


## AIRBORNE

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## Gulfstream on course for record deliveries in 2024

In 2008, just before the global financial crisis, Gulfstream Aerospace delivered 156 business jets. This is still the high-water mark for the Savannah-based manufacturer. But during the Q4 investor call at the end of last month, the company said it confidently expects to shatter that record in 2024 by delivering an estimated 170 units.

In 2020, Gulfstream handed over 127 business jets, which fell to 119 units delivered in 2021 as the Covid pandemic disrupted production. In 2022, it expects total deliveries to increase modestly to 124, as supply chain issues continue to suppress productivity. But in 2023, it predicts that business jets deliveries will finally grow substantially to 148, before hitting new heights in 2024. Gulfstream is expected to ramp up production over the next two years, which will see the introduction of both the G700 and G800, while the G400 is also set to join the family in 2025.

## US 5G saga continues

As we reported last month, the US government issued a delay to the nationwide rollout of 5G telephony owing to concerns over the potential impact of 5G C-band signals on aviation technologies, including radio altimeters. On 19 January, Verizon and AT&T launched 5G service in 46 markets across the US and the FAA announced that it would place restrictions on certain radio altimeter equipment in certain aircraft operating close to the new 5G antennas. It warned commercial airlines and aircraft operators that these restrictions could cause disruption to schedules and operations. The FAA has now confirmed that it has approved 20 altimeters fitted to 90% of the commercial fleet to allow low visibility approaches to most airports where 5G has been activated. The NBAA also confirmed that it continues to lobby the FAA in relation to the inclusion of bizav and general aviation aircraft under operating restrictions at the airports in question.

## China bucking an upward trend

Business aviation has shown huge resilience during the pandemic as passengers seeking alternatives to commercial airlines have 'gone private', while the price of new and pre-owned aircraft has risen relentlessly due to production difficulties and shrinkage of the preowned inventory. For bizav analysts, the upwards market trend has been clear and present. But not in China, according to the NBAA's chief Asian representative Jason Liao, where the market is 'very depressed'. The problems are three-fold: draconian travel restrictions; the fall in demand and strict control of the housing market, where many developers own private aircraft; and an official crackdown on conspicuous consumption to narrow the perceived wealth gap. According to the most recent estimates, it is believed that around 100 aircraft left the mainland China register last year.

## Vista Global keeps climbing

Private aviation firm Vista Global Holding, the Dubai-headquartered parent company of VistaJet and XO, continues to report record-breaking traffic and financial figures. Total combined flight hours for the two charter operators in 2021 were 64% higher than 2020 and exceeded pre-pandemic levels by some 57%. The number of hours-based programme members increased by 26% and the two carriers added 30 aircraft to cater for heightened demand. Vista Global founder and Chairman Thomas Flohr said: "2021 has been an incredibly strong year for Vista and we have delivered all-time record-breaking figures as a result of the huge demand for our subscription, membership, and on-demand offerings. There is clearly a paradigm shift in the global client's view of private aviation."

## Record January traffic levels

January 2022 was the busiest start to the year on record for global business aviation activity. According to the latest analysis from data specialist WingX, global bizav jet sectors last month were 35% higher than those in January 2021, when widespread travel restrictions designed to halt the spread of Covid-19 were in place. But the 2022 figure was also 19% higher than those of January 2020, before the World Health Organisation (WHO) had declared a 'pandemic', and 15% higher than those of January 2019.

In Europe, 38,000 sectors were flown, up 56% compared to January last year and up 10% and 13% up on January 2020 and 2019 respectively. Passenger airlines are also starting to recover faster, with more than double the sectors flown last January, but still 38% fewer than in January 2019. France was the busiest business jet market in January, with 43% more demand than in January 2021, while the UK leapfrogged Germany to rank as the second busiest market. The busiest route remained that between Paris and Geneva.

Traffic levels in North America also eclipsed previous records for January, with over 321,000 business jet and turboprop sectors flown, up 26% compared to January 2021 and up 14% and 8% against January 2020 and 2019 respectively. Business jet activity in the rest of the world was 11% higher than in January 2021.

## AVIATION SERVICES HUB: Aviation insurance

Sovereign Insurance Services (SIS) is a fully licensed, independent general insurance intermediary, based in Gibraltar. The strength of the Sovereign brand combined with the expertise and experience of the SIS team has enabled it to build relationships with leading insurers throughout the world. With direct links to specialist underwriters based in London and elsewhere, SIS can provide wide-ranging bespoke insurance cover for owners of fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters. The team further offers market insight, expertise and competitive pricing, together with efficient and professional claims' handling. Specialist aviation insurance covers the full range – from public liability through to hull insurance for new or used airframes. The SIS team will quote on all types of aviation asset – from corporate jets and turboprops, general aviation aircraft and helicopters to FBOs, flying schools or commercial passenger or freight operators. SIS also specialises in areas such as Kidnap & Ransom insurance, which may be of interest to aircraft owners and operators.

## Berlin goes green...

Dubai-based FBO handling specialist JetEx has signed a Joint Venture agreement with Berlin Neuhardenberg Airport to develop an executive aviation terminal and FBO at the facility located to the east of the city. The works will include a private jet terminal of 1,500m<sup>2</sup> offering 24-hr operations without slot restrictions, parking for 20 corporate jets and an FBO that JetEx claims will be the world's first 'pure green' facility of its type. The airfield hosts one of Europe's largest solar farms and the new works aim to harness renewable energy and significantly reduce CO2 emissions once in operation.

## RAF replaces venerable BAe146

The UK Ministry of Defence (MOD) has entered into an agreement with Bristol-based Centreline Aviation to acquire two Dassault Falcon 900LX trijet aircraft to serve in the VIP role from RAF Northolt, located close to Heathrow. The contract for the two aircraft is worth £80 million and will see the aircraft replace the two ageing BAe146-100 Statesman aircraft, which have been in service since 1986. The deal with Centreline covers the purchase of the aircraft and a two-year support contract. The Falcons will enter service later this year.

## Gibraltar traffic is rocking

Gibraltar Airport has mirrored increased bizav traffic seen elsewhere during the pandemic. The airport played host to an annual record of 469 non-scheduled aircraft movements in 2021, an increase of 19.9% over 2020. These flights carried a total of 3,821 passengers, an uplift of 4.4% over the 3,659 carried in the previous year. Despite 2020 being a difficult year for scheduled services, non-scheduled services fell only 2.5% to 391 annual movements. Minister for Commercial Aviation Vijay Daryanani said: "We live in difficult times, but these figures show how important Gibraltar has become for business purposes."

## Malta and San Marino take five

The Malta and San Marino aircraft registries both changed and widened the format for acceptable aircraft registrations last year. Both registries now permit the national prefix, plus a registration suffix of up to five alpha numeric characters – an increase from the previous three. In practice, this move opens the door to more quirky or meaningful personal registration marks. Below, are a few examples of new registrations that have seen aviation enthusiasts scratching their heads:

Malta – 9H-649FX (Gulfstream G650ER); 9H-HANSA (Boeing 737-800)

San Marino – T7-EAGLE (Bombardier Global Express); T7-88DGE (Embraer Legacy 600); T7-3338, formerly N-3338 (Bombardier Global 5000); T7-NGNG, formerly M-NGNG (Gulfstream G650).

## Corporate aircraft news

Dassault Aviation announced on 28 January that the first production Falcon 6X twinjet to receive a full customer interior had departed its factory at Bordeaux-Mérignac for the completion centre at Little Rock, Arkansas. The widebody twin, serial number 005 and registered F-WZOC, is heading for interior completion prior to receiving certification by the end of this year. The Falcon 6X was unveiled on 28 February 2018 and the prototype made its first flight on 10 March 2021.

Gulfstream Aerospace has confirmed that GKN Aerospace has won a major contract to supply components for both the G400 and G800 twinjet business aircraft which were unveiled in October last year. The British components business, which has been a major supplier to Gulfstream for some 30 years, is to provide the rudder and machined wing skins for the G400 and the floorboards, fuselage panels and empennage for the flagship G800. A key feature of the components is the use of thermoplastics for the empennage and floorboards, which should save 10% weight over earlier materials.

Michigan-based manufacturer Enstrom Helicopters ceased operations on 21 January after 64 years in business. The company had declared Chapter 7 bankruptcy due to "several financial difficulties". Enstrom produced three models – the F-28, the more aerodynamic 280 and the turbine-engined 480, each with their own variants – and had built more than 1,300 helicopters in total since inception. The firm was purchased by China's Chongqing Helicopter Investment Corporation in 2013.



## AIRCRAFT FACT FILE \\\

### Gulfstream G600



#### CATEGORY

Large size jet

#### MANUFACTURER

Gulfstream Aerospace, USA

#### ENGINE

2 x P&WC PW815GA turbofan

#### LENGTH

29.29 m

#### WINGSPAN

28.70 m

#### RANGE

12,223 km

#### MAX. SPEED

1,133 kmh

#### SEATING CAPACITY

19

#### NO. OF CREW

2

#### MAXIMUM TAKE-OFF WEIGHT (MTOW)

42,910 kg

#### DESCRIPTION

Gulfstream Aerospace launched two new models – the G400 and G800 – on 4 October 2021. This was a case of history repeating itself; it had done the same with the G500 and G600 on 14 October 2014. The G600, the longer range of the two twinjets, made its first flight on 17 December 2016. FAA certification was granted on 28 June 2019 with the first customer delivery taking place just over six weeks later. The 'new generation' G600 is designed to replace the hugely popular G550, while the G500 supplants the G450.

The G600, which shares a fuselage cross section with the G500, offers a cabin that can be configured in either three or four passenger zones, a large galley and a crew rest area. The G600 can carry 5,100kg of additional fuel when compared to the G500 because it boasts a wingspan that is 2.4m wider than its smaller sistership. The choice of Pratt & Whitney Canada powerplants for both models broke a long-term link with Rolls Royce, which had powered earlier models.