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NBAA-BACE 2018 - "inspiring dreams for the future"

The Business Aviation Convention & Exhibition (NBAA-BACE), held at the Orange County Convention Centre and Orlando Executive Airport from 16 - 18 October, demonstrated once again that it is the world's largest event dedicated to corporate aviation – 25,000 visitors, over 1,000 exhibitors (of which over 100 were making their BACE debut) from some 90 countries and over 100 aircraft in the extensive static display.

NBAA CEO Ed Bolen summed up this year's NBAA-BACE in distinctly positive terms: "We focused on the people, technologies and leadership qualities that will maximise today's opportunities, while keeping an eye on the investment and innovation that will drive the industry's future."

Embraer, Textron and NetJets stole many of the headlines at NBAA-BACE 2018. The Brazilian manufacturer unveiled two new models – the Praetor 500 and 600 – as well as significant enhancements to its baseline Legacy 450 and 500 models, while fractional heavyweight NetJets announced options for 175 of Textron's Cessna Citation Longitude and up to 150 of its Cessna Citation Hemisphere.

The Hemisphere commitment makes NetJets the launch customer for the largest Citation model, although the project remains suspended by the manufacturer while it works with engine maker Safran to resolve issues with the Silvercrest powerplant. NetJets has confirmed that it is seeking to take Longitude deliveries between late 2019 and 2033. The fractional specialist has purchased over 500 Citations of various marques since 1984. Headlines aside, this year's NBAA-BACE was held against a backdrop of a strengthening US economy, OEMs bringing a host of new models onto the market and continuing developments in new technologies. Industry analysts also made much of the strength of the US pre-owned market and the uplift this has had on aircraft values. The NBAA in particular was celebrating its efforts to ensure that the signed the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018 was passed without the controversial amendment to privatise the US air traffic control system (ATC).

The NBAA's other principal focus this year was on safety. In particular, a session on single-pilot safety and the National Safety Forum examined skill maintenance and the impact of automation. With a significant nod to the future, a panel discussion in the NBAA Innovation Zone examined electric vertical take-off and landing aircraft. NBAA-BACE returns to Las Vegas in 2019 from 22 – 24 October.

Mass bizjet retirements predicted over ADS-B Out

Engine Assurance Programme (EAP), the Dallas-based maintenance specialist, delivered a dire warning of forced corporate jet retirements caused by a 'double whammy' of factors. The US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) requires aircraft flying above 10,000ft to be equipped with Automatic Dependent Surveillance-Broadcast (ADS-B) Out equipment by 1 January 2020. In addition, replacement of the LPT1 rotor assembly in TFE731-4 and -5 aircraft engines is required under Airworthiness Directive (AD) 2012-17-05 by October 2020. This AD will affect a slew of older models including the Hawker 800/XP, Dassault Falcon 20-5 and early-model Falcon 900, and the Cessna Citation VII. EAP estimates that these requirements will force at least 20% of the older airframes out of service, due to the prohibitive expenses of carrying out the required installations.

Aerion plots its supersonic roadmap

In a detailed briefing at NBAA-BACE, supersonic corporate jet developer Aerion confirmed that its plans remain on track for the AS2 12 seat tri-jet. The aircraft is due to make its first flight in 2023 and to receive FAA certification in 2025. It is understood that the preliminary design phase is due to be completed in mid-2020 and the manufacturer will then commence construction of the first test airframes. Aerion emphasised that it expects the AS2 to be just the first in a family of supersonic corporate and commercial aircraft. With partner General Electric it unveiled the new GE Affinity engine, which will power the AS2 to cruise at Mach 1.4 (1,715kmh) over water. It also confirmed that the new aircraft is to feature the Honeywell Primus Epic avionics suite.

One Aviation rescue package secured

ONE Aviation announced, on 10 October, that it had filed for voluntary restructuring and protection under Chapter 11 bankruptcy. The Albuquerque-based manufacturer undertook to continue operations, including support services for the existing fleet of Eclipse 500/550 personal jets along with development of the larger Eclipse 700 (also known as 'Project Canada'). A total of 286 Eclipse aircraft have been delivered to date. Just five days later, however, it was confirmed that the company had been rescued from bankruptcy by Chinese investors. Citiking is a US financial entity set up by a Chinese group to complete the deal, said ONE Aviation CEO Alan Klapmeier.

AVIATION SERVICES HUB: Aircraft registration

There is no 'one-size-fits-all' aircraft registry. A number of new registries have been launched over the last few years, while a number of other jurisdictions have widened their acceptance criteria to attract high value business and improve the services they offer to international clients. More will surely follow. Every registry seeks to attract owners and operators of corporate aircraft with what they consider to be a unique selling point. In such a niche market what may be an appropriate registration jurisdiction for one client may not work for another.

The reasons for registering an aircraft away from the owner's home base jurisdiction can be many and various. To attract this comparatively small but lucrative market, registries must be able to offer outstanding service, ease of process, cost-efficiency, flexibility in terms of aircraft acceptance and crew standards, as well as providing confidentiality and political neutrality. In addition, corporate ownership can some offer potential tax advantages, increased asset protection and limited liability.

New Irish register finally accepts first aircraft

The first aircraft to wear the EJ-registration touched down in Ireland on 14 October. EJ-IOBN, which received its certificate of registration on 12 October, is an Embraer Lineage 1000 operated by Gainjet Ireland, a private aircraft charter operator and management company based at Shannon Airport. The aircraft was originally delivered to MGM Mirage in December 2015 as N730MM.

The 'EJ' Register was launched in March 2015, specifically for VIP or business aircraft in excess of 5,700kg MTOW, used for private or public transport. Open to both private and commercial AOC holders, the new register was established with preferred marketing and support partner International Aviation Services Centre (IASC) Shannon. It offers the benefits of a gold-standard onshore European Aviation Safety Agency jurisdiction and is designed for full compliance with current EASA regulations, including Part NCC. It is hoped that further aircraft will be attracted to the new register.

Q3 2018 - manufacturer deliveries

Brazilian manufacturer Embraer announced that is on course to meet its delivery estimate of between 105 and 120 corporate jets by the end of 2018. It delivered a total of 109 aircraft in 2017. In Q3 it delivered 24 aircraft – an increase of four over Q3 2017. The total was made up of 17 light jets (2 x 100s and 15 x 300s) and seven Legacy aircraft (three 450s, two 500s and two 650s).

Textron Aviation delivered a total of 41 Cessna Citation jets in Q3 – the same number as Q3 last year. However it also recorded a fall in turboprop Beechcraft King Air deliveries to 24 – from 29 in the same period in 2017.

Savannah-based Gulfstream Aerospace delivered 27 aircraft in Q3 – a fall of three aircraft over the same period last year. This figure comprises 21 large cabin aircraft (unchanged from 2017) and six mid-size jets (down three). The company noted that deliveries of the G500 had been "hampered" by production issues with the Nordam nacelle for the PW800 engine.

Bombardier delivered a total of 31 business jets in Q3 – 20 Challengers, seven Globals and four Learjets. This total is the same figure it achieved in Q3 2017 and represents 70% of its projection for the full year.

Corporate aircraft news

The FAA granted certification to the Bombardier Global 7000 on 7 November, clearing the way for deliveries to begin by the end of this year. The Canadian manufacturer's new flagship had earlier received approval from Transport Canada on 28 September. Originally unveiled in 2010, the project has been subject to significant delays. EASA approval is expected shortly.

Boeing Business Jets has taken orders for 20 BBJ MAX aircraft. On 15 October it announced that it had delivered the first example for cabin outfitting prior to service entry. To coincide with the first delivery, the company unveiled a new interior concept, named 'Genesis', by design specialist SkyStyle.

In a headline-grabbing announcement at this year's NBAA-BACE, Brazilian manufacturer Embraer has added two new models to its mid-size and super mid-size suite of aircraft. The Legacy 450 and 500 have been redesigned as the Praetor 500 and 600, and offer significant performance improvements including range and efficiency over the original designs. The Praetor 600 offers additional fuel capacity, new winglets and more powerful engines. The new 500 offers greater fuel capacity and newly designed winglets. Both aircraft come with a new custom interior option called 'Boss Nova', which is said to be inspired by the beauty and vitality of Brazil's beaches.

The word 'Praetor', an Ancient Roman title bestowed on generals and judges, derives from the verb praerire meaning "to go before, to precede, to lead the way". The project's strategy manager Alvidi Serpa continued this theme when said: "We're unleashing the Legacy 450/500 potential so customers can fully enjoy the value these disruptive products offer."



AIRCRAFT FACT FILE \\\

Fokker 70



CATEGORY

Heavy jet

MANUFACTURER

Fokker, Netherlands

ENGINE

2 x Rolls-Royce Tay turbofans

LENGTH

30.91 m

WINGSPAN

28.08 m

RANGE

3,410 km

MAX. SPEED

845 kmh

SEATING CAPACITY

85 in airline service

NO. OF CREW

2

MAXIMUM TAKE-OFF WEIGHT (MTOW)

41,730 kg

DESCRIPTION

The twin-engine Fokker 70 is a Dutch commercial airliner that first flew in early April 1993. Several examples are now in service as corporate/VVIP transports with both business customers and air arms. The Fokker 70 was developed as a smaller version of the popular Fokker 100 which first entered service with Swissair in April 1988. The Fokker 70 was designed as a regional airliner and as a direct replacement for the large number of Fokker F28 Fellowship aircraft in service around the world. The design received certification in October 1994 and featured a high degree of commonality with the larger F100 including avionics, wings and airframes.

A total of 47 aircraft were built before production came to an abrupt end with the bankruptcy of the manufacturer in 1996. The two principal European commercial operators (KLM CityHopper and Austrian Airlines) have recently withdrawn their fleets in favour of new generation Embraer 175 and 190/195 aircraft. Most of these aircraft have found new homes in Australia.