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Jennifer English, Editorial Director



CONTENTS

4. ON THE FLY

Electric air taxis take off, and how to give back.

6. BJT'S NICHE TOP TWELVE

There are times when you want specific capabilities in an aircraft. We spotlight 12 that might be just what you're looking for.



18. JOHN TRAVOLTA

A rare, in-depth conversation with Hollywood's most decorated devotee of flight.



36. IT'S TIME TO DITCH THE AIRLINES. WHERE DO WE START?

BJT reached out to several experts to help us craft private aviation solutions to serve our company's mission.



24. 15th ANNUAL READERS' CHOICE SURVEY RESULTS

Participants rate aircraft manufacturers and service providers, plus insights into how and why they fly privately.

Special Section: Keeping Safety Paramount

42. ANALYSIS OF A TRAGEDY

Crucial lessons uncovered in real accident reports.

46. CORPORATE FLIGHT ATTENDANTS: BEYOND SERVICE

The person serving your coffee could also be the one who saves your life.

50. REFLECTIONS ON THE KOBE BRYANT HEARTBREAK

An accident that will forever haunt the public consciousness.

54. MAJOR BUSINESS AIRCRAFT MANUFACTURERS AT A GLANCE

Shopping for an airplane or helicopter? Start by reading the key facts about the airframers whose products you're considering.



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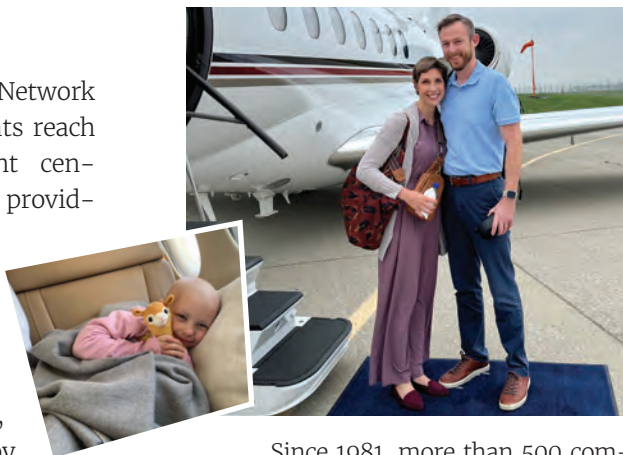
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ON THE FLY

GIVING BACK

Corporate Angel Network helps cancer patients reach the best treatment centers in the U.S. by providing free seats on corporate aircraft—both turboprop and jet-powered. Whether patients are seeking surgery, a clinical trial, or a second opinion, CAN reduces the physical, emotional, and financial burden of travel by arranging flights on business aircraft already scheduled to fly.

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Since 1981, more than 500 companies, including half of the Fortune 100, have donated flights, enabling CAN to coordinate over 69,000 missions. The program not only provides life-changing support to patients and caregivers, but also gives corporations a powerful way to align business travel with social impact.

—Jennifer English



ELECTRIC AIR TAXIS TAKE OFF

American eVTOL pioneers Archer Aviation and Joby Aviation have turned to the UAE to launch their first electric air taxi services abroad as the two companies continue to trudge through the Federal Aviation Administration's type certification process.

Archer Aviation began flight testing a prototype of its four-passenger Midnight eVTOL air taxi in July 2025 at Abu Dhabi's Al Bateen Executive Airport near the

iconic Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque, the largest mosque in the UAE. Those initial tests evaluated the aircraft's performance in the hot, humid, and dusty conditions typical of the region, where summertime temperatures often exceed 100 degrees F.

Meanwhile, Joby has been conducting flight tests of its four-passenger JAS4-1 eVTOL aircraft nearby in Dubai, preparing for the launch of air taxi services in and around the UAE's most populous city.

—Hanneke Weitering

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BJT's Niche Top Twelve

Many business aircraft do multiple missions well. However, there are times when you want specific capabilities in an aircraft. Here we spotlight 12 aircraft that might be just what you're looking for.

By Mark Huber

Cabin class helicopter that won't trash the lawn

Leonardo AW169



Finding a roomy cabin helicopter with a small enough footprint to minimize rotor downwash is no small task. With a main rotor diameter of 39 feet, the AW169 fits the bill. Maximum speed is 144 knots and range with full fuel and 30-minute reserve is 424 nautical miles. The 222-cubic-foot passenger cabin can accommodate eight to 10 people in utility configuration, eight in an executive design, or six to seven in an extremely plush VIP layout. The stylish interiors feature noise reduction, advanced cabin electronics, spacious captain's chairs, LED lighting, and high-end materials.

Dampeners inserted between the main rotor system mitigate vibration on passengers, pilots, and equipment and deliver a comfortable, jet-like ride. Another plus: though the AW169 doesn't have an auxiliary power unit to run air conditioning and cabin electricals, power can be drawn by running one of its two engines on the ground without engaging the rotors. No

more melting—or freezing—while you wait for the engine to start, run-up, and taxi.

Available on skidded or wheeled landing gear, the AW169 is certified for single-pilot IFR (instrument flight rules) operations.

Airplane for living off-grid

Daher Kodiak 100

No runway? No problem. The Kodiak 100 Series III is a float-ready, single-engine turboprop designed to get in and out of tight spots—dirt, gravel, grass, or water—under harsh conditions. The basic aircraft features a 45-foot-long high wing mated to a rugged aluminum fuselage with a large 54-by-57-inch rear cargo door, heavy-duty and high-riding fixed landing gear, a time-tested Pratt & Whitney PT6A-34 series engine, and Garmin's G1000 series glass-panel avionics in the cockpit.

The Kodiak is an almost-go-anywhere aircraft with a low stall speed of just 60 knots (flaps down), enabling it to use



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runways as short as 934 feet and stop in less than half that distance with reverse thrust. It has a maximum cruise speed of 183 knots, seating for nine passengers and one pilot, 248 cubic feet of cargo space without the passengers, and an endurance of close to 10 hours when you pull the power back to 95 knots. At 174 knots, the airplane has a maximum range of about 1,100 nautical miles.

Family hauler

Pilatus PC-12 PRO

Since 1994, the Pilatus PC-12 has combined go-anywhere utility with creature comforts that include a pressurized cabin, near 300-knot speed, and more than five hours of endurance. Stall speed at maximum takeoff weight is a slow 67 knots—remarkable for a 10,000-pound airplane. Trailing-link landing gear smooths out the sloppiest of landings and facilitates touchdown on paved or unpaved surfaces. The nearly 17-foot-long, six-to-nine-passenger flat-floor cabin features a beefy aft cargo door that is large enough to accommodate all-terrain vehicles, jet skis, Shetland ponies, and some larger household appliances.



Pilatus has refreshed the PC-12 several times since its first production models rolled off the assembly line. Updates have included improved avionics, better handling, sharper interiors, more engine power, and an upgraded propeller. The PC-12 Pro, the latest iteration, will begin deliveries later this year. It includes the Garmin G3000 Prime integrated flight deck with synthetic vision, high-resolution touchscreen displays, and an emergency Autoland function, which can land the aircraft automatically at the nearest suitable airport in the event of pilot incapacitation or another emergency. The Pro also offers a redesigned cockpit and cabin.

Entry-level jet you can fly yourself

Cirrus Vision Jet



The 311-knot Cirrus Vision Jet G2+ is the fastest—and the slowest—certified single-engine business jet you can buy. The airframer designed the carbon-fiber jet to be flown single pilot and by pilots with limited or even no previous turbine-aircraft experience. *(Ed. note: All pilots who want to fly the jet will need to complete a type-rating course.)*

Like Cirrus piston aircraft, the Vision Jet features a handle that deploys an emergency whole-aircraft parachute. It also includes Garmin Autoland as part of the Cirrus Perspective Touch+ avionics package with autothrottle and auto radar.

With full fuel (296 gallons), there's enough payload to carry the pilot and a passenger or the pilot and a lot of gear. The jet also has modular seating available for up to five adults plus two more optional jump seats suitable for small children. Its cabin is about 5 feet wide, 4 feet high, and nearly 11 feet long. With a pilot and four passengers (each at 200 pounds), the Cirrus will fly 600 nautical miles at 300 knots. Maximum range with full fuel is 1,275 nautical miles, and the aircraft can take off on just more than 2,000 feet of runway.

A great light jet cabin

HondaJet Elite II

This airplane demonstrates why Honda is the value brand both on the road and in the sky. The HondaJet is all about delivering midsize cabin comfort with light jet performance and operating economics. Honda engineers worked with the theory that each passenger requires about 60 cubic feet and that the seat pitch angle needs to be such that passengers' feet don't overlap when they're seated in the club-four facing seats. Passenger legroom



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BY TEXTRON AVIATION



is generous. Several interior configurations are available with seating for up to 7 passengers in a cabin that measures 17.8 feet long, 5 feet wide, and 4.83 feet tall and includes an aft lavatory with a solid privacy door. The aircraft's interior features upscale automotive accents, such as high-tech plating that runs the length of the cabin. Baggage capacity is 62 cubic feet.

Service ceiling is 43,000 feet and maximum cruising speed is 422 knots. With four passengers, maximum range is 1,547 nautical miles.

Midsize jet you won't trip in

Cessna Citation Latitude

Flat-cabin-floor luxury awaits. With the Latitude, Cessna exorcised the dreaded trenched center aisle demon that has possessed most midsize business jets since the 1970s. Begone the need to assume uncomfortable, and sometimes unnatural, postures when you want to stretch out or swing your feet into the aisle. No more banging your knees or tripping over the intruding wing spar box to get to the lavatory. The Latitude erases those indignities with a comfortable cabin that measures 27



feet, 6 inches long, 72 inches tall, and 77 inches wide. Standard seating accommodates up to nine passengers with a forward, two-seat, side-facing couch, a club-four grouping of single seats and two more single seats aft of that, and another belted single seat adjacent to the lav. The six pedestal single seats track forward and aft seven inches and laterally four inches on the seat base with 180-degree swiveling capability and infinite recline positions. The cabin management system allows completely wireless control of cabin functions and is compatible with Apple iOS and Google Android devices.

Top cruising speed is 446 knots and maximum range is 2,700 nautical miles. The aircraft has good short-runway capability with less than 4,000 feet of runway required at maximum takeoff weight.

Transatlantic super-midsize jet for comfortable napping

Embraer Praetor 600



Want to catch some ZZZs? In the super-midsize Praetor 600, the single executive seats can be rotated back-to-back and reclined together to provide comfortable sleeping accommodations for up to four passengers. That's no small consideration in a jet with a maximum range of 4,018 nautical miles: London to New York with fuel to spare (four passengers). Fully loaded, the twinjet can alight from runways shorter than 5,000 feet. Full fly-by-wire flight controls deliver a smooth ride.

With total passenger seating of eight to 12, the Praetor 600's flat-floor cabin measures 6 feet tall, nearly 7 feet wide, and 26 feet, 10 inches long. Available amenities include a big, well-appointed galley with hot and cold water, cabin-attendant seating, and two-zone executive seating in the main cabin for eight or nine with an optional three-place, berthing divan. The

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aft lavatory features a solid door, vanity, basin, vacuum toilet, and a closet with 40 cubic feet of space. (Total baggage space is 155 cubic feet.) An upper tech panel displays flight information and cabin management controls that appear when needed, then vanish, leaving a clean, smooth look.

Weekend large-cabin jet

Bombardier Challenger 650

The Challenger 600 series has been in production since 1978 and continues to fill the niche between the super-midsize and traditional large-cabin jets. Numerous improvements have been made to the aircraft throughout its lifespan in terms of interior styling and passenger comfort and technology, but the cabin's most compelling feature remains unchanged: space. The flat-floor, 1,150-cubic-foot cabin provides stand-up headroom and is almost 8 feet wide, and is 25 feet, 7 inches long. This enables multiple configurations, including a mix and match of large single captain's chairs, a comfortable club four and hi-lo table grouping, and one or two three-place divans. With 115 cubic feet of baggage space, there is ample room for multiple heavy golf bags and giant rollaway bags. With 4,000 nautical miles of range (six passengers, two crew), it's perfect for a weekend golf outing to St. Andrews or to Paris for a shopping trip—and can still use runways less than 6,000 feet long.



Long-range large jet for short runways

Dassault Falcon 8X

This trijet can get you into—and out of—some incredibly tight spaces. Like landing in just 2,200 feet. From London City airport's 3,934-foot runway, the 8X can fly nonstop to Chicago. Fully laden at 73,000 pounds, it has a range of 6,450 nauti-



cal miles and still only requires 6,000 feet of runway. All this versatility is combined with a comfortable cabin and a cross section that is 74 inches tall and 92 inches wide. The 8X can accommodate 12 to 16 passengers in up to 30 configurations across three zones while delivering a cabin altitude of just 3,900 feet at 41,000 feet.

Fore and aft lavs, a crew rest area that can be converted into a closet, an expanded galley, electrically-assisted seats, and a cabin humidification system all enhance the passenger experience. A new cockpit incorporates super-comfy seats and takes styling cues from Dassault's 6X twinjet. The aircraft features the new EASy IV glass-panel digital avionics, which are built around the Honeywell Primus Epic System, and the Elbit head-up display, which combines enhanced and synthetic vision.

Super lux bathroom in an ultra-long-range bizjet

Gulfstream G700

When you're on an airplane that can fly up to 7,750 nautical miles on one bag of gas, bathrooms matter. While the five-zone G700 offers many cabin layouts and seemingly endless finer details, what makes it a true lux long-hauler is the available 'Grand Suite' in the aft fuselage. It's the closest thing to a five-star hotel room in a production business jet. It can be equipped with a curved-edge, queen-size bed opposite a full-size dresser. Nice as this is, the adjacent, opulent aft lav is the main attraction, with two windows, stand-up closet, large vanity, and optional stand-up shower. The lav also provides in-flight access to the pressurized, 195-cubic-foot baggage hold, which can convey 2,500 pounds. This spaciousness is made possible by the passenger cabin that is a cross section of 6 feet, 3 inches tall and 8 feet, 2 inches wide, with a length of 56 feet, 11 inches.



ELEVATING PRIVATE FLYING: 30 YEARS OF PLANESENSE INNOVATION

Whether it's flying to metro hubs or remote destinations, PlaneSense has been providing business and leisure travelers with a consistently safe, efficient, convenient, and cost-effective solution for 30 years.

In the early 1990s, George Antoniadis believed that there was a better way to fly privately than the reliance on charter flights or whole aircraft ownership. After launching a successful aircraft management company and flying club, he turned his efforts to a fractional aircraft ownership program and set off what would become a game changer in the market. Recognizing that most private flights are relatively short, Antoniadis envisioned an aircraft that could deliver an innovative and distinctive travel experience for clients.

“We felt that there was a need for a more modern comfortable and efficient turboprop solution,” Antoniadis explains. “We launched PlaneSense in 1995. Our goal was to be an intelligent fractional ownership program, based on three pillars: aircraft with exceptional capabilities, excellent customer service delivery, and very cost-effective operation.”

At the time, the modern and efficient turboprop aircraft of choice was the recently FAA-certified single-engine Pilatus PC-12. Fast, comfortable, capable, and built like a “Swiss watch,” the PC-12 was the perfect foundation on which to build the PlaneSense fractional fleet. To meet its clients’ needs for faster, larger cabin aircraft with longer-range capabilities, the company added the Pilatus PC-24 light jet to its operations in 2018.

“Looking at it 30 years later, we believe we were right on target,” Antoniadis says. “Our Pilatus PC-12s and PC-24s are the most comfortable, capable, efficient, and technically advanced aircraft in their respective classes. They can easily

“Our fleet of Pilatus PC-12s and PC-24s is the most comfortable, capable, efficient, and technically advanced aircraft in their respective classes, and can easily operate at airports closer to where our clients want to go.”

— George A. Antoniadis - Founder, president, and CEO of PlaneSense, Inc.

operate at airports closer to where our clients want to go.”

He explains that the exceptional performance of the Pilatus fleet allows the aircraft to operate at airports with shorter runways that are inaccessible to larger aircraft, alleviating the concerns of the “last hour on the ground” for PlaneSense clients, even in hot, high, or ice-snow locations.

“Take a popular destination like Steamboat Springs, Colorado. The PC-24 is one of the most capable twin engine jets that can operate at SBS year-round, and there are many



PlaneSense operates the largest U.S. fleet of Pilatus PC-24 jets and PC-12 turboprops.



The PC-12 excels at shorter runways, like Walkers Cay Airport (MYAW) in the Bahamas.

more examples like this throughout North America, Central America, and the Bahamas,” Antoniadis says.

The PC-12 is able to access runways as short as 2,000’, making remote islands like Cat Cay (MYCC) in the Bahamas or the grass airfield at Woolsey Memorial Airport (5D5) in Michigan easily manageable. The 3,500’ runway at Santa Monica Airport in California is a frequent destination for PC-24 share owners on the West Coast. The innovative fleet makes it possible for clients to get closer to their destinations.

SOMETIMES EVEN A FRACTION IS TOO MUCH.

“Our new CobaltPass card has been created to meet the needs of less frequent travelers. Most card clients typically start with 25 hours, but it’s flexible to meet anyone’s needs,” he says. “And it’s also the only card that doesn’t



With the PlaneSense PC-24 jet program, clients have access to thousands of airports across all regions of the continental U.S. and international destinations from Canada to the Caribbean to Central America.

have any ‘blackout days.’ CobaltPass cardholders can fly anytime, but we may shift departure times on those high-travel days.”

“The card has proven to be an exceptionally popular travel value proposition; it’s still a complementary offering to our core fractional ownership business,” Antoniadis continues. “I’m very happy to say that we have seen many instances where CobaltPass users have become full PlaneSense fractional owners.”

And while some PlaneSense clients required a lower-hour option, others sought a way to expand their private aircraft travel to Europe.

“One of our pillars is providing an excellent travel value to our clients, and they’ve told us they want more access



The PC-24 redefines expectations for light jets, with a remarkably spacious cabin and luxurious touches that provide an exceptional experience of comfort and sophistication.

to private aircraft in Europe,” he says. “What we’ve done is to introduce a ‘share partnership’ with European-based Jetfly. Now PlaneSense clients can use their time for travel within Europe on Jetfly’s Pilatus fleet.”

“To give our clients even more flexibility for their flights, we’ve recently introduced the PlaneSense Sourcing Solution, an in-house program which works with our trusted provider list to find aircraft outside the PlaneSense fleet for specific trips. This could be larger-cabin jets for those traveling with more passengers, longer-range jets to reach Europe, or any number of possibilities,” Antoniadis continues. “The PlaneSense Sourcing Solution makes the entire transaction seamless and extremely easy for our clients.”

“What we’ve done with the Jetfly relationship, and the PlaneSense Sourcing Solution, is to collectively expand our services into Europe and effectively expand our fleet offerings,” he adds. “We believe both of these new offerings have dramatically increased the value of services our customers enjoy.”

PRIVATE FLYING IS A VERY PERSONAL THING.

While there are a lot of reasons why so many people have made PlaneSense their private business and leisure provider of choice, Antoniadis states that by far, their “loyalty is based on the people behind the planes.”

“We take a very personal approach to our business and invest the time to get to know the wants and needs of our clients. What can we do to serve them in new and better ways?” he says. “We have clients whose families have been with us for three generations, and that’s something to be very proud of.”

“It’s all thanks to our extremely loyal team, many of whom have been with PlaneSense for over 20 years. That loyalty translates directly into providing a better experience for everyone who travels on any of our airplanes,” Antoniadis continues. “Our customers have been working with the same people for years, and there’s a lot of trust and respect in those relationships.”

Speaking of trust and PlaneSense’s enviable on-time and safety record, he explains that everyone at the company takes great pride in the company’s commitment to providing world class service, which often starts with ensuring the best training for pilots and the program’s maintenance operations.

A highlight of the company’s investment in training is the recent addition of the world’s first state-of-the-art

Pilatus PC-12 NGX Level D full-flight simulator into its in-house training curriculum.

“The simulator allows us to fully control the entire pilot training process and enhance our curriculum to meet our high standards of excellence,” Antoniadis says. “We invest heavily in safety and, by definition, training for both our pilots and aircraft maintainers.”



Excellence in pilot training has been a strategic priority for PlaneSense for 30 years. Innovative technology such as virtual reality tools and a custom built, advanced full-flight simulator allows PlaneSense to meet the high standards of safety and service expected by clients.

That commitment is highlighted by the company’s construction of its own dedicated state-of-the-art Pilatus maintenance facilities in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and Boulder City, Nevada.

With decades of experience behind the team, Antoniadis stresses that every aspect of PlaneSense’s operation—from scheduling and dispatch to flight operations, maintenance, training, and employment policies—has been designed to deliver an outstanding private aircraft travel experience for each of its clients.

“We are built to offer an extremely integrated value proposition that targets safety, comfort, efficiency, and flexibility, all at a reasonable cost,” he says. “We are laser focused on service and aim to exceed our clients’ expectations with every flight.”



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Party plane that won't spill your drink

Airbus ACJ320neo

This business jet iteration of the ubiquitous Airbus A320 single-aisle airliner features fly-by-wire light controls, advanced avionics, and significant range improvements over its legacy predecessor, thanks to more fuel-efficient engines. The ACJ320neo can transport 25 passengers more than 6,000 nautical miles—a big jump from the 4,300-nautical-mile, eight-passenger range of the ACJ320. This range allows it to fly nonstop from London to Johannesburg or Los Angeles to Tokyo. The fly-by-wire controls help deliver a remarkably smooth ride.



Overall, the cabin measures 90 feet, 3 inches long, 12 feet 1 inch wide, and 7 feet tall—just enough room to hang that disco ball. And the luggage hold is a massive 650 cubic feet—big enough for costume changes that will keep the party going for weeks. Interior options are only limited by your budget and imagination.

Jet for potentates who want to blend in

Boeing BBJ 787-8

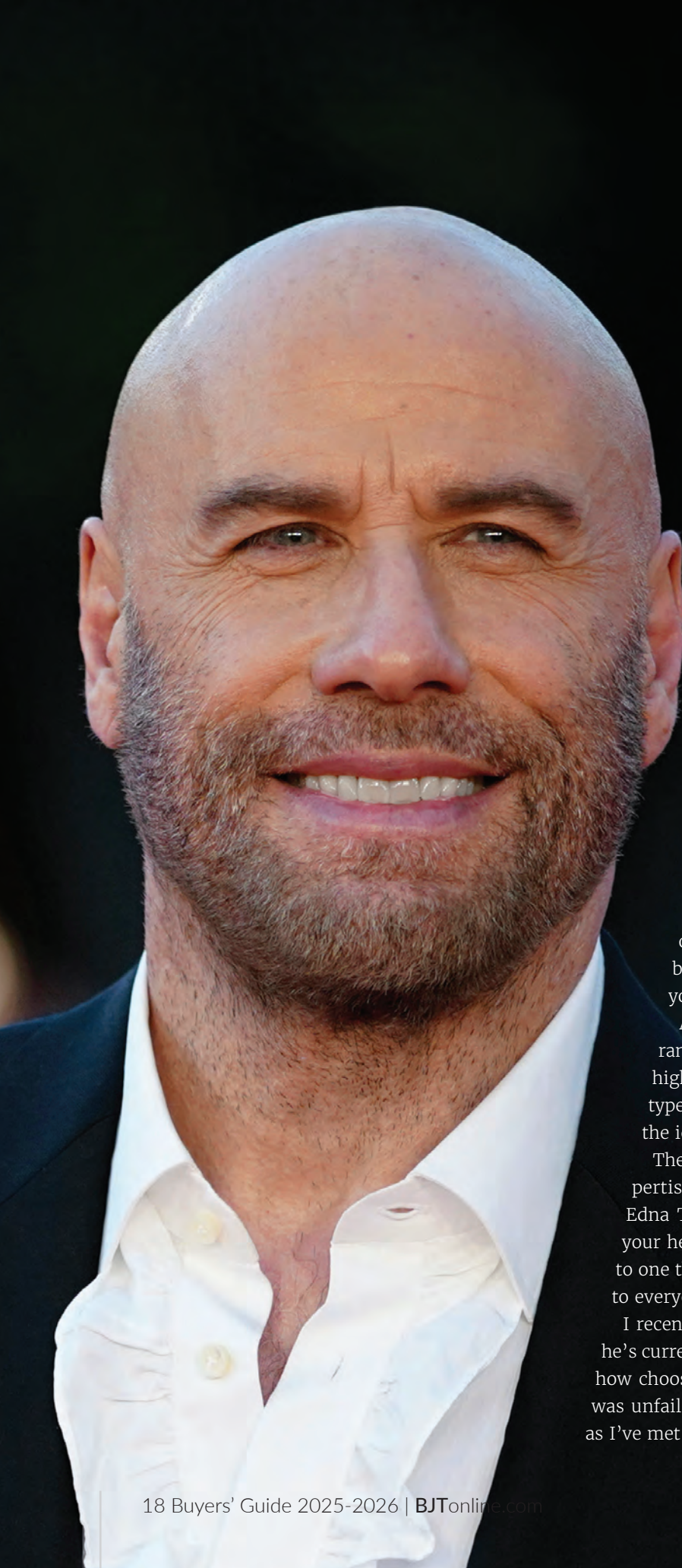
When a behemoth like a 987,000-pound (maximum takeoff weight) Boeing 747-8i quadjet is simply too conspicuous, the more discreet 500,000-pound BBJ 787-8 widebody twinjet could be an attractive alternative for the VVIP set looking to keep a lower profile. When configured with 24 to 35 passengers sharing the 2,340-square-foot cabin, the BBJ 787-8 can remain aloft for nearly 22 hours and fly 9,960 nautical miles nonstop, connecting virtually any two points on the globe. In the belly, there is space for 4,400 cubic feet of cargo. This is all the airplane most ultra-billionaires and heads-of-state will ever need.



Like the ACJ, the interior of the BBJ 787 has few limitations. Available layouts include a second sleeping level, giant big-screen theater room, bandstand, full bar, transparent floors, fitness center, sauna, library, walk-in shower, formal dining room, gourmet kitchen, and color schemes and accents that transcend good taste. Every passenger can be treated to a first-class experience with lie-flat seating, privacy surrounds, and the same connectivity and entertainment options found in a luxury hotel suite.

BJT

The opinions expressed in this column are those of the author and not necessarily endorsed by BJT.



The **BJT** Interview:

John Travolta

A superstar we can believe in.

By Jennifer English

In his 2023 commencement speech at Northwestern University, Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker said, “The kindest person in the room is often the smartest.”

He might as well have been talking about John Travolta.

For five decades, the actor has sustained an almost impossibly successful and varied career in show business, turning out one charismatic performance after another—many marked by a depth of empathy and emotional intelligence that can take your breath away.

As it happens, Travolta is likely the most experienced pilot to rank among Hollywood’s top stars. In his downtime, he’s become highly accomplished in the cockpit, earning more than a dozen type ratings in aircraft ranging from the Dassault Falcon 900B to the iconic Lockheed Super Constellation (*see page 21*).

The level of intellect it takes to reach that kind of aviation expertise—and also convincingly play both Archangel Michael and Edna Tarnblad—is clear. But we all know the cliché: never meet your heroes. More often than not, the disappointment comes down to one thing—they’re not nice. Travolta, as many have noted, is nice to everyone.

I recently had a chance to catch up with Travolta about the aircraft he’s currently flying, his thoughts on charter and supersonic travel, and how choosing a kind flight instructor can make all the difference. He was unfailingly considerate and humble—and as passionate an aviator as I’ve met.

After our interview—and at his suggestion—I sat down to read *Propeller One-Way Night Coach*, Travolta’s novella about experiencing air travel for the first time, told through the eyes of a child. The young narrator is named Jeff, but in a parallel life his name might be John Travolta. From the moment the airplane takes off, his heart is utterly captivated. Early in the story, despite the broader complications in his life, the boy writes: “For some reason everything that happened thus far that night seemed perfect. For years after, no matter what negative experience I might have, from the time I would leave for the airport until the time I would arrive at my destination, life would seem safe and I would be happy.”

Please catch us up on what you’re currently flying.

A Dassault Falcon 900B. It’s a very dependable, elegant, fast plane. It’s one of the larger corporate jets I’ve ever owned, and out of all of them, I have appreciated this one the most, because it just seems like it never fails you. I have had maybe one canceled flight in five years—which is a remarkable thing. It’s a beautifully designed plane. I think the modern design is why it’s so efficient. Garrett engines are by nature efficient, but it all depends on how the body of a plane is built. How hard is the engine working to push something through the air? The Falcon has such a streamlined design—it allows these engines to perform at their best. And it’s three engines versus two, which psychologically is always a nice thing. I do a lot of research before I buy a plane, and I noticed that all the top corporations in the world had this Falcon 900. Procter and Gamble had three of them. Elon Musk had one. Taylor Swift had two. Plus, about five other larger corporations—that could afford any plane—chose the 900.



I often hear feedback that Dassault Falcons are ‘pilots’ aircraft.’

It’s definitely a pilot’s airplane, because of how quick the design is to respond. Falcons are beautifully sensitive to your inputs. But it’s also a passenger’s plane. Don’t underestimate how quiet all the Falcons are and how elegant they are inside as well. It’s a pleasure to fly, but it’s also a pleasure to be a passenger. [I used to fly] a Falcon 2000—also an excellent jet. The only reason I gave that up for the 900 was because it held 15 passengers versus 10, and it could go two hours further.

What other aircraft do you own?

A Boeing 737—300 series, which has the CFM engine. I guess you could call it a BBJ since it was an airliner modified into a corporate interior. It holds 29 seats, but since I run it under the rules of Part 91, I’m limited to 19 seats. It’s very dependable, a good choice as far as parts are concerned, maintenance is easily and readily available everywhere in the world. Very dispatchable.

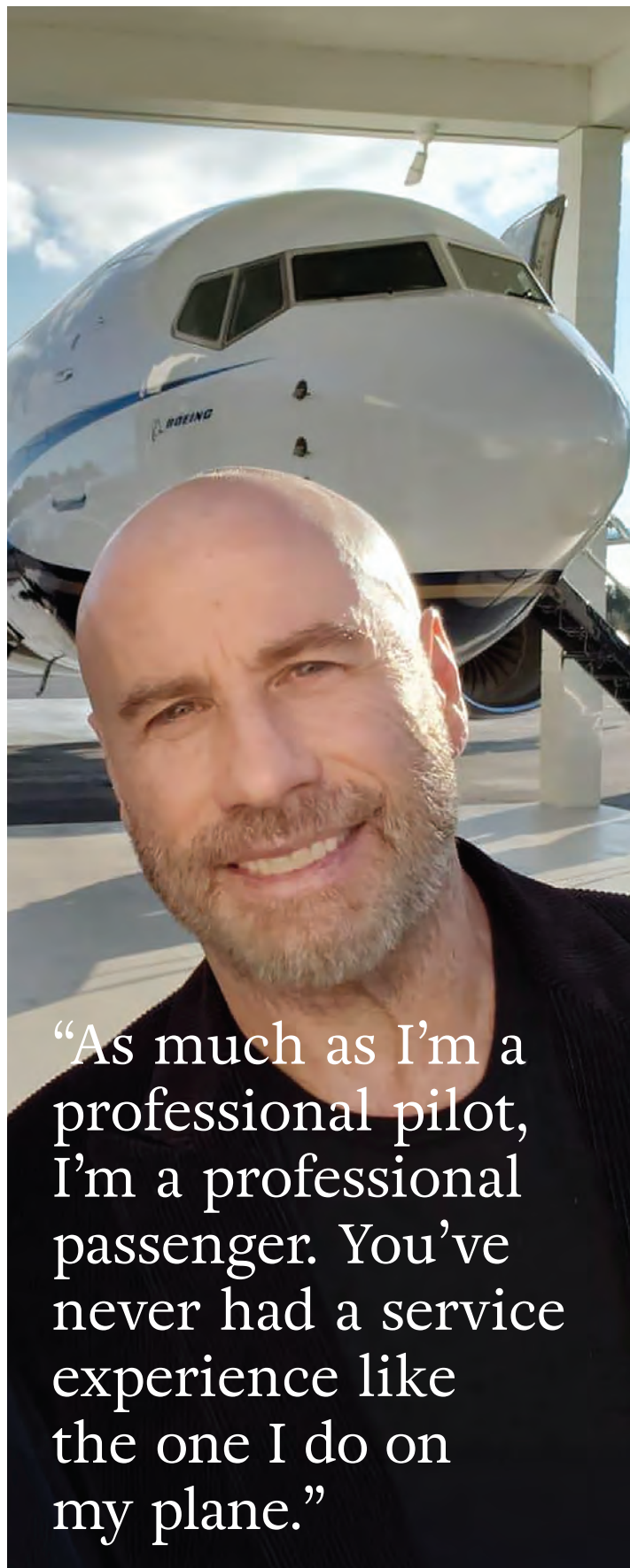
The other plane I own is a little Eclipse jet. I think it is an absolute miracle. A perfect safety record, just like the Falcon 900. And talk about efficiency! You can run it as inexpensively as an SUV car—that’s how brilliant the design is. Vern Raburn designed the plane. A fantastic little jet. There’s nothing out there that’s quite as fast and efficient as that little Eclipse. Also, I just purchased a Lockheed Super Constellation.

You have an astonishing amount of type ratings. Where do you train?

I started training at American Airlines for the Citation and the Boeing 707, and then I went to CAE in Texas for continuation of the Citation, the Gulfstream GII, Bombardier



From Travolta’s personal archive: Canadair CT-114 Tutor (left), which is used by the Royal Canadian Air Force Snowbird demonstration team, and Lear Jet 24B (right)



“As much as I’m a professional pilot, I’m a professional passenger. You’ve never had a service experience like the one I do on my plane.”

Challenger, Dassault Falcon 2000, and Falcon 900B, and I used private instructors for the Lear and my first Hawker. One of my most important licenses is the 747. I studied at Boeing and also at Qantas school for the 747. They wouldn’t let me be their ambassador flying around the world in my 707 to help promote the airline unless I was trained by the top instructors at Qantas. I studied for over a full month, every day, no days off, to get my license. And it proved that they were safe with me, because I flew all the Qantas executives around. I flew the chairman of the board, president, vice president, and other executives as well, plus their million-mile passengers, and their special VIP passengers. I flew them all over Australia.

Are you ever in the back of the plane?

Oh yes. As much as I’m a professional pilot, I’m a professional passenger. You’ve never had a service experience like the one I do on my plane. Soup to nuts. Meal service, sleeper service—I do it really well. All of my celebrity/artist friends know that I kind of pride myself when it comes to passenger service. I would be great at running an airline, except I’d probably go broke and need government support, because I believe so much in investing in luxury for the passenger.

What has your experience been with charter?

Sometimes, with charter, it almost feels like they’re doing you a favor, as opposed to remembering the massive amounts of money you’re spending on chartering their planes. It’s why I have my own planes, besides the fact that I can fly them. Nobody can give me the service I will do on my own aircraft. It’s a lost art, just not at the level it used to be. I’ve had to charter a few times because of my planes being in maintenance. I bring my own flight attendant so I don’t have to worry about service. You’re paying a premium, and you’re paying three times the amount of what it costs to actually operate the airplane. The service needs to be stepped up.

I heard you on a podcast telling someone that hiring the right crew and pilots should come before deciding on the actual plane. It’s a very interesting way of looking at the buying process.

You can have the finest airplane in the sky, but if you have a crew with a negative attitude, it affects that flight and the pleasure of flying. You could have a lesser plane and a better crew, and you’ll enjoy your flying more. Schools are fastidious about safety, and everyone is pretty well trained, but it doesn’t mean they’re going to meet your service expectations in their tone or in their behavior. If you have a pilot and crew that you love, you can train them for any new plane you buy.

How do you manage your aircraft?

I have three different planes, and they have three different types of pilots, three different types of maintenance facilities, and maintenance overseers. I have a group of flight personnel to cover three aircraft—actually four, if you include the Constellation, because that requires rarefied maintenance and pilots [who have expertise with vintage planes].

I like consistency, and I am proud of the way I like flights to be. I just did a little movie called “Propeller One-Way Night Coach” based on a novella I wrote 30 years ago. If you want to know who

I am, just listen to the audio or read the book. You’ll see why I’m who I am about flying, and it covers the heyday of luxury service in the sky—and how one should still have it, ideally.

Why do you think pilots are attracted to the profession?

I was always shocked when I would fly with pilots who only flew to make money and not for the joy of flying. I’ve run into several of those over the years. Those who do enjoy it all love it for different reasons, and I’ve noticed this is as different as when you ask an actor what their favorite movies are. What

John Travolta’s Type Ratings



1. Dassault Falcon 900 (Current)



2. Boeing BBJ 737-300 series (Current)



3. Eclipse 500 (Current)



4. Dassault Falcon 2000

5. Lockheed Super Constellation (has flown and currently owns), 6. Cessna Citation I, 7. Cessna Citation, 8. Boeing 707, 9. Boeing 747 (second in command), 10. Lear 24, 11. Lear 36, 12. Hawker 125-1a, 13. Hawker 800, 14. Lockheed JetStar 731 (trained in), 15. Gulfstream II, 16. Bombardier Challenger 601, 17. Airbus 380 (ambassador pilot for Qantas Airlines; first non-test pilot to fly the aircraft).

excites pilots is so varied that I don't even know what the commonalities are, except that it makes them happy because they love the joy of flight. Some people love the challenge of calculations. Some like the sensation of flight. Some like the objectivity of seeing the world from a different perspective. It lifts their spirits.

What are your thoughts on the future of flight?

I love the idea of supersonic. The Concorde was fantastic. I flew on it many times. And we need that again. But I don't really care if it gets any faster, because then there's no fun to the journey. It's about as fast as you want to go; otherwise, it's more like time travel or "beam me up, Scotty." But two times the jet speed is very sexy to me. It's very cool.



What is your advice for others who want to learn how to fly?

An advisory to anybody learning how to fly: choose your instructor [wisely]. If the instructor is teaching you in a negative way, you're not going to absorb as much, and you're not going to be able to apply it as well. You have to get someone who really wants you to learn and wants you to have fun in your learning. If it's anything less than that, ask for someone different. I've never done well with the military style of being taught anything. I don't like negative instruction. It should be: support what you did right, and then teach you things that you're not quite as sharp on. It's simple.

I learned the hard way because my first two instructors were just awful to me, and I gave up flying twice, when I was 16 and 18, because the instructors were so rough. At 19, I found a furloughed United Airlines pilot who had the kindest heart. He gave me the best encouragement—just very caring about my learning. I first soloed when I was 19 because of him. I needed a person who had real patience and tolerance in their heart. When you have that, you can learn to the moon.

BJT

This interview has been edited and condensed.

Living Legends Leads to Lasting Friendship

By Jennifer English

For over twenty years, John Travolta has been closely involved with the annual Living Legends of Aviation event, missing only one ceremony.

In 2019, he presented the prestigious Lifetime Aviation Industry Award to Jean Rosanvallon, then president and CEO of Dassault Falcon Jet. The award honors leaders who have made remarkable contributions to aviation, including entrepreneurs, industry pioneers, record breakers, astronauts, pilot-celebrities, and celebrity-pilots.

"I first met Jean at Living Legends, but we bonded over our shared passion for Falcons," Travolta said. "We now speak four or five times a year—and he always shares updates and advice."

BJT



John Travolta with Dassault Falcon's Jean Rosanvallon



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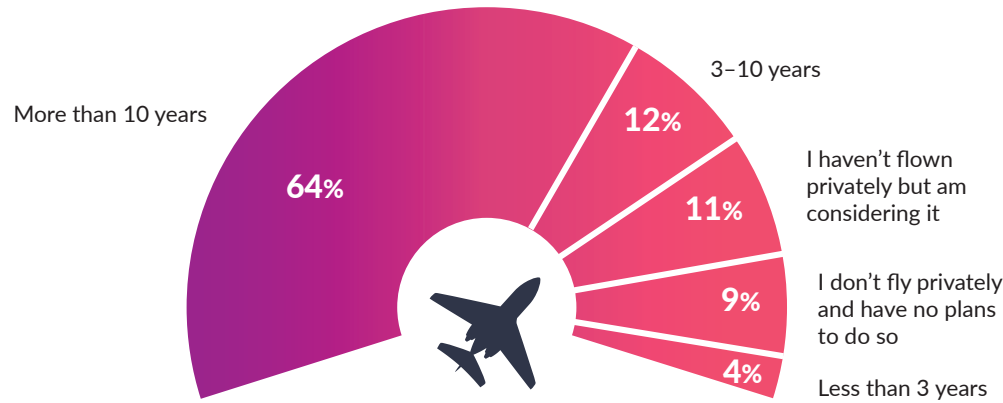
BUSINESS JET TRAVELER'S 15th ANNUAL

Readers' Choice Survey

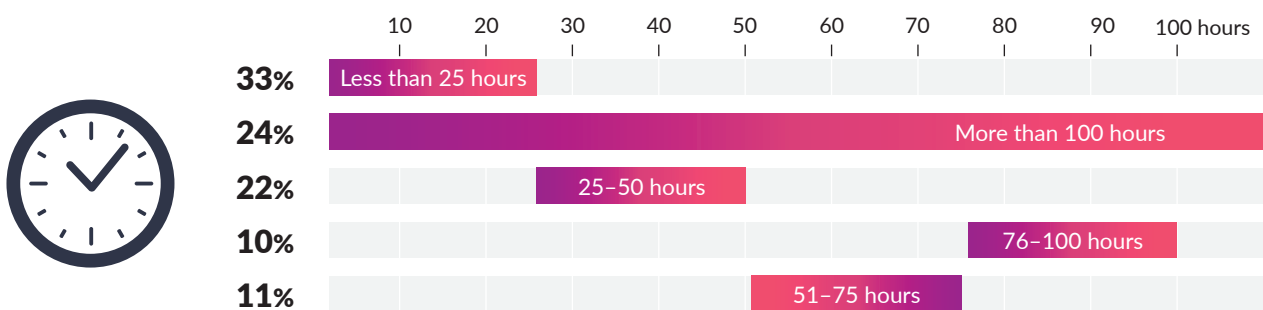


Here are the results of our 2025 Readers' Choice survey. As promised, we have made a contribution for every completed survey to Corporate Angel Network, which arranges free flights on business aircraft to treatment centers for cancer patients.

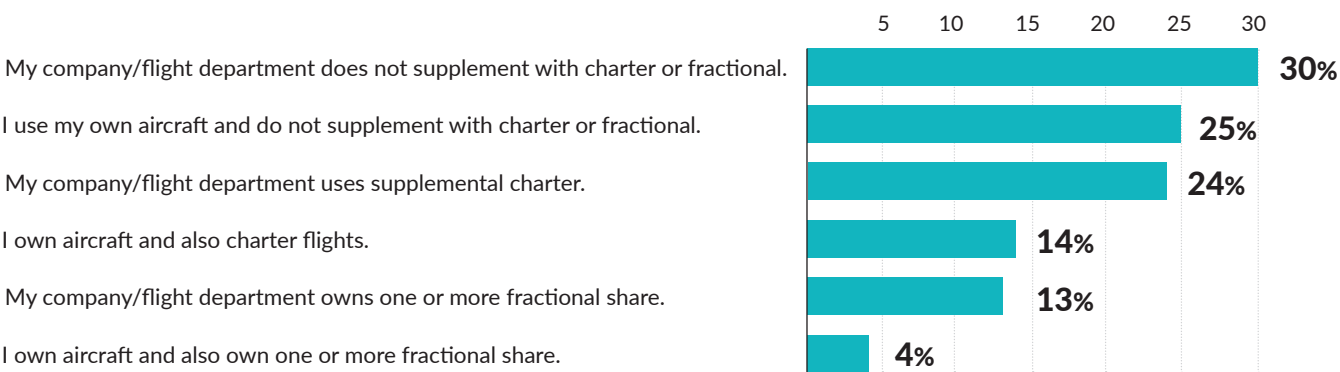
HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN FLYING PRIVATELY?*



ABOUT HOW MUCH DO YOU FLY PRIVATELY IN A TYPICAL YEAR?



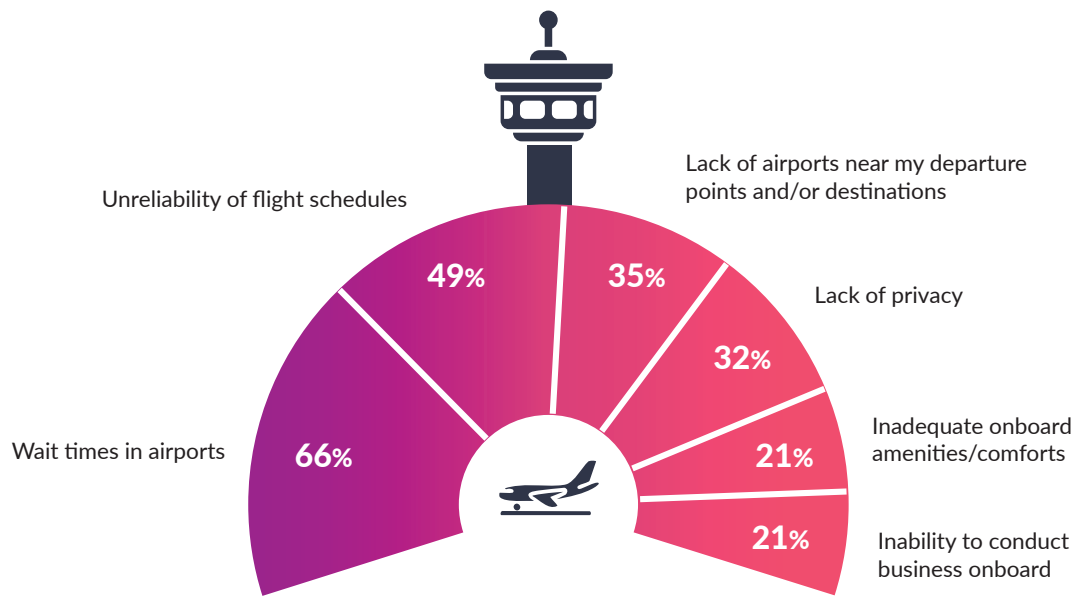
DO YOU OR DOES YOUR COMPANY SUPPLEMENT FULL OWNERSHIP WITH ADDITIONAL LIFT (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)?



*Respondents who indicated that they had no plans to fly privately are excluded from these stats and were not asked any of the questions that follow.



WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING DO YOU LEAST LIKE ABOUT AIRLINE TRAVEL (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)?



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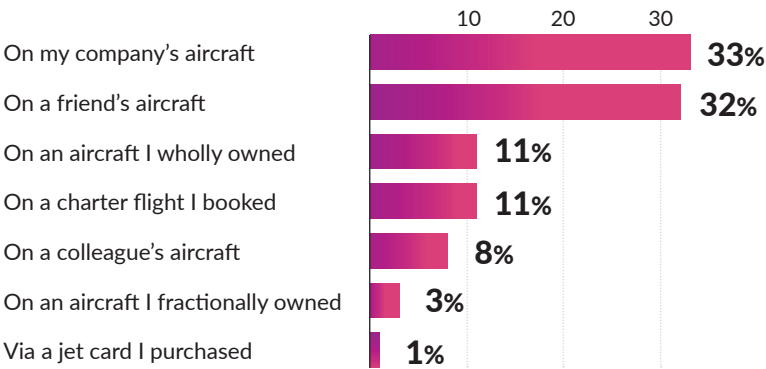


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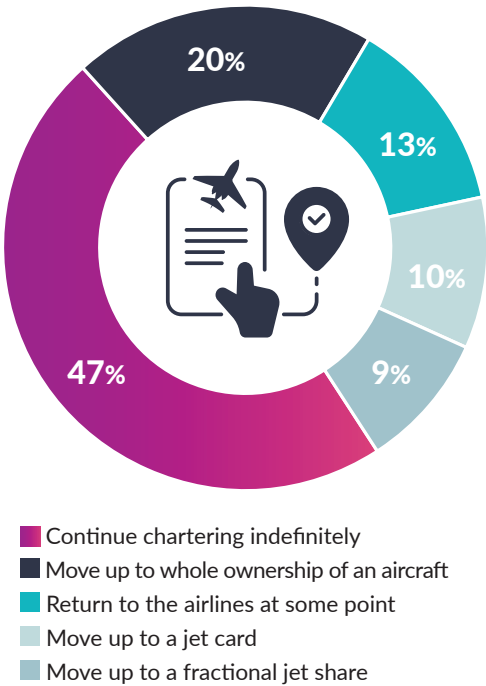


PLEASE INDICATE WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING YOU HAVE DONE IN THE PAST TWO YEARS
OR PLAN TO DO WITHIN THE NEXT TWO YEARS (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY).

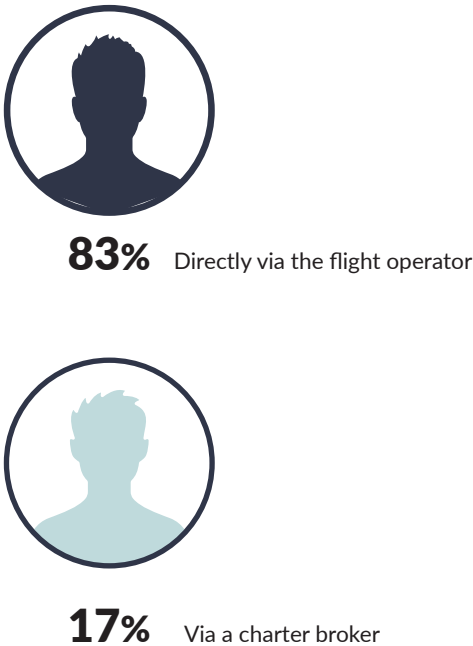


Note: Percentages don't always equal 100 due to rounding.

IF YOU FLY VIA CHARTER, DO YOU PLAN TO...



IF YOU FLY VIA CHARTER, HOW DO YOU PREFER TO BOOK FLIGHTS?





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	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Weighted Average
Gulfstream	69	18	3	1	3.71
Bombardier	50	35	5	2	3.46
Dassault Falcon	46	31	6	2	3.43
Sikorsky	26	23	6	1	3.32
Airbus Corporate Jets	25	25	6	1	3.31
Pilatus Aircraft	36	28	8	2	3.31
Embraer Executive Jets	36	35	8	2	3.29
Airbus Helicopters	20	23	5	1	3.28
Cessna Citation	37	43	10	1	3.27
Boeing Business Jets	30	26	10	1	3.26
Textron Aviation	31	32	10	1	3.26
Bell Textron	24	30	6	2	3.24
Daher	13	21	9	2	3.00
Leonardo Helicopters	9	16	7	2	2.96
Cirrus Aircraft	17	24	16	4	2.87
Piper Aircraft	12	36	17	3	2.84
Honda Aircraft	13	22	16	10	2.62
Robinson Helicopter	7	19	13	6	2.58
Piaggio Aero	6	15	17	8	2.42

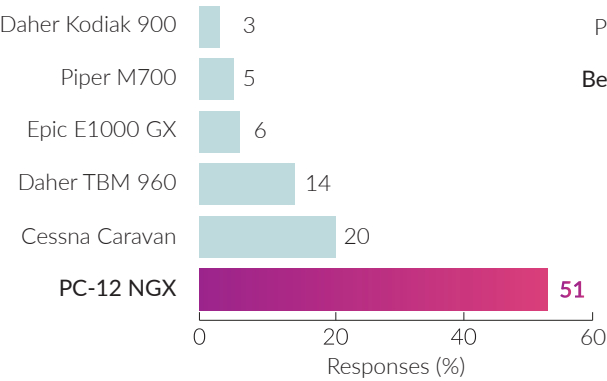
*Results exclude respondents who answered "Don't know/not sure", **Determined by assigning points to ratings: Excellent (4), Good (3), Fair (2), Poor (1)



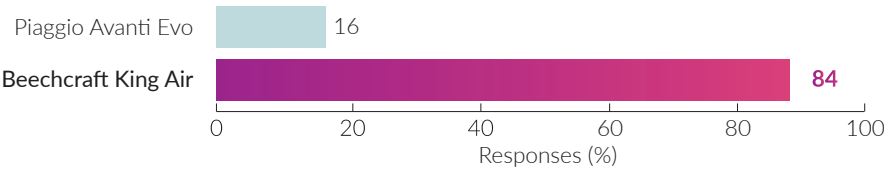
Note: Percentages don't always equal 100 due to rounding.

IF YOU COULD REGULARLY FLY ON ANY OF THESE AIRCRAFT, WHICH WOULD YOU CHOOSE IN EACH CATEGORY?

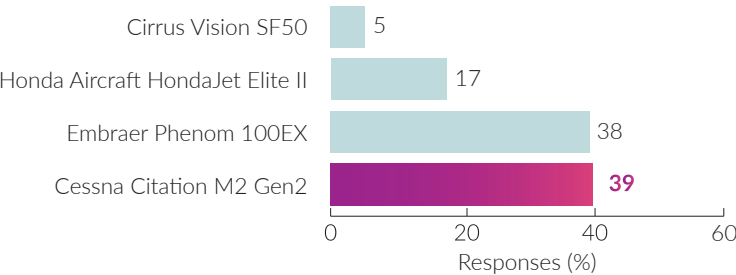
SINGLE-ENGINE TURBOPROPS



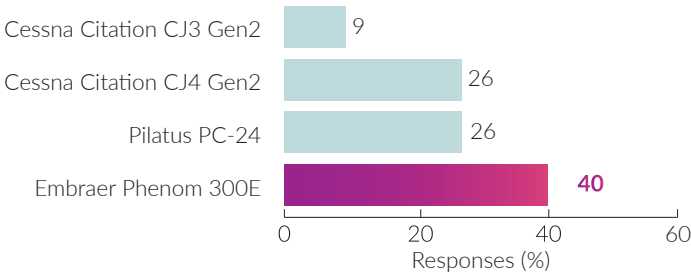
TWIN TURBOPROPS



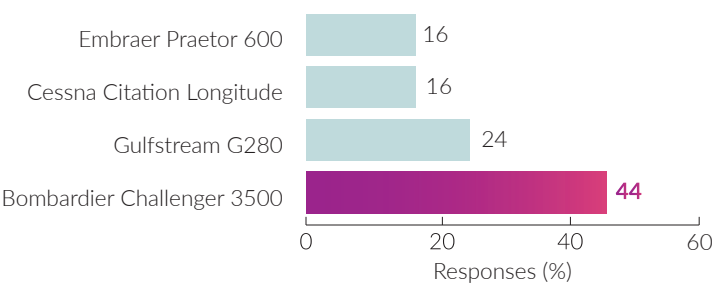
VERY LIGHT JETS (VLJs)



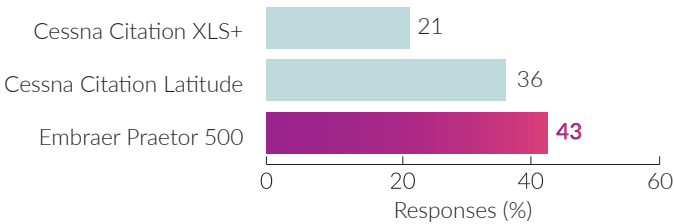
SMALL-CABIN/LIGHT JETS



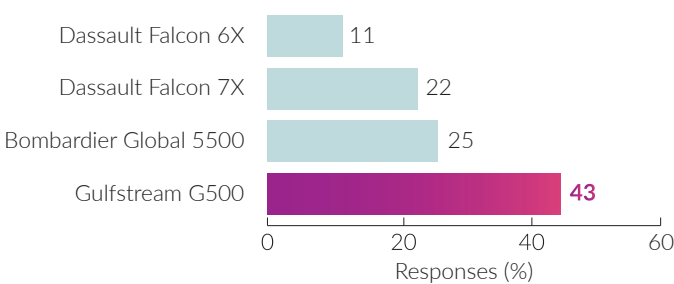
SUPER-MIDSIZE-CABIN JETS



MIDSIZE-CABIN JETS



LARGE-CABIN JETS



Note: Percentages don't always equal 100 due to rounding.



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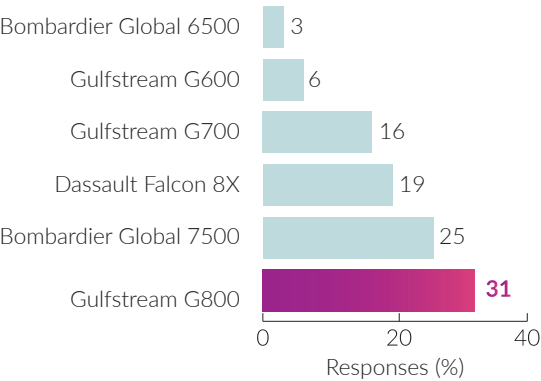
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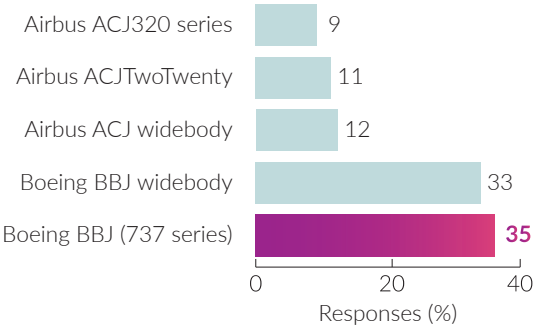
Gulfstream™

IF YOU COULD REGULARLY FLY ON ANY OF THESE AIRCRAFT, WHICH WOULD YOU CHOOSE IN EACH CATEGORY? (CONTINUED)

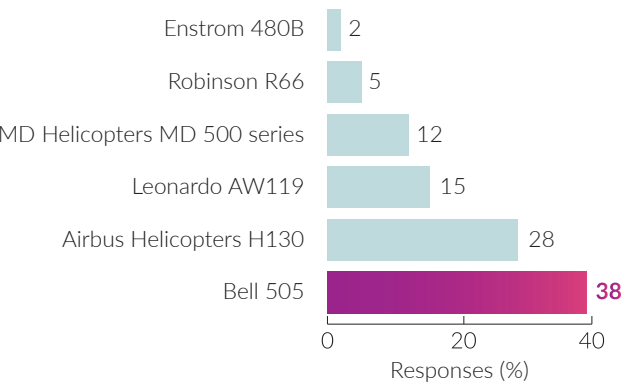
ULTRA-LONG-RANGE/HEAVY JETS



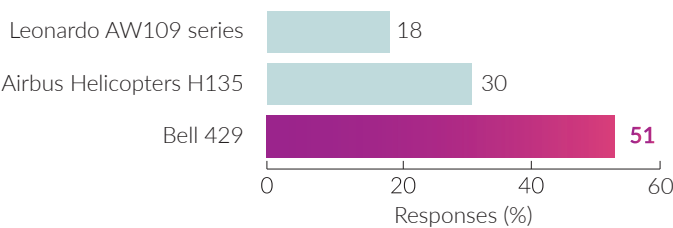
BIZLINERS



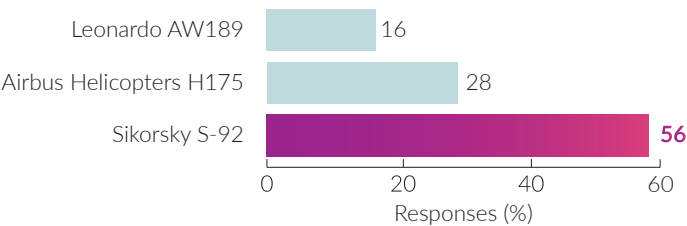
LIGHT SINGLE-TURBINE HELICOPTERS



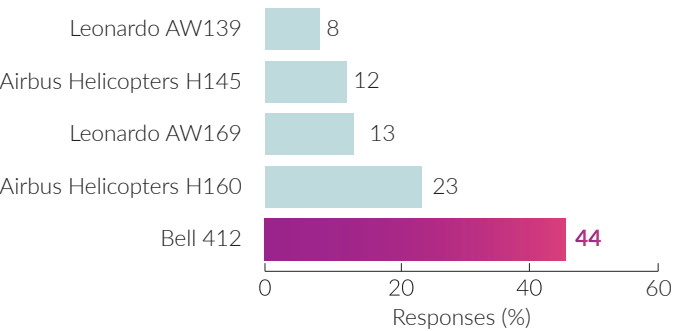
LIGHT TWIN-TURBINE HELICOPTERS



LARGE TWIN-TURBINE HELICOPTERS



MEDIUM TWIN-TURBINE HELICOPTERS



Note: Percentages don't always equal 100 due to rounding.



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It's Time To Ditch The Airlines. Where Do We Start?

By Jennifer English and Charles Alcock

Customer Case Study: AIN Media Group

AIN Media Group, **Business Jet Traveler**'s parent company, is growing at a rapid pace, and our team has been traveling more than ever. We know better than anyone the benefits of private aviation. With that in mind, we have decided to explore our options. We reached out to several experts to help us craft a private aviation set of solutions that will serve our company.



Fundamentals and Travel Needs For The Client:

AIN Media Group: Approximately 40 employees across the United States and Europe with contributors on every continent. Ten to 20 colleagues traveling from different parts of the world to and from airshows and AIN events/meetings in: Paris, Farn-

borough/ London, Dubai, Singapore, Las Vegas, Wisconsin, and assorted other European and U.S. locations. Regular regional road trips in various parts of the world for two to three people with approximately five to 10 stops in seven days or fewer.

Expert Takes:

The Aircraft Broker

Jay Mesinger, CEO, Mesinger Jet Sales

When a company or individual comes to us for the first time, we always start with the same question: How do we fulfill your mission? We sit down together and look at where you need to travel, how often, and with how many passengers. What are your main city pairs? Because flying from New Jersey to Las Vegas or Colorado is very different from flying from New Jersey to Asia.

I usually tell people to aim for an aircraft that fits 70% of their needs. There's rarely a one-size-fits-all solution—it's often a combination. Even if you own an aircraft, you might still fly first class commercially for certain trips. For example, if you're only going to the Middle East or Asia two or three times a year, it may not make sense to use your own jet for that. If you've got one person in the UK and five in New Jersey, you're probably not going to base a plane in the UK or reposition one from New Jersey just to pick them up. It's more practical to charter a plane for that person, or maybe a VistaJet fractional share. We are always honest with new clients and will be the first to help them find another option if full ownership is not the best solution for them right now. Most times we end up working with them again in a couple of years when the time is right to buy—we value long-term relationships.

We start with the city pairs—point A to point B. Then we look at frequency: you do this route six times a year, that one eight times, and another just twice. Once you know how many hours each trip takes, you multiply that by frequency. Now you've got a clearer picture of your annual flight hours.

That number is key. If you're flying only 100 to 150 hours a year, owning a whole aircraft might not make sense. But once you're at 200 to 250 hours a year, full ownership starts to become a more logical and cost-effective option compared to charter or fractional.

From there, you can say, "Based on these city pairs, I want to fly nonstop to each destination." You'll realize many domestic flights—and maybe even some routes to Europe—can be done

nonstop from New Jersey. That helps narrow down the type of aircraft you'll need.

Then comes cost: how much does it cost per hour to operate the plane? Multiply that by your annual flight hours, and now you have your budget.

It's a pretty natural progression: city pairs, frequency, hours, aircraft capabilities, cost. And once you've done that, you'll know exactly what kind of aircraft makes the most sense to fly your 200–250 hours a year.

How much you're willing to spend absolutely makes a difference. You could go out and buy an older Gulfstream for \$5 million, or you could spend \$35 million on a much newer one. At the end of the day, they both get you from point A to point B. But some people just don't want to deal with a 25-year-old airplane or they want something customized and brand new. These considerations also help to determine the overall operational cost.

Another thing to consider: I think having a management company is critical for running an efficient, safe operation. A good management company can give you supplemental lift when you need it. They can provide backup pilots. They offer



Jay Mesinger

operational excellence that's hard to achieve if you're trying to run everything on your own. In a case where you only fly 150 hours a year, but you want to keep your pilots current and engaged, you might decide to charter out your plane an extra 100 hours—not because it fully pays for itself, but because it helps offset fixed costs and supports a more efficient operation overall.

If you decide to buy a whole aircraft, some models that would work for your mission are:

- » **Gulfstream G450, G500, G600, Dassault Falcon 900 series, or Bombardier 500, 6000/6500 (for New Jersey to U.S. West Coast and most of Europe)**
- » **Gulfstream G650ER or G700, Dassault Falcon 7X, Bombardier 7500 (if you need to get to Middle East/Asia)**

The Case For Fractional Ownership

George Antoniadis, CEO, PlaneSense



Obviously I'm biased, but I believe you will have a very cost-effective solution if you use fractional ownership. We are seeing a lot of people migrating from owning fleets of airplanes to now owning fleets of shares. It allows certainty of availability, pricing, quality, safety, and delivery. I always advise: Aim to fulfill 70% of your travel needs. Going for 100% is very cost-inefficient.

When we figure out the all-in hourly cost of the aircraft, we include the hourly rate, the management fee spread over the hours you fly, and other small expenses. We also factor in the devaluation of the aircraft, because if you buy a share

today, eventually you'll trade it in, roll into another plane, or exit the program. So if you pay \$100 for a share and later get \$60 back, we count that \$40 loss as part of your cost. To me, that's the most truthful way to look at it. Some people bring in depreciation, but that's a tax effect, and everyone handles taxes differently, so I leave that out. Using this approach, the PC-12 comes out to about \$5,200 an hour, and the PC-24 is around \$8,400 an hour.

The PC-12 in our configuration has six passenger seats, the PC-24 has eight.

You can do coast-to-coast in the PC-24 with one 30-minute stop. For anything under 500 nautical miles, the PC-12 is perfect. For longer trips, at some point it makes more sense to use the PC-24. But here's the real advantage with PlaneSense: both the -12 and the -24 are excellent short-field performers, which means you can access hundreds more airstrips than with most other jets. That flexibility really matters. The PC-24 might be faster in the air, but if the PC-12 gets you closer to your destination, the total travel time could be about the same. That's part of how we help you choose the right aircraft for the mission.

We often have clients say, "I want to go to Cincinnati," and we say, "Don't give us the city—give us the address." There are seven airstrips near Cincinnati. You might know one or two, but we may be able to get you closer—saving that last hour or so on the road.

We've just launched a new service we call our Sourcing Solution. If you're a PlaneSense client and you need, say, a 12-seat jet to fly nonstop to Vancouver tomorrow, we will tap into our trusted network of vetted operators, and one of their aircraft will seamlessly show up. You're billed through us, just like a normal flight. In April, we started a cooperation with JetFly in Europe. If you're a U.S.-based fractional owner, you can now call and book a flight from, say, Milan to Hamburg using your U.S. hours on a JetFly aircraft.

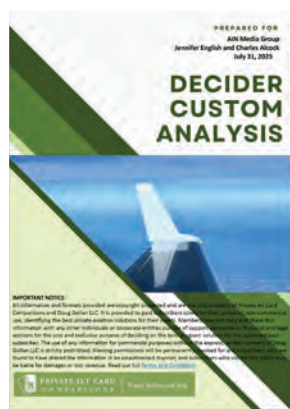
We also now offer a jet card program with 25 flight hours. It's a great way to try us out before committing to a fractional share. Anyone can buy a Cobalt Pass when available (we release them based on fleet capacity), and many clients use it up and go straight into ownership. It's a one- or two-year "use it or lose it" program. It costs a bit more per hour, but it gives you a feel for the service and the aircraft. If you decide to buy a share halfway through your card, we'll credit a significant portion of the unused value toward your purchase.

My recommendation for AIN Media Group: Start with a 16th share in each airplane. That would give you 50 hours in the PC-12 and 50 hours in the PC-24, and you can exchange up and down between the programs.

Independent Business Aviation Expert

Doug Gollan, founder, Private Jet Card Comparisons

We always recommend that subscribers take their time and map out the details as thoroughly as possible. As the old saying goes, "Measure twice, cut once." Private aviation can deliver tremendous ROI, but it's expensive, especially if you make the wrong choices. Either way, it's a significant investment. The key is to get it right upfront—so you're not surprised by hidden fees or policy mismatches, like blackout dates, daily minimums, peak-day restrictions, flights outside guaranteed zones, or stiff cancellation penalties.



Private Jet Card Comparisons' Decider Custom Analysis Report identifies providers and programs matching your criteria.

In this case, because it involves multiple people traveling in some cases simultaneously in different parts of the country and the world, the best place to start is by building out a detailed travel calendar—week by week, and even day by day when possible. Include how many people will be flying, exactly where they're going and in what sequence, what features you want on board (Wi-Fi, stand-up cabin, fully enclosed lavatories), how much booking notice you'll need, and how flexible your travel dates are.

For larger group trips such as multiple team members attending a show, look at where everyone is coming from and where they need to go afterward. Do all

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Doug Gollan

the travel dates line up? That kind of clarity starts to shape the right solution. For example, will multiple team members need private aviation access on the same day, and how often? Many programs only guarantee one aircraft per day. In some cases, flying commercial makes more sense. For road show trips, some programs operate on a day-based model, which can be very efficient if you're making multiple flights in a single day.

You may be better off chartering an aircraft for the entire trip, with the airplane and crew staying with your team as they move from city to city. Just keep in mind that pilot duty-time limits may affect your schedule. Also, with ad hoc charters, if a recovery aircraft is needed mid-trip, the rest of the itinerary would need to be requoted—something you'll want to discuss with your provider in advance. It's also important to know the cancellation terms if you want to change your flights after booking, in case a client cancels or reschedules a meeting and your routing needs to change.

Our Decider Custom Analysis report identifies specific providers and programs that fit your parameters with side-by-side comparisons, including specific costs for flights you will be taking. You'll then speak directly with those providers, and we're here to help if you have questions.

Private Jet Card Comparisons subscription: \$500/year for unlimited access to proprietary database of more than 80 providers and more than 500 program options, constantly updated.

The Case for a Hybrid Charter/Airline Approach: Wheels Up

Seth Rotman, Senior Vice President of Private Jets

For a team like AIN Media Group, where travel ranges from regional roadshows to long-haul international events like the

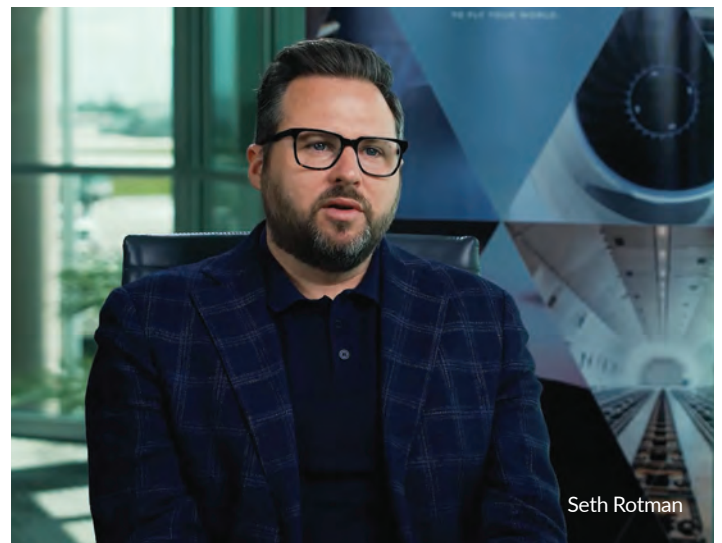
Paris and Singapore airshows, owning two aircraft is likely excessive in both cost and operational complexity. Instead, we recommend combining charter access with a flexible membership program. This model ensures you have the control to choose the right aircraft for each mission—whether that's a light jet for short-haul hops or a super-midsize for longer, multi-stop international trips—without being locked into a fixed asset or paying for underutilized capacity.

If you fly under 400 hours per year, ownership or fractional share simply doesn't deliver the flexibility or ROI. At Wheels Up, we've built our model around dynamic pricing, guaranteed recovery, and global access, allowing you to scale up or down based on your needs without long-term commitments or asset depreciation.

The core difference is flexibility. You fund upfront, fly when you want, and benefit from rate protections and rewards. Our membership model offers guaranteed availability, capped rates, and perks like Medallion Status with Delta Air Lines. For AIN Media Group, this approach would give your global contributors and sales teams premium access without locking you into a rigid structure.

Ad hoc charter is a great starting point if your flight volume is unpredictable or you're testing the waters. That said, it's critical to work with a provider who not only has access to global charter inventory but also prioritizes safety, operational control, and recovery. Engaging a reputable charter broker can also add tremendous value. Experienced brokers help negotiate pricing, clarify terms like cancellation and recovery policies, and are especially useful when navigating unfamiliar markets such as South America, India, Africa, or Asia. They ensure aircraft and crew meet your specific standards and can act swiftly to resolve any operational issues in real time.

Recommendation: Combine charter access with a flexible membership program.



Seth Rotman

The Customer's Take

Charles Alcock, Managing Editor, AIN Media Group



My overriding conclusion is that we need a mix-and-match approach that could combine elements of fractional ownership, charter services, and our old friends, the scheduled airlines. But getting that mix right is by no means straightforward, as far as I can discern from our other expert advisors. Doug Gollan's day job is making sense of all this and he gives valuable insights into the sort of hard questions we'll need to ask ourselves as we keep the AIN flying circus in motion.

There is a lot to be said for turning to George Antoniadis at Plane Sense to find out more about the sort of package his team could put together. I confess to having a soft spot for the Pilatus PC-12 and PC-24 models, which score highly for me in terms

of their rugged pragmatism. There are plenty of other fractional ownership and block charter options we could consider in a crowded market that includes giants such as NetJets, Flexjet, and VistaJet. One thing I especially like about the Wheels Up offering is the opportunity to retain the advantages of access to a major scheduled carrier like Delta. Jay Mesinger's seasoned advice about the thought process for choosing one will be invaluable.

So now I'm off to make the case for private aviation to my boss at AIN. I'm sure our sales team will look right at home on a private jet, but, with some notable exceptions, the reporters are going to need a whole new wardrobe.

In the meantime, and in case anyone is curious, my next flight will be when I board an EasyJet A320 (in my imagination it's an Airbus Corporate Jet) for a short hop from London to Basel in Switzerland for AIN's inaugural European Corporate Aviation Leadership Summit.

BJT

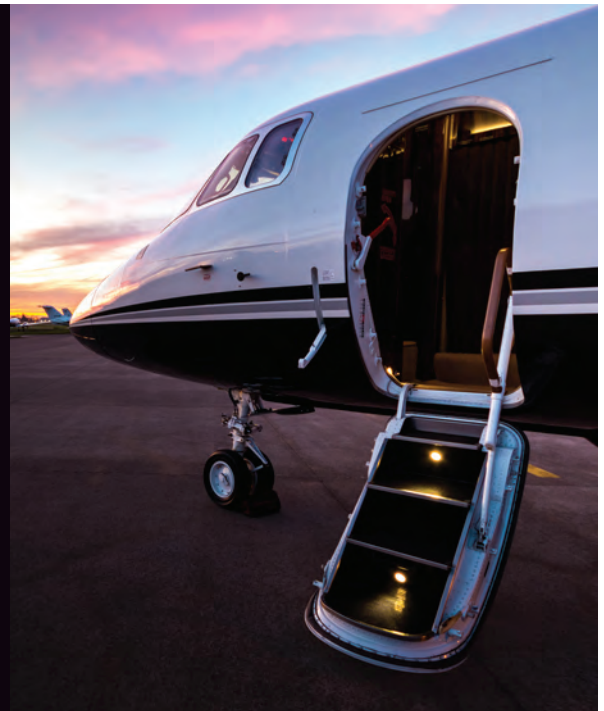
Interviews have been edited and condensed.

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Spotlight on Safety

Analysis of a Tragedy

How the actions of aircraft owners, charter operators, and their passengers can mean the difference between life and death.

By Gordon Gilbert

Federal aviation regulations include a rule that says pilots cannot “operate an aircraft in a careless or reckless manner so as to endanger the life or property of another.” No such federal rule applies to passengers, although accident records show that from time to time, they essentially conduct themselves in a careless and reckless manner.

A **BJT** review of turbine business aircraft accident reports over the last 25 years reveals several notable occurrences when passengers, operators, or owners unwittingly contributed to the accident’s probable cause or the degree of injury, including to themselves or others. In many cases, the aircraft owner or operator implicated in an accident was not onboard the aircraft when it crashed.

If In Doubt, Don't Move About

The most common type of injury to passengers results from not wearing a seat belt. While this might seem obvious, in some situations it's not as easy as it sounds to ask folks to buckle up. For instance, note the confusion in this March 3, 2023 accident of a corporate jet in which an unrestrained passenger perished when the pilot inadvertently induced unexpected, sudden, and severe up and down movements of the aircraft. According to accident investigators, the seat belt fasten sign always being on during the flight likely caused the confusion.

In post-accident interviews with investigators, the captain reported that the seat belt sign was on for the entire flight and that his regular practice was never to turn it off. "It is likely that the passengers had no expectation for the seat belt sign to be turned off at any time during the flight, given that they regularly flew with this flight crew," said investigators in the final report. "As a result, the passengers had to use their own judgment regarding whether it was safe to get up and move about the cabin. Had the flight crew used proper procedures, the passengers would have been warned of possible oscillations and [the crew] could have made an announcement to ensure that they were indeed seated with their seat belts fastened."

Regardless of the investigation conclusion in the aforementioned accident, many operations fly with the seat belt sign on at all times to be safely prepared throughout the flight for surprise turbulence, as might happen in clear air or from the wake of a larger jet ahead, as we see in the next scenario.

On Aug. 8, 2019, a private jet flying in smooth air suddenly encountered unexpected wake turbulence. The seat belt sign was off. Unsecured objects, passengers, and the flight attendant were thrown about the cabin, resulting in several minor injuries and one serious injury to a passenger. Investigators attributed the injuries to the seat belt sign being off.

On March 21, 2018, three passengers on a business jet were injured when they ignored the seat belt sign that had just chimed and illuminated. The crew was desperately trying to get the passengers attention by flashing the sign on and off. During the descent for arrival, the pilots turned on the fasten seat belt sign and flashed the sign again when the airplane began encountering light turbulence. Despite the flight crew's multiple seat belt warnings, three of the five passengers were



not strapped in during the turbulence. One of the unbelted passengers was seriously injured, while the other two received minor injuries.

Timing was everything in the Nov. 21, 2021 accident that happened on a fractional operation. While in cruise flight, with the seat belt sign off, unexpected light turbulence started to buffet the airplane. The crew turned on the seat belt sign. Moments later, the flight encountered moderate turbulence just as one of the passengers was returning to his seat from the lavatory. The passenger fell and broke several ribs.

A passenger was hurt under similar circumstances on a March 29, 2022 flight in a corporate turboprop. The pilot reported that while descending, the airplane encountered "a sudden pocket" of severe clear air turbulence. Just before the encounter, the seat belt sign was activated, and the passengers were verbally instructed by the pilot to make sure their seat belts were on. A passenger who was in the process of restraining himself when the turbulence hit banged his head on the cabin ceiling, causing a serious injury.

An airplane owner was bounced against the sidewall and seriously injured on a March 1, 2015 flight when he stood up while his business jet was still in motion. After landing, the pilot was unable to stop the jet on the remaining runway. It rolled off the end of the runway for several hundred feet and was substantially damaged. The other five passengers aboard kept their seat belts on until the aircraft's motion ended. The owner had stood up to go to the cabin entry door before it became clear to him that the airplane was not going to stop on the runway.

Staying Safe on the Surface

Passengers also have to be cautious when the aircraft is on the ground, whether it's moving or not. A fractional operator reported that, after landing, while parked at the ramp, the pilot left the flight deck to open the cabin door. He "found the lead passenger standing in front of the main cabin door waiting to exit the aircraft," said the investigation report. "The pilot was able to open the door, but did not have room to exit ahead of the passenger as was normal procedure." As she started down the airplane's airstairs, her foot slipped. She landed on her knees and was able to catch her balance by grabbing onto the hand rails, but not before she fractured her ankle.

During a brake check while taxiing out for takeoff on Dec. 30, 2005, a passenger had released her seat belt to switch seats, when a sudden stoppage occurred. She fell into the aisle. After the co-pilot helped her, she decided to continue the trip to its destination. About one week later, the pilot learned that she had a hairline fracture on her collarbone.

After a corporate turboprop twin landed at night and stopped on the ramp on June 15, 2001, a passenger was seriously injured by walking into a propeller blade after exiting the aircraft. "It was dark out. I exited the plane to proceed to the hangar," she told investigators. "There was no ground support crew, stairway, or ladder to exit the plane. There was no lighting. The pilot gave no commands prior to passengers exiting... or what direction to go once we exited. As it turned out, once you exited the plane, the direction to the hangar put you in a path directly into the propeller."



According to the investigation report, however, there was a ground crew present, and they said "she just ran into the back side of the [windmilling] prop and [we] could not stop her." It was stated by one of the other passengers that she desperately needed to use the bathroom and "just bolted when the aircraft stopped." Investigators faulted the passenger for the accident.

One rule of thumb: unless directed otherwise by a ground or air crew member, when exiting, walk straight out and don't make any turns until you have reached at least the end of the wing. Exiting helicopters requires extra vigilance because if the main rotor blades are not rotating, they can droop to the height of an average person. Beware that tail rotors also pose a risk.

Pressuring the Pilot

Pressing demands—subtle or blatant—on the crew to land at the planned destination under any circumstances is not justified. It could be interpreted as "interfering" with the duties of the crew, prohibited by federal regulations. More importantly, it adds unnecessary stress on the pilots, who are already under self-imposed pressure to arrive at the intended destination on time. An owner was guilty of this in a recent fatal accident of a business helicopter.

On July 4, 2019, a twin-engine turbine helicopter crashed into the sea after taking off on a dark moonless night over water. The two pilots and five passengers were killed. Investigators said the probable cause was spatial disorientation, which happens when pilots suddenly lose their sense of position, direction, and motion when there are no external visual references. Contributing

to the pilots' decision to make the flight was "external pressure" via direct communication from the helicopter owner.

Six people died on Feb. 7, 1990, when a single-engine turbine helicopter crashed while trying to land at a remote site during snow squalls. The pilot could not recall the accident, and the surviving passenger refused to be interviewed by investigators. A former employee reported that "company officials pressured pilots to complete their flights in spite of marginal weather conditions."

Charter and tour operators competing for passenger business have also been blamed in accidents for pressuring their pilots to complete missions. The June 25, 2015 fatal crash of a single-engine tour turboprop is a case in point. Investigators determined that the probable cause of this accident was the pilot's decision



and the two pilots were killed when the chartered business jet crashed on a dark and stormy night. The passengers, the company that chartered the aircraft, and the charter operator were implicated in the cause. The aircraft's onboard recorders and post-accident interviews unveil the main circumstances leading up to the accident.

First, the pilots were dealing with various sources of operational challenges, on top of which was the charter customer's "near-demands" to land at their planned destination despite worsening weather.

Second, "According to the charter customer's business assistant, his employer became irate when he was informed about the possible diversion to an alternate airport," said the final report. "The business assistant also said that he was told to call the

charter operator and emphasize that the airplane was not going to be redirected."

Finally, the flight attendant escorted a passenger to the cockpit "jumpseat"—a fold-out seat directly behind the pilots. The presence of this passenger in the cockpit, especially his being a paying charter customer, "most likely further heightened the pressure on the flight crew to land" in deteriorating weather and after the airport's nighttime curfew.

To discourage passengers and owners from putting crews in these kinds of untenable positions, many aircraft owners and charter companies require signed or verbal agreements that their passengers cannot make operational demands to the crew. Customers must acknowledge that the pilot has sole authority over the operation of the aircraft. This understanding is critical, and your life might depend on it.

BJT

to fly into poor visibility and the operating company's culture, "which tacitly endorsed flying in hazardous weather and failed to manage the risks associated with the competitive pressures...affecting air tour operators; [the company's] lack of a formal safety program; and its inadequate operational control of flight releases."

Be careful what you wish for is an apt description for the following May 5, 2021 accident: After becoming aware that another business jet flying to the same destination was scheduled to arrive two minutes sooner, the crew of the accident airplane increased speed to complete the flight first. The final investigation report concluded that this was done to "accommodate passenger wishes."

On the cockpit voice recorder, the pilot said, "I'll speed up. I'll go real fast here." Apparently, they went too fast because heard on the cockpit voice recorder was the overspeed warning tone. Seconds from landing the captain stated, "goal achieved," and the co-pilot remarked, "final lap." They won the race, but the victory was fleeting. The aircraft's excessive speed on landing caused the airplane to overshoot the end of the runway and end up substantially damaged. No one was injured. Investigators said the accident was due in part to the crew's "motivation and response to external pressures to complete the flight as quickly as possible to accommodate passenger wishes."

On March 29, 2001, one of the most tragic and avoidable business aircraft accidents on record killed all 18 aboard. As soon as the pilots warned the passengers that the weather at their destination may force them to fly to an alternate airport, demands to complete the flight were constant and unrelenting. The 15 passengers, a flight attendant,





Spotlight on Safety

Corporate Cabin Flight Attendants: Beyond Service

“We’re not going to make the runway. We’ve lost both engines.”

By Mark Huber

That was the final transmission from the cockpit of Hop-A-Jet Flight 823 on Feb. 9, 2024. Seconds later the Bombardier Challenger 604 attempted a forced “dead stick” landing into the southbound lanes of Interstate 75 near Naples, Florida, during rush-hour traffic.

The twinjet touched down but then veered into the breakdown lane, collided with a pickup truck and SUV, hit a concrete sound barrier, stopped, and then burst into flames. Pilots Edward Murphy and Frederick Hoffman were killed. But thanks to the quick thinking of flight attendant Sydney Ann Bosmans, who was just 27 years old at the time of the accident, she and her two passengers survived.

With both the main cabin door and emergency exit blocked by the crash’s conflagration outside, Bosmans and passengers Aaron Baker and Audra Green headed to the rear of the aircraft and successfully evacuated through the baggage compartment door mere moments before a secondary explosion consumed the aircraft, according to a preliminary report from the National Transportation Safety Board. The makeshift exit was unknown to most passengers and not part of the cabin safety briefing. But Bosmans had been instructed on it less than two years earlier during her safety training at Aircare FACTS (Flight Attendant Crewmember Training System) in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

Bethan Williams-Velenosi, chief of cabin experience at Bombardier.

The National Business Aviation Association (NBAA) recognized Bosmans' quick thinking in 2024, bestowing her with its "Above and Beyond Award for Heroic Achievement" at the organization's annual business aviation show. In accepting the award, Bosmans acknowledged the role her safety training played in surviving the accident.

"If I hadn't made the personal and professional development decision to invest in proper safety training for my role, it would have resulted in five souls lost that day, and my parents would have had to deal with burying the charred remains of what was left of their 27-year-old daughter," Bosmans told the convention audience.

She used the opportunity to advocate for mandatory safety training for corporate (Part 91) flight attendants, something not required by FAA regulation. (There are training standards for cabin/flight attendants aboard Part 135/charter-operated aircraft, but only such aircraft with more than 19 passenger seats are required to have these crewmembers.)



Sydney Ann Bosmans
Flight attendant

"Most people think something like this will never happen to them. And of course, I never thought this would happen to me, either," she said. "But if it happened to me, it could happen to you."

Statistically, an accident like Bosmans' is very unlikely. But a well-trained flight attendant is just as valuable, perhaps even more valuable, than the most sophisticated piece of safety equipment on the flight deck. Yet roughly only half of super-midsize and larger private jets are likely to fly with them.

Aircraft owners and charter customers who do not use cabin attendants often recoil at the associated costs or what they perceive as an intrusion into their privacy. They also tend to think that the pilots will provide all the service and safety that is required. That can be a mistake.

Sheryl Barden, CEO of Aviation Personnel International, frequently works with corporations and high net worth individuals on their private jet staffing needs. She continues to confront resistance to hiring professionally trained flight attendants. "I call them cabin safety attendants because that is what they are," Barden told **BJT**.



PHOTOS: BOMBARDIER

Bombardier's annual Flight Attendant Safety Summit attracts more than 150 people who share vital safety information.

“You don’t want pilots getting out of their seats” in the event of a passenger medical event or other onboard cabin emergency, noted Jennifer Guthrie, CEO of In-Flight Crew Connections, a recruiting and staffing firm that focuses on the private jet industry and has placed and hired thousands of flight attendants. These types of passenger events “happen more often than you would think,” she said. “The price of having a flight attendant on board is often less than the catering bill.”

“We’re not there to invade your space. We can be very discreet, but we are there for safety. Incidents and accidents happen all over the world. When they do, if there wasn’t a cabin attendant, the results could be very, very different.”

“No one is going to save anyone in an emergency with a nicely-folded napkin,” said Bethan Williams-Velenosi, chief of cabin experience for Bombardier and lead flight attendant for its factory demonstration team. “We’re not there to invade your space. We can be very discreet, but we are there for safety. Incidents and accidents happen all over the world. When they do, if there wasn’t a cabin attendant, the results could be very, very different.”

Williams-Velenosi has more than 25 years’ experience working in airline and corporate aviation. Three years ago, she and

Training for the Unthinkable

By Mark Huber

Independent corporate flight attendant training is available through several reputable providers including Aircare International, Beyond & Above, FlightSafety International, and DaVinci Inflight. Aside from the fine points of cabin service, these organizations all emphasize emergency, medical, and security training. Areas include firefighting, cabin decompression, water ditchings and emergency evacuations; medical inflight emergencies including cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR), operating automatic electronic defibrillators, administering first aid; and security awareness.

Paula Kraft founded DaVinci on the sensory Montessori model of learning and stresses the passenger safety aspect of the job. That includes placing students in realistic situations—such as practicing performing CPR in the aisle of an actual Gulfstream jet. “We do it in the classroom and then we go do it in an airplane. We want students to feel confident in their decisions and react on impulse rather than panic. You don’t want to be asking questions about how to do something at 40,000 feet.”

Other medical training covers how to deal with hypoxia (oxygen deprivation), the proper use of emergency oxygen masks, and choking. Communicating with the pilots in these situations is also included as part of the crew resource management (CRM) component.

While DaVinci trains for inflight medical emergencies, it also spends considerable time instructing on how to avoid them. And that largely comes down to food. “Aside from the budgetary constraints when it comes to ordering [aircraft] catering, there’s a science behind it,” she stressed. “How to pick up restaurant food and keep it safe, keep the cold food chain from being dislodged and have safety and security with the food, to make sure it is not harmed or tampered with in any way.” Kraft noted that VIP passengers can sometimes be high-profile targets for disgruntled former employees or even members of the public who may be looking for retaliation by “poisoning the food.”

Another safety concern that sometimes flies under the radar is cabin cleaning and “disposing of the garbage before it turns into a hazmat situation by being left unattended on the aircraft.”

the company's chief pilot founded Bombardier's annual Flight Attendant Safety Summit, a standalone annual event that attracts more than 150 flight attendants.

The latest summit was held in August 2025 at Bombardier's Laurent Beaudoin Completion Centre in Dorval, Quebec, Canada. Topics covered included security, firefighting, mental health, fatigue, and crew resource management. "Mini" summits complement this gathering in other venues: Hong Kong, Nashville, and Dubai in 2025.

"Safety is the key. It has to be paramount," she maintained.

Guthrie pointed out that her firm won't even consider hiring a flight attendant who does not have safety training from a recognized provider. "These aren't just waitresses in the air. They have to get their emergency evacuation and safety training from a recognized company. They have to have yearly evacuation, AED, and CPR training. Those are the requirements to work for us."

Aside from basic safety and what Guthrie calls the "soft skills" of excellent cabin service and people skills, there is another reason she believes aircraft owners should consider when deciding whether to bring a flight attendant on board. "It protects the integrity of your aircraft. When you have large parties on your aircraft, you want to make sure that your guests are not in there slamming doors and drawers. It's nice to have help managing the crowd."

It also can help protect the owner with warranty claims, as some OEMs recommend always carrying a flight attendant on aircraft with 10 or more seats as the flight attendant can assure that passengers understand the cabin equipment and operate it properly.

According to Guthrie, customers are also becoming increasingly security focused with some requested flight attendants having personal security experience and training. Additionally, she said, male flight attendants are specified only in certain situations, including when operating in countries with strict cultural and dress requirements for women. "And we do have some customers who feel more comfortable with an all-male crew," Guthrie added.

Bombardier's Williams-Velenosi explained that excellent crew resource management is the key to effective onboard communications that are critical on any flight, but particularly in an emergency. "On many flights the pilot and the flight attendants have never met before, so you have to create that bond immediately.

"You never know what is around the corner. It's important to create that connection and make sure everyone's on the same page, everyone is comfortable, and the communication is flowing. It's just as important as being able to fight a fire or opening an exit in an emergency."

And when that emergency exit is blocked, it's nice to know that a flight attendant such as Bosmans knows another way out. BJT

Scenario-based safety training is often ripped from the pages of accident/incident reports from the National Transportation Safety Board. Personal safety and emergency egress training is taught in cooperation with another industry-related firm, Aviation Secure.

Classes are kept small by design, and students can always ask follow-up questions after graduating. The company has contracts with several fleet, charter, and fractional ownership companies. "We teach flight attendants to work with the same equipment that they have onboard."

DaVinci encourages flight attendants to continue with their professional development and assists them with resourcing scholarships and providing professional memberships, including in the National Business Aviation Association (NBAA).

"This is a profession, just like pilots," Kraft said. BJT

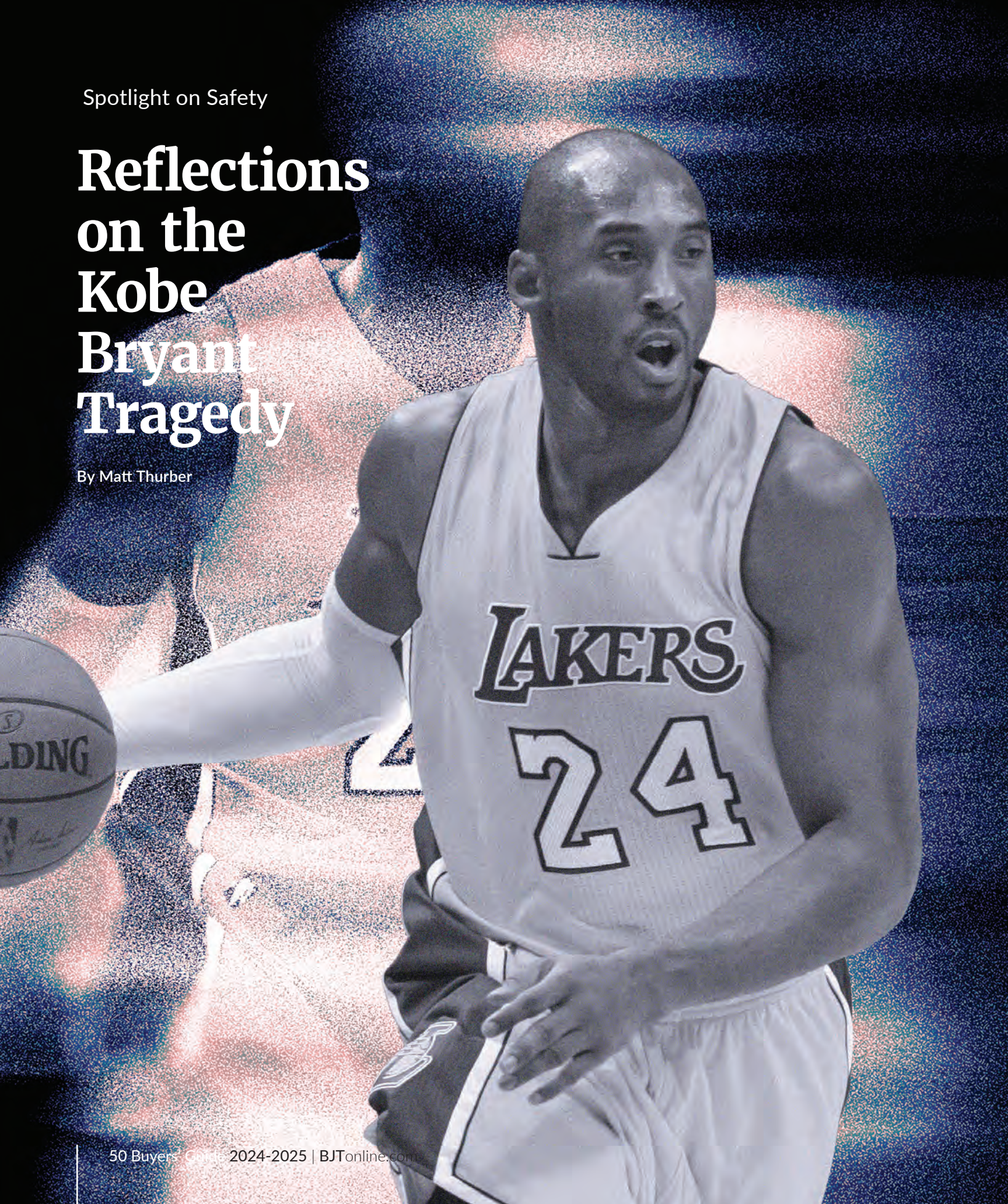


Practicing with realistic scenarios helps flight attendants prepare for worst-case situations.

Spotlight on Safety

Reflections on the Kobe Bryant Tragedy

By Matt Thurber



There are plenty of examples of flights that ended up in tragedy where the customer could have influenced the outcome (*see sidebar*). Perhaps the most prominent is the Kobe Bryant crash in Calabasas, California, on Jan. 26, 2020. The pilot of the helicopter carrying the basketball legend, his daughter, and six other passengers, lost control while trying to maneuver around poor weather, and everyone was killed in the ensuing high-speed dive into the ground.

This accident raises the question of how external pressure affected the pilot's decision-making. Did the pilot feel a strong compulsion, because of Bryant's celebrity status and wealth, to complete the mission and fly all the way to the desired destination despite the weather obstacles? We will never know, but this kind of external pressure may have been a factor, and it could be a factor in some of your trips.

Pilots are goal-oriented and necessarily focused on achieving the mission and the desired outcome: a safe flight to the destination. But pilots also can succumb to external pressure, and you can help mitigate the risk of this happening.

As the customer and ultimate decision-maker on where the flight is going, you do have influence, and you shouldn't be embarrassed to bring up any safety concerns before the flight. The Kobe Bryant case provides a useful example, but keep in mind that we do not know what transpired between the pilot, who had flown Bryant many times before, and Bryant.

The weather that day was cloudy at the destination, Camarillo Airport, but the cloud ceiling and visibility were not poor enough to prevent a helicopter from landing there under visual flight rules (VFR). The charter operator wasn't able to operate the flight under instrument flight rules (IFR) because IFR flights weren't approved in that helicopter.

Unfortunately, the weather conditions recorded at airports along the route, including Burbank and Van Nuys, didn't capture the exact conditions around rising terrain between Van Nuys and Camarillo. However, a marine layer condition was causing widespread low visibilities and cloud ceilings in the area.

It is difficult, in hindsight, to assess whether the existing and forecast weather along the route would make it impossible to fly VFR to Camarillo, and IFR wasn't an option.

In fact, at a general safety meeting held by the helicopter operator on May 24, 2019, having an alternative was emphasized to the participants, according to the National Transportation Safety Board final report on the accident: "If you must divert, then do it. Land [the helicopter and] call a taxi for the passengers. If the pilot has to get a hotel room, then get [the] room."

Pressure on pilots a key factor in Aspen GIII crash

By Gordon Gilbert

Pressure from passengers to complete the flight, both on the ground and in the air, was cited by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) as a contributing factor in the March 2007 crash of a chartered Gulfstream III, N303GA, at Aspen, Colorado. The report from the U.S. agency indicates that from the start little went right for this flight: a much later than planned departure from Los Angeles International Airport launched a race to beat an approaching curfew, ever-darkening skies, deteriorating weather at the destination, and a critical fuel situation.

But the race was lost, with tragic results. All three crewmembers and 15 passengers were killed when the jet hit rising terrain less than half a mile short of the runway.

According to the Safety Board, the probable cause of the accident was the flight crew's operating the airplane below the minimum altitude without the required visual reference to the runway. Contributing factors included "unclear wording" of a notice to airmen (notam) regarding a nighttime airport restriction for the approach; the inability of the flight crew to adequately see the mountains because of the darkness and weather conditions; pressure from the charter customers for the captain to land the airplane at Aspen; and the delayed departure of the airplane from California, causing the flight to arrive in the Aspen area at just before airport's nighttime curfew for noisier jets went into effect.

Because of the flight's late departure from Los Angeles—about 41 minutes later than originally planned, due to the late arrival of passengers—the landing curfew at Aspen and fuel considerations, the flight crew indicated they could attempt only one approach to the airport before having to divert to their alternate of Rifle, 44 miles from Aspen.

But the charter customer "had a strong desire" to land at Aspen, according to the Safety Board, and his communications before and during the flight "most likely heightened the pressure on the flight crew." The NTSB refers to someone in the jump seat and said if it was the charter customer, "this most likely further heightened the pressure on the flight crew to get into Aspen."

“We assume pilots are going to be professional and not take any risks. We’re human, and ‘eager to please’ takes over. Especially with celebrities...”

We can imagine an alternative in discussing the Kobe Bryant case: the pilot and client could have discussed any potential issues due to the marginal weather conditions and agreed on suitable alternatives. This is a classic method of defusing external pressure, and pilots are encouraged to use techniques such as this.

The client, who is paying for the flight, could simply raise the question: What do we do if the weather doesn’t allow us to make it to the destination? The pilot might respond, “The weather looks flyable at least until Van Nuys Airport but is questionable in the hills after that. So how about we have a Plan B where we can land in Van Nuys, we’ll have a car service waiting for you there, and you’ll still arrive close to the original schedule. Either way, we’ll get you there safely.”

Jessie Naor, president of Private Aviation Safety Alliance, which has developed a database of charter operators and charter safety information, explained, “We assume pilots are going to be professional and not take any risks. We’re human, and ‘eager to please’ takes over. Especially with celebrities—we’ve got this big shot in the back—it makes you behave in ways you don’t normally.”

Naor recommends that charter clients do some due diligence when selecting an operator, and some of this can be done on the Private Aviation Safety Alliance website. “FAA certification is bare minimum,” she said. “We like to see higher levels of [industry audits such as] Argus, Wyvern, and IS-BAO. That’s not going to guarantee safety. Ask about their safety programs and personnel.”

She pointed out that in the U.S., there is a difference between a simple and complex charter operator. Simple operators can

Former NTSB chairman Marion Blakey said, “We know from interviews that the pilot certainly had been under pressure from the charter customer, who seemed quite determined that they would land at all costs at Aspen that night. He had contacted the charter company to make known how strong his views were. He was critical of the pilot apparently before the flight took place. We do not know who sat in the jump seat, but our concern is that it may very well have been the charter customer.”

The aircraft’s cockpit voice recorder did indicate the presence of another person in the cockpit from time to time, but one of the last things said by that other person—“I’m gonna buckle them in”—and other references indicated that the other person may have been the flight attendant. At one point she asked the pilots if they were scared.



Aspen-Pitkin County Airport is tucked into a valley surrounded by high mountains.

According to NTSB aviation safety director John Clark, “We believe from the conversations and the way the airplane was being flown that there were times that [the Safety Board was] not sure they ever had [the airport] in sight. [The crew] claimed they had it in sight, but there are times when it was clear to us that they did not have it in sight. They were looking to the right and the airport was clearly to the left.”

During the meeting in which the synopsis was released, the NTSB’s Bill English said that from the “very limited”

have a single person taking on multiple roles, such as the chief pilot also being the director of operations, while complex operations have individuals in each role. This doesn't necessarily mean the simple operator is unsafe, she explained.

"The biggest problem is operational control," Naor said. Operational control is an FAA term that specifies which parties are accountable for safety and compliance with regulatory requirements. Naor strongly believes that leaving operational control to the pilot or flight crew misplaces the burden of responsibility. Of course, pilots are responsible for safe operation, but the decision on whether or not to depart when there are weather or other factors that might add unacceptable risk should be part of the company's operational control responsibility.

"No pilot or crew should be 100% in control of whether they should take off or not," she said. "It should be someone in management or dispatch. It has to have a second set of eyes on it. Flight crew needs backup to make a difficult choice, but we leave it on the crew and don't give them the psychological safety to help make the decision." This is a complex issue for charter passengers to understand, she stated.

In addition to asking about certification and industry audits, charter clients should ask the operator about its operational process and who is responsible for approving and monitoring each flight. Charter companies aren't required to have a formally trained and certified dispatcher (while airlines are required to), but if there is some change that affects the flight, the change needs to go through the operational control process. A dispatcher can help with this.

A person designated to handle operational control duties, whether it's the chief pilot or director of operations or their designee, she explained, "has to show they have reviewed every step of the flight planning. That's what operational control means."

A robust operational control process, no matter the size of the charter operator, builds a wall of trust for all participants, including the client, the pilots, and the charter operator's employees. This helps ameliorate differences in risk profiles among pilots, where some might be willing to go too far to people-please, while others are overly cautious.

"As a charter company, we have to build trust that this is our envelope, this is where we'll always live, and that's clear," Naor said. "If things happen, if a pilot is not comfortable landing at a certain airport, we respect that as a company. We have training and safety programs, but there is still a human element. That's 50% of safety, building that culture and how to respect people's choices.

"I love the idea of passengers talking to pilots more; pilots love to share," she concluded. "As a passenger, be curious, ask as many questions as you want to. More curiosity leads to more safety in the long term."

BJT



prebrief by the captain before arriving in the Aspen area, it "appeared he was more fixated" on making a visual approach. The NTSB staffer opined that the last chance the pilot had to remove himself from this situation was at 400 feet above ground level, when he asked the copilot, "Where's [the airport] at?" According to English, "It's obvious he did not have the runway in sight at that particular time. Had he made a go-around at that time, we may not be sitting here talking about it today."

A notam issued two days before the accident was "vaguely worded and ineffectively delivered." The notam stated, "Circling NA [not authorized] at night," but the intended meaning was to entirely prohibit instrument approaches at night. The NTSB suggested that pilots might have inferred that an approach without a circle-to-land maneuver to Runway 15 was still authorized at night. A day after the crash, the FAA issued a second notam for Aspen that explicitly banned all night instrument landings.

According to Avjet, the operator of the ill-fated GIII, the pilot had logged about 9,900 hours total time, with 1,475 of them in the GIII since obtaining his type rating in January 1990. The copilot was reported to have 5,500 hours total time, with 913 in the GII and GIII. Avjet said the crew and this aircraft had flown "multiple trips to and from Aspen" in the month preceding the accident.

BJT

Major Business Aircraft Manufacturers at a Glance

Shopping for an airplane or helicopter? Start by reading the key facts about the airframers whose products you're considering.



AIRBUS

Founded: 1970 | HQ: Toulouse, France | ACJ President: Chadi Saade
Info: acj.airbus.com

Airbus is a multinational aerospace conglomerate that launched its first passenger jet, the A300, in 1972. The model was the world's first twin-engine widebody passenger jet and marked the initial offering from what would become Europe's largest aerospace and defense company.

Airbus forayed into the corporate jet market in 1997, and today the Airbus Corporate Jets business unit offers the ACJ TwoTwenty, ACJ319neo, ACJ320neo, ACJ330neo, and ACJ350 XWB.

The company, which maintains roughly 180 global locations, has delivered close to 16,000 aircraft since the launch of the A300.



AIRBUS HELICOPTERS

Founded: 1992 | HQ: Marignane, France | CEO: Bruno Even
Info: airbus.com



Airbus Helicopters is the rotorcraft wing of Airbus. It was founded as Eurocopter Group and was rebranded as Airbus Helicopters in 2014. The company and its predecessor firms have been pioneers in rotorcraft development for decades. In both civil and military applications, Airbus's helicopters have been bestsellers with a reputation for ruggedness and durability.

The product line includes entries in the intermediate-single, light-twin, medium, super-medium, and heavy segments. In 2017, Airbus Helicopters launched the Airbus Corporate Helicopters business unit, a luxury corporate helicopter development wing, positioning an offering in every segment from intermediate single to super-medium.

Bell, a subsidiary of Textron since 1960, is an aerospace manufacturer that has developed civilian and military aircraft and rotorcraft since 1935.

In 1976, Textron rebranded the Bell Helicopter division as Bell Helicopter Textron. This designation remained until 2018 when the company was renamed Bell.

Currently, it manufactures the Bell 505, 407GX, 429, 412EPX, and 525 helicopters for the civilian market. Maximum passenger counts range from four in the 505 to 16 in the 525, which is expected to receive FAA certification in 2025. The company is also developing unmanned aerial vehicles called Autonomous Pod Transports for cargo delivery.

BELL

Founded: 1935 | HQ: Fort Worth | President and CEO: Lisa Atherton
Info: bellflight.com



BOEING

Founded: 1916 | HQ: Arlington, Virginia | BBJ President: Joe Benson
Info: businessjets.boeing.com



The Boeing Company operates in 65 countries and maintains offerings across the aerospace realm, manufacturing aircraft, rotorcraft, rockets, satellites, and communications equipment for civilian and military clients.

Boeing—which lumber industrialist William Boeing founded in 1916—became one of the world's largest aerospace companies after its merger with McDonnell Douglas in 1997. Its civil aircraft offerings include the 737, 777, and 787. The 737 has been a bestseller since its first flight in 1967, with more than 12,000 deliveries to date.

The company's civilian aircraft division also produces the Boeing Business Jet series. Narrowbody models of the BBJ are based on variants of the 737, while widebody models include the 777 and 787 platforms.

A standalone business jet manufacturer since 2021, Bombardier makes and supports Challengers and Globals, spanning the super-midsize to ultra-long-range jet categories.

In 1942 Joseph-Armand Bombardier, a Canadian inventor and entrepreneur, established a company to market his “snow vehicle,” or snowmobile. Four decades later, in 1986, Bombardier expanded into aerospace, acquiring Canadair, which had developed the Challenger 600-series business jet. In 1990, it acquired Learjet. The first member of its ultra-long-range Global family, the Global Express, flew in 1996, followed by the super-midsize Challenger 300 in 2001.

In 2018, the flagship Global 7500 was certified. Expected entry into service for the 8,000-nm range Global 8000 :2025.

BOMBARDIER

Founded: 1942 | HQ: Montreal | President and CEO: Éric Martel
Info: [bombardier.com](https://www.bombardier.com)



CIRRUS

Founded: 1984 | HQ: Duluth, Minnesota | CEO: Zean Nielsen
Info: [cirrusaircraft.com](https://www.cirrusaircraft.com)



Cirrus manufactures the SR line of piston-powered, single-engine aircraft and the single-engine SF50 Vision Jet. The company is owned by the China Aviation Industries General Aircraft (CAIGA) division of state-owned AVIC.

In 2024, Cirrus delivered its 10,000th aircraft, and the number of Vision Jets in customer hands has exceeded 600. All are equipped with the Cirrus Airframe Parachute System. Recent refinements to the Vision Jet include Garmin's Auto Radar, which automatically scans the skies and builds a 3D view composite real-time depiction of atmospheric conditions, and Cirrus IQ connectivity. This enables pilots to check on aircraft readiness from anywhere via Cirrus IQ's LTE cellular connectivity. Gogo's air-to-ground Wi-Fi system is also an available option.

Daher is a diversified aerospace manufacturing and logistics and supply-chain-services company whose aviation roots date to 1911 with the founding of Morane-Saulnier. It produces the Kodiak and TBM single-engine turboprops and manufactures components for other airframers.

To meet growing demand for its Kodiaks and TBMs, Daher plans to open production lines at its Stuart, Florida manufacturing facility. This will supplement Kodiak manufacturing in Sandpoint, Idaho, and TBM production in Tarbes, France.

As April 2025, Daher had delivered 1,263 TBMs, and the in-service Kodiak fleet totalled 365.

Two Kodiak versions are available: the Model 100 Series III, which can be equipped with floats, and the 900, with a more powerful P&WC PT6A-140A engine.

DAHER

Founded: 1863 | HQ: Tarbes, France | President and CEO: Didier Kayat
Info: daher.com



EMBRAER

Founded: 1969 | HQ: São Paulo | EEJ President and CEO: Michael Amalfitano
Info: embraer.com



A division of Brazilian aircraft manufacturer Embraer, Embraer Executive Jets (EEJ) produces light to super-midsize twinjets.

Established in 2005, it introduced the clean-sheet Phenom 100 V LJ and Phenom 300 light jets that same year.

EEJ brought fly-by-wire to midsize jets with the Legacy 450 and 500 in 2008. Ten years later, Embraer rebranded the Legacy 450 and 500 as the Praetor 500 and 600, and in 2020 discontinued the large-cabin Legacy 650 and Lineage 1000 bizliner.

Current production business aircraft include the Phenom 100EX and 300E; midsize Praetor 500; and super-midsize Praetor 600.

Founded in 1929, this company has a rich history of military and civil aircraft production.

FedEx launched its delivery service in 1972 with a Falcon 20 fleet. The Falcon 50 trijet was certified in 1979. Its 900-series trijet entered service in 1986, and the Falcon 2000 midsize twinjet joined the fleet in 1995.

The ultra-long-range Falcon 7X trijet, the first fly-by-wire business jet, entered service in 2007, followed by the longer-range 8X in 2016. In 2018, the airframer debuted the twin-engine Falcon 6X, which entered service in 2023. The company's new flagship, the large-cabin, ultra-long-range Falcon 10X twinjet, could begin deliveries in 2027.

Dassault's current Falcon lineup includes the super-mid 2000LXS twinjet, large-cabin 900LX trijet, ultra-long-range 8X trijet, and 6X.

DASSAULT

Founded: 1929 | HQ: Paris | President and CEO: Éric Trappier
Info: dassault-aviation.com



GULFSTREAM

Founded: 1958 | HQ: Savannah, Georgia | President: Mark Burns
Info: gulfstream.com



Gulfstream Aerospace focuses on the large-cabin market. It was established in 1958 as an outgrowth of Grumman Aircraft Engineering. In 1966, it moved its civil-aircraft production to Savannah, Georgia.

In the 1980s, the GIII came to market, as did the Gulfstream IV. The 1990s brought Gulfstream's first sales contract with NetJets and the debut of the GV.

In the 2000s, Gulfstream bought Galaxy Aerospace, developing its midsize jets into the G100/G150 and G200/G280. It also introduced the G550, G650, 650ER, G500, and G600.

Its product line now includes the super-midsize G280, the G500, G600, G700, and G800. The next member will be the large-cabin G400, which is expected to enter service in 2026.

HONDA AIRCRAFT

Founded: 2006 | HQ: Greensboro, North Carolina
President and CEO: Hideto Yamasaki | Info: hondajet.com

Honda Aircraft manufactures the HA-420 HondaJet. The model was first delivered in 2015, and the current iteration is the HondaJet Elite II. The twinjet features a patented over-the-wing engine mount as well as turbfans that the airframer's parent, Japan's Honda Motor Company, developed in partnership with General Electric.

In 2021, Honda Aircraft unveiled a concept for its next aircraft, the HondaJet 2600, a larger light jet with a transcontinental range of 2,625 nm and a midsize-jet cabin that seats up to 11 passengers.

Now called the Echelon, the design shares the over-the-wing engine mount design of the original HondaJet. Performance goals include a maximum cruise speed of 450 knots and a maximum altitude of 47,000 feet.



LEONARDO

Founded: 1948 | HQ: Rome | CEO: Roberto Cingolani
Info: leonardo.com



Leonardo manufactures a wide variety of rotorcraft and airplanes for civil and military applications.

Formerly Finmeccanica, Leonardo was founded in 1948. Agusta represented the rotorcraft branch of the business, which began developing and manufacturing helicopters in 1952 under license from Bell.

Agusta first flew its homegrown A109 in 1976. A lightweight, twin-engine utility helicopter, the A109 has proven to be the company's bestseller and is still manufactured today.

Leonardo produces the AW109S, AW119Kx, AW139, AW169, AW189, and AW101 helicopters for civilian applications. Development of the AW609 tiltrotor aircraft continues, as does that for its AW09 light single helicopter.

MD Helicopters traces its roots to 1955 when Hughes Tool's aircraft division began developing light helicopters. After more than six decades and a series of mergers and divestments, it was recapitalized as an independent company in 2005. Since then, it has grown its global fleet presence to more than 2,500 aircraft.

After successes with civil and military rotorcraft, Hughes sold its helicopter division to McDonnell Douglas in 1984. In 1997, McDonnell Douglas and Boeing merged and in 1999, Boeing sold the commercial rotorcraft lines formerly produced by McDonnell Douglas to MD Helicopter Holdings. MD Helicopters emerged from bankruptcy in 2022, and it continues to support its fleet with parts and an authorized service center network.

MD HELICOPTERS

Founded: 1955 | HQ: Mesa, Arizona | President: Ryan Weeks
Info: mdhelicopters.com



PILATUS AIRCRAFT

Founded: 1939 | HQ: Stans, Switzerland | President: Markus Bucher
Info: pilatus-aircraft.com



Pilatus Aircraft began manufacturing military training airplanes in the 1940s and launched the legendary PC-6 Porter short-takeoff-and-landing aircraft in 1960. Its PC-12 single-engine business and utility turboprop entered service in 1994. Pilatus has since delivered more than 2,200 of the aircraft, whose newest iteration, the PC-12 Pro, features Garmin avionics, an autothrottle, and Autoland technology in case of pilot incapacitation.

In 2018, the company began deliveries of its twin-engine PC-24 Super Versatile Jet, an aircraft capable of takeoff and landing on unimproved, rough airfields and hauling oversized cargo, thanks to an oversized rear cargo door and flexible cabin layout. The single-pilot PC-24 can fly 2,000 nm and at cruise speeds up to 440 knots.

Piaggio began producing aircraft engines and airframes in 1915. It entered into a partnership with Gates Learjet in 1983 to begin the development of the twin-engine pusher-propeller turboprop P.180 Avanti. Learjet withdrew from the project in 1986, and the aircraft received FAA certification in 1990.

The aircraft is now on its third iteration, which is called the Evo. It has a maximum speed of 402 knots at 41,000 feet. With a three-lifting surface design (canard, wing, and horizontal stabilizer), the Avanti sports a timeless modern appearance while providing superior performance compared with competing aircraft.

After several years in insolvency, Piaggio was sold to Turkish aerospace company Baykar in July 2025.

PIAGGIO AEROSPACE

Founded: 1884 | HQ: Villanova d'Albenga (Savona), Italy
President and CEO: Giovanni Tomassini | Info: piaggioaerospace.it



PIPER AIRCRAFT

Founded: 1927 | HQ: Vero Beach, Florida | President and CEO: John Calcagno
Info: piper.com



Piper Aircraft builds a full line of piston single and twin-engine aircraft. Those models include the piston single Pilot 100i, Archer LX, and diesel-powered DLX, and pressurized M350, along with the piston twin Seminole and Seneca. Piper also builds two models of turboprop singles based on the M350 fuselage—the M500 and M700 Fury. The six-seat M700 cruises at 301 knots and is equipped with the Garmin emergency Autoland system, which can automatically land the aircraft in the event of pilot incapacitation.

Lockheed Martin acquired Sikorsky for \$9 billion in 2015. Production of its civil models, the S-76D medium twin and the S-92A heavy twin, has languished due to a combination of corporate resourcing priorities, U.S. regulatory changes, and market forces.

Sikorsky made the strategic decision not to bring the S-76D into compliance with new FAA crashworthy fuel tank standards, essentially ending its ability to sell that aircraft in the U.S. market, although it delivered three in 2023. None were delivered in 2024.

Meanwhile, Sikorsky has spent \$100 million to develop the Phase IV gearbox for the S-92A, which features an auxiliary lubrication system. The company has also engineered other improvements to the S-92A, such as longer maintenance intervals and a gearbox housing life extension.

SIKORSKY

Founded: 1925 | HQ: Stratford, Connecticut | President: Richard Benton
Info: lockheedmartin.com/en-us/capabilities/sikorsky.html



TEXTRON AVIATION

Founded: 2014 | HQ: Wichita, Kansas | CEO: Ron Draper
Info: txtav.com



Textron Aviation was created in 2014 when parent company Textron, Cessna's owner, acquired the Beechcraft and Hawker brands. Cessna's first business jet, the Citation I (Cessna 500), first flew in 1969. A decade later, Citations were the world's bestselling business jets. In addition to piston singles-engine airplanes, Cessna sells six jet models, ranging from the small-cabin Citation M2 to the super-midsize Citation Longitude.

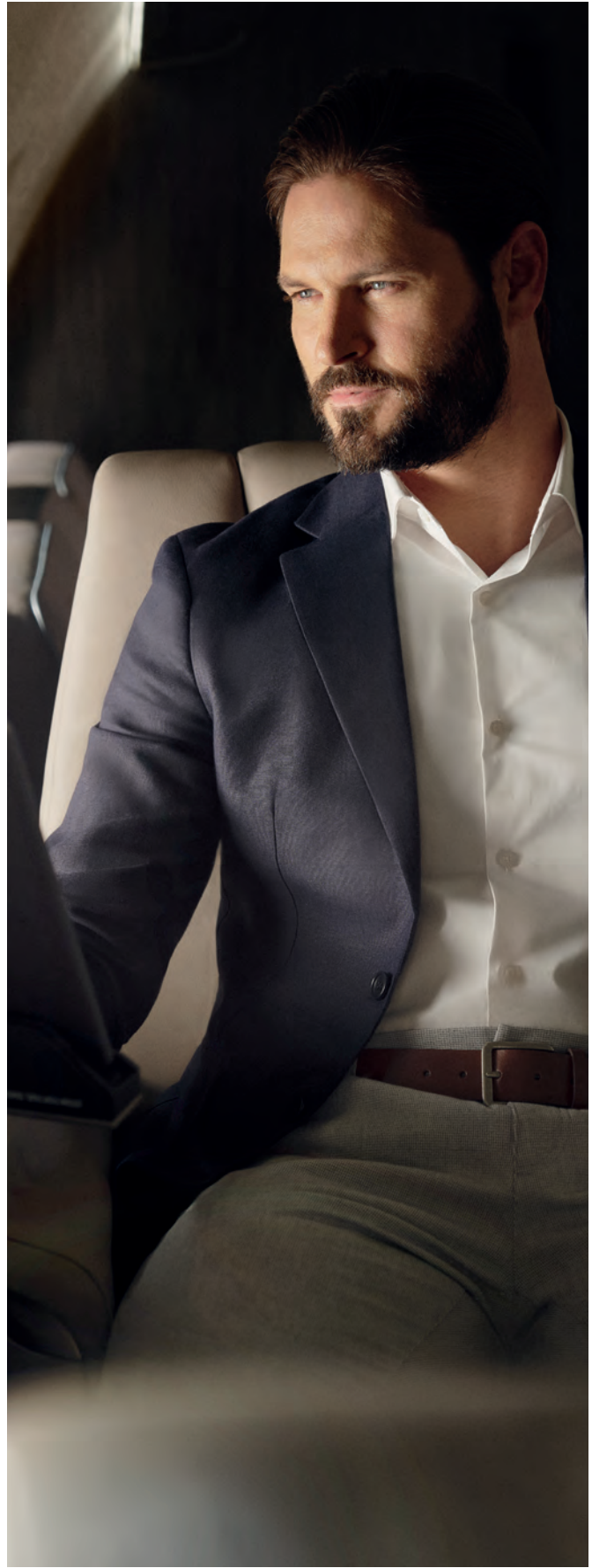
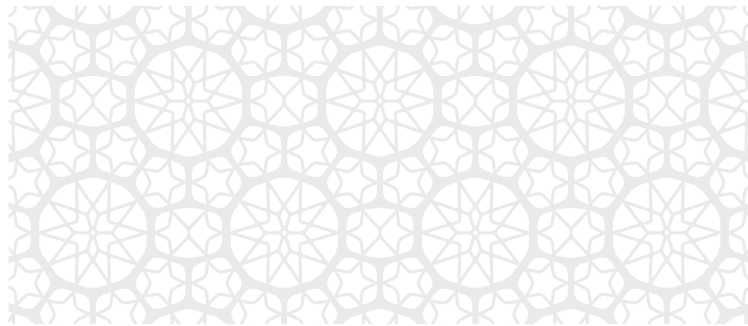
Since they entered service in 1973, more than 8,200 Citations have been produced. Beechcraft manufactures the G36 Bonanza single-engine piston aircraft, the piston twin-engine G58 Baron, and the twin-engine King Air model 260 and 360 turboprops. Certification of the Beechcraft Denali single-engine turboprop is expected in 2025.



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