

Corporate registers - 2023 numbers

This month, we publish our annual review of aircraft under registry in a number of jurisdictions that are popular for the hosting of corporate jets and airliners. The data has been compiled by RANA from both official and unofficial sources. Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the resultant wide-ranging international sanctions have clearly had a major impact on the numbers of registered aircraft under certain registries that have long been popular with Russian owners. Bermuda, the Cayman Islands and the Isle of Man, in particular, have seen significant falls as aircraft have been de-registered, voluntarily or compulsorily, because of ownership links to sanctioned individuals or entities.

Despite these challenges, the San Marino Aircraft Registry (SMAR) has continued to sustain outstanding growth, based on the effective promotion of its customer services, competitive costing and wide acceptance of international technical and crew standards. The 'T7' registry boasts aircraft of all sizes and, on the commercial side, has entered into several active 83bis agreements, which enable aircraft registered in San Marino to be operated for commercial purposes by foreign AOC holders.

Malta has also increased the number of AOCs set up to operate business aircraft on a commercial basis – from 29 to 33 – since last year's review. Operators continue to be attracted by the island's tax incentives and ease of process. Several operators have added to their existing fleets, with Flexjet Operations Malta now boasting a fleet of four Legacy 500, four Praetor 600 and a single Gulfstream G650ER – up from just one of each model last year. Programme specialist VistaJet has also continued to expand its fleet and now boasts a tally of 91 aircraft under Maltese registration, including 19 flagship Bombardier Global 7500.

The table shows the figures as of February 2022/February 2023 (or latest available).

Registry	Corporate jets	Corporate airliners (incl. Legacy 600/650, Lineage, Challenger 850)
Aruba (P4)	38/37	24/23
Bermuda (VP/VQ-B)	56/41	37/34
Cayman (VP-C)	131/121	43/36
Guernsey (2)	55/57	7/4
Ireland (EI/EJ)	13/15	1/1
Isle of Man (M)	213/183	24/14
Jersey (ZJ)*	1/-	0/-
Malta (9H)	180/203	45/48
San Marino (T7)	178/181	34/35

*The Jersey Aircraft Register was wound up November 2022

FSF warns on Russian operations

The Flight Safety Foundation (FSF) has issued a White Paper that is aimed at those countries that continue to allow Russian and Belarussian flight operations despite the international sanctions imposed on the two regimes following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Such countries "must be aware of the potential limitations associated with sanctions and export controls that could impact the level of service and parts availability," said the FSF. Russia has re-registered hundreds of leased Western-built aircraft, calling basic technical oversight and legitimacy into question. The White Paper said countries unable to ensure safety should not permit such flights into their airspace and should "look out for the possibility of unapproved modifications and repairs, as well as parts coming from unapproved sources."

Pre-owned transactions move away from 'feeding frenzy'

The pre-owned business aircraft marketplace is 'rebalancing' after the recent explosive demand, which was likened to a 'feeding frenzy'. This was the conclusion of the First Quarter 2023 Market Report produced by the International Aircraft Dealers Association (IADA). According to the report, IADA members closed 239 business aircraft transactions in Q1 2023, compared to 288 in the same period in 2022 and 213 in 2021.

Underlining the report's conclusions is the market's 'return' to normality – inventory levels are being replenished, while valuations and pricing might now be described as more 'rational'. Despite economic jitters surrounding the global banking sector, IADA reports continued interest in buying, selling and operating business aircraft. The market remains vibrant but has receded from the 'feeding frenzy' of 2022, when demand was leaping ahead of available inventory. IADA Chair Zipporah Marmor said: "Although specific low-time aircraft with attractive pedigrees continue to attract top-dollar, the overall market has begun to downshift from a peak characterised by accelerating prices and strong residual values."

The Dassault Mystère 20 took to the skies for the first time on 4 May 1963. Sixty years on, Dassault Aviation has produced more than 2,700 Falcon business jets.

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Steady as she goes for major OEMs in Q1

Each of the 'big four' OEMs that produce Q1 figures have posted comparatively stable delivery numbers but have also reported encouraging orders and some revenue increases.

Embraer Executive Jets delivered eight aircraft in Q1 2023, the same number as Q1 2022. This year's tally comprised six Phenoms and two larger Praetor twinjets. The Brazilian OEM also reported an increase in its customer order backlog, which is now valued at USD4.1 billion, an increase of USD200 million on 2022 and up from USD2.9 billion at the end of 2021. However, Q1 revenues fell by 3% year-on-year to USD87.1 million.

Gulfstream Aerospace delivered 21 bizjets in Q1, four fewer than Q1 2022 and three short of its own estimate. The fall was attributed to engine supply chain issues and registration delays on one large cabin aircraft. The total comprised four G280 and 17 G500/G600 and G650 aircraft. Despite the drop in deliveries, YoY revenues were just USD11 million lower for the quarter and the OEM still expects to deliver 145 aircraft by year end.

Canada's Bombardier delivered 22 jets in Q1, an increase of one on Q1 2022, and said it expected to achieve its target of 138 deliveries this year. The Q1 total was comprised of eight Challengers and 14 Globals. The OEM also recorded a 17.5% increase in revenues to USD1.5 billion and posted its first net profit – USD113 million – since 2018.

Textron, the US-based manufacturer of the Beechcraft, Cessna and Hawker brands, delivered 34 turboprops in Q1, compared to 31 in Q1 last year, while jet deliveries fell from 39 to 35 in the same period. Revenues, however, grew by 10.5% to USD1.1 billion.

Bizav traffic continues to stabilise

The Dassault Mystère 20 took to the skies for the first time on 4 May 1963. This design, renamed the Falcon 20 in 1966, was the first in a family of business jets that continues to bring new models to the market. At the time of its diamond anniversary, the French OEM has delivered more than 2,700 aircraft across a range of continually evolving models. The tri-jet Falcon 50 was introduced in 1976, the intercontinental Falcon 900 in 1983 and the sleek twin Falcon 2000 in 1993, while the tri-jet 7X and 8X first took to the skies in 2005 and 2009 respectively. And this illustrious bloodline is set to continue with the Falcon 6X poised to enter service later this year and the 10X scheduled to join the family in 2025.

Corporate aircraft news

Airbus made the first delivery of the latest member of its Airbus Corporate Jets (ACJ) family, the ACJ TwoTwenty, on 3 May. The aircraft, appropriately registered in Malta as 9H-FIVE, was completed for Five Hotels and Resorts. The interior completion, which took 14 months, was undertaken by Swiss VIP operator Comlux, which partnered with ACJ to launch the VIP version of the commercial Airbus A220-100 airliner. The TwoTwenty can accommodate up to 18 passengers and it is understood that the OEM holds orders for ten examples of the new aircraft.

Another notable delivery saw Textron Aviation hand over the 400th example of its Citation 525C CJ4 to a Pennsylvania-based customer on 25 April. The handover ceremony took place at the OEM's plant at Wichita, Kansas. The Citation CJ4 was launched at the NBAA in 2006 and received certification in 2010. The current version, the CJ4 Gen2, was introduced in 2021 and features an enhanced cabin including additional seating options, a new cabin management system, increased galley storage space, new ambient lighting and new folding airstairs.

Pilatus Aircraft announced on 1 May that the worldwide fleet of its PC-12 single turboprops had reached ten million flight hours. The PC-12 made its first flight in May 1991, entering service three years later. The Swiss OEM Pilatus delivered the 1,800th production unit at the end of April 2021 and expects to soon deliver the 2,000th as it increases current production levels to keep pace with demand.



AIRCRAFT FACT FILE \\\

Piper J-3 Cub



CATEGORY

Light piston trainer

MANUFACTURER

Piper Aircraft, USA

ENGINE

1 x Continental A-65-8 piston

LENGTH

6.83 m

WINGSPAN

15.37 m

RANGE

354 km

MAX. SPEED

140 kmh

SEATING CAPACITY

1

NO. OF CREW

1

MAXIMUM TAKE-OFF WEIGHT (MTOW)

550 kg

DESCRIPTION

The iconic Piper Cub was manufactured for a comparatively short period in the US and Canada between 1938 and 1947. But just over 20,000 examples were produced during those nine years and many these remain active today, particularly in remote areas where it plays the role of the archetypal 'bush aircraft'. Conceived as a light training aircraft, the Cub also found huge popularity as a general aviation craft. The Cub's design is inherently simple but offers excellent low-speed handling properties along with short-field performance.

The Cub was designated as the primary training aircraft for the US government's Civilian Pilot Training Programme (CPTP), which ran from 1938 to 1944, ostensibly to increase the number of civilian pilots but having a clear impact on military preparedness. By the end of World War Two, more than 80% of US military pilots has undertaken initial flight training on a Piper Cub. At the peak of production, Piper was manufacturing one Cub every 20 minutes.