the first quarter of 2009 with the amenities of new aircraft, but at a fraction of the price. This makes the Hemisphere a highly attractive opportunity that really makes sense for discerning customers."

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## IN BRIEF

## FOUR MUSTANGS

**FOR EGYPT**  
Cessna (stand OD1) has received an order for four Citation Mustangs from the Egyptian Aviation Academy (EAA) for delivery in the fourth quarter of 2009.

EAA's selection of the Mustang follows its experiences operating the Cessna 172 as a training platform.

By acquiring the Mustang, EAA says it will be the first pilot training organisation in Africa to offer Cessna's entry-level jet.

"EAA is committed to providing world-class training services to our customers across the Middle East and Eastern Mediterranean," says chairman and chief executive officer Hassan M. Hassan. "Introducing the Citation Mustang is the next step in this strategy and we believe will offer students an unrivalled practical learning environment."

## NEW CONCEPTS

Corporate Concepts International (CCI) and Subul Aviation of Saudi Arabia have entered a partnership to open an additional regional office in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia to serve the Middle East and northern Africa. CCI has been serving clients worldwide for more than 30 years in aircraft selection and acquisitions, sales, completion and refurbishment, aviation consulting, aircraft appraisals, and expert witness engagements.

## A RIGHT ROYAL AWARD

Royal Jet (challenger 37) was named the Middle East's leading private jet charter at the World Travel Awards this year. "What makes this award so special," says Shane O'Hare, president and chief executive, "is that the winners in each category are decided by votes received from agents and travel professionals. So it is a firm endorsement by the industry itself that we are regarded as the best private jet charter in the region."

# LOTS IN STORE ON STATIC DEBUT



Aero Toy Store aircraft are a major contractor to the MEBA display

Four of the largest jets on show here at MEBA were bought by US-based Aero Toy Store to be re-sold, and they expect no shortage of interest from buyers.

"The Middle East has been growing for us since we started operating in the region many years ago," says chief operating officer Ben Shirazi. The Florida head-quartered company is the world's largest trader of used business jets invariably adding its own touch of luxury style before they are prepared for sale.

Thinking of the range needs of local buyers, Shirazi has brought a 2006 Bombardier Global Express XRS, a Challenger 605, a new Falcon 900EX and a new Challenger 605.

## FERRARI

The 605 is "a branded, special edition, a fantastic looking aircraft," explains Shirazi. "Conceptually designed, interior and exterior, by Pininfarina specialists." The same team shapes the speedy style of Ferrari, Maserati and other luxury vehicles.

Aero Toy Store's own completion centre reshapes interiors of its selection, which is half pre-owned and half new. "We have positions on green aircraft that you can have at the end of the year," Shirazi says.

Keeping their hangars stocked isn't any easier after the global economy began to slow. Shirazi says "It's still hard to find a new, low-time, late model business jet, and that's the majority of our business."

So far, he says, sales haven't taken a hit.

"Business must go on. Regardless of what happens, people need to be at a meeting here and a meeting there in a different region, and there's really only one way you can guarantee that still today," he explains. "They obviously can't count on airline transportation for such a task."

It's the same for personal

sales visits. "We spend quite a lot of time out of the U.S.," he says, and they're willing to pay the fuel and operating costs to bring a plane for any serious buyer to lot over. "We're not afraid to get in one of our aircraft and visit them on the other side of the ocean."

## LOCAL MARKET

That includes trips to the Middle East, where Shirazi and his father, Morris, the founder and chairman, have family ties. "We feel very comfortable operating in this region. The chairman is fluent in Arabic and Farsi and many of the native tongues," says Shirazi. "We are very conscious of the local market needs and aviation business quite well now because we've been doing it for some time," he says. But he says it would be wrong to look at the region as being too different. "It's a global market place," he says. "No matter what the market does

there's a demand to move executives and private individuals to and from different parts of the world."

After MEBA, it'll be five months before they fly aircraft to display at another trade show – at Geneva for EBACE. "Shows are great. It's a great excuse to invite your customers from that region to come in and show them some new products," he says.

This year Aero Toy Store has expanded its global footprint, adding a completions centre in Montreal to help the Florida headquarters, and opening sales offices in Beverly Hills, California and off the coast of Monaco. There, a large

yacht serves as a regional office and an example of watercraft they can supply. "That's more of a leisure item, which is why we don't focus so much on it," he explains. "It's really for customers of ours that are looking for yachts and yacht owners who are looking for aircraft."

The location is the big benefit of that investment, he adds. "We find Monaco to be a hub during the summer days where you get to meet everybody from a lot of different regions. It's a lot of word of mouth. Before you know it, we'll meet five or six people from one contact. Of five or six people, usually half will buy."

**"Business must go on. Regardless of what happens, people need to be at a meeting here and a meeting there in a different region, and there's really only one way you can guarantee that still today,"**



Aero Toy Store's Ben Shirazi – comfortable in the region

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# Make a splash in Dubai

If you have time away from the show, Dubai offers a vast variety of things to do. Whether you fancy having fun at a water park or seeing the cultural side of Dubai you're sure to be satisfied. And remember, just because it's in the desert it doesn't mean you can't ski! *Marcelle Nethersole* gives her top tips for things to do.

## Al Fahidi Fort

This is one of the most historical monuments in Dubai. Built in 1799, it was originally built to protect the Creek from foreign invaders. Since then it has acted as a palace to the ruling Sheikh, and as Dubai's seat of government. In 1970 the fort was converted into a museum, known as 'Dubai Museum'. The museum is one of Dubai's biggest tourist attractions, displaying a large collection of objects highlighting the cultural richness of the Arab past. A huge amount of military artefact are on display, as well as Arabian sailing boats, pearl-diving suits, plus a complete grave from the Al-Qusais archaeological site dating back around 4,000 years. There is also a multimedia and interactive show available, where fascinating models give an insight into the building of traditional souks and dhow.

## Atlantis The Palm

[www.atlantisthepalm.com](http://www.atlantisthepalm.com)

This is one of Dubai's latest attractions. The resort hosts a range of breathtaking attractions the main one being Aquaventure. Here you can scare yourself silly on the Leap of Faith, a near-vertical waterslide which plunges down from the top of the Ziggurat, take a river ride of over two kilometres, ride the water rapids and white water chargers, or sun yourself on the 700 metre beach. At Dolphin Bay you can get up close and personal with dolphins at one of its three huge lagoons. View marine life in the ruins of an undersea city at Lost Chambers. There are 65,000 marine animals, walk through the tunnel of



sharks, if you dare. And if it's a day of pampering you're after head to the huge spa offering a huge variety of treatments. Note: If you're a guest at the Hotel Atlantis you get in to the attractions for free.

## Skiing

It might be 40 degrees outside but that's not going to stop Dubai having ski-slopes! Ski Dubai is an in-door ski centre which juts out of the Mall of the Emirates, one of the biggest shopping centres in the world, and produces real snow with temperatures below 0.

It has got all the areas covered with a snow park for children, a quarter pipe for snow boarders, ski runs for novices, plus the first indoor 'black' run in the world.

You'll need to change out of your shorts and flip flops and get in to your ski suits and boots which you can hire there. You are even provided with hats and gloves. After an hour or so on the slopes you can sit and enjoy a hot-chocolate in one of its cafes before braving the heat back outside. What a contrast!

## Jumeirah Mosque

Dubai has many beautiful mosques but this is the largest and most impressive example of Islamic architecture. With its elaborate design it makes it one of the most photographed landmarks in Dubai.



Left: The Leap of Faith at Aquaventure, takes you through a shark infested pool (top). Above: Dubai Museum.

## Shopping

Dubai is a shopping paradise with huge shopping malls in abundance packed with designer stores from Armani to Yves Saint Laurent, and top jewellery stores such as Tiffany's, as well as general outlets.

If you're in a rush to buy a last minute gift you should head to Dubai's newest mall which is simply called Dubai Mall but it's certainly not a simple mall as it is one of the largest in the world with a proposed 1,200 stores many of which are already open to the public.

# Make a meal of it!

Dubai is a multi-cultural city which is reflected in its cuisine. Whether you want to dine at a top-notch French restaurant, or just grab a hot shawarma, you'll find it all in this bustling city. The top restaurants are generally located in the hotels and you must pre-book. But if you want cheaper fare, you'll find delicious eateries all over Dubai, plus it will give you a taste of real Emirati life.

## Al Mahara

Burj Al Arab

Jumeirah

☎ 301 7600

Open: 12.30pm-3pm & 7pm-midnight

This is Burj's signature restaurant and thought to be one of the best seafood restaurants in the world. Enjoy the mock submarine ride to your table. The food is first class, as is the service. You must pre-book!

## Vu's

Emirates Towers

Sheikh Zayed Road

☎ 319 8088

Open: 12.30pm-3pm & 7.30-midnight

Take a very fast lift up to this award winning chic French/Italian restaurant with fabulous views of the city. It's pricey but well worth it if you want to impress a client. Pre-book

## Blue Elephant

Al-Bustan Rotana Hotel

Al Garhoud Road

☎ 282 0000

Open: 12.30pm & 7.11.30pm

This popular Thai restaurant designed as a Thai village, the centrepiece is a fish-filled lake. Tuck-in to a Royal Thai Banquet, or just choose your favourite dishes.

## MORE

Garhoud

(behind Lifco supermarket)

☎ 283 0224

Open: 8am-10pm

A great café-restaurant living up to its name as the portions are generous. The breakfast is particularly good, try the eggs benedict. No alcohol is served here, but do try one of their delicious smoothies.

## Lebanese Village

Al-Mankhool Road

☎ 352 2522

Popular Lebanese restaurant serving authentic grills and mezze, and delicious shawarmas. Outside dining area gets busy.

# FLIGHT DAILY NEWS

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## Airport Information

Dubai International Airport

[www.dubaiairport.com](http://www.dubaiairport.com)

Airport Enquiries: ☎ 206 6666

## Major Airlines

Air Canada:

[www.aircanada.ca](http://www.aircanada.ca)

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[www.british-airways.co.uk](http://www.british-airways.co.uk)

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☎ 337 1500

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parcels at these petrol stations.





The maintenance, repair and overhaul sector has struggled to keep pace with the rapid growth of business aircraft in the Middle East. Executives and Jet Aviation have large maintenance shops as part of their fixed-base operations at Dubai International airport and some operators carry out their own line checks, but many of the region's business jets have to travel to Europe for even the most routine repairs. However, this could be on its way to being fixed. A number of announcements at MERA show this week should see a major investment in local infrastructure over the next few years.

Abu Dhabi's Prestige Jet earlier this year launched its own maintenance brand, Prestige Technique, and will team with the USA's Duncan Aviation to provide engine and airframe overhaul services. Although Prestige chief executive Paris Desb is reluctant to talk details and dates, the plan is to open a shop at the planned business aviation-only airport at Al Bateen air base in downtown Abu Dhabi, followed by a series of small maintenance centres around the region. These will mainly be staffed by technicians able to provide rapid, mobile aircraft-on-ground support.

"The operator's main concern is aircraft dispatchability. Our travelling AOG team will fix the aircraft to a level where it can fly," says Desb.

Following that, Prestige plans to open a major MRO

# More plans in pipeline to beat MRO shortage

centre in Jordan. As well as good land prices, economic stability, a well-trained workforce and an aviation heritage, the kingdom has the advantage of being neutral, with business and political links with all its neighbours including Iran and Israel, says Desb.

He believes it was essential to hook up with one of the foremost business aviation services specialists rather than attempt to go it alone in MRO. "I did consider it, but there are very humble technical capabilities in this region," he says. "We can find engineers with spanners and ratchets, but it needs a network of logistical support, spare parts etc. We needed an aggressive player with lots of experience."

Bahrain-based charter start-up Kinn Jet, which began operations last year, plans to open what chief executive Will Curtis describes as a 3,500m<sup>2</sup> "state of the art" third-party maintenance facility in the island state, as well as a second facility at London's Biggin Hill airport (see story below). Availability of top-class maintenance service in the region is poor, he believes.



Jet Aviation continues to provide service in the region

"We will be filling a big gap. People in this region are very discerning about service. You see that with their spending habits elsewhere. Yet the experience of third-party maintenance here does not match that expectation. We

plan to change that." The mistake some providers make is employing "someone just about able to do the job", he contends. "You can save 25% on salary, but that he will cost you 20 or 30 times that if things go wrong. In

this business, margins are tiny and potential losses are huge. The difference could be just one or two mistakes a year."

Longer-established charter providers in the region are also eyeing the MRO market.

They include Falcon Aviation, which plans to make an announcement at MERA following its move this year from being a helicopter-only operator into fixed wing, and fellow Abu Dhabi firm Royal Jet, which has its own line maintenance facility for its Gulfstream fleet but is considering a move into third-party services. "We are in discussions with various parties. It's an area of intense interest for us," says Royal Jet vice president commercial John Morgan.

The region's main two established MRO providers specialise in certain brands and types. Jet Aviation, which has facilities in Saudi Arabia as well as Dubai, is an authorised service centre for the Boeing Business Jet and Gulfstream GIV and GV, Falcon 900 and 2000 and Hawker 800 series. Its Dubai hangar is big enough for two BBJs. Executives, whose FBO is next door to its rival at the Dubai airport free zone, is approved for all Bombardier aircraft and the Gulfstream G150 and G200, as well as Honeywell engines and auxiliary power units.

However, with the Middle Eastern business aircraft fleet estimated to double in four years' time to around 700 aircraft, supply still lags behind demand, says Kinn's Curtis. "There needs to be a dramatic increase in maintenance facilities."

## Rizon expands into new London base

Bahrain-based executive jet operator Rizon has expanded into Europe with an 80-year lease for land at the UK's London Biggin Hill Airport.

Rizon is in the process of constructing a \$20 million 13,000m<sup>2</sup> hangar and ramp area.

The new facility will have maintenance capabilities and the company is already in the process of obtaining EASA 145 approval for an Aircraft Operations Certificate (AOC) for aeroplanes and helicopters.

There will be a fixed base of operation (FBO) that the company says is geared to meet the high expectations of its discerning Gulf-based clientele. It also says it is encouraged by early demand for its services in London and has already signed the first hangarage and maintenance contract to cover a UK-based client with a Challenger 605 for delivery in late 2009.

To complement its aviation offerings at Biggin Hill, the company has signed a separate agreement to build a \$15 million, 75-room, hotel adjacent to its FBO.

Chief executive Will Curtis says: "London Biggin Hill has long needed its own hotel in order to cater for visiting crews, who often have to travel some distance to find suitable accommodation. We see it as an extension of our services to provide visiting aircrew to Biggin Hill a convenient and competitively run hotel."

Alongside the hotel and FBO facilities, the company has plans to work with the airport in the development of a brasserie-style restaurant.

"There is not so much that is new about this



Render of Biggin Hill Hangar to be built

concept if one considers it – European companies traditionally have the Middle East in their sights when it comes to expansion. We are simply doing business the other way round," explains Curtis.

"It actually makes a lot of sense for us because the seasonal demand in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) area inversely mirrors

that in Europe with a busy winter and quiet summer. We have devised systems by which we can move staff and resources from one theatre of operation to the other on a seasonal basis, thus largely overcoming the Achilles heel of the majority of charter operators – namely the seasonality of the business."



# Falcon swoops to increase Middle East market share

Dassault's Falcon 7X arrives for MEBA



Dassault Falcon (chalet 25) has increased its local presence dramatically over the last year with around a dozen Falcons entering service.

The influx has brought the installed fleet to 41, which is projected to double over the next four years.

John Rosanvallon, Falcon's chief executive says: "Despite the recent economic conditions, our 2008 sales results in the region are expected to remain healthy. The Middle East accounted for a significant share of the 116 Falcons ordered world-wide during the first three-quarters of this year."

According to Rosanvallon, extra income from higher oil prices has been a factor behind the sales, but an increase in diverse business interests throughout the Middle East has also driven growth.

Dassault's flagship Falcon 7X accounts for 30 per cent of the recent sales. Its 5,950nm range allows non-stop connections with most major business centres in Europe and Asia. There are already two of the type in the region, and the first of the 20 Falcon 2000EX sold to NAS (National Air Services) in 2007 will be delivered in early 2009 to enter NetJets Middle East's fractional ownership programme.

The French airframer has also set up a full-time sales office and dedicated spares distribution centre in Dubai.

Jacques Chauvet, senior vp, worldwide customer service says: "Dubai is unique because of the expanding Falcon fleet based there, but it is also a popular stop-over point for transient aircraft flying from the Asia-Pacific region to Europe."

The company is also evaluating several regional service centres as candidates to join its 30 authorised Falcon Service centres network. Currently, Falcon Customer Service has a customer service manager based in Jeddah and another will soon be appointed for a permanent office in Dubai.

■ Both the 7X and the 2000EX are on display at the static park.

## Airbus sets up Dubai base to meet demand

Airbus has demonstrated a firm commitment to the growing Middle East and Asian business aviation markets by relocating its head of business to Dubai.

Speaking on the eve of MEBA, vice president executive and private aviation, Francois Chazelle, said the move was driven by recognition of the importance of the regional market to the European manufacturer.

"The Middle East represents about a third of executive and private aviation business," Chazelle says. "We are also using Dubai as the base for our sales in to northern and southern Asia. China is a fast growing area too and we are better positioned by being here."

Airbus has brought an A318 Elite to Dubai for its MEBA debut to display the sheer size and advantage of

the airliner in its VVIP configuration. The aircraft on the static is owned by VVIP operator Comlux of Switzerland, and features a luxurious interior comprising a lounge with several seating areas, plus a private office/bedroom with ensuite bathroom. It seats up to 18 passengers.

Airbus' ACJ Family, comprises the A318 Elite, ACJ and A320 Prestige, which vp marketing, David Velupillai



Comlux has its Elite here. Inset: Francois Chazelle

describes as the new top-end of the market in business jets. "It features the widest, tallest

and most spacious cabins in its class, with around twice the cabin width and nearly three times the volume of traditional business jets," Velupillai says.

The ACJ is derived from the best-selling A320 airliner which has more than 6,300 orders from 285 customers and operators. With more than 100 ACJs sold, (20 in Saudi Arabia and 10 in the UAE alone) it is proving to be a great success story. "It is thus well placed to benefit from customers trading up from traditional business jets, because while it is similarly sized on the outside, it features a much more comfortable and spacious cabin on the inside," Velupillai says.

Chazelle says that the other aircraft in the Airbus family are also making an impact in the region. "The VIP widebodies offer even more space and comfort, as well as "non-stop to most of the world range," he says. "The A340-300s with the four engines are – with the exception of the A380 – the quietest in the sky."

Airbus announced its first sales of VIP A350s last year to Saudi Arabia's MAZ Aviation, adding to several VIP A340 orders, and also landed its first deal for a VIP A380 at the Dubai Air Show last November.

## Chance to witness an Eclipse



The Eclipse 500 on the static at MEBA

Palm Aviation (stand 1000) is displaying an Eclipse 500 with MyJet of Turkey. After the show, the aircraft will be performing flight demonstrations for potential customers.

Palm executive vice president and chief executive Samer Dabbagh, describes the Eclipse as a "real aviation innovation" and adds: "It offers an attractive alternative to prospective business jet owners and we are looking forward to demonstrating it. We believe there will be a lot of interest in the Middle East."

Serdar Göksal, board member of MyJet Turkey, says: "This is the first time we have attended MEBA and we are delighted to be participating with Palm Aviation. We have a strong commitment to the Eclipse 500 and to prove this we have placed an order for 120 aircraft; we believe that it will revolutionise air transportation and together with Palm Aviation we would like to introduce this revolution to MEBA visitors."

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The NAS/NetJets 750 will debut here

## Hawker 750 makes its Middle East debut

NetJets Middle East (chalet 35), the largest operator of business jets in the area, is debuting at MEBA 2008 and is introducing its Hawker 750 aircraft – the first in the region's aviation industry.

"NetJets Middle East is the first company in this part of the world to have this top-of-the-line aircraft in its fleet and it will be made available to our growing number of aircraft owners in the region," says Chadi Saade managing director, sales and marketing.

The super light jet is commonly referred to as a spacious conference room in the sky. It offers stand-up headroom along the entire cabin length and features a full refreshment centre.

While the presence of the Hawker 750 (static park, location 15) will be the visible highlight of NetJets' Middle East participation, what is gaining equal popularity among corporate and individual business travelers is the concept of the company's fractional aircraft ownership programme, says Saade.

"It certainly makes traveling a lot more flexible and convenient, given the guarantee we provide to our customers to have their aircraft available within 12 hours' notice. This means that the client is assured of traveling safely, globally and comfortably at very short notice, using NetJets world-wide fleet of aircraft," he says.

The NetJets Middle East fleet includes 16 light, mid-size and large-cabin aircraft, accommodating from eight to 14 passengers, with flight range of up to 4,300 nautical miles. The fleet includes the world's top name aircraft such as Hawker, Falcon and Gulfstream.

NetJets' Middle East fleet is expected to grow by 60 new aircraft, on order now, with projected delivery of one aircraft per month starting this month.

"What we offer is not only the largest fleet of aircraft and a team of the best trained and experienced pilots and flight crew, but also an idea – fractional aircraft ownership – whose time has come," adds Saade.

## Embraer sets out strong stall at show

Embraer (chalet 30) is showing off a strong product portfolio at MEBA.

The Brazilian airframer is displaying its Legacy 600 on the static display, along with a cabin cross-section of the Lineage 1000 and a full-scale mock-up of the

Phenom 300. Claudio Galdo Camellier, vp market intelligence says: "The Middle East is an important Legacy and Lineage market. The larger products are successful here. Our new Legacy 450/500 aircraft are selling well in this market

compared to North America, where there is a big concentration of smaller cabin aircraft."

To date there are 20 Legacy 600s installed in the region.

December sees the certification and entry into

service of the first Lineage, which will go to Abu Dhabi-based Amer Abdul Jalil Al Fahim and be operated for private use. Al Jaber Aviation has also ordered five Lineage 1000s, with options for a further two. The \$42.95 million aircraft can be configured to accommodate up to 19 passengers and features a five-zone luxurious interior created by UK-based Priestman Goode. It can fly non-stop from anywhere in the Middle East or Europe to Tokyo, or Quebec, Canada.

According to Camellier, Embraer has not yet sold any Phenom 100 very light jets into the Middle East but is optimistic that there is a market for the aircraft

locally. He says: "The majority of our smaller aircraft go to North America and Europe, but we do see a reasonable market share in this region. We are already talking to potential customers, such as branded air charter operators, and foresee a big market for both aircraft here."

The Phenom 100 is set for certification in Brazil at the end of the month and will earn its FAA ticket in early December.

Embraer has been slammed by turbulent world economic conditions, posting a 70 per cent fall in profits last quarter thanks to the drop in Brazil's currency against the dollar.

Camellier points out that the company has invested

in a range of financial instruments designed to hedge against fluctuations in the value of the Brazilian currency.

He adds that Embraer Executive Jets will produce strong delivery results for 2009 as it works through its high backlog. However, he admits that there is a slowdown in the market and says: "We expect a decrease in the levels of orders for at least two or three years."

He is still confident that the company will prosper. "We are 39 years old and developing a strong product portfolio in the executive jets segment," he says.

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## Future looking bright for Piaggio

Visitors can enjoy the spectacle of two Piaggio Aero P180 Avanti II twin pushers at the static park.

The sophisticated aircraft can climb to 41,000ft and reach a maximum speed of 402kt. The cabin is configurable for up to seven passengers and, at six feet wide and five feet nine inches high, it is wider and taller than most of its competitors.

Piaggio Aero Industries is owned by three shareholders: Abu Dhabi-based Mubadala, a shareholder group comprising Italy's Ferrari and di Mase families, and India's Tata Group, which came on board this October with an undisclosed investment.

Piaggio is likely to leverage additional

capital from a stock sale towards developing a business jet. Tata's involvement will also offer the company a foothold in the rapidly developing Indian business aviation market.

Chairman Piero Ferrari, says: "The future for Piaggio Aero is bright and, with the support of world-class investors and strategic partners like Mubadala Development Company and Tata, I'm confident we can realise our full potential."

There are more than 160 Avantis in service, and the company has strong order backlogs. Local operators include Abu Dhabi-based Prestige Jet, which has two P180 Avantis under management on its books.



The Legacy 600 a cornerstone for Embraer in the Gulf