

AIRBORNE

MAY 2016

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ABACE 2016 - a vehicle for regional industry growth

Shanghai Hongqiao International Airport hosted the 11th Asian Business Aviation Conference and Exhibition (ABACE) from 12 to 14 April. This year's event covered a larger area than any previous show and offered 165 exhibitors, some 40% of which were from Asia. The show also offered a static display of more than 30 aircraft.

The show featured a small number of orders but reflected the changing nature of the region's corporate jet market. Co-hosts the NBAA and the Asian Business Aviation Association (AsBAA) pointed to a more multi-dimensional market, particularly in China, with the focus changing from large cabin business jets to wide diversity of business aircraft including piston engine singles to intercontinental corporate jets and helicopters. They cited the number of airports that have been built throughout the country and the liberalisation of policies that provide access to the airspace. In fact the general aviation market in China is growing at a rate of some 20% a year.

The event also emphasised educational sessions and a student outreach day on 14 April with some 200 university students sponsored to visit the show and learn about opportunities presented by business aviation. ABACE 2017 will take place from 11 to 13 April.

Hongkong Jet to acquire Asia Jet

Hongkong Corporate Jet Management, subsidiary of Beijing-based charter specialist operator Deer Jet, announced at ABACE the signing a letter of intent to purchase Hong Kong-based Asia Jet, along with its subsidiaries Asia Jet Partners (Shanghai) and Asia Jet Partners (Malaysia). It is expected that the deal will be closed by the end of Q2 2016. Hongkong Jet currently has a fleet of 25 aircraft under management and offers two aircraft for charter – a BBJ and Gulfstream G550. Asia Jet currently has a fleet of 11 business jets under direct supervision.

BAA takes a stake in NetJets China

In another major announcement at ABACE, Business Aviation Asia (BAA), one of the largest corporate jets operators in the Asia-Pacific region announced a strategic equity partnership with charter operator NetJets China. Subject to approval by Chinese regulators, BAA will acquire 25% of NetJets China, becoming the second largest shareholder after NetJets which will retain a 49% holding. BAA is a subsidiary of China's Minsheng Investment and started operations from its Shenzhen base in 2006. It operates a fleet of some 56 aircraft.

Isle of Man introduces online register

The Isle of Man Aircraft Registry is now offering client access to online reservation of registration marks, mortgage searches and the current Isle of Man Aircraft Register. The service allows requests to be made via a dedicated website with a full search facility and online payment for reservations and mortgage searches at the time of request. The Registry went live on 1 May 2007 and has now registered 864 aircraft. Previously the register was available in PDF format, which was updated on a monthly basis and downloadable from the registry website. The online register can be accessed at <https://ardis.aircraft.im/register/search>

Asian Sky Asia Pacific Report

Hong Kong-based Asian Sky Group (ASG) issued its much-anticipated Year End 2015 Asia-Pacific Business Jet Fleet Report during ABACE in Shanghai. The 2015 report is the fourth annual edition and its scope has been widened to include India, Australia and New Zealand, in addition to detailed coverage of the Asian-Pacific corporate jet fleet. At the close of 2015 the region's business jet fleet totalled 1,134 aircraft – an overall increase of 6.2% over 2014. A net increase of 66 aircraft was recorded for the year with 66 new and 74 previously owned aircraft arriving while 74 left the region.

The key headline of the 2015 report is the continued slowing of growth in the Chinese market. Although China boasts 300 aircraft, 28 fewer new aircraft were delivered in 2015 than in 2014. Overall growth was just 3.8% – a sobering contrast to previous figures. The downturn reflects a much-predicted fall in orders from OEMs due to an evolving and retrenching Chinese market. One of the few positives for China is an increase in activity in the pre-owned market for smaller aircraft. After China, the next two largest markets in the Asia Pacific region are Australia with 184 aircraft (7% growth in 2015) and India with 145 aircraft (4% growth in 2015). Overall, the Asia-Pacific fleet remains one of the world's youngest, with 63% of all aircraft less than 10-years old. Finally, in terms of registration, the majority of business jets in the region remain on the US register, with China following on 23% and Australia on 14%.

RANA SERVICE CENTRE:

Aviation consultancy

Sound 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 spanning both the corporate and commercial aviation markets, which is coupled to our established links with aviation authorities and operators across the globe.

The wide 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.

Embraer headlines

Brazilian manufacturer Embraer reported a very strong first quarter of 2016. The firm delivered a total of 23 corporate jets compared to just 12 in the same period last year. The deliveries represented an even split – 12 light jets (11 Phenom 300s and one Phenom 100) along with 11 large jets (five Legacy 500s and six Legacy 650s).

In a huge landmark for the company, Embraer delivered its 1,000th corporate jet on 19 April. A Legacy 500 was handed over to fractional operator and charter specialist Flexjet in a ceremony at Embraer Executive Jets' headquarters in Melbourne, Florida. The manufacturer established a business aviation division in 2005 although it first began delivering corporate versions of the ERJ-135 regional jet in 2002.

The Legacy 450 is now the largest business jet aircraft permitted to use La Mole Airport, close to St Tropez in the South of France, following certification. The airfield is challenging and requires strict performance requirements due to short field and terrain. The aircraft can provide commercial charter service from La Mole with up to six passengers, with departures approved for eight.

Following a major extension of its Florida production facility, which previously featured a Phenom assembly line, the company expects final production of the first Legacy (a 450) to begin next month. The first US-built aircraft is due for delivery in October.



Corporate aircraft news

Gulfstream used a press briefing at ABACE to update industry observers on the G500 and G600 programmes. Four G500 aircraft are currently taking part in flight-testing and have completed 195 flights and accumulated some 800 hours of flying time. The manufacturer also confirmed that it had mated the wings to the first flight-test G600. The G500 is due to receive type certification in 2017 with first deliveries scheduled for the early part of 2018. The G600 is projected to enter service in 2019.

The Falcon 8X, new flagship of French manufacturer Dassault Aviation, made its Chinese debut at ABACE in Shanghai. F-WWQC (c/n 403) features a fully equipped passenger interior – the first example to be fitted. The design is due to received certification by EASA and the FAA by the end of Q2 with service entry by the end of this year.

In a further major programme landmark, Honda Aircraft Company recently delivered the first HondaJet to a European customer. The first example was handed over to Rheinland Air Service, the exclusive HondaJet dealer for Central Europe, in a ceremony at Friedrichshafen, Germany. The HondaJet is manufactured at Honda Aircraft's headquarters in Greensboro, North Carolina. It received FAA type certification in December 2015 and immediately began customer deliveries in North America.

Short Finals...

Donald Trump's Citation - a registration headache

Prospective US Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump suffered what some may argue are further embarrassing headlines when it was discovered that the registration of his Cessna Citation X had expired in January. The aircraft – N725DT, built in 1997 – had fallen foul of FAA rules that came into effect in 2010 requiring all US-registered aircraft to be re-registered every three years. The new rules introduced forced de-registration of lapsed aircraft and also set out financial penalties for use of aircraft beyond the newly imposed limit. Trump's team moved quickly to re-register the aircraft in the name of one of the candidate's holdings – DT Endeavor I.



AIRCRAFT FACT FILE \ \

British Aerospace BAe146



CATEGORY

Heavy jet

MANUFACTURER

British Aerospace, UK

ENGINE

4x Honeywell ALF502R-5 turbofans

LENGTH

26.16 m

WINGSPAN

26.34 m

RANGE

3,000 km

MAX. SPEED

767 kmh

SEATING CAPACITY

Up to 19 in executive layout

NO. OF CREW

2

MAXIMUM TAKE-OFF WEIGHT (MTOW)

38,102 kg

DESCRIPTION

With a total production run of 387 examples, the British Aerospace 146 (including the Avro RJ series) is the most successful British jet airliner programme. The aircraft was officially launched in July 1978 with the first BAe146-100 taking to the skies on 3 September 1981. The aircraft received certification in Q1 of 1983 and customer deliveries began shortly thereafter. The 146 was designed as a short-haul regional airliner and was produced in three versions. Unusually the aircraft offered four engines and was designed to offer excellent short-field performance. It can also be equipped with a "gravel kit" to allow for operations from unprepared runways in remote areas.

A VIP version of the BAe146-100, the "Statesman", was ordered by the Royal Air Force Queen's Flight and entered service carrying members of the Royal Family and government as the BAe146 CC2. Three aircraft were acquired with two remaining in service.