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Paris Air Show 2019: 'petit à petit' or 'joie de vivre'?

The biennial Paris Air Show generated positive headlines although, perhaps predictably, it was dominated by the great rivalry between European manufacturer Airbus and the US plane maker Boeing – not least given the current grounding of Boeing's 737 MAX family of aircraft.

Aside from the 'A versus B' contest, the buzzwords in Paris were eVTOL (electric vertical takeoff and landing) aircraft and sustainable fuels for both commercial and business aviation. In terms of corporate aviation, this was not the forum for OEMs to deliver new programme announcements – but the investment and belief in Paris as a showcase was clear.

Gulfstream's new G600 made its show debut just a few days before receiving both type and production certification from the FAA. The G600 joined a full line-up of business jets from Gulfstream – the G280, G550, and G650ER. Also appearing for the first time was Bombardier's new flagship Global 7500. French manufacturer Dassault Aviation displayed the Falcon 8X, 900LX and 2000S on home soil.

RANA's Middle East representative Paul Arnold, who attended the show, said: "Rarely has there been this much news presented to the aviation industry than at the 2019 edition of the Paris Air Show. The world's corporate, low-cost operators and leading global carriers were all keen to reveal details about aircraft they are adding to their fleets. New generation Mitsubishi Aircraft Corporation and a range of ATRs and Embraers were the stand-out models leading the business headlines."



(Photo courtesy Paul Arnold, RANA - Middle East)

YOY European bizav traffic plunges

Business flight traffic in May fell some 16% over the same period last year, according to activity data collected by specialist analyst Argus International. The data shows that virtually all categories of aircraft saw traffic figures fall – with turboprop flights falling by some 28.6% and large business jets by 14.4%. On a slightly more positive note, overall traffic for May rose by a modest 3.6% compared to April.

Vista Global decants XO

Vista Global (VG), the holding parent of programme and charter specialist VistaJet, which acquired US charter operator XOJet and Dubai-based mobile booking app developer JetSmarter earlier this year, has now launched XO – "a digital jet marketplace" – that blends and replaces the two entities. In a statement, VG promised that XO will offer a platform where "customers will be able to choose the best digital membership option, request a flight, or book a seat – instantly."

ADS-B Out Equipage rises

A total of 13,174 US turbine-powered business aircraft have now been equipped to fly in designated airspace complying with the FAA ADS-B Out requirement, which comes into force on 1 January 2020. According to the latest report produced by aviation software and data analyst FlightAware, the May 2019 figure represents some 73% of the active fleet and compares with just 8,337 aircraft equipped at the same time last year. Older models continue to record the lowest percentage equipage, with just 39% of the Gulfstream III registered fleet being retrofitted – 17 out of a total of 44 airframes.

Daher goes on a Quest

French manufacturer Daher announced, on 13 June, that it is to acquire US-based Quest Aircraft. Daher, which produces the TBM family of turboprop singles, has snapped up Sandpoint, Idaho-based Quest to gain a manufacturing presence in the US. Quest has delivered almost 280 of its Kodiak 100 utility aircraft since January 2008. The high-wing, unpressurised, single-engine turboprop seats up to 10 passengers.

Chairman Patrick Daher said: "As a powerful and manoeuvrable aircraft, used particularly for humanitarian missions to provide aid to isolated communities, the Kodiak 100 perfectly complements our TBM product range and is fully in line with Daher's long term vision as a company committed to the future of aviation." The purchase, which is due to be completed by year-end, will make Daher the world's seventh largest aircraft manufacturer in business aviation.

AVIATION SERVICES HUB:

Aviation consultancy

Accurate, up-to-date and comprehensive information is a key requirement for making the right decisions in respect of sourcing, 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; 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.

'B word' dominates Isle of Man aviation conference – again

Airborne's report on the 2018 Isle of Man Aviation Conference began: "The uncertainty surrounding the post-'Brexit' aviation relationship between the UK and the EU continued to exercise minds ..." Those attending the 2019 event on 27 June experienced a severe case of déjà vu. Three years after the UK referendum result, Brexit again dominated discussions in the hall and during the networking events – the abiding feelings being frustration and lack of certainty.

Organised by Martyn Fiddler Aviation and supported by the Isle of Man Aircraft Registry, the ninth edition was hosted again in the majestic Edwardian grandeur of the Royal Hall in the Villa Marina complex on the Douglas seafront. The conference featured detailed discussion of areas as diverse as the threat posed by illegal or 'grey' charters, the Cape Town Convention, the advantages offered by both new and pre-owned aircraft, updates on VAT and new technology and its application within business aviation. Significantly the last topic was widened out into a debate about future operations, including electric urban transport.

Simon Williams, the Isle of Man's Director of Civil Aviation, once again delivered a very upbeat message on the registry and the island's place as "an aviation centre of excellence". He also noted that the island has not ruled out introducing AOCs at some stage in the future and that this is constantly under review.

Dassault continues shopping spree

Earlier this year Dassault Aviation purchased the worldwide aircraft maintenance arm of ExecuJet along with a similar acquisition of TAG Aviation's European maintenance business. It has now added to this portfolio by adding the Geneva and Lugano operations of Ruag, which has been a major service centre for Dassault Falcon business jets. The purchase also includes the company's FBOs at both locations. Ruag will retain its existing maintenance and operations base at Munich-Oberpfaffenhofen.

Corporate aircraft news

Gulfstream Aerospace confirmed that its long-awaited Gulfstream G600 received both type and production certificates from the US FAA on 28 June. First customer deliveries can now commence. The twin G600 was unveiled alongside the smaller G600 in October 2014 and made its first flight in December 2016. The G600 is designed to replace the popular G550. Gulfstream President Mark Burns said: "Getting both authorisations on the same day is evidence of the maturity of our G600 production processes and speaks to the safety and reliability of the aircraft's design."

At the beginning of July, Bombardier announced the latest version of the iconic Learjet family. According to the Canadian manufacturer that, unlike most competitors in the light jet category that are certified to Part 23 regulations, the six-seat Learjet 75 Liberty is certified to the FAA's more stringent Part 25 regulations, applicable to commercial airliners. It will feature the advanced Bombardier Vision flight deck and include the recently announced Garmin G5000 avionics upgrade. Assembled in Wichita, Kansas, the Learjet 75 Liberty will be offered at a list price of US\$9.9 million, with first deliveries expected in 2020.

Textron Aviation marked the delivery of the 300th Cessna Citation CJ4 (model 525C) light twin on 27 June. The CJ4 was launched at the NBAA in autumn 2006, with deliveries commencing in 2010. Fractional specialist NetJets has also now taken delivery of the 100th Cessna Citation Latitude, just three years after it accepted its first. In 2012 the company placed an order for an initial 25 aircraft with options for a further 110. NetJets Latitudes are in service with both the US parent and its Portugal-registered European operation.

Brazilian manufacturer Embraer has delivered the first example of its new Praetor 600 super mid-size twin to an undisclosed European client. It is understood that the aircraft will now receive interior completion at the firm's Melbourne, Florida, plant. The Praetor 600 received certification from Brazilian, US and European regulators earlier this year. At the Paris Air Show, Embraer reached an agreement with ELTA Systems – a subsidiary of Israel Aircraft Industries – to develop an airborne early warning version (AEW) of the Praetor 600.



AIRCRAFT FACT FILE \\\

de Havilland DH.89 Dragon Rapide



CATEGORY

Classic airliner/transport

MANUFACTURER

de Havilland, UK

ENGINE

2 x de Havilland Gipsy Six inline pistons

LENGTH

10.50 m

WINGSPAN

14.60 m

RANGE

920 km

MAX. SPEED

253 kmh

SEATING CAPACITY

8

NO. OF CREW

1

MAXIMUM TAKE-OFF WEIGHT (MTOW)

2,490 kg

DESCRIPTION

A further 'blast from the past'. The de Havilland DH.89 Dragon Rapide is another early airliner that has also seen use (in the late 1940s and 1950s) as a corporate/private transport – albeit in comparatively small numbers. The Dragon Rapide is generally regarded as the most successful British short-haul airliner produced during the 1930s.

The prototype Dragon Rapide first flew on 17 April 1934 from the manufacturer's factory at Hatfield Aerodrome. The aircraft was designed as a short-range airliner and was constructed totally of plywood. A number of the aircraft in civilian service were requisitioned for use by both the Royal Air Force and Royal Navy during World War II.

Interestingly, one of the early owners of a Dragon Rapide was Edward, Prince of Wales, who became the first British monarch to fly when he used his aircraft following his accession as Edward VIII in 1936. A total of 728 aircraft were produced.