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The 'Covid' factor - Q3 deliveries slide

The OEM delivery figures for the third quarter of 2020 clearly demonstrate the scale of the impact that the Covid-19 pandemic has unleashed on the aviation sector.

Brazil's Embraer Executive Jets delivered 21 aircraft in Q3 – three Phenom 100, 16 Phenom 300 and two Praetor 500 – compared to 27 in the same period last year. In terms of an annual tally, the manufacturer's total is down by some 20 aircraft – 43 against 63 in the first nine months of 2019.

Savannah-based Gulfstream Aerospace handed over 38 aircraft in Q3 2019. This year it delivered 32 units in the same period – seven G280 and 25 large cabin G500/G600 and G650 – a fall of 15.8%. Year to date totals saw the manufacturer deliver 87 aircraft compared to 103 by the end of Q3 last year. It does however still expect to hand over 130 aircraft by the end of the year.

Wichita-based Textron Aviation, manufacturer of Cessna and Beechcraft branded aircraft, delivered 25 Citation jets and 21 corporate turboprops in Q3, compared to 45 and 39 respectively last year. The manufacturer also recorded a quarterly loss of \$29 million on \$795 million revenue against a profit of \$104 million on \$1.2 billion revenues in Q3 last year.

Canada's Bombardier delivered 24 bizjets in Q3, down from the Q3 2019 tally of 31. On a positive note, this quarter's figure includes 13 large cabin Globals, up from nine in the same period last year. The delivery of these large aircraft helped revenues during the three months to grow by 10% to \$1.225 billion. Year to date, the manufacturer has delivered a total of 70 aircraft (31 Globals, 32 Challengers and seven Learjets) compared with 90 a year ago – 33 Globals, 48 Challengers and nine Learjets.

VistaJet promotes corporate membership & its 'Private World'

Specialist programme operator VistaJet, which has reported a 50% increase in corporate enquiries for private jet travel since the start of the pandemic, has launched a new offering for corporations in response to changing travel demands brought about by Covid-19. 'Dynamic Corporate Membership' aims to meet this demand by providing maximum accessibility and flexibility, as well as enhanced safety protocols.

Members will have access to VistaJet's fleet of Bombardier aircraft on a short-notice, as-needed basis, but with a much-reduced minimum cost and the ability to pay for hours flown in arrears. In addition, a dedicated VistaJet flight manager can be based in the corporate's own headquarters and a flight attendant will be assigned to a single client to minimise Covid-19 exposure.

Chief commercial officer Ian Moore said: "We want to offer companies maximum flexibility with minimum commitment, as we recognise the need for safer and more reliable solutions as companies look to build back their business for the future."

In a further assure its clients of a safe, seamless door-to-door service, the Malta-based company has also unveiled its 'Private World' – a carefully chosen selection of partners and deluxe properties around the world. It says that it has "opened up its black book" of hotels, yachts, estates, ski resorts and islands, coupled with the use of its fleet of some 70 aircraft.

Bizav traffic declining as second wave restrictions bite

Bizav traffic is falling again. Worldwide bizav departures were down by 14.7% compared to 2019 levels, according to the latest regular data produced by specialist analyst WingX Advance, which blamed the decline largely the reintroduction of travel restrictions and new lockdowns designed to deal with the so-called second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic.

In early November, European traffic levels fell by some 22% compared to the same period in 2019. The UK has seen the largest falls – with traffic down more than 32% – while levels in Spain, Belgium, France and Switzerland are all more than 20% down on last year's figures.

In countries where second wave lockdowns have been less restrictive, such as Germany and Italy, traffic is down by around 10%. European airports have also seen eye watering falls in traffic levels – with London Luton reporting more than 50% fewer departures YoY and Geneva, Farnborough and Paris Le Bourget all seeing traffic levels down by around 35%.

In North America, overall bizav sectors were down by 16% YoY – with the US recording traffic levels down by 14%. In terms of region, the areas hardest hit include the Midwest and the northeast, with traffic in New Jersey down by some 40%.

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 and ransom insurance, which may be of interest to aircraft owners and operators.

Russian market demand increases

Bucking wider trends, bizav traffic between the EU and Russia is currently running slightly ahead of 2019 levels. According to local analysts, this reflects a growing demand for bizjets in Russia. The sale of bizjets in Russia is increasing and many Russian owners are now importing aircraft and placing them on the Russian (RA-) register. This follows the lifting of VAT on aircraft importation, which came into effect on 1 January. The local market for business aircraft has long been seen as leaning towards large cabin models and it is suggested that resurgent Russian demand will be helped by the flagship Global 7500 and Gulfstream G700s in service or due to enter service in the near future.

Luxaviation pursues single European AOC

Aircraft management and charter group Luxaviation has placed its Portuguese operation under the direct safety oversight of European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) as a first step toward obtaining EASA regulatory supervision for all of its European divisions under a single European air operator certificate (AOC).

The company, which markets itself as “one of the largest private aircraft operators in the world”, operates a worldwide fleet of some 235 fixed wing aircraft worldwide and currently holds a total of 15 AOCs, of which nine are in the EU.

Under the European Union’s 2018/1139 regulation, introduced in 2018, operators have had the option to report to a single competent authority for safety oversight and certification in any one of the 31 EASA member states. Establishing a single AOC in Europe under the direct oversight of EASA will remove duplication and, Luxaviation estimates, could reduce costs by some 15%.

Luxaviation selected its Portuguese operation to be the first adopter of the new process and will follow the same process until all its seven other AOCs based in EASA member states – Luxembourg, France, Germany, Denmark, Belgium, San Marino and Malta – have been consolidated on a single EASA certificate.

Corporate aircraft news

Savannah-based Gulfstream Aerospace has increased the ranges of its two latest twinjet models to enter service as a result of an analysis of real-time in service operations. Both the G500 and G600 can now fly 185.20km (100nm) further at both high-speed cruise and long range cruise. The G600 now boasts a range of 12,223km (6,600nm) at long range and 10,371km (5,600nm) at high-speed cruise. The shorter G500 can now fly 9,816km (5,300nm) and 8,334km (4,500nm) respectively.

Gulfstream has also confirmed that a fifth test vehicle (T5) has entered service as part of the pre-certification programme for its new G700 flagship. The G700, a larger version of the ultra-long-range G650ER, is expected to enter receive approval and enter service in 2022.

Dassault Aviation has announced that the roll out of its new Falcon 6X twinjet will take place on 8 December at its factory at Bordeaux Mérignac, with the aircraft’s first flight expected early in the new year. The French manufacturer unveiled the 6X in February 2018 after abandoning work on the much delayed 5X, due largely to issues with the Safran Silvercrest powerplant. The 6X will boast a range of 10,200km and be able to accommodate up to 16 passengers.

Brazil’s Embraer Executive Jets has announced a limited edition design collaboration with German car maker Porsche. The ‘Duet’ package features a limited edition Porsche 911 Turbo S and Phenom 300E, which will share similar interior and exterior features. The package, limited to ten sets, will sell for \$10.9 million and will also include a titanium wristwatch and exclusive three-piece luggage set that echo elements of the design concept. Deliveries of the Duet sets are due to commence next year.

In a similar vein, Airbus Helicopters has unveiled an Aston Martin special edition of the H130 helicopter that features both an interior and exterior finish created by the luxury carmaker.



AIRCRAFT FACT FILE \\\

Guimbal Cabri G2



CATEGORY

Helicopter

MANUFACTURER

Hélicoptères Guimbal, France

ENGINE

1 x Lycoming O-360-J2A piston

LENGTH

6.31 m

ROTOR DIAMETER

7.20 m

RANGE

700 km

MAX. SPEED

185 kmh

SEATING CAPACITY

2

NO. OF CREW

1

MAXIMUM TAKE-OFF WEIGHT (MTOW)

700 kg

DESCRIPTION

Hélicoptères Guimbal markets the Cabri G2 as “the little big helicopter – large helicopter stability, small helicopter agility”. The slogan is well deserved. The Cabri G2 is a highly versatile two-seat helicopter powered by a reciprocating Lycoming engine. The aircraft features a fully composite structure, a three-bladed main rotor with composite blades and a crash resistant fuel cell. The rotor is specifically designed to cope with a variety of challenging weather conditions and to be considerably quieter than other rotorcraft in the class.

The Cabri G2 was originally conceived by Bruno Guimbal in the 1980s while working with Eurocopter. A prototype made its first flight in April 1992 but the first production aircraft did not take to the skies until March 2005, following the setting up of Hélicoptères Guimbal in 2000. The Cabri G2 eventually received EASA approval in late 2007 and the first examples entered commercial service in 2008. While focusing on the European market, FAA certification was delayed for a further seven years.