



## AIRBORNE

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## Flexjet launches UK fleet

Flexjet, the rapidly expanding US-based fractional specialist, unveiled the first aircraft in its new UK operation – the first of three Nextant 400XTi – on 1 March at Farnborough airport. Flexjet UK anticipates offering a fleet of up to 10 aircraft by the end of its first year of operation.

The initial fleet will be focused around the 400XTi – a light jet billed by Nextant Aerospace as “the most innovative private jet in the sky”. A rebuilt version of the original Beechjet 400A/XP, the 400XTi can accommodate up to seven passengers. The company plans to introduce large-cabin aircraft, including the Gulfstream G450, before the end of the year. Flexjet UK is operating its aircraft under the AOC of UK-based aircraft management company FlairJet, which it acquired last August. This will provide Flexjet customers with access to European-based aircraft for point-to-point services within Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

The US parent company reported a 20% jump in new business in 2016 and looks set to expand its fleet, with G650 aircraft due to be added by the end of this year and new generation G500's joining in 2018. Flexjet was also one of the initial operators of the new Embraer Legacy 450.

## NBAA at 70

The National Business Aviation Association (NBAA) was founded on 13 February 1947 as a loose federation of 19 entities aiming to promote corporate aviation standards, professionalism and access to airports throughout the US. Today the NBAA boasts some 11,000 members and plays host to the world's largest corporate aviation event – the annual convention currently alternating between Las Vegas and Orlando. It also promotes business aviation to a wider international market through co-sponsorship of events in Europe and Asia.

## Biggin Hill turns 100

February also saw the launch of “Biggin 100” – a series of events to mark the centenary of London Biggin Hill Airport. The airport was formerly the Royal Air Force station RAF Biggin Hill, and a small enclave on the airport still retains that designation.

The first event on 14 February featured a flypast by a Spitfire and a Zenith Aviation Learjet 75 carrying three 100-year-old passengers, including a WW2 fighter pilot. The Spitfire marked Biggin Hill's role as a frontline fighter base during The Battle of Britain, while the Learjet represented the airport's current role as a major centre for corporate aviation for the capital.

Will Curtis, MD of London Biggin Hill Airport, said: “Biggin 100 will enable us to showcase our continuing commitment as we lay the foundations and investment enabling us to inspire young people to pursue exciting and worthwhile aerospace careers in the future.”

## Dive in billings and deliveries

Business jet deliveries fell by 8% in 2016 – the lowest number since 2004. This is the most striking headline from the annual industry shipment and billing data produced by the General Aviation Manufacturers Association (GAMA). Overall, fixed wing deliveries of jet, turboprop and piston engine aircraft fell by 70 units overall – from 2,332 to 2,262. Overall industry billings also fell by 14% to \$20.719 billion. A more positive note was sounded by the turboprop sector, where overall deliveries increased by 4.5%. This uplift can be attributed in part to the delivery of new models such as the TBM-930 and Piper M600, along with strong performance from the Pilatus PC-12 and Piaggio Avanti.

## Bombardier suffers 18% deliveries slide in 2016

Canadian manufacturer Bombardier delivered a total of 163 corporate jets in 2016 – a fall of 18% over its total of 199 during 2015. Unlike some manufacturers, Bombardier produces a detailed breakdown by model. In 2016, it delivered 24 Learjet 70 and 75, 62 Challenger 350, 26 Challenger 605 and 650 and 51 Global 5000 and 6000. According to the 2016 annual report it has revised down its estimate for 2017 as it expects to deliver 135 corporate jets. This is “mainly reflecting an adjustment to volumes of the Learjet family of aircraft. Delivery profiles for the Challenger and Global families of aircraft are generally expected to continue from production levels set in the later part of 2016.” The flight test programme for the Global 7000 continues apace with first customer deliveries for the new long-range twin expected in the second half of 2018.

## Changes at Embraer

In a move that caught many industry observers by surprise, Brazilian manufacturer Embraer announced that Marco Tulio Pellegrini is to be replaced as President and CEO of Embraer Executive Jets by Michael Amalfitano. Having amassed some 35 years of experience, most recently with Stonebriar Commercial Finance, Amalfitano is one of the industry's most respected aviation financiers. His CV includes previous senior roles with GE Capital, Bank of America Leasing and Fleet Capital.

## RANA SERVICE CENTRE: Aviation consultancy

Sound, accurate and comprehensive information is a key requirement for making the right decisions in respect of owning, registering and operating an aircraft. RANA's specialist aviation consultancy service can draw upon a considerable breadth of knowledge across both the corporate and commercial aviation markets, which is coupled to our established links with authorities, manufacturers, service providers and operators worldwide.

The spectrum of our expertise encompasses: technical and performance specifications of competing aircraft models – from small pistons and turboprops through the whole range of corporate jets to commercial airliners both in passenger and freight roles; research and detailed reporting on the operational history of individual airframes and operators both private and commercial; the registration and ownership requirements of registries worldwide; and the most suitable and efficient corporate structures for holding aviation assets.

## Phenomenal - 2016's best-selling Bizjet

The Embraer Phenom 300 is the world's best-selling business jet for the fourth year in a row. According to data collated by the General Aviation Manufacturers Association (GAMA), the Brazilian manufacturer delivered 63 examples of the light jet in 2016 – equating to a total of 266 aircraft since 2013. The Phenom 300 just beat off the challenge of Bombardier's Challenger 3500, which posted only one unit less for delivery last year.

The Phenom 300 flew for the first time in April 2008 and received regulatory approval in December of the following year. Originally produced at the manufacturer's home facility, all production of the Phenom 300 was shifted to the company's plant in Melbourne, Florida last year.

## JetSmarter President resigns

Edward Gennady Barsky, president of private jet booking app provider JetSmarter, has stepped down from that role following his arrest in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, on charges of five counts of grand theft by embezzlement. JetSmarter stressed that Barsky resigned "due to personal reasons unrelated to the company". Barsky, who was CFO before taking over as president a year ago, was responsible for building the company's worldwide business and overseeing global investor relations and business development. He was also executive chairman of real estate developer Verzasca Group. JetSmarter chairman and CEO Sergey Petrossov founded the firm in 2012. It has since expanded with offices in London, Zurich, Moscow, Dubai, Riyadh, Hong Kong and Istanbul.

## Silvercrest engine on track for certification

French aerospace group Safran confirmed, while announcing its 2016 financial results, that it is expecting certification of the Snecma Silvercrest engine in Q1 2018. The powerplant, which was first announced at the NBAA in 2006, is designed to power larger cabin corporate aircraft and regional jet airliners. The Silvercrest is set to be used on the Dassault Falcon 5X, which is due to enter service in 2020, and the new large cabin Cessna Citation Hemisphere, which is set for service entry in 2019. The programme has suffered a number of delays. It was originally due for certification in 2010.

## Corporate aircraft news

The flight test programme for the Bombardier Global 7000 has reached two major milestones. The first prototype (FTV1) has logged some 100 flying hours since making its initial flight in November last year. The second prototype (FTV2) also made its first flight from the manufacturer's facility at Downsview, Toronto, on 4 March. The Canadian manufacturer confirmed that the wing to be used in the production version of the 7000 is now in the final design stages. The Global 7000 is expected to receive certification and enter service in the second half of 2018. The firm also confirmed that the programme schedule for the ultra-long range Global 8000 would be announced further along the development cycle for the 7000.

Gulfstream announced, on 15 February, that its flagship G650 and G650ER have finally been granted type certification by the Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC), which will provide for registration of the ultra-long range twin on the "B-" register. On 24 February, the second prototype G600 (registered N720GD) made its first flight from the manufacturer's plant at Savannah, Georgia.

In a month dominated by first flight test vehicles, the third prototype Pilatus PC-24 twinjet (HB-VSA) took to the skies for the first time on 6 March from the manufacturer's base at Buochs in Switzerland. The PC-24 is expected to receive certification by the end of Q4 this year.

Belgian operator ASL has received regulatory approval for the operation of charter flights from London City Airport (LCY) with the Embraer Legacy 450. The Legacy 450 registered OO-NEY was the first of its type to be registered in Europe and is the first 450 to be licensed for the dockland airport's steep glide slope and operating restrictions.



## AIRCRAFT FACT FILE \\\

### Beechcraft King Air 350i



#### CATEGORY

Turboprop

#### MANUFACTURER

Beechcraft, USA

#### ENGINE

2x P&WC PT6A-60A turboprops

#### LENGTH

14.22 m

#### WINGSPAN

17.65 m

#### RANGE

3,345 km

#### MAX. SPEED

578 kmh

#### SEATING CAPACITY

11

#### NO. OF CREW

1-2

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

6,804 kg

#### DESCRIPTION

The King Air 350i is the latest version of a family of twin turboprop aircraft which has been in continuous production since 1974. The King Air family is the world's most popular business turboprop aircraft. This version is an update of the Model B300 and was certified in December 2009. The B200 and B300 were both marketed as the 'Super King Air' but the 'Super' title was dropped in 1996. The 350i is promoted by Beechcraft as the latest result of "continuous enhancement over five decades. The King Air 350i. True to its legacy of innovation."

The 350i's main enhancements over previous versions offer improved payload and range, Wi-Fi, a cabin designed to be as spacious as possible along with acoustic technology designed to reduce cabin noise. The 350i also features the Pro Line Fusion avionics suite offering touch-screen functionality. A major selling point for the 350i is its noted fuel efficiency, its comparatively large luggage hold and ability to operate from undeveloped strips.