

The World's Top-rated FBOs

SKYSERVICE AVITAT • TORONTO

Our exclusive survey of ground-support facilities turned up some winners.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PRIVATE jet operator and the fixed-base operation (FBO) is symbiotic, as neither could exist without the other. FBOs provide aircraft fueling, cleaning and watering; storage hangars and parking tie-downs; catering; meeting spaces; and, in some cases, maintenance.

To determine which facilities do the best job of providing these services, **BJT**'s sister publication, *Aviation International News*, annually surveys its readers. *AIN* asks its subscribers not only to rate the FBOs they've visited during the previous 12 months but to list the factors that might attract them to—or keep them away from—any FBO. This year, respondents overwhelmingly cited excellent customer service as their top priority in selecting an FBO, followed by competitive fuel pricing and then quality passenger amenities. Poor passenger service, rundown or unclean facilities and unprofessional staff ranked as the biggest reasons for avoiding a ground-support operation.

For its report, *AIN* tallied evaluations of more than 17,000 FBOs from 2,037 respondents who interact daily with these operations, such as pilots and flight-department managers. They rated service providers they'd visited in four categories: line service, passenger amenities, pilot amenities and facilities. In each category, FBOs received a score of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest. *AIN* then compiled the scores into an average for each location that was rated by 30 or more respondents.

This year's top scorers in the Americas were Pentastar

Aviation and XJet, both of which earned an overall rating of 9.3.

Pentastar, at Michigan's Oakland County International Airport near Detroit, has been one of the highest rated FBOs in *AIN*'s survey for the past six years. Yet the company says it can't rest on its laurels. "There are others ratcheting up the service level and facilities," commented Bob Sarazin, Pentastar's vice president of FBO services. "I think it's become a little bit tougher competition if we look at it nationally." Pentastar, which also operates at California's Van Nuys Airport, offers a full range of services, including



THE TOP-RATED FBOs – THE AMERICAS

The annual A/N FBO Survey lists top-rated facilities according to the responses from pilots and other users of FBOs. This year, the top FBOs in the Americas received overall scores of more than 8.0. Users were asked to rate FBOs based on line service, passenger amenities, pilot services and facilities.

Rank	FBO	City	Airport	Overall Average
TOP 10%	Pentastar Aviation	Pontiac, Mich.	Oakland County International (PTK)	9.3
	XJet	Denver	Centennial (APA)	9.3
	AirFlite	Long Beach, Calif.	Long Beach Daugherty Field (LGB)	9.2
	JA Air Center	Sugar Grove, Ill.	Aurora Municipal Airport (ARR)	9.2
	Tampa International Jet Center	Kansas City, Mo.	Tampa International (TPA)	9.2
	Wilson Air Center	Memphis, Tenn.	Memphis International (MEM)	9.1
	Global Select (formerly City of Sugar Land)	Sugar Land, Texas	Sugar Land Regional (SGR)	9.0
	Jet Aviation Palm Beach	West Palm Beach, Fla.	Palm Beach International (PBI)	9.0
	Meridian Teterboro	Teterboro, N.J.	Teterboro (TEB)	9.0
	Banyan Air Service	Fort Lauderdale, Fla.	Fort Lauderdale Executive (FXE)	8.9
	Destin Jet	Destin, Fla.	Destin-Fort Walton Beach (DTS)	8.9
	Enterprise Jet Center	Houston	Hobby (HOU)	8.9
	Skyservice Avitat	Toronto	Lester B. Pearson International (CYYZ)	8.9
	Swift Aviation Services	Phoenix	Sky Harbor International (PHX)	8.9
	Texas Jet	Fort Worth, Texas	Meacham International (FTW)	8.9
TOP 20%	National Jets	Fort Lauderdale, Fla.	Fort Lauderdale/Hollywood International (FLL)	8.8
	Scottsdale Air Center	Scottsdale, Ariz.	Scottsdale Municipal (SDL)	8.8
	Business Jet Center	Dallas	Dallas Love Field (DAL)	8.7
	Million Air	Addison, Texas	Addison (ADS)	8.7
	Million Air	Houston	Hobby (HOU)	8.7
	Signature Flight Support	St. Paul, Minn.	St. Paul Downtown-Holman Field (STP)	8.7
	Signature Flight Support	Minneapolis	Minneapolis/St. Paul International (MSP)	8.7
	Del Monte Aviation	Monterey, Calif.	Monterey Peninsula (MRY)	8.6
	First Aviation Services	Teterboro, N.J.	Teterboro (TEB)	8.6
	Monterey Jet Center	Monterey, Calif.	Monterey Peninsula (MRY)	8.6
	Tac Air	Lexington, Ky.	Blue Grass (LEX)	8.6
	Tradition Aviation	Palm Springs, Calif.	Jacqueline Cochran Regional (TRM)	8.6
	Vail Valley Jet Center	Eagle, Colo.	Eagle County Regional (EGE)	8.6
	Wilson Air Center	Charlotte, N.C.	Douglas International (CLT)	8.6
	TOP 30%	Denver jetCenter	Denver	Centennial (APA)
Jet Systems (formerly Avitat Westchester)		White Plains, N.Y.	Westchester County (HPN)	8.5
Atlantic		Chicago	Chicago Midway International (MDW)	8.4
Cutter Aviation		Phoenix	Phoenix Sky Harbor International (PHX)	8.4
Galaxy Aviation		West Palm Beach, Fla.	Palm Beach International (PBI)	8.4
Galaxy Aviation		Orlando, Fla.	Orlando International (MCO)	8.4
Jet Aviation		Teterboro, N.J.	Teterboro (TEB)	8.4
Million Air		Salt Lake City	Salt Lake City International (SLC)	8.4
Million Air		Albany, N.Y.	Albany International (ALB)	8.4
Showalter Flying		Orlando, Fla.	Orlando Executive (ORL)	8.4
Skyservice Avitat		Calgary, Canada	Calgary International (CYYC)	8.4
Skyservice Avitat		Montreal	Pierre Trudeau International (CYUL)	8.4

Source: AIN 2012 FBO survey. FBOs with the same overall average are listed alphabetically.

XJET • DENVER



PENTASTAR • PONTIAC



THE TOP-RATED FBOS—EUROPE, MIDDLE EAST, ASIA AND AFRICA

FBO	City	Airport	Overall Average
TAG Aviation	Farnborough, England	Farnborough (EGLF)	8.8
Hong Kong Business Aviation Centre	Hong Kong	Hong Kong International (VHHH)	8.3
Harrods Aviation	London	London Luton (EGGW)	8.2
TAG Aviation	Geneva	Geneva (LSGG)	8.2
Dassault Falcon Service	Paris	Le Bourget International (LFPB)	8.1
ExecuJet Switzerland/Aviation Ground Services	Zurich, Switzerland	Zurich (LSZH)	7.7
KLM Jet Center	Amsterdam, Netherlands	Amsterdam Schipol Airport (EHAM)	7.7
Vienna Aircraft Handling	Vienna, Austria	Vienna International (LOWW)	7.6
Jet Aviation	Geneva	Geneva (LSSG)	7.5
Signature Flight Support	Paris	Le Bourget International (LFPB)	7.5
Signature Flight Support	London	London Luton (EGGW)	7.5
Abelag Aviation	Brussels, Belgium	Brussels National (EBBR)	7.4
Jet Aviation	Zurich, Switzerland	Zurich (LSZH)	7.4
Service People	Hamburg, Germany	Hamburg (EDDH)	7.4
Cannes Airport Handling	Cannes, France	Cannes-Mandelieu (LFMD)	7.2
Signature Flight Support/Aviapartner	Nice, France	Nice-Cote d'Azur (LFMN)	7.1
Vipport FBO/Vnukovo	Moscow	Moscow Vnukovo (UUWW)	6.2

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comprehensive aircraft maintenance and in-house catering through its Fivestar Gourmet subsidiary.

Based at Denver's Centennial Airport, XJet garnered this year's top overall ratings for both passenger amenities and facilities, among them an auto spa where guests can leave their terrestrial rides for scheduled maintenance while they are on a flight. With its hangars filled, the FBO—which began about five years ago as a private club for business jet owners—plans to more than double its size and also possibly expand to Paris and Dubai.

The highest-rated Canadian FBO was Skyservice Aviation at Toronto's Lester B. Pearson International Airport. The full-service flagship of a chain that includes locations at Montreal and Calgary, it has approximately 300,000 square feet of hangar space and pumps more than four million gallons of fuel annually.

For 2012, the top service provider outside the Americas was TAG Aviation at London-area Farnborough Airport. "Farnborough is the only airport in Britain that has been specifically developed with business aviation in mind," said Brandon O'Reilly, CEO of TAG, which also runs the airport. Since taking over management from the UK government 15 years ago, the company has spent more than \$160 million on facilities and infrastructure.

On the other side of the world, the Hong Kong Business Aviation Centre was the only non-European FBO to place in the top rankings this year. Located at bustling Hong Kong International Airport, the facility has a separate terminal and all the amenities business aviation passengers have come to expect, such as private rooms and showers, a business center and on-site customs.

—Curt Epstein



TAG AVIATION • FARNBOROUGH, ENGLAND

HONG KONG BUSINESS AVIATION CENTRE WAS THE ONLY NON-EUROPEAN FBO IN THE TOP RANKING.



HONG KONG BUSINESS AVIATION CENTRE • HONG KONG

What are the three most important factors you look for when choosing an FBO?

respondents were asked to choose three

Excellent customer service	86%
Fuel pricing	68%
Passenger amenities	40%
Pilot amenities	29%
Cleanliness	29%
Line service training program participation	14%
FBO infrastructure & décor	14%
Loyalty and reward programs	10%
Fuel brand	2%

What do some FBOs do that makes you avoid them?

respondents were asked to choose three

Poor customer service for passengers	74%
Rundown or unclean facility	51%
Unprofessional or improperly trained CSRs	43%
Poor care of aircraft	37%
Ramp fees	31%
Charging separately for services, such as coffee	24%
Lack of proper ground-handling equipment	17%
Adding a fee for handling of catering	10%
Billing errors	3%
Spilling fuel on my aircraft	3%