

# AIRBORNE

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## NetJets and Textron break records

The bizav market headlines were dominated on 20 September by the announcement by fractional specialist NetJets and OEM Textron Aviation of an all-option fleet order for up to 1,500 Cessna Citation twinjets for delivery over the next 15 years. The value of the deal, which has been conservatively valued at some USD32 billion, cements the close relationship between the two industry heavyweights. NetJets has already taken delivery of some 800 Citations over the years. The order will be made up of Citation Latitude and Longitude. It will also include the smaller Ascend, an upgraded version of the Citation XLS+ that was unveiled at this year's EBACE for service entry in 2025. The agreement to take the Ascend makes NetJets the first fleet operator of the new variant.

## Operator optimism returns

Optimism is in the air for bizav operators for the first time in more than a year. According to the Q3 survey presented by data analyst JetNet iQ, 56% of bizav aircraft operators in North America believe that sector market conditions are past the low point. High levels of inflation and interest rates had softened optimism as the market emerged from the pandemic but these trends are now being bucked as OEMs report strong demand despite supply chain issues. In addition, the pre-owned market is stabilising as inventories and the quality of available aircraft increases.

## EASA given role in achieving net zero

European safety regulator EASA is to take overall responsibility for monitoring Europe's efforts to achieve net-zero by 2050. The European Parliament recently approved ReFuelEU aviation regulations that establish a regime to deter operators from tinkering with fuel and to avoid the use of jet-A1 at certain airports – a major cause of increased pollution from fuel burn. EASA will be tasked with ensuring that 70% of fuel uploaded at European airports by 2050 must be sustainable aviation fuel (SAF). EASA acting executive director Luc Tygat said: "Assigning this task to EASA also sends the clear message that sustainability cannot come at the expense of safety in aviation. We must be sustainably safe."

## Air charter demand stabilising

The current charter market is stabilising was the consensus among attendees at this year's Air Charter Expo, held at Biggin Hill on 12 September. Charter operators reported that while demand had fallen from the high point after Covid travel restrictions were fully lifted last year, this easing of demand has made it easier by improving the supply of aircraft. Claudia Watt, Senior Business Development Manager at charter broker Air Partner, said: "This year, the market has been less frantic and easier to secure aircraft. We're now able to focus more on improving the post-booking service." Charter operators and brokers are now making investments to expand the capacity of their businesses, including efforts to recruit new skilled staff.

## Protesters target New York heliport

After unsuccessfully attempting to block the entrance to the annual Burning Man Festival in Nevada's Black Rock Desert, environmental protesters targeted the bizav sector by attempting to shut down the W30th Street Heliport (KJRA) in New York City on 13 September. While operations continued, albeit with increased security, members of Extinction Rebellion (XR) blocked the entrance to the facility for some 90 minutes. XR organiser Charles Komanoff said: "Helicopters are a pestilence to New Yorkers and a rotten pinnacle of an economic system that places pleasure over planetary survival. We must stop them."

## September Euro bizav traffic down

European bizav traffic in September fell by 7% compared to levels recorded in the same month last year, according to the latest data from specialist analyst WINGX. This fall was due in large part to a 'softening' in economic performance and therefore traffic levels in several key countries. The UK, Austria, the Netherlands and Germany all posted lower traffic levels than in 2022. The levels in Germany were actually running 5% lower than pre-pandemic 2019 rates. The US bizjet market was holding up, reflecting the steadier outlook for the US economy in Q3. Asian bizjet activity was comparatively low but still hitting record highs by historic standards.

## Flexjet has a new home

Fractional specialist operator Flexjet, which currently boasts a growing fleet of some 270 aircraft worldwide, has unveiled a new USD50 million control centre and headquarters in Cleveland, Ohio. Located at Cuyahoga County Airport (KCGF), the new facility includes an operations centre that can track every aircraft in the operator's fleet in real time and boasts the third largest seamless LED screen in the world at 176 feet wide by 19 feet high. It also houses Flexjet's primary data network, which feeds more than 30 satellite locations worldwide facilities, and is designed to allow for further expansion as the fleet grows. Flexjet chairman Ken Ricci said: "From the simplicity of where we started 25 years ago, to the advancements in technology and where we are today, this new global operations centre is truly a marvel..."

## 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.

## SAF fuelling NBAA-BACE 2023

The target of net-zero in aviation by 2050 will be one of the headline discussions at 2023 National Business Aviation Association (NBAA) Business Aviation Convention & Exhibition (NBAA-BACE), when the world's largest corporate aviation event returns to Las Vegas later this month. Aircraft flying into Las Vegas' three airports will have an opportunity to fuel up with sustainable aviation fuel. The convention static display, which will be located at Henderson Airport (KHND), will offer 40,000 gallons (151,416 litres) of SAF – twice the amount on offer at NBAA-BACE 2021. SAF will also be available at Harry Reid International (KLAS) and, for the first time, at North Las Vegas (KVGJ). NBAA-BACE will emphasise notable innovations and advancements being made to shape the future.

## Farnborough looks to increase bizav traffic

Farnborough Airport, the privately-owned facility in Hampshire that is just 38 miles from London, is looking to increase the current limits to aircraft movements, while maintaining its commitment to net-zero by 2030. It is seeking to raise total aircraft movements to 70,000 per year from the current 50,000. The consultation and approval process is expected to take more than two years. The operator is also seeking to increase the number of flights of aircraft between 50 and 80 tonnes to cater for the larger aircraft, such as the Global 7500, that are now coming on stream.

## Schiphol cuts bizav traffic by 30%

We reported last month that the Dutch caretaker government was looking to scale back plans for an overall cut in aircraft movements at Amsterdam Schiphol. The airport operator has now confirmed that, as part of new restrictions to take effect from 31 March 2024, permitted bizav movements will be reduced by 30%. Annual bizav aircraft movements will be capped at 12,000 (down from the current 17,000) with a limit of 7,200 over the peak summer period. In announcing this new cap, the airport operator underlined its intention to eventually eliminate all bizav movements as part of a drive to reduce emissions and noise levels.

## Corporate aircraft news

Textron Aviation announced the delivery of its one-hundredth Cessna Citation Longitude, the largest aircraft in the current Citation family, on 9 October. The Longitude was originally announced at EBACE in May 2012 and the prototype made its first flight in October 2016, but due a number of significant programme delays it was not until September 2019 that the aircraft received FAA certification. EASA approval followed in July 2021. The super-midsize design can carry up to 12 passengers and boasts a range of 6,482km.

Textron CEO Ron Draper said: "We are very proud of the entry into service of this aircraft. It hit the field with incredible reliability numbers and acceptance in the marketplace. We clearly have great reliability numbers, great performance, and low operating costs ... and some of our larger customers like NetJets continue to talk about the performance and the technology included in this product."

Textron also announced that owners of Cessna Citation XLS+ and XLS Gen2 twinjets will now be able to install Garmin G5000 avionics suite at Textron Aviation service centres. This upgrade was previously only available to owners of the older Citation Excel and XLS models.

Iconic British manufacturer Britten-Norman (B-N) has now relocated production of the BN-2 Islander back to the UK after the closure of its line in Romania. The aircraft has been produced in Romania since 1968 but will return to Bembridge on the Isle of Wight, where the OEM aims to produce eight units a year within two years. Although its much-vaunted merger with Cranfield Aerospace Solutions has been put on hold, B-N continues a strategic partnership with the UK-based aircraft technology innovator to convert the Islander to zero-emissions, hydrogen-electric propulsion.

To mark the 60th anniversary of the first flight of the classic Learjet – serial number 23-001, N801L – in October 1963, Canadian OEM Bombardier announced that it is assisting the Classic Lear Jet Foundation with its project to restore 23-003, N3BL, the first example of the twinjet to be delivered in 1964. Production by Bombardier ceased in 2021.



## AIRCRAFT FACT FILE \\\

### Cessna U206F Stationair



#### CATEGORY

Light single piston

#### MANUFACTURER

Cessna, Textron Aviation, USA

#### ENGINE

1 x Lycoming IO-540 AC-1A5 piston

#### LENGTH

8.61 m

#### WINGSPAN

10.97 m

#### RANGE

1,302 km

#### MAX. SPEED

304 kmh

#### SEATING CAPACITY

5

#### NO. OF CREW

1

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

1,633 kg

#### DESCRIPTION

The Cessna 206 was introduced in 1964 and, unusually for a general aviation marque, remains in production today. The 206 is part of the Stationair family of aircraft developed from the popular Cessna 210, which included the 205, 206 and 207. 'Stationair' is a contraction of the phrase 'station wagon of the air' and complements the manufacturer's description of the 206 in particular as "the sports utility vehicle of the air". The Stationair family are rugged, single engine general aviation aircraft for personal, corporate or commercial service.

Cessna halted production of the single engine production line in 1986, but then resumed deliveries in 1998. More than 7,000 examples of the 206 have been built. The 206 design has seen a whole host of versions developed over the years. Variants of the aircraft have filled niches including aerial photography, sky diving aircraft and have also been equipped with skis and floats. The example pictured, the U206F, is fitted with floats for charter operations between Florida and the Bahamas.