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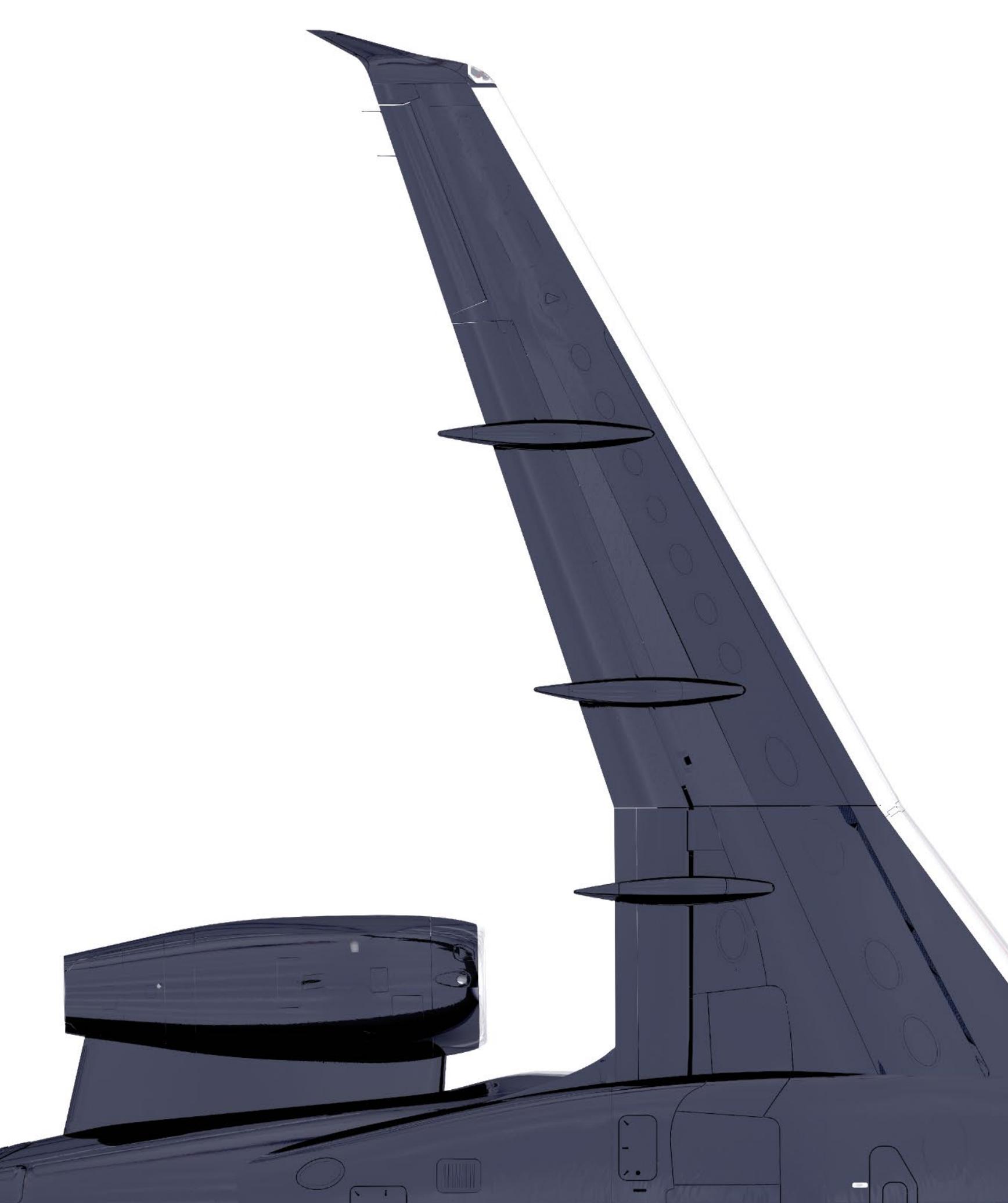
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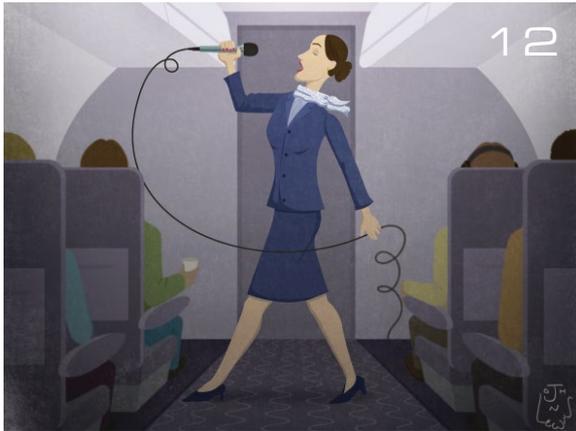
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- ▶ 5th annual **Book of Lists**
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- ▶ Exploring **South Africa** in a 4x4



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## FEATURED CONTRIBUTOR



COURTESY OF MARY ANNE DESANTIS

### MARY ANN DESANTIS

DeSantis, whose report on her recent trip to Cuba begins on page 54, first visited the country 25 years ago with the Southern Newspaper Publishers Association (SNPA). She began her career as a newspaper reporter and photographer after receiving a bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Southern Mississippi. Later, she worked in Atlanta as a program director for the SNPA and then as an award-winning speechwriter for United Parcel Service.

Today, she writes and edits for Akers Media Group, a Central Florida media company, and freelances for consumer and corporate publications. She and her husband live in Lady Lake, Florida.

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#### On the Cover:

Taylor Guitars cofounders **Bob Taylor** (left) and **Kurt Listug**, photographed for **Business Jet Traveler** at their El Cajon, California factory by Jeff Berlin.

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# Up Front

## Must-read stories in this issue

**Y**ou'd be hard-pressed to find a company that appreciates the value of private lift more than Taylor Guitars (*see page 18*).

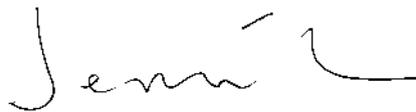
Kurt Listug and Bob Taylor started the business in 1974 by making and selling one instrument at a time while living on tight budgets, but as sales took off, so did they: they began to use charter flights to visit customers and suppliers and later purchased a Hawker 850XP. Last year—with their annual revenues exceeding \$100 million—they moved up to a Gulfstream G450, which they now fly more than 400 hours annually.

Later this year, Listug plans to take the aircraft on a three-week sales trip around the world, while Taylor intends to fly across the globe with four colleagues to study trees. He will also use the jet to travel to Africa, where Taylor Guitars grows ebony trees that produce the unique wood for its instruments. The company is fiercely committed to preservation of these endangered trees and to raising living standards for the 75 employees who work at its wood mill in Cameroon (*see page 22*).

The Taylor Guitars story is just one of many must-reads in this issue, which, like every **BJT** edition, combines articles designed to enrich

your lifestyle with features aimed at maximizing your investment in private air transportation. On one hand, we offer Mary Ann DeSantis's article on vacationing in Havana, Cuba (*see page 54*) and a story by John Grossmann about hotels and resorts where you can help catch or prepare the food that winds up on your plate (*see page 16*). But the issue also includes a preview of Finmeccanica's AW609 tiltrotor (*see page 26*), a look into chartering massive business jets (*see page 40*), and an article that explores which cabin upgrades are worth their cost (*see page 46*).

This mix of authoritative, comprehensive bizav coverage and lifestyle content adds up to a complete package for the business jet traveler, and we're proud to remain the only publication that offers anything like it.



[jenglish@bjtonline.com](mailto:jenglish@bjtonline.com)

**Business Jet Traveler** hosted dozens of our readers at the National Business Aviation Association's regional forum at Palm Beach Airport in West Palm Beach, Florida, on January 28. We helped them tour the aircraft and explore options for private lift, including charter, jet cards, and fractional shares. The forum attracted 120 exhibitors and more than 2,200 attendees. Twenty-five aircraft—ranging from helicopters to light jets to a bizliner—were on static display at the FBO of event host Atlantic Aviation.



Jennifer Leach English (center) with **BJT**'s onsite logistics manager Philip Scarano and associate publisher Nancy O'Brien at the NBAA Regional Forum in West Palm Beach.

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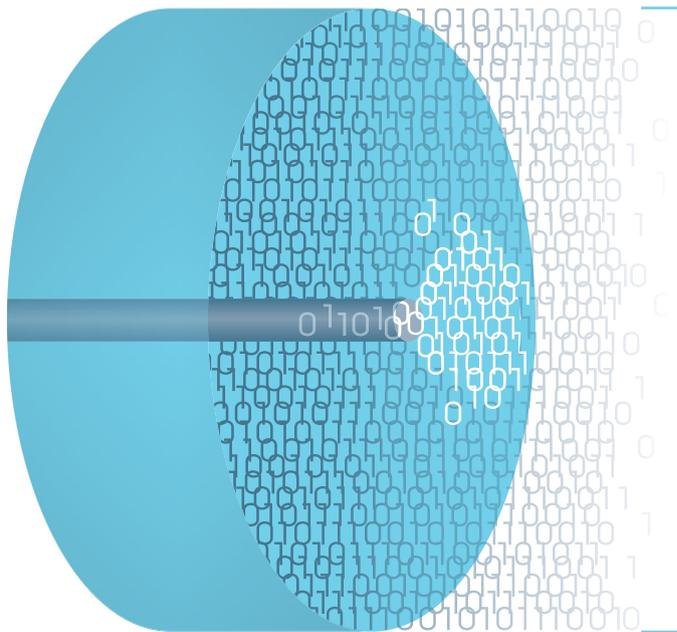
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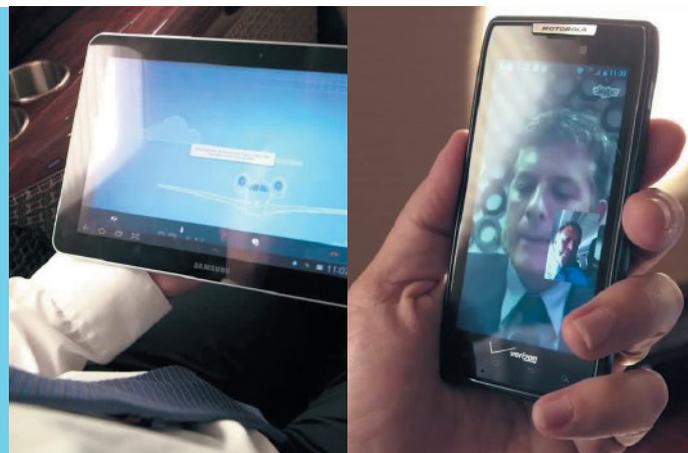


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# Bizav charity aids Asian medical patients

Angel Jet Network (AJN), a Hong Kong-based charity providing transportation to medical care for underprivileged patients across the Asia-Pacific region, made its first flights last September. The flights carried orphans from the Chunhui Children's Foundation to Chinese hospitals, where they were due to have major surgery.

AJN, which is inspired by the U.S.-based Corporate Angel Network (CAN), uses aircraft and seats donated by individuals and companies. The organization works with charities that provide free medical care to poor patients but that are generally unable to supply free transportation. In some cases, flights will carry medical personnel to remote locations.

Angel Jet Network invites companies and individuals worldwide to contribute empty seats, empty legs, and flight hours within Asia as well as airline frequent-flyer miles and tickets, fundraising support, ground transportation, hotel accommodations, and financial contributions. The organization also seeks aircraft owners and operators willing to provide flights between the U.S. and Asia as part of its plan to recruit American doctors to provide medical procedures and training.

AJN's advisory board includes CAN cofounder Pat Blum; former CAN executive director Dick Koenig; and David Leach, group publisher of AIN Publications, **BJT's** owner. Info: [angeljetnetwork.com](http://angeljetnetwork.com), email [info@angeljetnetwork.com](mailto:info@angeljetnetwork.com). —Charles Alcock



Three Chinese orphans from remote cities were the first to benefit from Angel Jet Network's free flights using donated private jets.

## Two more reasons to visit PARIS

Two of Paris's historical museums, the Musée Rodin and the Musée de l'Homme, have recently reopened after major makeovers.

The elegant 18th century mansion housing the work and collection of the universally revered sculptor Auguste Rodin looks much the same after three years of work, but every part

of the building has been meticulously restored or buffed, painted, and polished. The structure itself has been shored up to support sculptures weighing up to 2.5 tons (the marble version of "The Kiss"), and many of his plaster casts have been taken out of storage and put on display to illustrate his working process.



Musée Rodin

The Musée de l'Homme, meanwhile, has changed entirely—which is not surprising, since most of its ethnographic collection of non-Western art and artifacts was moved across the Seine to the Musée du Quai Branly when it opened 10 years ago. Now the Musée de l'Homme has been brought into the 21st century with lots of interactive displays and a focus on evolution and conservation. Innovative exhibits include a wall of tongues that, when pulled upon, speak in one of the world's 7,000 languages—everything from Yoruba to Tagalog to Yiddish—and a photo booth where you can discover what you would have looked like as a Neanderthal. —Heidi Ellison

### QUOTE UNQUOTE

“It's a massive, unbelievable competitive advantage. Having access to a private jet is the single most important asset to any national political campaign.”

—GOP campaign consultant Dave Carney

SOURCE: WALL STREET JOURNAL

JOSEPH CESARE

# Making helicopter travel more affordable

EvoLux founder Ray Leavitt says he wants to make it easier for you to book a helicopter seat. He has created computerized platforms that let you either reserve the entire helicopter or open up a helicopter you've booked to friends or the general public to cut your costs. Leavitt claims to have 200 helicopters enrolled in the system in major metropolitan areas, including New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Atlanta, Las Vegas, and Miami. His goal is to get enough helicopters and passengers in the sky to bring down the cost for both.

"My research shows that 781 helicopters are available for charter in the U.S.," Leavitt says. "That isn't much when you consider that Sao

Paulo, Brazil alone has 450. On average, helicopters in the U.S. fleet fly just 0.81 hours per day, but they have the potential to do six to eight hours. You could open up that market to a huge population if you could make helicopter travel more affordable."



Today, Leavitt says, the typical charter broker "might get six quotes for a flight and then slap a huge commission on the one that is most competitive. The customer winds up being offered an overpriced flight and the operator loses the booking because the broker got in the middle."

Leavitt—a former charter broker who speaks from experience—thinks this system is, if not broken, certainly cumbersome for customers and operators. "From the operator's viewpoint, putting a quote together takes a lot of time," he says. "Most are very small businesses.

"Our system calculates where the aircraft is, what the reposition would be, the flight and wait times, the reposition of the aircraft back, and any other fees that go into it," Leavitt continues. "You can go to our site and have a price quoted with all that included in less than three seconds."

—Mark Huber



## GIVING BACK

**BJT** readers—who represent one of the highest-net-worth magazine audiences anywhere—clearly have the means to contribute to a better world. To help you do that, we're spotlighting deserving organizations in every issue. All of them have received a four-star overall rating from Charity Navigator ([charitynavigator.org](http://charitynavigator.org)), which evaluates philanthropic institutions based on their finances, accountability and transparency.

### Cambodian Children's Fund

([cambodianchildrensfund.org](http://cambodianchildrensfund.org))

The World Bank describes the living conditions of families who come to



Cambodian Children's Fund for support as "absolute poverty." Hollywood executive Scott Neeson founded

the group in 2004 after he witnessed children scavenging at a burning garbage dump near Phnom Penh. He subsequently resigned from his job to devote himself to CCF, whose multi-tiered and comprehensive program focuses on six core areas: education, leadership, community outreach, healthcare, childcare, and vocational training.

Having "learnt early on that transforming the lives of impoverished children through education isn't as simple as opening free schools," CCF employs a holistic approach and several interconnected programs to address the issues that keep kids away from the classroom. Today more than 2,400 students are building better futures with the support of the organization, which works with the whole family to formulate plans for educating their children, escaping debt, and developing job skills.—Jennifer Leach English



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At Fakanal Etterem (the name means "wooden spoon") in Budapest's bustling, historic Vasacsarnok Central Market, you can dine on delicious versions of such Hungarian specialties as savory gulyas (goulash), paprikas chicken, and nokedli (gnocchi). You can also go upstairs for a basic cooking course and learn how to prepare these dishes yourself.

Fakanal Etterem's recipes underscore paprika's central role in Hungarian cuisine. For instance, when I made gulyas leves (a soupier version of the stew) in the cook-

ing course here, a tablespoon of fresh, sweet paprika transformed sautéed onions. Suddenly the simmering iron pot began emitting exotic, savory umami-inducing aromas. Other diners came over to watch me cook and enjoy the intoxicating smells.

The gulyas—paired with salad, a side of tarhonya, and a mid-bodied Magyar wine—provided a hearty meal fit for an ancient Hungarian king. It also did the trick for a ravenous traveler looking to both enjoy and learn about the country's cuisine. —Bob Ecker

# Singing the flight-attendant

On airlines, their jobs are particularly tough. On bizjets, demand for their services may be declining.

by Joe Sharkey

# blues

Our airliner was on final approach to New Jersey's Newark Liberty International Airport when a flight attendant decided to grab a mic and start warbling Willie Nelson's country-western ballad "Crazy." Not Nelson's own smooth-as-pudding rendition of the song or the plaintive Patsy Cline version, but rather a caterwauling, off-pitch, screeching interpretation that, as the airplane descended, probably had most of the cats in North Jersey looking to the night sky with alarm.

What can this be, I wondered, but a distress call about the deterioration of airline travel, not only from the passengers' perspective but also from that of the flight attendants? Some of them are apparently so desperate to escape the wretchedness of the job these days that they are using their captive audiences to audition for a better gig as a singer, dancer, or comedian. You can find lots of these impromptu performances by flight attendants on YouTube.

Their corporate-jet counterparts, of course, are in a whole other arena. A song and dance isn't part of their jobs, nor is the soul-deadening grind of working long hours on crowded airplanes full of mostly unhappy passengers.

"I tell people who want this kind of work that passing out juice and pretzels isn't what you do," says corporate flight attendant Melanie Marie Foster. "But you never know who's going to be on that private or corporate jet, and you have to be on your toes."

The days are mostly long gone when Foster's airliner counterparts spent part of a flight slamming frozen meals into galley microwaves and distributing them to hungry passengers. But on certain private aircraft, especially heavy business jets, food preparation and presentation are high on the customer-service list,

and some attendants are responsible for all aspects of in-flight catering.

"Every flight is different," Foster says. "If it's a bunch of guys going to the Super Bowl, you might have to make sure you have beer and [Buffalo] wings, but with a group of ladies or a family, your main challenge could be to find great pastries." And yes, that often means going food-shopping the night before, Foster adds.

This sort of effort pays off, says Mary Lou Gallagher, a former airline and corporate

in Paris. Those times are barely remembered in the drudgery of today, when layovers for airline flight attendants often mean eight hours in an airport hotel before the next trip out.

Both Gallagher and Foster insist that copious—and growing—opportunities exist for contract and freelance private-aviation flight attendants with service skills and savoir faire. "The [flight-attendant] business is fabulous," Gallagher says, especially when it comes to long flights on large-cabin jets.

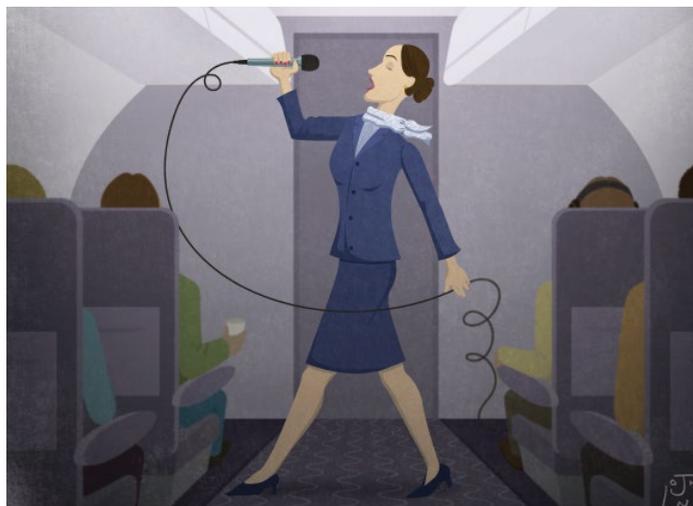
Not everyone agrees, however. Cultural changes driven by millennial generation tastes are reducing demand for business-jet flight attendants, says Vincent M. Wolanin, chairman of PrivateSky Aviation, a Gulfstream refurbishing center and FBO operator in Fort Myers, Florida. He cites the increased popularity of "grab 'n' go" meals, which caused the hotel industry, for instance, to deemphasize room service.

"We stopped using flight attendants on a regular basis because most savvy clients-passengers did not want the invasion of their privacy," Wolanin says. "On my Gulfstream, for example, the crew gets what we need on board, and we all

serve ourselves as required, as it's only a few feet to walk and get it."

Perhaps this helps to explain why Foster, who is herself a member of the millennial generation, is keeping her options open. She is an aspiring actress and also appears in some commercials.

But she has no urge to perform in flight. "That is a very different world," she says, sounding a little horrified at the prospect of doing a song-and-dance routine for bizjet clients. **BJT**



JOHN T. LEWIS

flight attendant, who notes that "in this business, it's very important to give people those service nuances if you want to get invited back on that plane." In 2001, she started Beyond & Above, a school in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, where would-be corporate flight attendants receive instruction in safety, business protocol, etiquette, catering strategies, and food and wine presentation.

Back in the 1970s, when Gallagher began flying commercially, smart young people flocked to the airlines for flight-attendant jobs, drawn by the excitement of a business that hadn't yet deteriorated, and by perks like five-day layovers

Joe Sharkey (jsharkey@bjtonline.com) covered business travel for the *New York Times* for 16 years.

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# Turn a **home** into an **income stream**

When you're not using your main or vacation luxury residence, put it to work.

*by Chana R. Schoenberger*

**W**hile executive recruiter Lori Greenberg and her husband were on vacation in Ecuador and the Hamptons, strangers were in their four-bedroom townhouse in upscale Park Slope, Brooklyn.

The couple had rented out the property, on a picturesque block, with the help of London-based onefinestay.com. The company listed the house online, acted as a concierge, showed the renters around when they arrived, and took care of any mishaps, Greenberg says.

Vacation-home owners have traditionally used property-management companies to rent out villas, especially in resort areas. With the rise of online marketplaces for home rentals, these

owners are finding it easier to list their second homes, as well as to swap homes with others. For people who own a luxury residence, the services offer a way to fund vacations they would take anyway, or make back some portion of the cost of the home.

“Financially, it’s absolutely worth it,” Greenberg says.

Onfinestay matches historic and luxurious homes in London, New York City, Paris, and Los Angeles with guests who pay to use them. It’s the same as the principle behind Airbnb, which connects homeowners with travelers looking for a place to stay, but at a higher price.

Launched in 2010, the company hires and

supervises the cleaning service, swaps out the linens, and makes sure valuable keepsakes are locked away behind tamperproof seals and then put back in place. If something is broken—American renters have occasionally tried to heat a European-style electric coffee pot on a London stove, for instance—the company fixes it.

People who have rented out their houses with the help of onefinestay say that the company styled their homes before taking professional listing photos, which they were able to keep. Staffers take a video of the way the house looks once the owners leave, and everything—even clutter—is put back exactly the same way after the guests depart and the cleaning crew sweeps through.

Listing your property with a concierge website like onefinestay.com or a do-it-yourself site like Luxury.HomeAway.com is just one of three main ways to monetize your home's idle time. So says Nick Copley, president of travel analysis firm SherpaReport in Newton, Massachusetts. You can also hire a property-management firm, which will handle everything from listings to renter relations to maintenance in return for 15 to 20 percent of the rent. Or you can submit your property to an exchange, such as 3rdHome or Trade to Travel, both of which allow high-end homeowners to contribute time at their own homes and in return stay at others' homes elsewhere in the world.

“Financially, it’s absolutely worth it,” says a homeowner who rented out her luxury townhouse while she and her husband vacationed.

It’s important to list your property on websites that specialize in luxury rentals, so it will be seen by the sort of people who are looking for what you have to offer. At onefinestay.com, an urban townhouse can rent for \$3,000 per night, while properties on Luxury.HomeAway.com average \$1,800 per night, with some topping out at \$50,000. Homes for rent may have “gourmet kitchens, cinemas, and wine cellars, as well as over-the-top features including a helicopter landing pad, access to a private yacht, and an equestrian center,” comments HomeAway’s Adam Annen.

In all cases, Copley says, it’s a good idea to have stellar photos taken, perhaps by a professional photographer. You’ll also need to inform your insurance company that you are renting out the house. “Depending on the insurance you’ve got, it might mean additional premiums,” Copley notes. Some rental sites have arranged for special insurance policies; check when you submit your listing.

One pitfall of renting your home is not being able to keep tabs on how guests treat it. Try not to get too attached to your possessions, warns homeowner Kathy Brunjes: “You have to recognize that everything is just a material thing, and sometimes things get broken or are not used the same way you would use them.”

Brunjes and her husband, Julien Beresford, who own a market-research firm, have rented out their riverfront Westport, Connecticut home in the summer for a dozen years, fetching a peak of \$15,000 per month while they live on their sailboat. Renters, who find the house through HomeAway’s listing site VRBO.com, have included both vacationers and people relocating to Connecticut. Last year, the couple fulfilled a decade-long dream, sailing to the Bahamas and back over 15 months while a series of renters occupied the house. Brunjes and Beresford plan to do another stint on the seas, on a bigger boat and for a longer time, which will entail renting the house again.

If you rent your home through a website like HomeAway.com, you’re responsible for taking care of your renters’ needs. Brunjes has a roster of local service people who look after her pool, grounds, and house, but problems can arise.

When she and her husband were in the Bahamas, a telephone-company mix-up back in Connecticut resulted in disconnection of their landline phone service, which inadvertently shut down the home’s security system. The couple



This Westport, Connecticut home rents for up to \$15,000 a month while the owners live on their sailboat.

KATHY BRUNJES



FOTOLIA

## Not Using Your Yacht? Rent That Out, Too

Chartering out your yacht can make as much sense as renting out your home.

Steve Norry just bought a 50-foot Jeanneau sailboat. But the computer-software salesman will use it only two to four weeks a year. He has put it up for charter, as he has done with boats he has owned for the last 15 years.

Norry gets about 60 percent of the \$1,000 rental fee when the charter company he uses, Seaforth Boat Rental in San Diego, rents out his boat for a four-hour trip. Seaforth advertises the boat, finds renters, handles paperwork, makes sure the captains have proper qualifications, and performs minor cleaning and maintenance. Norry holds his boat in an LLC, which protects him from liability and makes clear to the IRS that renting it out is a business for him, he says.

Owners who place their yachts with a charter company often receive tax benefits, says Ian Van Tuyl of San Diego-based IVT Yacht Sales, the broker that sold Norry his latest sailboat. A few of Van Tuyl’s sales each year are to owners who charter out the yacht, often making back the costs of keeping it. On the minus side, he says, the vessel does get more wear and tear and more engine hours, which decreases its resale value. — C.R.S.

discovered the problem when the long-term renter who lives in a cottage on their property found the front door to the main house blown open by strong winds, and called the police. Another time, when a renter moved out, the power company also mistakenly turned off the house’s electricity.

“No matter how much you plan, issues arise, and you have to deal with them,” Brunjes says.

BJT

**Chana R. Schoenberger** (cschoenberger@bjtonline.com) has been an editor at *Forbes*, an online editor for the *Wall Street Journal*, and a news editor for *Bloomberg News*.

# Serve Yourself



FOTOLIA

At some hotels and resorts, you can help catch, harvest, or prepare the food that winds up on your plate.

by John Grossmann

If dining well means knowing that the food you eat is fresh from local farms, woods, or waters, then dining better still means experiencing nature's bounty firsthand—picking the ripe crops, discovering the wild ones, even diving to the ocean floor in pursuit of dinner. No wonder food travel is such a hot ticket and food lovers are flocking to a wide range of hotel- and resort-sponsored, uniquely personal culinary experiences. Here are a few:

**Boston Harbor lobstering.** Spend a Saturday night this June through September at Boston's Battery Wharf Hotel, and you'll be able to book a ride on a working lobster boat. On the two-and-a-half-hour harbor excursion, you'll learn how to bait and lower lobster traps, haul them up, and claw-band those crustaceans big enough to keep. For an added fee, you can enjoy the day's catch at a traditional lobster bake at the hotel's

waterside fire pits. By then, everyone will surely have the local pronunciation down: *lobstah*.  
*Info: batterywharfhotelboston.com*

**Trowel lessons in Tennessee.** One of the pleasures at Blackberry Farm, the 9,200-acre Relais & Chateau property in the foothills of the Smoky Mountains, is the opportunity to book a one-on-one class with the inn's master gardener, John Coykendall. The 73-year-old agricultural eminence grise, who has a Southerner's gift for storytelling, shares his half-century's know-how as an heirloom seed saver and passes on some of the farm's 500 flavorful varieties. In four-hour "Day in the Life of a Farmer" experiences, you can share in the fieldwork in some three acres of kitchen gardens, learning about sustainable organic farming. Yes, it's fine to sample ripe cherry tomatoes and beans off the vine and berries from the bush. Merely mention, say, that you're fond of

asparagus, and Coykendall will "arrange with the chef to provide a wow," something special at dinner involving that garden specialty.  
*Info: blackberryfarm.com*

**Tree-to-table chocolate in Brazil.** At Uxua Casa Hotel & Spa on the UNESCO-protected town square in Trancoso, Brazil, the dozen cocoa trees in the lush garden offer more than shade. Twice annually—June through September and October through March—hotel staff harvest the cocoa pods, and guests can lend a hand in the chocolate-making process. Classes typically last an hour or two. You leave the kitchen with a bespoke three-to four-ounce chocolate bar (if minus a preemptory bite or two) and an insider's knowledge of that night's chocolate ice creams and other desserts, such as warm chocolate petit gâteau with coconut sorbet and red fruits sauce; and white-and-dark chocolate mousse with crunchy Brazil nuts and pitanga fruit sauce. *Info: uxua.com*



## TAKING A GLOBAL APPROACH TO THE BUSINESS JET MARKETPLACE

**A**ircraft sales and acquisitions has always been a relationship business. But in today's market, the resources and expertise needed to nurture these relationships have increased dramatically. At the same time, regulatory considerations, tax implications, and valuation volatility have made the stakes for buyers and sellers alike exponentially higher.

"You need a global presence, industry experience, and financial strength to seriously work on behalf of your clients," said Jetcraft president Chad Anderson. The company, which last year conducted more than 70 transactions with a total value in excess of \$1.7 billion, certainly knows. Founded over 50 years ago by Charles "Bucky" Oliver, Raleigh, N.C.-based Jetcraft has been a business jet brokerage pioneer, developing industry innovations such as leasing programs, custom completions, avionics solutions, and asset management.

Since chairman Jahid Fazal-Karim, former head of sales at Bombardier, joined as Bucky's partner in 2008, Jetcraft has repositioned itself for the new century, enhancing services, bolstering staff, and expanding its global network. With sales and acquisitions teams now established in more than 20 offices across Asia, Europe, the Middle East, Russia, Turkey, and most recently Australia and Mexico, "We are global, but local

at the same time," Fazal-Karim said. "Clients can talk to people from Jetcraft and have access to our organization and services in their own time zones."

The transformation puts Jetcraft at the forefront of a new category of aircraft transaction service specialists. "We occupy a unique niche between traditional broker and an OEM," said Scott Plumb, senior v-p of sales, who is based in Zurich. "We straddle the new and preowned aircraft markets, and span the makes and models of every major manufacturer."

In the preowned market, with lines of credit from leading lenders, Jetcraft can take aircraft in trade and backstop transactions, providing maximum flexibility for clients, while also acquiring quality aircraft for its own inventory when market opportunities arise. For buyers of new jets, the company can serve as completions monitor, ensuring that aircraft are delivered as specified, squawk free.

Indeed, the term "broker," "dealer," or even "OEM" doesn't capture the range of transactional services the firm provides. Perhaps the capabilities, connections, and experience needed to execute on this level should simply be labeled "Jetcraft."



### Performing “Jetcraft”: Transaction Services that Transcend Simply Buying and Selling

Jetcraft can “give wings to any enterprise,” the company likes to say, and its deals illustrate the point. A company based in Africa operating a Challenger 605 recently sought Jetcraft’s help in acquiring a new Global 5000. “We were able to offer a green Global of ours, complete it to the client’s specifications, and take the CL605 in trade,” recalled Anderson. Jetcraft then sold the 605 to an owner eager to move up from a CL604, while simultaneously finding a buyer for that owner’s 604. “That one deal [for the Global] earned us three new clients,” he noted.

Behind the scenes, Jetcraft’s 55 sales professionals and multidisciplinary in-house transaction team support every sale and purchase, providing expertise in legal, financing, market analysis, regulatory, and technical issues. Yet despite complex details, sales and marketing skills remain at the core of the deal, while a third element, ownership strategies, has become an essential advisory service as asset-management precepts are applied to business aircraft.

### Aircraft Sales and Acquisitions

Identifying and locating the best aircraft for a prospective buyer and establishing its value lie at the heart of transaction services. Said Plumb: “We take the emotion out of buying and selling and bring it back to the clear value proposition: How has the aircraft been maintained? What are its attributes? What makes it the right aircraft for the buyer?”

Jetcraft first performs a needs analysis for buyers, to identify the right aircraft models for their missions, and provides a complete market review and analysis of those aircraft. The company then locates the best candidates for consideration, and commences negotiations for the purchase of the selected aircraft. Should an aircraft in Jetcraft’s inventory fit the requirements of a prospective buyer, it will be offered with complete transparency, always keeping the client’s needs and interests paramount. Jetcraft also helps obtain favorable financing terms for a buyer when needed, and a sound investment strategy when representing the seller.

For those considering a new aircraft, Jetcraft advises on pricing, contractual concerns, and delivery schedules. Meanwhile, they work

Jetcraft can  
“give wings to  
any enterprise.”



The Jetcraft executive team from left to right: Chief Financial Officer Anne Behrend, Chief Operating Officer Peter Antonenko, Chairman of the Board Jahid Fazal-Karim, President Chad Anderson, Founder Charles “Bucky” Oliver and Senior Vice President of Sales Scott Plumb



directly with OEMs to help facilitate transactions where a trade-in is required, or sometimes on even more demanding cases. One recent example of this was when Jetcraft worked closely with Dassault Falcon on a large project to repair, return to service and facilitate the sale of a crashed Falcon 900B.

### Aircraft Marketing

In today's aircraft market, a seller's best prospect for purchase could be anywhere in the world, and effective representation requires a footprint to match. "That's why we invested in our global network—to make sure the product will be in front of any buyer," said Fazal-Karim. "Clients know if they give their airplane to Jetcraft to handle the sale, it will be marketed everywhere."

Added Plumb, "This will always be a face-to-face business. We're having conversations [with buyers and sellers] every day in Beijing, Johannesburg, and Riyadh. People don't buy or sell airplanes that cost \$30 million to \$60 million without seeing who they're doing business with."

A six-person team at Jetcraft headquarters leads and supports global marketing operations. With all offices linked by secure network, sales teams worldwide can collaborate on the transactions. While new media channels and digital communications play a growing role in marketing, "We still invest heavily each year in producing videos and photographs of our aircraft for clients who can't meet with us, or want to see the airplane in a matter of minutes, so people aren't looking at photos taken five years ago," said Anderson.

### Ownership Strategies

The structure of a transaction, its timing, and the jurisdiction in which it's consummated are among the factors that can dramatically affect the ultimate cost of a purchase, and the ownership experience. "We advise clients on the best strategies to make ownership work," said Anderson. The company provides guidance on whether to buy outright or lease, the type of financing arrangement, how long

to plan to keep the aircraft, even whether to buy new or preowned. Such strategizing is especially important with fleet purchases—a Jetcraft specialty—when operators acquire multiple aircraft.

Jetcraft's 10-Year Business Aviation Market Outlook, 2015–2024, exemplifies its forward-thinking, action-oriented approach to developing ownership strategies. Released late last year, the forecast includes regional outlooks, category analysis, key trends, projected transactions, and OEM revenues. It's the only such forecast not produced by a major airframe or engine OEM, and it underscores both the company's capabilities and its long-term commitment to clients. Said Fazal-Karim, "We believe in planning ahead unequivocally, with vision, and in playing our part as diligent advisors."

### Partnering with a Leader

If business aircraft play a role in your work or life, it pays—literally—to work with the best market professionals you can find. "Choosing a good firm will help save you money," said Fazal-Karim. "If you make one small mistake on your contract, tax structure, or a technical issue, it can cost millions of dollars."

"Our customers tell us that the value we add to a transaction, be it in expertise, time spared and actual money made or saved, far exceeds the fees we charge for our services," said Anderson, adding, "They're extremely successful people, and their time is very valuable. They do what they do best and let us manage their aircraft investment."

Whatever direction the business aircraft market moves, Jetcraft is sure to be at the forefront, working diligently on behalf of customers with integrity, discipline, and unmatched resources. "We're in it for the long term. When we talk to a customer, it's not about that one-time deal, it's about creating a relationship where they stay our clients for the next generation," said Fazal-Karim. "My task is to make sure the Jetcraft name survives me, as it did Bucky. I am dedicated to making this company a success."



"This will always be a face-to-face business."

## HOW EFFECTIVE IS JETCRAFT? A CLIENT SPEAKS

"In today's ever-changing market, it is helpful to work with a player that has offices across the world. In one of our recent transactions, Jetcraft's professionals not only sold our Embraer Legacy 650, but they also facilitated all communication between us as the seller, the maintenance facility, and the buyer, and expertly steered the transaction to its closing."

—Johan Blitz, Global Head of Corporate Aircraft Finance, UBS AG



## FEATURED AIRCRAFT



### 2008 BOMBARDIER GLOBAL 5000 S/N 9243

- EU OPS 1 Compliant
- Batch 3 Avionics Upgrade w/CPDLC & FAN
- Enrolled on Rolls-Royce CorporateCare
- Located in St.Louis, MO



### 2006 BOMBARDIER GLOBAL 5000 S/N 9190

- 1,999 Hours; 776 Landings
- Airframe on Smart Parts; Engines on Rolls-Royce CorporateCare; APU on JSSI
- Increased MTOW, 92,500 lbs.



### 2015 BOMBARDIER GLOBAL 6000 S/N 9697

- 14 Passenger Configuration
- Factory Training Provisions Included
- Factory New with Completion & Delivery Time Only
- Trade Opportunities Welcome



### 2014 BOMBARDIER CHALLENGER 605 S/N 5950

- Factory New with Completion & Delivery Time Only
- Factory Training Provisions Included
- Trade Opportunities Welcome



### 2009 HAWKER 900XP S/N HA-0121

- 1,235 Hours; 492 Landings
- MSP Gold on Engines & APU
- Maintained to Highest Standards



### 2010 HAWKER 900XP S/N HA-0151

- Privately Operated by One Fortune 200 Company Since New
- US Registered and Northeast Based
- Engines & APU Enrolled on MSP Gold



### 2008 HAWKER 900XP S/N HA-0044

- 1,140 Hours; 898 Landings
- Inspection E/F/G Completed Oct-2015
- 8 Passenger Interior with a Belted Aft Lavatory



### 2000 BOMBARDIER LEARJET 60 S/N 169

- Engines on ESP Gold
- No Damage History
- Recent New Paint & Interior Refurbishment



### 2008 BOMBARDIER LEARJET 60XR S/N 351

- 3,244 Hours Total Time
- Engines on ESP Gold
- No Damage History



Burgundy barge truffle hunt



Trowel lessons in Tennessee

**West Indies dive and dine.** If you're an experienced scuba diver, you can stay at the Four Seasons Resort Nevis in the West Indies and lend a hand supplying the day's catch. Executive chef Jason Adams or his executive sous chef regularly take up to six dive-certified guests on a private charter with a local dive master in the Caribbean waters off St. Kitts and Nevis in search of lunch or dinner. Maybe the crew will spear a lionfish or other local delicacy. But the primary prey is spiny lobster, caught the local way: lassooed with a wire loop at the end of a pole. Back on dry land the group reassembles for cocktails in a luxury beach cabana. Then chef Adams explains the preparation of his Caribbean sofrito marinade—which uses fresh organic ingredients from the resort's herb garden—and grills the just-caught lobsters.

*Info: [fourseasons.com/nevis](http://fourseasons.com/nevis)*

**Colorado BBQ University.** This June at the Broadmoor Resort in Colorado Springs, barbecue maven Steven Raichlen will again convene his popular BBQ University. This year, his ninth grillside, he'll be sharing tips and techniques, including a smoked cheesecake with a burnt sugar cream sauce from his latest book, *Up in Smoke*. The three-day experience includes indoor, stadium-style classes and plenty of time on the awaiting battalions of grills. The five-dozen slots fill quickly, because many alums return year after year to learn new marinating methods and such advanced skills as cooking directly on coals or basket-weaving pork loins in bacon.

*Info: [broadmoor.com](http://broadmoor.com)*



West Indies dive and dine



Tree-to-table chocolate in Brazil

*You'll learn how to bait and lower lobster traps, haul them up, and claw-band those crustaceans big enough to keep.*

**California Abalone Camp.** June 26 to 28, the Little River Inn in Mendocino will host a second annual sea-to-sauté pan abalone experience. Abalone Camp participants at the 76-year-old inn can watch from shore or don a wetsuit and snorkeling gear (after purchasing an abalone license) and try their skill at prying the prized shellfish from near-shore rocks in waters about 10 feet deep. Dive guides may also surface with urchin or box crabs and perhaps a speared codfish or two, adding to the night's briny feast. But dinner is all about the abalone—how to clean it and cut it into steaks, tenderize it, bread it, and sauté it. Inn owner Cally Dym's grandfather taught her all these skills when he ran the inn and the now-rare delicacy was so abundant it was a nightly menu offering.

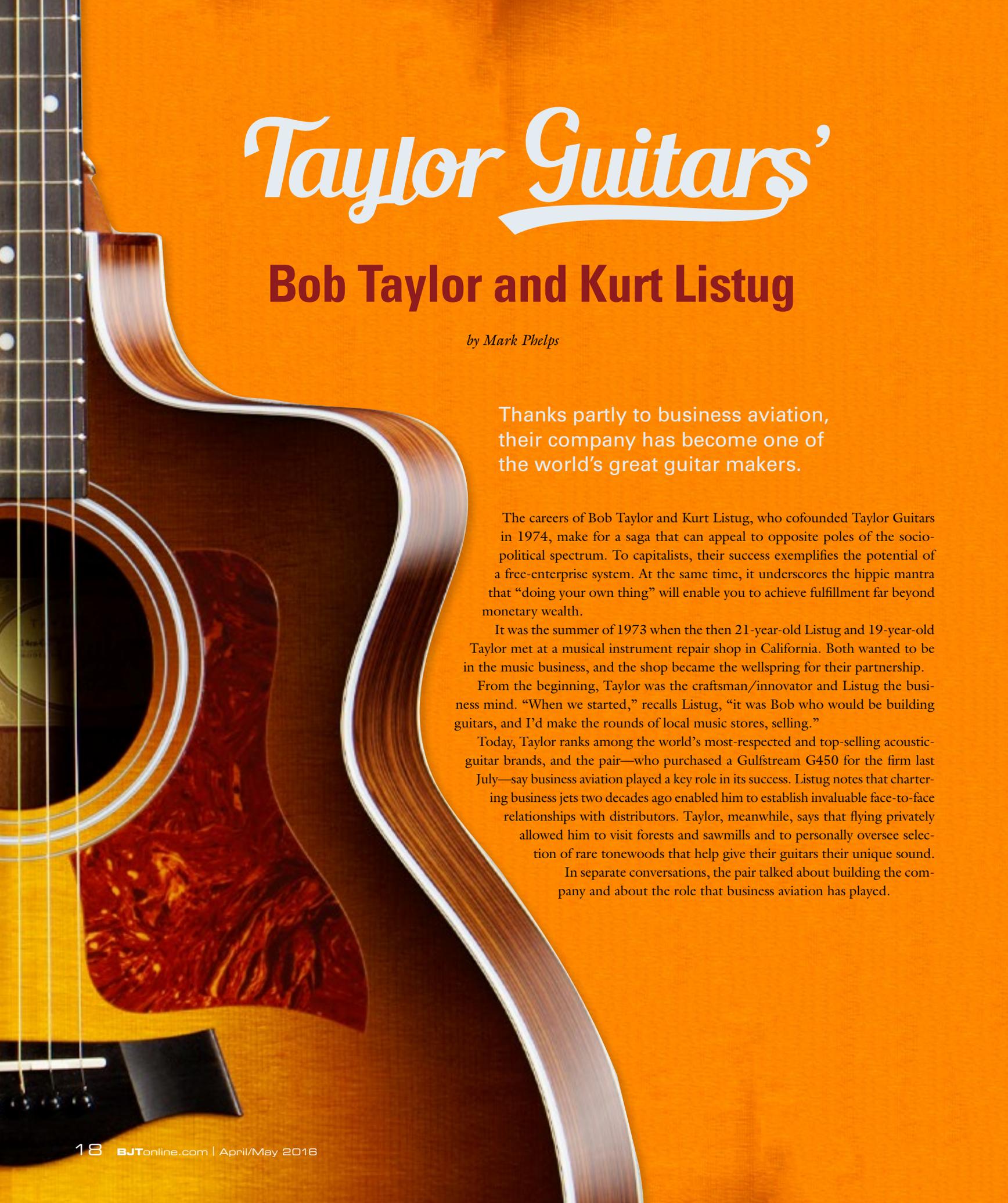
*Info: [littleriverinn.com](http://littleriverinn.com)*

**Burgundy barge truffle hunt.** Come September and October, black truffles ripen in France's Burgundy region. Belmond Afloat in France, which charters five small luxury barges, includes a truffle hunting/cooking experience on one day of its six-night Belmond Alouette cruises on the Canal du Midi. You can marvel at the nose-to-the-ground ability of a trained truffle-hunting dog and see the prized fungus carefully unearthed by the local truffle farmer. Back on the barge, you can learn to shave the fresh truffles over dishes that you can help the onboard chef to cook—perhaps an earthy, aromatic pasta dish or an indulgent omelet.

*Info: [belmond.com/afloat-in-france](http://belmond.com/afloat-in-france).*

**BJT**

**John Grossmann** ([jgrossmann@bjtonline.com](mailto:jgrossmann@bjtonline.com)), a Maine-based freelance writer, wrote about restaurants with private dining options for the last issue of BJT.



# Taylor Guitars'

## Bob Taylor and Kurt Listug

*by Mark Phelps*

Thanks partly to business aviation, their company has become one of the world's great guitar makers.

The careers of Bob Taylor and Kurt Listug, who cofounded Taylor Guitars in 1974, make for a saga that can appeal to opposite poles of the socio-political spectrum. To capitalists, their success exemplifies the potential of a free-enterprise system. At the same time, it underscores the hippie mantra that “doing your own thing” will enable you to achieve fulfillment far beyond monetary wealth.

It was the summer of 1973 when the then 21-year-old Listug and 19-year-old Taylor met at a musical instrument repair shop in California. Both wanted to be in the music business, and the shop became the wellspring for their partnership.

From the beginning, Taylor was the craftsman/innovator and Listug the business mind. “When we started,” recalls Listug, “it was Bob who would be building guitars, and I’d make the rounds of local music stores, selling.”

Today, Taylor ranks among the world's most-respected and top-selling acoustic-guitar brands, and the pair—who purchased a Gulfstream G450 for the firm last July—say business aviation played a key role in its success. Listug notes that chartering business jets two decades ago enabled him to establish invaluable face-to-face relationships with distributors. Taylor, meanwhile, says that flying privately allowed him to visit forests and sawmills and to personally oversee selection of rare tonewoods that help give their guitars their unique sound.

In separate conversations, the pair talked about building the company and about the role that business aviation has played.

## KURT LISTUG

### What was it like during the early days, when you and Bob were starting out?

Well, the 1970s was an exciting time to be in the music business, and we were excited to be building guitars. Bob was a talented do-it-yourselfer. He came to work at American Dream [a musical instrument repair shop, where Listug already worked] in the summer of '73. It was a sort of co-op with lots of people independently doing repairs, alterations, and so on. The shop would get a cut of what we took in, and we'd get the rest.

### How did you get from there to Taylor Guitars?

By 1974, I knew I wanted to get into the guitar-building business. I figured I'd need one or two partners and \$10,000. I asked my father for a loan. He asked me who the best guitar builder was at the shop, and I said, "Bob Taylor." He told me to get him as one of the partners, and he and my mother would consider loaning us the money.

### How did those early years go?

From 1974 to about 1982 were tough. Bob would build guitars, and I'd be out selling. Over time, we grew to about \$100,000 [annual revenue]. By 1986, production had stabilized at around 22 guitars per week, our make/break point, and we continued to grow from there. We plateaued for several years at \$50 million to \$60 million. For the past two years, we've been at \$105 million to \$110 million.

### To what do you attribute that most recent increase?

The acoustic-guitar business has been very good lately. Maybe it's because an acoustic guitar is an analog instrument in an increasingly digital world. Maybe people feel the need for some balance.

### Why did you decide to use Bob's name for the company?

We figured Taylor was as good a name for a guitar as Martin [*a reference to the legendary guitar maker—Ed.*]. It's a great name for an American guitar, don't you think? Listug? Not so much.

### What is Taylor's market share at this point?

Between Martin and us, we have about 80 percent of the North American market for acoustic guitars, split about evenly.

### Given Martin's 144-year head start, that's impressive.

Well, we have great respect for Martin, but we are different. They build East Coast-style guitars. We build West Coast-style guitars.

### What do you mean by "West Coast style"?

[*Chuckles.*] I think I'll let Bob explain that.

### How many guitars are you producing these days?

We're just completing moving into our larger factory in Tecate, Mexico [about 45 minutes' drive from the main plant in El Cajon, California]. With that factory running, we'll be building [a total of] 900 guitars a day, up from about 700, depending on demand.

### What's the next step for you, as the marketing side of the partnership?

Compared with the '60s, when everyone wanted to play, now there are so many other distractions. Guitar makers are all looking at where to go from here, and we are, too. For example, we have been working with and supporting Taylor Swift since she was in middle school. It'd be good to see more women play guitar. Can a company influence a social trend? How do you do that? [I think you] keep your head down, just forge on, and then, maybe, you break out into the sunshine.

### Where do you see your growth markets?

Since opening our distribution center in Amsterdam [Holland], we've tripled our sales in Europe in the last five years. We could be bigger in Japan. In October I was in Shanghai, where sales are growing fast. North America is still the largest market. International [sales] could be half, but we're not there yet.

### How does private aviation fit into your growth strategy?

We met Marc [Foulkrod, CEO] at Avjet about 20 years ago, and we began doing some charter. We thought, "Wow, what an amazing tool." It has always been expensive, but we did it judiciously and strategically. For example, I wanted to visit our top 100 [U.S.] accounts. With a chartered Hawker 800, I could do that in a half dozen easy four-day trips. On the airlines, I couldn't have done it at all. We're convinced of the value.

### What made you decide to purchase your first business jet?

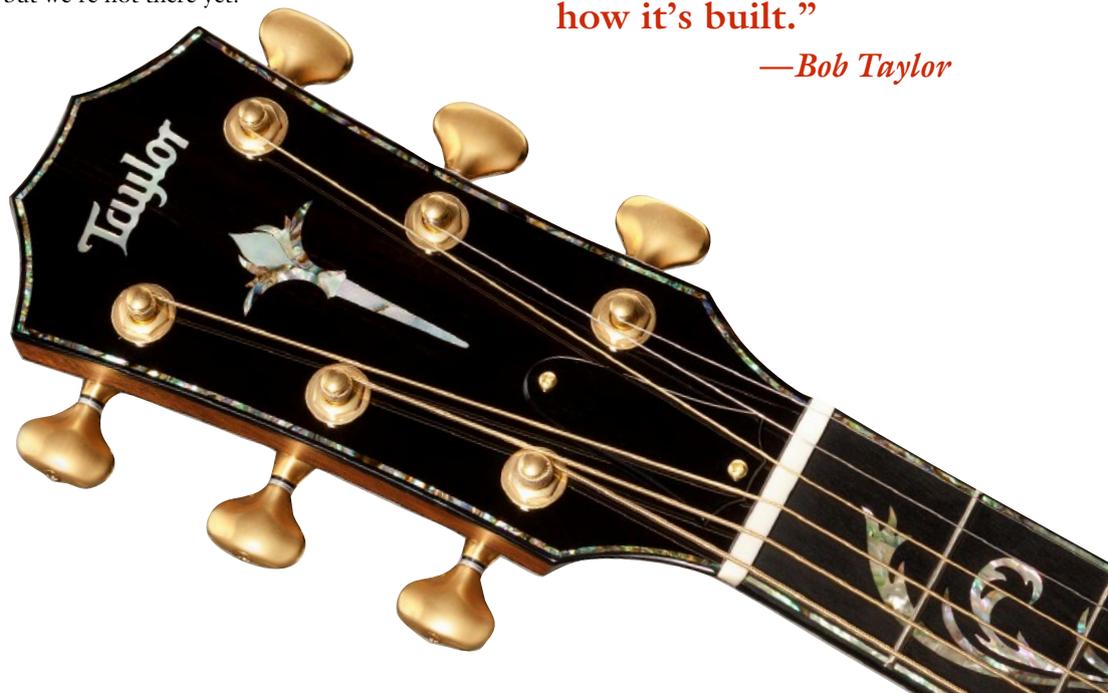
Around 2000, prices of [used] jets got hammered. We were growing, and we could afford it, so we decided that rather than larger salaries for Bob and me, adding a business asset meant more. It was a carefully thought-out investment, to extend our careers.

### What was your first airplane?

A three-year-old Hawker 850XP, since we assumed most of our missions would be within North America, though it had the capability of crossing the Atlantic, too. It made our travel comfortable. We actually looked forward to trips.

**"If I had to give up part of my life, I think I could quit thinking about how a guitar sounds before I could give up thinking about how it's built."**

**—Bob Taylor**



**When did you see the need for a more capable jet?**

For me, most travel was marketing trips to visit dealers. For Bob, it was for visiting designers and suppliers—in Washington state and Belize, for example. Then, when we were starting the distributorship in Amsterdam, we thought we could use the Hawker for those trips, too. But over the next five years, much more of my travel turned out to be visiting European customers, and Bob was exploring new sources of woods all around the world.

**So you bought a Gulfstream 450.**

Yes. We needed the range, but also the [more capable] cabin. And the Gulfstream’s support network is global, which was an important consideration. We had to go up in expense, but the difference between the Gulfstream and the Hawker was as great as the difference between the Hawker and flying commercial.

**Tell me about the airplane.**

It’s well equipped with business equipment—broadband, a printer-scanner, Internet connectivity—and has a full galley and berthing seats. When we were talking with Marc at Avjet [about setting up the crew], we asked him, “Do you think we really need a cabin attendant?” Well, with all the complexity of the airplane and for safety, yes, we really do.

**It doesn’t sound like you bought the jet to impress people.**

For us, it’s a business tool. When Marc’s people were going over plans for the interior, they showed us linens to choose from. [Laughs.] Linens? We didn’t care about linens. We’re kind of brown-bag guys. For a vacation, Bob will go down to Baja in his off-road Land Cruiser and camp on the beach.

**Has anyone ever criticized your decision to fly privately as self-indulgent or elitist?**

No one who knows us would think that. Rather than being exclusive, we got the plane to be more inclusive. We use it to connect with people who work for us as well as customers and business partners.

**Tell me about your usage.**

We’ll fly the G450 about 400 hours a year. In October, for example, I’m planning a three-week sales trip around the world. Bob has plans to take four people around the world to learn about growing and using trees. You just



COURTESY OF TAYLOR GUITARS

Bob Taylor (left) and Kurt Listug, shown here in 1985, launched their guitar-building business more than 40 years ago.

## FASTFACTS

	BOB TAYLOR	KURT LISTUG
▶ <b>Birthdate</b>	March 12, 1955 (age 61)	Nov. 15, 1952 (age 63)
▶ <b>Position</b>	Cofounder, president, Taylor Guitars	Cofounder, CEO, Taylor Guitars
▶ <b>Education</b>	High school	A.A., San Diego State
▶ <b>Family</b>	Married, two grown daughters	Married
▶ <b>Residence</b>	El Cajon, California	Rancho Santa Fe, California
▶ <b>Hobbies</b>	Woodworking/furniture making, off-road expedition travel, church activities	Classic cars (Porsche 911s, VW microbuses); music, early 20th century California impressionist art

wouldn’t do that with charter—and certainly not with the airlines.

### BOB TAYLOR

**Kurt said you design West Coast-style guitars. What does he mean by that?**

Well, in Germany in the early 1800s, C.F. Martin Sr. wanted to build and design guitars. But

the violin-makers’ guilds in Germany wouldn’t permit him to build instruments. So he came to New York [and later moved to Nazareth, Pennsylvania]. Martin was a great innovator [and the company’s guitars] made the development of American folk music and blues possible. But after that, guitar development halted for decades...and then I was born.

I didn’t start out to move the design forward; I just wanted to do something different. The



## Peace of Mind

The only decision you need to make is whether to enjoy the terrace or the pool.



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## Planting Ebony Trees— and Opportunity

Bob Taylor is known for his efforts to preserve the endangered tonewoods used in guitar making, including ebony for fingerboards.



COURTESY OF TAYLOR GUITARS

In Cameroon, workers plant ebony seedlings that will take 70 years to grow into mature trees.

In 2011, Taylor Guitars formed a joint venture with a Spanish tonewood supplier to purchase Crelicam, an ebony mill in the African nation of Cameroon, one of the few places where the wood can be found. “I believe in solving ecological problems through business—not by stopping business,” Taylor says. He notes that ebony trees take 70 years to mature, so people in Cameroon have had little incentive to plant them. Taylor is providing that incentive—and giving people incomes—by paying them to plant and care for the trees.

The mill now has 75 employees, wages have doubled, and workers are being trained to harvest and process wood from existing mature trees. “Planting new trees is important, but what blows me away is what you can do for the people,” Taylor comments. “They’re winning for the first time in their lives. And they love to win.”

He expects to launch his tree-planting programs in two villages per year and plant tens of thousands of ebony trees in the next two decades. —M.P.

East Coast is more conservative, more traditional, which I respect. But we’re from California. We surf. We innovate.

### Do you play?

Not as much as I used to. I’ve gotten into other things.

### What is it about a guitar that makes you love it?

Everything, really. The wood. The art. The craft. The mechanics. Trying out a new guitar, I’ll set it on my lap and strum it for about 45 seconds. Then I have to pick it up and peer inside. I’m drawn to examine the craft and the engineering. If I had to give up a part of my life, I think I could quit thinking about how a guitar sounds before I could give up thinking about how it’s built.

### What makes Taylor guitars different?

The bolt-on NT [new technology] neck joint is a big reason; and the Expression System electronic pickups that we developed. But the little things incorporated into the design of Taylor guitars—and the production process—also make them known for being consistently easy to play and great sounding.

### What makes Taylor different as a company?

I think part of it is having a single person as the decision maker on the design. Some companies have so many people involved that they wind up designing by committee. And often, it’s the marketing people who drive the decision. I didn’t want that to happen to Taylor.

### How do you keep that from happening after you retire?

I’ve tried to establish a transition plan. [We have] Andy Powers. He’s the best guitar designer and builder alive. He was born to design and build guitars, like I was. And he knows guitar history, which is something I don’t know enough about.

### How does traveling on the Gulfstream fit into your growth plans?

They would not be possible without the airplane. With the jet, I can go away for a month at a time to accomplish things that would be impossible traveling on the airlines.

### Do you feel at all vulnerable to criticism as an environmentalist flying in a business jet?

I understand that, but it’s really not a well-thought-out question. The benefit that

we are bringing to preserving forests—not just in Africa, but Hawaii, Honduras, Asia, all over the world—far outweighs the tiny negative impact [see sidebar]. Don’t those same environmentalists drive their cars to their environmental rallies?

### Do you ever use the airplane for personal travel?

I have taken some vacations, but my family hasn’t been on the Gulfstream yet. For my 60th birthday, we planned a trip to Las Vegas, and my wife and daughters asked, “Do you think we could go on the plane?” So I looked into the Sarbox rules [Sarbanes-Oxley Act, a 2004 law governing personal use of business assets], and we did all the calculations on what we would pay the company for using the Hawker, and we went. It was great.



Taylor Guitars has been working with singer/songwriter Taylor Swift since she was in middle school.

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Kurt Listug says the company's recently acquired G450 helps him connect with employees, customers and business partners.

JEFF BERLIN

#### TAYLOR GUITARS' GULFSTREAM G450

Model years produced	2005–current
Variable cost/hour for latest model	\$4,364
Seating (exec/max)	13/19
NBAA IFR range	4,363 nm
Maximum cruise speed	500 kt
Maximum takeoff weight	74,600 lb
Cost new (millions)	\$43.15
Cost range used (millions)	\$6.5–\$32

**Sources:** Conklin & de Decker Aircraft Cost Evaluator, Conklin & de Decker Aircraft Performance Comparator, Vref Value Reference

**Assumptions:** jet fuel, \$6.00/gal. Variable costs include fuel, routine maintenance reserves, misc. expenses. Range based on four passengers (200 lb each, including baggage), NBAA IFR fuel reserve, 200 nm alternate.

#### What other benefits have you discovered from using a business jet?

The time spent on the airplane can build relationships—with employees as well as business colleagues. Taking someone along on a trip is sharing, rather than giving. You might not offer to buy a business partner an airline ticket—it would be like a gift, and they would feel uncomfortable accepting it. But you can offer a seat on your own airplane and they'll say yes. And you can do things with people that are impossible any other way. One time, a colleague and I wanted

to attend [a business function] in Munich. We met up in Atlanta when I was on my way to Cameroon with some people from our factory and we stopped over in Munich for a half-day's work; then he flew home on a commercial carrier, and we continued to Africa. That was only possible with our own jet.

#### Do you use the airplane for domestic travel, also?

Sure. I can go to Redding [California] to visit a sawmill and be back to my office that afternoon.

The other good thing about the big cabin is that there are a lot of seats. When I have a trip like that coming up, I'll walk through the office and say, "Anyone want to come?" And someone might say, "Yeah, I could really use a visit with so-and-so." And they'll get work done that they couldn't do otherwise, and be back home that night. It's normal for us to have seven or more people on the plane.

#### You and Kurt seem to be the perfect match as business partners. And it sounds like your meeting back at American Dream was entirely random. Do you ever wonder about that?

Kurt and I talk about this. We know we're talented and we work hard for what we have. But whenever we're tempted to think that we're maybe more special than we really are, we remember "accidents" that have happened along the way. Without them, we wouldn't have the success we have. Our meeting was one of those accidents; and it's the best thing that ever happened. **BJT**

**Mark Phelps** (mphelps@bjtonline.com) is a managing editor at AIN Publications, **BJT's** parent company.



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**NEW AIRCRAFT  
PREVIEW**





# Finmeccanica's **AW609**

This tiltrotor will likely transform  
travel between some cities.

*by Mark Huber*

**M**anufacturers and writers often attach the word “revolutionary” to new aircraft, but the forthcoming AW609 tiltrotor from Finmeccanica’s AgustaWestland really deserves the label. The aircraft takes off and lands like a helicopter yet can achieve forward speeds of around 275 knots, on par with a fast turboprop airplane. It will likely transform personal and business travel between cities that are 700 to 1,100 nautical miles apart. In many cases, it will be faster to make these trips with the AW609 than with a helicopter or private jet.



## NEW AIRCRAFT PREVIEW

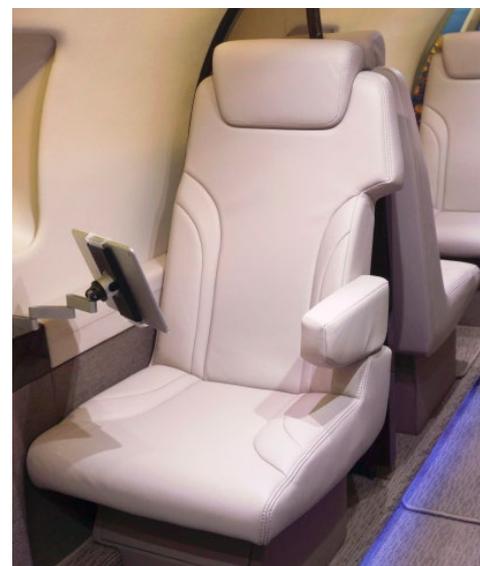
Finmeccanica is counting on customers being willing to pay a premium for this convenience. While the AW609 will have the same cabin space as a four-to-nine-passenger, \$4 to \$9 million light jet, it likely will sell for around \$24 million—about what you'd pay for a super-medium twin helicopter with all the bells and whistles.

Tiltrotors aren't new, of course. They've been flying as research aircraft since the 1950s, and the Marine Corps' much larger and more expensive Bell-Boeing MV-22 made its first flight in 1989 before going operational in 2007.

Bell and Boeing had partnered on bringing a smaller craft to market but Boeing withdrew from the venture and Bell then partnered on the project with Finmeccanica. It was not a good marriage, and in 2011 Finmeccanica bought out Bell's share. It then accelerated program development, beginning construction of two more prototypes to add to the pair already flying and gearing up its Philadelphia plant to handle most of the development, testing, and manufacturing. It also finished working with the FAA on creation of a special section of the Federal Aviation Regulations governing powered-lift aircraft.

**Finmeccanica is counting on customers being willing to pay a premium for the convenience the AW609 offers.**

Since 2011, the 609 has undergone if not a redesign, then what certainly is an optimization of the design and the supply chain. The cabin height has been increased from 54 to 60 inches, width is now 58 inches, and length is 13



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Though development of the program has at times seemed tortuous, customer enthusiasm hasn't waned.

feet, 5 inches—dimensions that put the AW609 on or above par with popular business turbo-props. Finmeccanica gave the main cabin door a clamshell design and widened it to 35 inches, making the 609 more suitable for a medevac role. Corporate and VIP interiors have yet to be formally defined but the VIP cabin likely will feature a small refreshment center followed by a club-four grouping and an aft belted lavatory while a less-plush corporate configuration will probably incorporate six seats. Customers will be able to select fabrics and colors, much as they would for a corporate jet.

By delaying the project slightly after it acquired Bell's share, changing vendors for certain components, and doing some redesign, Finmeccanica managed to wring 10 percent of the manufacturing cost out of the aircraft, according to program manager Clive Scott. "We were unhappy with some components in terms of performance, weight, or cost," he said, "so we have been working hard to ensure that the aircraft is not only technically acceptable but financially acceptable to the market in terms of acquisition and operating costs."

More than 100 people are already working on the program in Philadelphia. The decision to base it there was in no small measure a func-

### At a Glance

Price	▶ n/a
Range*	▶ 700 nm
Crew	▶ 2
Passengers (corporate/VIP)	▶ 4–6
Cabin	▶ Height: 5 ft
	▶ Width: 4 ft 10 in
	▶ Length: 13 ft 5 in
Cruising speed	▶ 275 kt
*assumes standard fuel tank Source: Finmeccanica	

tion of the aircraft's initial certification from the Federal Aviation Administration and proximity to suppliers, including Rockwell Collins (avionics) and Pratt & Whitney Canada (engines).

Thirteen years have passed since the first 609 prototype flew and development of the program has at times seemed tortuous—especially since last October, when the second prototype crashed outside Santhia, Italy, killing the pilots. The crash investigation may delay the AW609's entry into service, which had been

scheduled for 2018. By how much depends on whether the accident proves to be linked to the aircraft's fundamental design or merely to pilot error or failure of a minor component.

But Finmeccanica remains committed to the project and customer enthusiasm hasn't waned. "Are we going to purchase these? Absolutely!" says Jonathan Baliff, CEO of the Bristow Group, which provides helicopter services to offshore energy platforms worldwide. "This aircraft allows a level of safety and certainty. It flies above the weather and has speed and range."

AW609 test pilots say the aircraft is easy to fly for those transitioning from either helicopters or fixed-wing aircraft. One pilot tells me the hardest thing about flying the 609 is keeping the proper mindset, given the model's flight profile. "It changes from a fixed-wing aircraft to a helicopter in about 30 seconds," comments pilot Paul Edwards. "So you have to fly it like a fixed-wing when it is a fixed-wing and then get ready to fly it like a helicopter. It sounds trite, but that is what it is like. The fly-by-wire system makes it very easy to fly. It flies beautifully." **BJT**

Industry veteran **Mark Huber** (mhuber@bjtonline.com) has reviewed aircraft for **BJT** since 2005.

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Solairus Aviation's **Dan Drohan**

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF SOLAIRUS AVIATION

The founder of an aircraft-management and charter company bets its future on delegating authority and eschewing cookie-cutter approaches to meeting client needs.

*by James Wynbrandt*

Dan Drohan serves as chairman and CEO of Solairus Aviation, an aircraft-management and charter company he founded in 2008, just as the Great Recession began. Despite that bad timing, the firm has prospered and now has more than 100 aircraft in its managed fleet.

Drohan grew up in Marin County, California, and launched his first business, Sunset Aviation, in 1992. It grew from a one-airplane air-tour operation into a diversified aircraft-services provider. In 2007, Drohan sold it to JetDirect, a company that was attempting

to consolidate charter operators and create a national brand. He joined that firm as a vice president, but it declared bankruptcy in 2008, leaving Drohan and many of his former clients among unpaid creditors. By then he had recruited J.W. “Jake” Cartwright and John King, former principals of TAG Aviation USA, from JetDirect’s ashes, to join his new venture.

Solairus’s decentralized management structure—borrowed from TAG, Drohan says—relies upon teams headed by a client aviation manager, often the chief pilot for the

customer’s airplane. Those individuals handle operation and management of each aircraft, wherever it’s based.

Solairus—which is headquartered in Petaluma, California, about 40 miles north of San Francisco—has a charter-sales department, but outsources all maintenance, repairs, and other services. The company acts as its clients’ advisor and advocate, helping them to select and arrange the best solutions for them and using its buying power to reduce costs on fuel, maintenance, training, and other expenses.



Dan Drohan

INDUSTRY INSIDER

When we talked with Drohan in New York City, he was in the midst of a cross-country trip to visit clients and prospects with Solairus colleagues. (He was piloting the group in his Beechcraft King Air 350.) Dressed in a dark suit with a crisp white shirt sans tie, the 43-year-old Drohan projected youthful enthusiasm as he discussed his company and career.

**How did you get involved with aviation?**

After my father passed away in 1984, a family friend who wanted to find something for me to do took me up to Schellville Airport [in Sonoma County, California] and dropped me off on a Saturday morning. There were a lot of warbirds and tailwheel airplanes, and I was mesmerized. [The next day] he drove me up there again. A guy said, "If you wash and wax my car for me, I'll take you up for an airplane ride." He had a Super Decathlon, and we went out and did aerobatics. I fell in love instantly. I spent the next five or six years working at the airport weekends, and seven days a week during the summer.

**What's your educational background?**

I was not a straight-A student in high school. I should have focused more than I did, but there was a bigger, wider world out there, and I wanted to be in it sooner than the program allowed. I went to the University of New Mexico for a semester. [But] I wanted to be back with my family and missed my friends at Schellville, so I moved back and told my mom I wanted to do this aviation thing full steam. I signed up at Sierra Academy [of Aeronautics] in Oakland [now in Atwater, California] and got my commercial and multiengine instrument [ratings] knocked out in a couple of months.

**How did you start your own aviation business?**

I convinced my mom to spend the college money on a [Beechcraft] Baron, got it refurbished, and built some time in it. I got the [Part 135 charter] certificate in 1992, and Sunset Aviation was born. We did sightseeing flights

over the Bay Area and wine country.

We weren't wildly successful. But that evolved into charter, and soon people were coming to us with 400-series Cessnas [to manage], and that turned into King Airs, and they turned into CJs and Citations, and they turned into Beechjets and Hawkers. Over 15 years we built a pretty good regional presence on the West Coast and had four bases when we sold the business: Santa Rosa, Concord, Sacramento, and our home base, Novato.

**Why did you sell Sunset to JetDirect and join that company?**

I was 33 at the time. I wanted to be part of something big in the business, and I wanted the people with me to experience that, too. I met great people—people who are on the masthead at Solairus now. Jake [J.W. Cartwright, Solairus vice chairman, and former TAG Aviation USA president and CEO] was at the core of that.

I approached him and said we would love it if you joined and brought some former TAG people with you. That's how Solairus got going.

**Do you think a charter-service-consolidation company like what JetDirect was trying to achieve could succeed?**

JetDirect was ultimately trying to pull together a

fragmented service-delivery business, and it's been done in other market sectors successfully. The problem in my opinion is that it's such a relationship-driven business. There are so many important personal relationships that happen between the leadership of the management company and the client that you can't possibly pull together multiple operations without having the different leadership entities [remain] in place.

**Solairus has an unusual service model, with management largely overseen by a client aviation manager [CAM] and his team, operating from the aircraft's home base. What type of owner does this model appeal to?**

People seeking a very individualized, decentralized model. It's so much about the pairing of the CAM and the aircraft owner. We put a lot of faith and trust in our client aviation managers to manage the accounts in a tenor and tempo that is consistent with the owners' desires, while we provide significant backbone, infrastructure, leadership, and guidance. We believe that people want to do it right, and if we provide the support for people to go out and make good decisions on the client's behalf, 9.9 times out of 10 they will exceed expectations.

**How do you select CAMs?**

We try to find a CAM for each aircraft who not only meets our leadership and flight-operations experience standards, but who we think is going to be a good fit from a personality

At a very early age I realized that while the airplanes are really cool, the real passion here is the people that make this business up.



Drohan (center) consults with colleagues.



Dan Drohan

INDUSTRY INSIDER

and style perspective with the client. There's no manual that tells them how to run the relationship. We spend a lot of time and energy finding the right guys and gals, and building them up to be better managers and better leaders. That person is largely responsible for building the team with our guidance.

We do leadership and personality-assessment profile testing to see if they fit into our environment, culture, and how we operate. It's been a very successful tool, and we're still adapting it. On paper they are all stellar candidates, but it's neat to have a tool that is so detailed that [it lets you see differences] that you would never see in an interview or in a resume. That has been critical in several occurrences where we chose [one candidate over another] purely because of [the personality assessment].

How do you spend your working hours?

I'm probably in the office 50 percent of the time, and the rest of the time I'm out meeting the people who influence where we're headed as a company—current clients, prospective clients, employees. I love the people side of the business.

When I'm in the office, I'm on the phone constantly. We've got pilots who are at their base or traveling the world and administrative employees who show up five days a week at the



same desk. Communication is a big part of how we manage those two different groups of people.

Your headquarters is in downtown

Petaluma. Why not at an airport?

That was a big decision we made in the Sunset days. It's reflective of where we place priorities. We've created a really neat work environment for folks who live locally and want to work at administrative jobs and have a professional career but still be tied to a small town. I live about a mile from the office so I can walk to work.

With our decentralized model, a lot of our client-services people and flight coordinators work from home. Obviously, that creates some relationship challenges because we want that human interaction. [But] if we've got a great flight coordinator who wants to live in Montana or Chicago or Texas, we don't need them to be in an office in Petaluma. It's pretty easy to measure whether they're continuing to be a great flight coordinator through surveys and client interaction. Ninety-nine percent of the job is over the phone and the Internet anyway. Why do I need them sitting in an office so that I can walk out and look over their shoulder? The results speak for themselves.

You call the Solairus decentralized management model unique. Why haven't other companies adopted such precepts?

I think on a philosophical level that's a very difficult thing for people in aviation to do, because it's such a command and control business, and the industry is so heavily regulated and there are so many rules around how we do things.

The notion of letting go on the people side and allowing them to thrive and do what they feel is right in a certain set of circumstances is hard.

What lessons from your Schellville days stick with you?

In addition to learning the airplane side of it, I learned the money side of the business. [Solairus president] John King likes to say there are people who sign the front of checks, and people who sign the back of checks, and you learn business and being an entrepreneur by signing the front of checks. You're only an entrepreneur if you almost didn't make payroll.

Secondly, at a very early age I realized that while the airplanes are really cool, the real passion here is the people that make this business up. It's at my very core level, my DNA. I love airplane people, and I'm an airplane person. I'm just drawn to that, so that's why I'm here.

Has your business philosophy changed during your career?

None of what has happened [to me] in a little over 20 years in the aviation business has been part of a grand plan. It's all just been a passion pursuit. [But now] we've got several hundred people, and while at a gut level I'm [still] running my little aviation business and enjoying it in a passion pursuit, one wrong turn could have a very big impact on a lot of people's lives, and I take that very seriously. That's a maturing process. That is good.

BJT

James Wynbrandt (jwynbrandt@bjtonline.com) is a private pilot and longtime BJT contributor.

RÉSUMÉ:

- NAME: Dan Drohan
BORN: April 26, 1972, Marin County, California
POSITION: Chairman and CEO, Solairus Aviation (2009-)
PREVIOUS POSITION: Vice president, JetDirect Aviation (2007-08), president and CEO, Sunset Aviation (1992-2007)
EDUCATION: University of New Mexico (one semester)
TRANSPORTATION: King Air 350
PERSONAL: Met wife Cybelle when she was taking flying lessons. Three sons: Danny, 15; Nathan, 13; Jimmy, 10. Hobbies include running, cycling, "and pretty much anything having to do with airplanes."



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USED AIRCRAFT  
REVIEW



CESSNA  
*Citation* VII



It's not No. 1 in its class by any measure, but that doesn't mean it isn't a solid performer—and an excellent value.

*by Mark Huber*

Virtually every category of aircraft has an entrant that does nothing particularly well. It's not a worst in class, it's not a best in class. It's just...OK. And so it is with the Cessna Citation VII. Produced starting in 1991—largely in response to complaints from Citation III owners who wanted this or that fixed or improved—the VII lacks the durability of a Hawker 800XP and the stylishness and economy of a Learjet 60. You do get more speed (460 knots) and baggage room (54 cubic feet) than with the Hawker and a bigger cabin (438 cubic feet) than the Learjet offers, but you also get less range than either of those competitors delivers.

Perhaps partly for that reason, customers yawned, and Cessna built only 113 over eight years. That compares with 277 of the Hawkers and nearly 200 of the Learjets over the same period. The aircraft valuation publication Vref gives the Hawker and Learjet “B” ratings for demand. The VII receives a “CCC.” And with good reason.

The Citation III was Cessna's 1983 answer to criticism that it built “slowtations”—jets that flew only marginally faster than turbo-props. The III featured a super-critical wing and a respectable top speed of 472 knots. Refinements of the design should have found their way onto the VII; instead, they leapt-frogged onto the Mach 0.92 Citation X, which for some time was the world's fastest bizjet. So while fractional-ownership providers discovered that their Hawkers could take a beating, Citation VIIs didn't fare as well, and the pilot-lounge snickering started about their need for frequent maintenance.

At the beginning of its production run, between 1991 and 1995, the VII was built in tandem with the lower-cost Citation VI. That bargain-basement version sold only 39 copies in four years, and production soon folded. The VII soldiered on until 2000 when Cessna replaced it with the infinitely better Citation Sovereign. The VII's chief assets were its new Garrett (now Honeywell) TFE731-4R-2S engines (4,080 pounds of thrust each), which gave it superior high/hot performance, allowing climbs to 37,000 feet in 18 minutes; the option of the ever-important externally serviceable lavatory; and trailing link landing gear to



### Cessna Citation VII compared with other aircraft

Model	First year produced	Variable cost/hour	Seats exec/max	Range (nm)	Normal cruise (kt)	Max takeoff weight (lb)
<b>Citation VII</b>	<b>1992</b>	<b>\$3,501</b>	<b>2/7</b>	<b>1,742</b>	<b>452</b>	<b>23,000</b>
Learjet 60	1993	\$2,746	2/7	2,134	465	23,500
Hawker 800XP	1984	\$3,661	2/8	2,539	449	28,000

Assumptions: Aircraft are 2000 models. Jet fuel \$6.20/gal; variable cost: fuel plus maintenance reserves; four passengers; NBAA IFR 200 nm reserve fuel; passenger weight 200 lb includes baggage; two pilots.

Cost source: Conklin & de Decker Life Cycle Cost

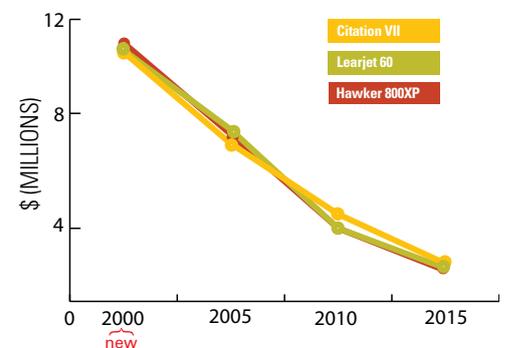
Performance source: Conklin & de Decker Aircraft Performance Comparator, Orleans, Mass.

smooth out any ham-handed landings. The VII also offered noticeably better cabin soundproofing than the Citation III.

You can accommodate eight passengers, or nine if you use the belted lav. An optional side-facing two-place divan can be installed opposite the entry door; behind it go six individual seats and then the lavatory.

The space from the entryway up through the center of the club-four grouping is serviced by a trenched center aisle that disappears into a step up over the wing box as it intrudes into the cabin to the last two individual seats and then disappears again during the step down into the lavatory. This is clearly the cabin's worst and most annoying feature. It significantly dimin-

### FAIR MARKET VALUE price comparison of competitive aircraft



Source: Vref Publications (vrefonline.com)

## Specifications & Performance

Passengers (executive)	7
Pilots	2
Range*	1,742 nm
Max Cruise Speed	452 kt
Cabin Dimensions	Height: 5.7 ft
	Width: 5.5 ft
	Length: 18.4 ft

\*IFR NBAA 200 nm reserves.

## Economics

Total variable flight cost/hour	\$3,500.86
Total fixed cost/year	\$433,236

Source: Conklin & DeDecker, Orleans, Mass.

Please see the online version of this article for detailed specifications and performance data as well as a report on all hourly and annual fixed and variable expenses.

ishes headroom and legroom for the last two single seats. Why Cessna didn't join the wing lower beneath the fuselage into an aerodynamic fairing escapes me—especially when you consider that the company was already doing this at the time on the Citation X and had plans to do it on the Citation Sovereign.

As is, traversing the center aisle at the rear of the cabin is awkward if not marginally dangerous. The inconvenience of the split aisle is mitigated on this and other Cessna designs of the era by the fact that most of the airplanes fly with some empty seats. On the VII, payload with full fuel is 1,620 pounds—basically the flight crew and four heavily packed passengers.

The VII, like most Cessnas of the era, came with lots of a la carte options. One you want to make sure you have is the auxiliary power unit or APU, good for heating or cooling the cabin with the engines off. Replacing the forward two-place divan with a closet can add 20 cubic feet of baggage space inside the cabin.

A good maintenance, repair, and overhaul shop can use cabin color and fabric matching

and lighting to minimize the aesthetic challenges that factory-fresh models presented. However, because of the airplane's low price point, customers are reticent to spend lavishly on refurbishment, says Duncan Aviation completion sales representative Suzanne Hawes. Citation VII owners typically shy away from big-ticket upgrades like adding closets, extending galleys, retrofitting LED lighting, or installing acoustic soundproofing blankets, Hawes notes. Rather, they focus on a traditional reraig, refoaming and recovering the seats along with replacing carpet and sidewall coverings and occasionally adding new veneer on the cabinets. One big exception is Wi-Fi, Hawes says, with several recent VII customers opting to install Gogo Biz Internet.

The VII came with a glass-panel cockpit that was considered modern for its day, a five-screen electronic-flight-information system linked to Honeywell's digital SPZ-8000 autopilot system. Cessna also offered an optional flight-management system.

Most Citation VII cockpits have been modernized over the years. Universal Avionics touts its InSight integrated flight deck for retrofit on the aircraft. The system shaves 118 pounds from legacy avionics and includes soon-to-be-mandated features such as ADS-B OUT (automatic dependent surveillance-broadcast OUT) and LPV (localizer performance with vertical guidance), which enables precision landings in low visibility.

InSight also provides electronic charts, a synthetic vision system, and an optional TAWS (terrain awareness and warning system). It's a good, cost-effective way of complying with the latest avionics mandates without breaking the bank with totally new equipment.

Reragging the interior, adding Internet, repainting, and installing the Universal system can push the cost of a refurb into the high six figures.

As you may have guessed by now, the Citation VII's failure to rank best in class means that one in good condition can be had for several hundred thousand dollars less than a comparable aircraft of a competing brand. From that standpoint, a Citation VII is a good value. **BJT**

Industry veteran **Mark Huber** (mhuber@bjtonline.com) has reviewed aircraft for **BJT** since 2005.



# When large-cabin business jets aren't large enough

Reconfigured airliner models offer abundant space, and their charter prices are surprisingly reasonable.

by James Wynbrandt

Maybe your group is too big to fit in a large-cabin business jet, or perhaps you and your travel companions simply want more space than those aircraft provide. Either way, you may be a candidate to charter a so-called bizliner—an airliner model that has been reconfigured for private use.

“I’m frankly a little surprised there’s as much demand as there is,” says Don Haloburdo of Jet Aviation, which just put an ACJ318 Airbus Corporate Jet on its charter rolls. “The customers we’ve talked to, what they like the most is the space. They want to be able to get up and move around.” Haloburdo notes that embassies and touring music groups have been among those expressing interest in the aircraft.

California’s Avjet charters out two Boeing Business Jets (VIP versions of Boeing airliners), one based in Burbank, California, and one in Miami. The U.S.-based BBJ charter operator reports growing demand for the bizliners. “Clients want the luxury of flying and sleeping comfortably on eight-plus-hour flights,” says Leslie Cheshier, Avjet’s vice president of charter sales. The B737-based BBJs seat 16 and sleep 14. Fortune 500 executives and



A BBJ bed offers homelike comfort.

movie stars on publicity tours are among major customers. Former President Bill Clinton used one on his 2009 mission to retrieve a pair of U.S. reporters who’d been seized by North Korea.

ACJs and BBJs are typically configured like business jets but feature more refined interiors, with divided cabins, a private meeting area, a stateroom, multiple lavs, and global communication systems. Usually, they seat no more than 19 passengers—the limit before more stringent commercial-carrier rules kick in for charter operations.

That’s not much more seating than a large-cabin business jet offers, but as Haloburdo notes, “We don’t see [Bombardier] Global 6000s or [Gulfstream] G650s with 10 or 15 people aboard on significant trips—typically just four or five at the upper ends.” The issue of reduced range aside, a fully occupied business jet can



You have room to move on an ACJ318.



Comlux’s B767 includes a spacious lounge.

**Comlux charters out a Boeing 767 that can carry 63 passengers and features a bedroom, office, dining room, and lounge.**

quickly begin to feel overcrowded. In contrast, “with this [Airbus Corporate Jet] aircraft, with 10 or 15 aboard, you wouldn’t feel like you were totally cramped,” says Haloburdo, who is Jet Aviation’s vice president and general manager of flight services.

If your group is so large that it won’t fit on an ACJ or BBJ, you can consider even larger jets. In fact, you might want to do so even if one of those models would suffice, argues Richard Brainard, director of maintenance, marketing, and business development at Kaiser Air in Oakland, California. “If you try to move 19 people in the [VIP] airplane,” he says, “they’re scattered all over—some sit in lounges, some in sleeping

areas. It's kind of chopped up." Instead, he suggests Kaiser Air's all-first-class B737-500, which hauled 120 to 140 passengers as an airliner and now carries up to 60, plus one flight attendant for every 10 passengers.

"It's not a BBJ," in terms of luxury quotient, admits Brainard, but he deems it "a perfect application for automaker trade groups, sports teams, and companies doing IPO road shows." The aircraft has taken groups to the World Cup soccer tournament in Brazil and carried officials of sports authorities to championship games. A media server provides on-demand video to personal devices, and a Gogo Wi-Fi system was recently installed. Kaiser Air also operates a 68-passenger 737-700 for charter, but its availability is limited as it provides twice-weekly round-trip service between California and Hawaii for a homeowners' association.

If you want both a VIP interior and a big passenger load, you can turn to Comlux the Aviation Group, which owns and operates a wide-body VIP B767 that carries up to 63 passengers. It features a bedroom, office, dining room, and lounge, in addition to first- and business-class seating areas. Based in Bahrain, the aircraft attracts clients in the Middle East and Africa, where governments charter it for official business and high-net-worth individuals turn to it for leisure travel, says Richard Gaona, president and CEO of the Zurich, Switzerland-headquartered company.

Despite all their amenities, executive-configured airliners can be relative bargains for charter customers compared with large-cabin business jets, which typically cost \$7,500 to \$9,000 per hour. Rates for Kaiser Air's 60-passenger 737 vary, but at the low end "it can be Gulfstream charter

prices," says Brainard. "If you need to fly 20 to 60 people, you won't find a more cost-efficient and nice way."

Avjet's BBJs charter for \$12,500 per hour, while Jet Aviation's ACJ318 retails at \$15,000 per hour, though the company will adjust the rate for positioning flights from its Teterboro, New Jersey base. These aircraft are available for charter worldwide, and given the interest in multiday, long-distance travel, such charges rarely affect demand. "When you're quoting out a \$2 million trip, a \$100,000 repositioning fee" is acceptable to customers, Haloburdo says.

If you really want a bargain, consider the Comlux B767. It's "less expensive per head compared with an ACJ or a BBJ," says Gaona.

Globally, the U.S. lags in offering big-jet charter way behind Asia, Europe, and the Middle East—the home base for most of

the individuals and companies that make these aircraft available. Avjet is "looking to expand our fleet" of executive-configured airliners, says Cheshier. Comlux's Gaona notes that European charter demand "is very low at the moment" due to the stalled economy, but even that company anticipates adding to its wide-body VIP charter fleet. "We plan to put in service in 2017 a Boeing 777 BBJ and an ACJ330," Gaona says.

One cautionary note, though: if you're looking for a bizliner for a trip to the U.S., keep in mind that cabotage rules prohibit non-U.S.-registered charter aircraft from flying within the U.S., once you get there. **BJT**

**James Wynbrandt** (jwynbrandt@bjtonline.com), a private pilot, is a regular **BJT** contributor who has written for the *New York Times*, *Forbes*, and *Barron's*.

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# Learning from a preventable accident

A 2014 business jet crash raises disturbing questions about pilot procedures and underscores the need for changes.

by John Goglia

**O**n May 31, 2014, a Gulfstream IV crashed after an aborted takeoff at Hanscom Field in Bedford, Massachusetts. It overran the runway, hitting approach lights and an antenna before stopping in a ravine outside the airport's perimeter. A post-impact fire killed all seven people on board: the two pilots, a flight attendant, and four passengers. A National Transportation Safety Board report subsequently identified several probable causes for the accident and noted that one contributing factor was "the flight crew's habitual noncompliance with checklists."

This was shocking, especially since the crew was far from inexperienced. The pilot-in-command held several single- and multi-engine airplane ratings and type ratings and had 11,250 hours of flight time; and, according to the NTSB's files, he had been associated with the accident airplane's owners for about 12 years, including more than eight years in the GIV.

The 61-year-old copilot was even more experienced. Certified to fly the GII/III, JetStar, GIV, and GV, he had worked for the airplane's owners for 27 years and served as their chief pilot and director of maintenance. (According to the NTSB report, the accident crew normally flew together, trading seats between flights.)

So how does such an experienced crew habitually fail to comply with checklists? Checklists are the foundation of the standardization process that preserves safety in aviation. They are particularly critical during taxi, takeoff, and other high-stress activity when attention to detail is especially critical. It's hard to imagine that a crew this senior was unaware of this. And yet the NTSB determined that at the beginning of the accident flight, they failed to discuss checklists

and to perform a flight control check. The Board further concluded that the crew had failed to perform complete flight control checks on almost all of their last 175 flights.

According to the NTSB: "The flight crewmembers' total lack of discussion of checklists during the accident flight and the routine omission of complete flight control checks before 98 percent of their last 175 flights indicate that the flight crew did not routinely use the normal checklists or the optimal challenge-verification-response format."

It seems that not only could this accident have been prevented by use of a routine checklist but that the crew likely never used checklists. I can't imagine how heartbreaking that news must have been for the families and friends of the victims. Or what a sense of betrayal the aircraft owner's family must feel for the dereliction of duty of their long-time crew.

Having read about the NTSB report, some aircraft owners undoubtedly now wonder whether they and their families are vulnerable to pilots who don't perform their jobs properly, especially when it comes to critical items such as checking the flight controls. I know you can't cite one accident to generalize about the professionalism of thousands of corporate pilots. But that's not what aircraft owners want to hear when they entrust their lives and the lives of their families and friends to these pilots. They want to know how they can be assured that their pilots are complying with industry best practices when it comes to checklists in general and, crucially, pre-takeoff control checks.

The NTSB makes two recommendations regarding flight control checks.

First, it recommends that the International Business Aviation Council "amend International Standard for Business Aircraft Operations auditing standards to include verifying that operators are complying with best practices for checklist execution, including the use of the challenge-verification-response format whenever possible."

And to the National Business Aviation Association, it recommends: "Work with existing business aviation flight operational quality assurance groups, such as the Corporate Flight Operational Quality Assurance Centerline Steering Committee, to analyze existing data for non-compliance with manufacturer-required routine flight control checks before takeoff and provide the results of this analysis to your members as part of your data-driven safety agenda for business aviation."

These are excellent suggestions, but I would make one more: install video cameras in the cockpits of corporate aircraft that can be regularly reviewed to ensure that crews are complying with safety protocols, including checklists and flight control checks. While video cameras in the cockpits of airliners have been controversial with pilot unions, the NTSB has recommended their installation to aid in accident investigations. The same union issues do not apply to most corporate operations, and video cameras are probably the most cost-effective way of assuring owners that their pilots are conforming to professional standards. **EJT**



**John Goglia** (jgoglia@bjtonline.com), who has worked in the aviation industry for more than 40 years, served on the National Transportation Safety Board from 1995 to 2004. He contributes regularly to **BJT** sister publication *Aviation International News*.



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# Trouble... or just a bump in the road?



MARK WAGNER

For the first time in half a decade, sales decline and inventory climbs.

by James Wynbrandt

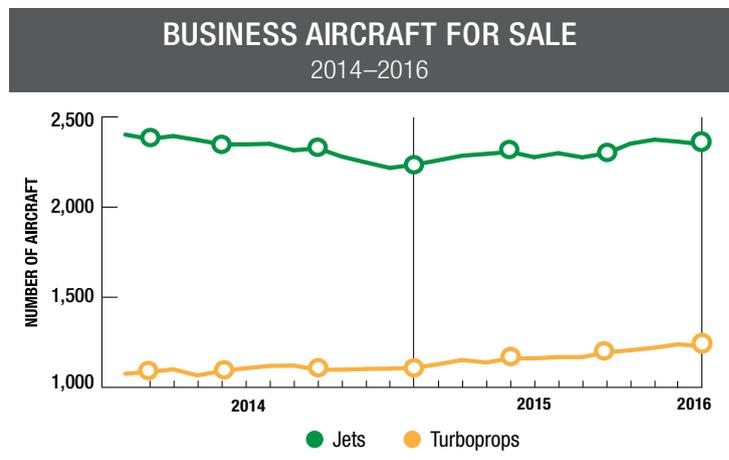
After five years of slow growth, preowned-market sales volume headed into negative territory last year. Aviation data service JetNet reports fewer retail transactions were conducted in 2015 than in 2014, the first such decrease since 2009. Last year, 2,458 preowned business jets were sold, says JetNet, versus 2,569 in 2014—a 4.3 percent decline. Only the large-cabin category saw an increase in transactions (5.6 percent, from 770 units to 813). Activity dropped the most for light jets (11.5 percent, from 969 to 858 transactions), while turbine helicopter sales dipped 1.9 percent, from 1,434 to 1,295. Data from market service Vref indicates the same trends, according to publisher Fletcher Aldredge.

In another sign of market slack, the percentage of the fleet for sale rose last year for the first time since 2009 (when the number peaked at 16.3 percent), rising to 11.5 percent from 11 percent in 2014.

Tempering the reversal, notes JetNet, the shrinking inventory of the previous five years reflects not just preowned-transaction activity, but also growing fleet size, with some 600 to 700 units added annually, while only about 200 airframes per year have been retired during the period.

If you're looking for any sign of market resilience, you might note that business jets spent an average of 44 fewer days on the market (313) last year than they did in 2014, while the average asking price rose 11.6 percent. But the average preowned aircraft sold was newer last year than in 2014, which likely accounts for the asking price increase, according to JetNet.

For now, micro trends continue to drive transactions. As the U.S. market for large-cabin jets strengthened over the past year, for example, "there was less emphasis on a forward-galley requirement, which is more popular with overseas prospects," according



Source: JetNet LLC (JetNet.com)

to Andrew Bradley, president of Global Sales at Avjet.

Meanwhile, Rich Newton of Cleveland's Axiom Aviation advises sellers to have their engines in a maintenance program. "I've seen several sellers pay the big bucks to enroll the engines prior to selling the airplane, recognizing that with the competition out there it would otherwise be a very difficult sale," says Nelson, who is an accredited appraiser.

If you're on the buy side in this market, "you really need to define your mission profile, near term as well as long term, and buy as much technology as you can," says Dennis Rousseau, president of market data provider AircraftPost.

JetNet believes 3 percent global growth is needed for business aviation—and preowned transaction activity—to thrive and concludes that this benchmark "may not be on the horizon in 2016." **EJT**

**James Wynbrandt** (jwynbrandt@bjtonline.com) is a private pilot and longtime **BJT** contributor.

## SOME POPULAR PREOWNED MODELS 2014-2016

	CESSNA CITATION CJ3	CHALLENGER 604	CITATION SOVEREIGN	EMBRAER LEGACY 650	PHENOM 300	FALCON 7X	BOMBARDIER GLOBAL EXPRESS	GULFSTREAM GIV-SP	HAWKER 900XP	LEARJET 60XR
No. in Operation	413	363	348	86	318	248	148	303	183	113
No. for Sale	37	40	26	12	19	21	15	31	24	11
Avg. Price 2014 (millions)	\$4,604	\$9,039	\$8,578	\$23,000	\$8,500	\$38,500	\$19,264	\$8,277	\$8,383	\$6,011
Avg. Price 2015 (millions)	\$4,859	\$7,622	\$7,878	\$23,330	\$7,569	\$35,400	\$14,220	\$7,897	\$6,373	\$5,438
Avg. Price 2016 (millions)	\$4,812	\$6,572	\$7,660	\$20,538	\$8,398	\$30,248	\$14,679	\$6,020	\$5,744	\$3,998

Note: Prices as of January in each year. Source: JetNet LLC (JetNet.com)



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# Which cabin upgrades pay off?

Making improvements to your aircraft can enhance your ride, help attract charter business, and increase resale value. Read this, though, before you proceed.

by R. Randall Padfield

**L**ike automobiles, business aircraft usually depreciate. But like high-end homes, they often gain value when owners make improvements.

Some upgrades pay off better than others, however, and some don't pay off at all. So, **BJT** decided to find out which cabin improvements not only provide a better experience for the current owner but also help make a business aircraft more attractive for charter and increase its resale value. What we learned might surprise you.

Doing "a complete refurbishment of a business jet to prepare it for resale is not worth it these days, because the prices of preowned jets are decreasing," says Josh Mesinger, vice president of Colorado-based Mesinger Jet Sales. Instead, "Owners should consider doing extensive refurbs while they still want to use the older aircraft, so they can enjoy the new interior."

However, partial, or cosmetic, refurbs can make sense when you're preparing to put an aircraft on the market. "If the carpeting is really bad or the wood finish is milky white, refurbishing these will help [you sell the airplane]," says Mesinger, "but don't expect to get back the money that you put into this work."

James Hagerty, an aircraft broker in Georgia, agrees. "We call it 'putting lipstick on the pig'—light cosmetics, new carpet, chairs, headliners, front-to-back stuff," he says.

Randy Groom, president of Florida-based Groom Aviation, concurs, too. "If I were an owner, I'd get my airplane ready for sale," he says. "It's like a house. If it needs new carpeting and paint [before a sale], you do it."



**W**hat about more expensive upgrades, such as a cabin-management system (CMS) and in-flight entertainment (IFE)? "We're not seeing buyers in the residual market giving a lot of credit for these, so it's better to let the end users figure out what they want to do," comments Hagerty.

"For example," he says, "upgrading a CMS on a 2000 Gulfstream GIV-SP, which is worth \$7 million to \$8 million, will cost about 10 percent of the jet's value. A new system will help it sell faster but won't separate it totally from the rest of the pack. In my view, you should install a new IFE or CMS only if you plan to keep the airplane five to 10 years."

Prior to a sale, cosmetic changes make more sense than extensive refurbishment, agrees Lissa Zimmerman of Arkansas-based Galley Support Innovations. "Interior styles seem to be changing more rapidly than in the past," she notes, and it's next to impossible to know what future aircraft buyers will desire. Zimmerman says that before undertaking a refurbishment, owners need to consider how long they plan to keep the airplane, because what's in fashion today probably won't be in just a few years.

Moreover, owners often want their airplanes to reflect their tastes and personalities, so even if you sold tomorrow, the buyer might well want to rip out everything. On

the other hand, if the interior is in bad shape, prospective purchasers might not consider the airplane at all. "If the owner wants or needs to sell quickly," says Mesinger, "then a decent interior, even if somewhat dated, has a better chance of getting buyers' attention than one that's in bad shape."

Before undertaking any upgrade, ask yourself whether it really makes the airplane more valuable to buyers. "For example, if you reconfigure from a forward- to an aft-galley cabin, the airplane is still competing with ones of the same model year that had an aft galley to begin with," says aircraft broker Robert Rabbitt, Jr., a managing partner at Avpro in Maryland. "You really have not added much value."

"We've seen Gulfstream GIVs and Vs reconfigured with G450 and 550 interiors, and they're beautiful," Rabbitt adds. "But when you go to resell them, they're still GIVs and GVs."

On the other hand, Rabbitt says, "If you put a million dollars into installing NextGen avionics and Internet connectivity, refurbishing the interior, and doing new exterior paint on a \$20 million airplane, that million is likely to be recouped. Why? Because if you are trying to sell a similar airplane with none of these upgrades, buyers are likely to discount it by an appropriate amount, because they would have to do these upgrades themselves. Another consideration is



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the downtime needed to do this work, which could lead buyers to airplanes that already have these upgrades.”

Consideration of downtime also applies to the current owner, especially those that regularly depend on travel by business aviation. How much will it cost to lease or charter another airplane during the downtime required for the reconfiguration? “We’ve seen some cabin reconfigurations in the \$5 million to \$6 million range put the airplane down for six months,” Rabbitt says.

**F**inally, there’s the intangible side of costly refurbishes and reconfigurations. “If the principal really wants to do it, then do it,” Rabbitt suggests. “It’s like when you want a new kitchen, you spend more than you’ll ever get back when you sell the house. Why? Because, well, you get to do this only once. It’s not that people shouldn’t put so much money into their older airplanes, but they should understand that certain things are not likely to get a payback when they sell it.”

Lower-cost cabin items can help an airplane sell, albeit not necessarily for more money. “Having 110-volt power outlets to recharge devices is a huge plus now, not just for owners and charter customers, but also flight crews,” says Matthew Sorace, charter coordinator at Cutter Aviation in Phoenix. “More aircraft are coming out of the factory with outlets, so it’s now pretty much a must-have.”

New seat covers and carpet are an easy way to update an interior, and this may require just a few days of downtime, Sorace says. “We replace our carpeting about every four to five years, figuring about 200 hours [of flight time] a year,” he comments. “When you walk in the cabin, you see the carpeting in the entryway and a seat nearby, so if they are in bad condition, it will draw your eye to it and you’ll start noticing it throughout the airplane.”

Woodwork, doors, and galleys usually need to be pulled out to be refurbished, so that keeps the aircraft grounded longer. “In smaller business jets and turboprops, which don’t use a flight attendant, customers need to get drinks, snacks, and other things themselves,” Sorace says, “so you’ll see some areas that get scratched or damaged. So refinishing or replacing the woodwork can be a good idea.”

Interestingly, Sorace feels that galley features in smaller aircraft are less important for resale than the lavatory. “Most of our aircraft have a refrigerator and coffeemaker, and our passengers

don’t expect much more,” he says, but “a lavatory with a sink and hard door, rather than a curtain, can make a big difference.” The majority of Cutter’s aircraft have an Airshow system, he adds, which most passengers like.

Patti Squire, owner of Pennsylvania-based LR Services, says that “as long as the cabin is clean and looks fairly new,” her charter customers are happy. Squire, who charters a Learjet 28, 31, 35, and 55, replaces their carpets about every two years. She says that the airplanes’ owners aren’t interested in renewing their interiors to give them a more modern look.

**B**usiness jet owners and passengers today want their smartphones, tablets, and laptops to have the same connectivity in flight as they have on the ground. And they want this connectivity

airplane that doesn’t have [connectivity], it’s going to be a disability when you want to sell it.”

Many business airplane owners might find that the connectivity they want is constrained by the size of their aircraft (not enough room for equipment inside and antennas outside), the cost of the equipment, its installation and upkeep, and the subscription fees charged by the providers.

“The most important thing to the user is a consistent Internet signal,” says Innotech-Execaire director of sales and marketing Tony Rawlinson. “We have customers who want it all and want it all the time, but they need to understand the constraints of the various systems. How many systems can we install within the constraints of the aircraft? How many antennas can we put in the radome on the tail? Can we put antennas on the fuselage?”



for both passengers and pilots, all of whom may be using multiple devices. Unfortunately, achieving this level of connectivity worldwide from sea level to 50,000 feet at speeds approaching Mach 1 is a highly technical and expensive nut to crack.

“Five years or so ago, maybe 20 percent of airplanes had some form of high-speed data, says Rabbitt of Avpro. “I think today, whether it is for your own needs or for charter, connectivity is an absolute requirement. If you step on Southwest for \$99 and have connectivity, you’ll certainly expect a private or charter aircraft to have some sort of connectivity, too.”

“Internet is becoming a must-have,” agrees Hagerty of Hagerty Jet Group. “And it’s surprising that so many late-vintage airplanes on the market still don’t have it.”

Groom concurs, saying, “If you have an

Innotech-Execaire has installed multiple connectivity systems into aircraft to accommodate worldwide coverage as much as possible, using the air-to-ground-based Gogo Business Aviation system, a Ku-band satellite system, and DirectTV. But even satellites cannot provide desired connectivity all the time. “If you fly into an area where there are ships and yachts also drawing from a Ku-band signal,” Rawlinson explained, “then you are competing for that connectivity. If you have two or three passengers on your airplane and then bring in 12 more and they all open their phones and iPads, then that aggregate gets challenged. This is not something that customers think about at first. So the industry has to educate the client, which can be a difficulty for the charter operator.”

“Gogo Biz is the most popular for domestic [U.S.] operators,” Haggerty says. “It is inexpensive compared with the other Internet systems, which are satellite-based.” However, Gogo Biz isn’t available until the airplane is 10,000 feet above ground level and it works only over the continental U.S., part of Alaska and southern Canada, and a thin strip of the Canadian west coast. To obtain Internet coverage outside these areas one needs to use satellite-based systems.

“Gulfstream’s Ku-band, Broad Band Multilink (BBML), which costs about \$800,000 per system, is very fast, has high download speeds, and can work on VPNs for corporate networks,” Haggerty says, “but it’s expensive to operate and doesn’t have global coverage, though it does cover areas outside the U.S. The Honeywell Swift Broadband system works off the Inmarsat satellites.

It’s not nearly as fast as BBML, but you do get global coverage. However, it’s also expensive to operate. Most U.S. Gulfstream operators would have an HD710 or BBML system for international use and Gogo for domestic travel.

## Before You Upgrade...

- > Decide how long you plan to keep your airplane.
- > If you hope to sell soon, talk to a few aircraft brokers or resellers about the value of doing upgrades. The work might not be worth the time and expense. If you don’t do an upgrade, at least do a cosmetic makeover of the interior and maybe the exterior.
- > If you plan to keep your airplane for five or more years, get advice from other owners and from aircraft brokers. Ask the brokers and resellers about the effects of the work on resale value.
- > If you plan to charter the airplane, ask charter/management companies for opinions about upgrades and additions you’re planning.
- > Obtain estimates and advice from several completion centers before you decide what work to have done.
- > If you have the money and really want to do a once-in-a-lifetime, cost-be-damned upgrade of your beloved jet, go for it. —R.R.P.

“Direct-TV is another option,” Haggerty notes, but adds, “In my opinion, it’s extremely expensive—\$500,000 for installation—and now the technology has changed so that people can stream TV or use Apple TV, or put a server on the airplane and download hundreds of movies. This reduces the demand from many users for live television. However, there are still customers for DirectTV, such as sports-team owners, who need to keep up on their competitors.”

While connectivity is a must for large-cabin corporate and private jets, it is becoming more important for smaller jets and turboprops, too. “Wi-Fi is huge now in private aviation and becoming a requirement,” says Sorace. “But Wi-Fi is an expensive installation, especially for an older aircraft. Gogo is the big one for our operations. The Gogo subscription is usually several thousand dollars per month just for the data, and there’s the installation, which [can run] \$50,000 to 100,000.”

**BJT**

**R. Randall Padfield** (rpadfield@bjtonline.com) retired in 2014 as editor-in-chief and chief operating officer of AIN Publications, BJT’s parent company.



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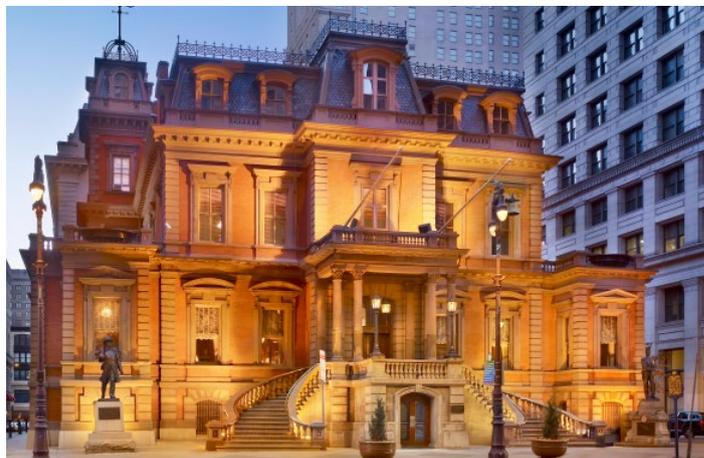
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acquires equally classic fairways.



by Bradley S. Klein

One of Philadelphia's crown jewels is sporting a new gem. Actually, an old one, since what used to be Torresdale-Frankford Country Club dates to a 1921 design by Donald Ross. Today it's part of the Union League, the prestigious downtown club founded in 1862 whose South Broad Street home offers a classic example of Second Empire architecture. Now the city's movers and shakers (and millennials) who are among its 3,500 members have a golf course of their own in the city, 13 miles to the northeast.

The city club's nationally recognized manager, Jeff McFadden, was a driving force behind the acquisition of the golf facility two years ago.



That's when Torresdale-Frankford was in a state of decline in terms of both membership rolls and course presentation. Since then, the golf course has experienced a turnaround, thanks in part to course-restoration architect Stephen Kay, who oversaw a rebuild of the layout's bunkers, greens, fairways, and tees—as well as a dramatic expansion of its practice range.

The result is a retrofitting that has brought back the ground game, fun, and variety of Ross's design, while adapting it to modern conditions of greenkeeping. The par-70 layout has markers from 4,895 yards up to 6,609 yards and a surprising amount of roll and elevation change, so that every shot commands your attention. The place is now a joy to play.

And it's not just the golf course that got upgraded: so did the clubhouse as well as the pool area and tennis facility. Members of the Union League and their guests who thought they were already spoiled by its amenities (including a dedicated cigar bar) now have even more reason to feel indulged. **BJT**

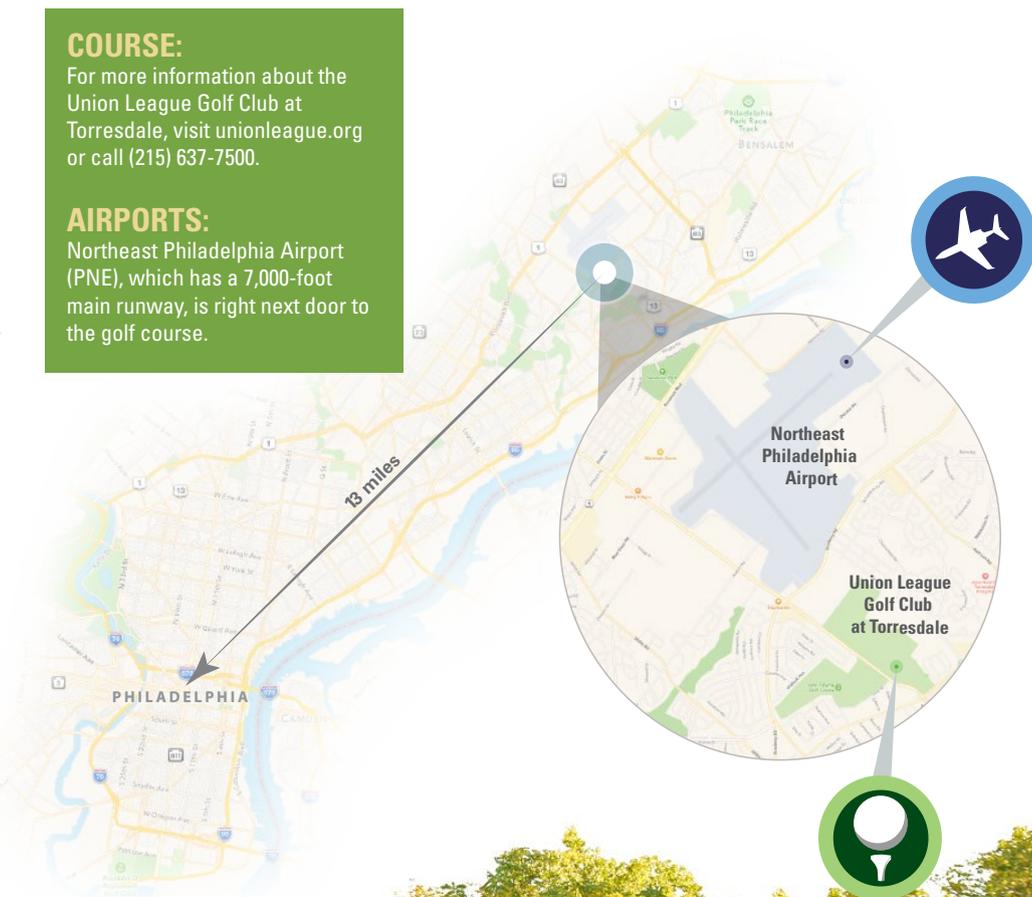
**Bradley S. Klein** (bklein@bjtonline.com) is the architecture editor of *Golfweek*. His latest book is *Wide Open Fairways*.

### COURSE:

For more information about the Union League Golf Club at Torresdale, visit [unionleague.org](http://unionleague.org) or call (215) 637-7500.

### AIRPORTS:

Northeast Philadelphia Airport (PNE), which has a 7,000-foot main runway, is right next door to the golf course.





# Dreams for Rent

Why stay in a hotel when you can vacation in opulent private homes and estates that come complete with everything from Ferraris and personal chefs to private beaches and polo fields?

by Gemma Z. Price

**T**he advantage of renting a private vacation property rather than a hotel room or suite are obvious: a luxury home can offer all of the comforts you could want, plus more privacy than hotels and resorts provide.

Whatever your dream vacation-home experience, you can probably find it among currently available rentals. How about a gorgeous 17th century apartment in Paris? A 30-bedroom estate, with horse stables, a polo field, and a private beach? The home of a world-famous designer or movie director? If you've got the money, luxury rental companies have the listing.

Many of these companies provide à la carte amenities that go beyond what hotels offer. A 24-hour emergency hotline and concierge service are usually standard; a Michelin-starred chef, art tours within the private mansions of aristocratic Venetian families, or a Ferrari to explore

the countryside might all be a phone call away.

Convenient payment systems mean that booking your dream digs can take mere minutes. But when you're putting down anything from a few grand to \$150,000 to secure a property, how do you know that it will deliver on promises made in the listing? How do you know your money will be secure? Ultimately, whom can you trust?

Here are some tips.

**R**egardless of whether you book directly with a homeowner or with a property management company, travel agent, or marketplace, it's important to ascertain how involved—or not—that individual or business is in assessing and managing its listings.

While companies such as Airbnb let users set up an account and list a property in about half an hour, marketplaces at higher price points tend

to apply a more rigorous vetting process. Some represent a small selection of listings that they have personally inspected. Many rely on partners to check properties before adding them to the portfolio. You should find out how any property you're considering has been vetted.

HomeAway's Luxury Rentals, which offers about 8,500 estates, homes, and apartments starting at \$5,000 per week, does not visit them but does apply a multipoint checklist; it then keeps tabs on the properties and rental experience through reviews. While chief revenue officer Jon Gray won't divulge details regarding the criteria applied—companies tend to be tight-lipped on this subject for competitive reasons—he says that

Want to rent out your own luxury vacation or primary home? See *Money Matters* on page 14.

an algorithm screens all HomeAway properties for “luxury” attributes such as outdoor features, entertainment options, and local attractions; then a staffer examines the listings flagged. Of the million properties HomeAway offers, only 1 percent make the Luxury Rentals grade.

Luxury Retreats, meanwhile, handpicked and inspected its portfolio of 3,000 properties in 95 destinations to ensure they’re up to par. “Photos can undersell or oversell a property,” says CEO Joe Poulin. “Having a personal vetting process helps ensure that the overall picture is accurate.”

Luxury Retreats’ 100-point checklist for inspectors covers things you won’t see on photos, such as checking the approach to a home and the state of neighbors’ properties, as well as that the air conditioning and hot tub work well.

Villa Europe managing principal Jeff Cappellieri has visited almost all of the 125 villas the company represents and knows each of the property owners. “When people are spending \$6,000 to \$35,000 a week, there are certain expectations,” he says. “Recently I had to let [a property representative] know that the first property he showed me did not meet my standards. It lacked a sense of arrival, and the linens and kitchen were not of a certain standard.”

Once you’re comfortable that the property won’t disappoint, find out what special services might be available. Often, they’re significant. “What has surprised me is the level of involvement of owner and property managers,” Cappellieri says. “Generally the owner is on the estate or minutes from the property. If you want some really nice olive oil or to tour a winery, they’ll send an email or make a phone call.”

Guest Apartment Services, which represents high-end Paris properties, also promises personalized service. “We can welcome [guests] at the airport with a driver, offer concierge services, make restaurant reservations, and get tickets for events,” says marketing manager Margaux Gerbert

**A**fter you’ve checked that the rental agreement is thorough, deciding whether to go ahead with a booking becomes more about your level of comfort than anything else. While local laws may require that property owners have certain licenses and insurance, tour operators, travel agents, and listings companies aren’t obliged to

ensure that those owners adhere to the laws, and can’t—or won’t—verify compliance.

But the nature of this industry and the fact that it’s easy to research companies online mean that vacation rental marketplaces won’t operate for long if they don’t have clients’ best interests at heart. Guest satisfaction generally is high—Jon Gray says that 84 percent of people booking through Luxury Retreats say that they want their next trip to be in a vacation rental—and previous renters’ comments and reviews are an invaluable resource for checking that a property is as listed and is well maintained. (Luxury Rentals permits reviews only by people who have stayed at a property; Villa Europe will connect you with previous guests so that they can personally tell you about their experiences.)

**Once you’re comfortable that the property won’t disappoint, find out what special services might be available. Often, they’re significant.**

Besides paying attention to reviews, it’s wise to look for endorsements by companies and media such as *Forbes*, *Conde Nast*, and *Deloitte*, which regularly rank the best travel companies under various categories.

“We’re recognized by Virtuoso [a luxury travel network]. It’s hard to be a Virtuoso preferred partner for 15 years if you’re not reputable,” says Steve Lassman, a vice president at Villas of Distinction, which lists over 2,000 properties in more than 50 locations.

At a minimum, every company should offer protection for your money, guaranteeing security of your financial details and guarding against fraud. Many marketplace websites have an online transaction portal that allows you to securely pay deposits and balances, which can be reversed, if necessary. Credit card companies offer additional protections.

“If you hear the words Western Union, run,” advises Joe Poulin. “If you see a big price discrepancy [on two websites] for the same property, [one is] either outdated or it’s fraud.”

While rental agreements usually won’t spell out the company’s policy if things take a turn for the unexpected, you can mitigate any nasty surprises by talking through any concerns before you book your stay. Find out, for example, what the company would do if the property owner cancelled your booking at the last minute, leaving you stuck with airplane tickets and nowhere to stay.

Problems sometimes arise because renters have needs that the listing information doesn’t cover and that weren’t addressed before they took the keys. If you require a fenced pool or if being within walking distance of a beach is a priority, you can direct an inquiry to the company rather than booking blind through its website. Most can answer your questions about a property and, if necessary, propose places that might be a better fit.

**M**arketplaces, property companies, and homeowners are usually open about their fee structures. Generally, you can expect to put 30 percent down at the time of booking and then pay the balance 10 weeks before arrival. Some marketplaces charge property owners a subscription fee and/or a commission of 10 to 30 percent of the rental price. Homeowners usually stipulate security-deposits requirements, which can vary enormously, anywhere from nothing to \$20,000.

You should have good travel insurance, perhaps beyond what your credit card covers or what you’d have for a resort or package vacation. You need protection in case you or the property owner cancels the booking or a homeowner alleges that you’ve damaged something and withholds some or all of your security deposit. If you feel a property is not “as described,” insurance could be the only way to recoup any financial outlay.

But don’t let these cautions stop you from renting a luxury home. As noted earlier, serious problems rarely arise, and the properties and amenities can be spectacular. Chances are, your vacation will be, too. **EJTB**

**Gemma Z. Price** (gprice@bjtonline.com) is a freelance writer based in San Francisco and Vietnam.

# HAVANA





Travel to this fascinating city has become easier for Americans since the U.S. and Cuban governments restored diplomatic relations last year.

by Mary Ann DeSantis

ALL PHOTOS IN ARTICLE FOTOLIA EXCEPT WHERE INDICATED



ften described as the most precious jewel in the Greater Antilles, Cuba has an allure that is hard to resist. For many, the island is “forbidden fruit” because most Americans couldn’t enter the country legally after the U.S. broke diplomatic relations and closed its embassy in 1961. For others, stepping back in time to a place where vintage cars dominate the roads and Internet access is limited sounds like a dream vacation. For me, traveling to Cuba meant a chance to meet the people and hear in their own words how they feel about their neighbors to the north.

“You are American?” an elderly man asked me as I took a photo of his shiny 1957 Chevrolet Bel Air on my second morning in Havana, the capital city of 2.2 million people. The moment I answered “yes,” he grasped me in a bear hug and sincerely said, “Welcome to Cuba. We are so glad you are here.”

While Cubans are ready for more Yanks to experience their country firsthand, their government is still debating travel rules with the U.S. Getting to Havana isn’t as easy as just hopping on an airplane—at least not yet. General tourism, as of press time, remains prohibited. Many U.S. citizens visit on people-to-people educational programs, which require contact with Cubans and an itinerary based on a particular area of interest. (See “Traveler Fast Facts” on page 57.)

Those who do manage to enter the country will find much to see and do. Start with a ride along the picturesque Malecón Boulevard in a flashy, old American car. Known as “tanks,” these autos line the streets, and you’ll see many of them waiting as taxis for tourists outside the José Martí Airport. When I was in Havana, the

cost of a city tour in a vintage car was about \$35 an hour but the price has since increased to \$50. It’s worth it—if only to hear the drivers’ invariably colorful stories.

As we passed Havana landmarks in a 1950 cherry-red convertible Chevy, driver Carlos Alberto told me he had inherited the car from his grandfather, who had bought it before the 1959 Cuban Revolution. Owners like Alberto must be ingenious to keep the old cars running, because the U.S. embargo on exports to Cuba prohibits parts from being shipped there. If they can afford it, Cubans buy parts and paints from Mexico or Canada, and cars are often jerry-rigged with pieces from non-American cars.

Carlos Alberto, the driver hired by author DeSantis, inherited his 1950 Chevrolet convertible from his grandfather.



MARY ANNI DESANTIS

# HAVANA

About a decade ago, Europeans—who can travel freely to Cuba—were buying the vintage autos. Fidel Castro put a stop to it because even he recognized how iconic the cars are to Cuban culture. Today, a reported 60,000 pre-revolutionary cars are still on Cuban roads.

The Spaniards founded Havana in 1515 to be the “strongbox” for the gold they accumulated in the New World, and it was the principal port for Spain’s New World. The city was designed following the Spanish “Law of the Indies,” which required a central plaza surrounded by public buildings with portals to shade inhabitants from the hot Caribbean sun.

Today, the Spanish Colonial buildings survive alongside architectural influences from Great Britain, France, and Italy, all of which played a role in Cuban history. The people of Havana take pride in the exquisite architecture, which is a reminder that the nation once had considerable wealth. Unfortunately, that wealth evaporated after Castro’s revolution and many buildings fell into disrepair. Today, this “pearl of the Antilles”



MARY ANN DESANTIS

## About Travel Restrictions

Visitors from many parts of the world have long been able to travel freely to Cuba, but visiting from the U.S. has been difficult until recently. In December, the U.S. and Cuba agreed to restore commercial flights between the two countries, and several U.S. airlines immediately announced plans to request approval to begin flying the route. American Airlines, which has operated charter flights to Cuba since 1991, hopes to introduce commercial flights as soon as possible. Jet Blue, which operates charter flights through ABC Charters, also plans commercial service.

The number of U.S. business aviation charter operators with approval to fly to Cuba continues to grow. Among those to receive FAA authorization to fly to Cuba are New York-based ExcelAire and California-based JetSuite. The former, which completed its first flight to Havana last December, offers departures from 19 U.S. cities. The latter provides flights on Citation CJ3s and Embraer Phenom 100s from seven Florida locations as well as New York, Chicago, and seven other U.S. cities.

In addition to carrying a passport and a Cuban visa (referred to as a tourist card), Americans must travel with a general license from the U.S. Department of Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), which offers 12 categories of authorized travel to Cuba, including family visits, humanitarian projects, and educational activities.

Many U.S. visitors arrive via people-to-people exchange programs, one of the permitted educational activities. OFAC rules require that these programs include a full itinerary of activities such as visiting schools and talking to teachers, meeting with tobacco farmers, or visiting a Cuban culinary institute. Many university alumni groups, museums, cruise lines, and OFAC-licensed travel agencies hold people-to-people licenses and offer programs. The Latin American Working Group Education Fund maintains a list of organizations that coordinate licensed travel to Cuba at [lawg.org/storage/documents/people2people.pdf](http://lawg.org/storage/documents/people2people.pdf)

For up-to-date information about travel restrictions, call the U.S. Embassy’s Cuban Interests Section in Washington at (202) 797-8518 and visit [travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/country/cuba.html](http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/country/cuba.html). To determine the appropriate visa for your visit, contact the Cuban embassy in Washington, D.C. ([cubadiplomacia.cu/sicw/EN/ConsularServices.aspx](http://cubadiplomacia.cu/sicw/EN/ConsularServices.aspx)). —M.A.D.



may lack its luster, but with the help of UNESCO many of the city's historic gems are being restored and transformed into tourist-friendly destinations. Numerous major sites of interest are centered on three squares: Plaza Vieja, Plaza de Armas, and Plaza de la Catedral.

Once in complete disrepair, the Plaza Vieja (Old Square) now features restaurants, boutiques, a photography museum, and a planetarium. I particularly liked Plaza de Armas with its outdoor book market. Look closely to find a vintage copy of Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, which the Nobel Prize-winning author began writing just down the street at the Hotel Ambos Mundos. Photo opportunities abound at the Plaza de la Catedral, where locals in costumes or with gigantic cigars will pose for a tip. And don't miss the iconic, baroque-facade Catedral Colon (Columbus Cathedral), which was described by Cuban novelist Alejo Carpentier as "music turned to stone."

Havana's significant sites and cultural attractions are numerous. Having a planned itinerary—which people-to-people trips require—helps to narrow choices. For my group, the arts were the focus and allowed us to have off-the-beaten-path experiences, such as exploring "Fusterlandia," the studio of avant-garde artist José Fuster.

The Callejón de Hamel street performers in Salvador's Alley in Old Havana provided colorful and lively Afro-Cuban rhythms along with a story about the Santería gods. The Instituto Superior des Artistes, on the grounds of the former Havana Country Club,

MARY ANN DESANTIS



## Beyond Havana

Many Americans trek to San Francisco de Paula, about eight miles southeast of Havana, to see Ernest Hemingway's home, which is maintained just as he left it. Also worth a visit is Cojimar, a tiny fishing village on the Straits of Florida to the east of Havana where the Pulitzer Prize-winning writer berthed his boat. When he died in 1961, local fishermen donated their boats' brass fittings, which were melted to create a bust of the author that now looks out to sea from a columned rotunda. After viewing it, stop at La Terraza for a *Cocktel Fuentes*, a turquoise concoction honoring Gregorio Fuentes, Hemingway's skipper and the model for *The Old Man and the Sea*.

Some of Cuba's most beautiful scenery is in the Valle de Viñales, a two-hour drive from Havana to the west. The area's rich, red soil makes it Cuba's top tobacco-growing region. Just five kilometers north of Viñales is the Cuevas del Indio, a large grotto with an underground river where tour boats wind their way through a maze of limestone tunnels. —M.A.D.

MARY ANN DESANTIS



# Traveler Fast Facts

## WHAT IT IS:

Known as the "pearl of the Antilles," Cuba is the Caribbean's largest island. Only 90 miles from the U.S. mainland, it has been worlds away politically since the 1959 revolution led by Fidel Castro.

## GETTING THERE:

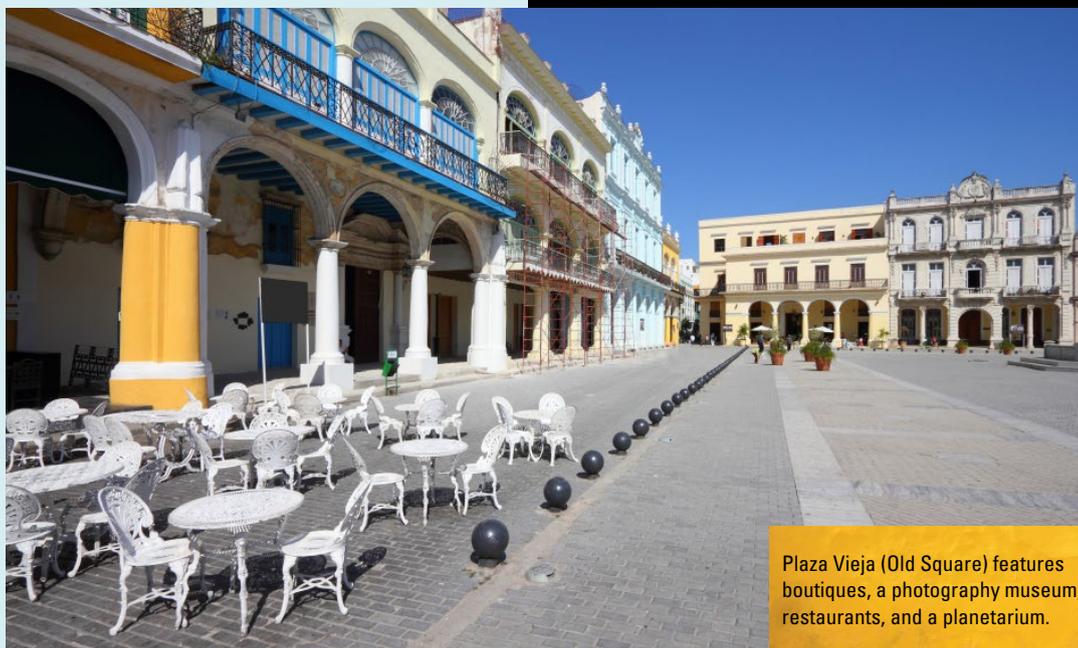
The U.S. Transportation Security Administration has authorized charter flights to and from Cuban airports in Havana, Camaguey, Cienfuegos, Holguín, Manzanillo, Santa Clara, and Santiago de Cuba.

## CURRENCY:

Cuba's currency is confusing, because there are two types—one for visitors and another for residents. Visitors must use Cuban Convertible Pesos, called CUCs. The Cuban government is reportedly working to unify its currencies. ATM cards and many credit cards don't work here although MasterCard said it would accept charges in Cuba beginning March 1. Check with your credit card company before leaving. Cash is still king, and you'd be wise to budget \$100 for each day of your visit.

## CLIMATE:

Cuba is in the tropics, so prepare for hot, moist weather, especially during July and August when temperatures can approach 100 degrees Fahrenheit. The rainy season is mid-May to November, with September and October having the highest probability of tropical storms and hurricanes. The coolest months are December, January, and February, when average highs are between 70 and 80. Winter evenings can be breezy, with temperatures in the 60s.



Plaza Vieja (Old Square) features boutiques, a photography museum, restaurants, and a planetarium.

# HAVANA

is a national school for musicians, dancers, painters, and photographers where we talked with students about their visions for Cuba's future.

To understand the importance of art in Cuban culture, visit the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes (National Museum of Fine Arts) where you'll "fill your eyes with Cuban color" as our guide Omar Diaz Linia explained. Covering five floors, the museum contains the world's largest collection of Cuban artwork, beginning with 16th and 17th century pieces.

A trip to Havana isn't complete without a visit to a cigar factory. The government-owned facilities offer strictly controlled tours, and access is impossible without a guide. No photography was allowed during my H. Upmann tour, which ended in the gift shop. Be aware that you can bring only \$100 worth of Cuban cigars back to the U.S.

Offering a cigar is a gesture of friendship. I received one from a tobacco farmer in Viñales. My husband, Tony, was shooting photos on the Malecón Boulevard when he struck up a



Above, vintage American cars are commonplace on the streets of Havana. Below left: Fusterlandia, the studio of avant-garde artist José Fuster. Below right: a street performer in Old Havana.



conversation with a young man who offered him two cigars. The man, who wouldn't accept any money in exchange, smiled broadly and, in halting English, said: "You are American. You are my friend." **BJT**

Florida-based freelancer **Mary Ann DeSantis**, who paid her own expenses for her Cuba trip, specializes in travel, food, and wine. This is her first article for **BJT**.

## Traveler Report Card

### ACCOMMODATIONS (B+):

Most Havana hotels are clean and many have ornate lobbies. Though many are working to upgrade accommodations, however, rooms are usually small and can look threadbare by U.S. standards.

Built in 1930, the landmark **Hotel Nacional de Cuba (A-)** towers above the Vedado District's famed Malecón thoroughfare and offers first-class restaurants.

On the pedestrian street of Calle Obispo in Old Havana, **Hotel Ambos Mundos (A-)** doubles as an Ernest Hemingway museum. Room #511 remains just as the writer left it, complete with his Nobel Prize and a copy of his bar tab. Check out the rooftop café and bar for a spectacular city view. Rooms were being updated in 2015.

The magnificent lobby in the 1908 art nouveau **Hotel Raquel (B+)** reveals poignant references to Jewish culture, including biblical-themed paintings by Cuban artists.

With its retro 1950s look, **Hotel Capri (B+)** offers a comfortable, convenient location in Havana's Vedado District. The cafeteria looks utilitarian but serves substantial, delicious breakfasts, and the rooftop swimming pool provides a great place to unwind after a day of sightseeing.

### RESTAURANTS (A+):

Cuban cuisine is a delightful surprise, especially at the family-owned paladars. Favorites include **La Casa Restaurante**, open since 1995 and one of Havana's first family-run establishments, and **La California** in the Columbus neighborhood. **Café del Oriente**, one of Havana's most elegant government-run restaurants, is in the Plaza de San Francisco near the cruise-line terminal. For the best coconut gelato in the Western Hemisphere, head to **Divino**, on the organic farm La Finca Yoandra. For fresh seafood, visit **Mediterráneo Havana**, which gets fish four times a week from its own fishing boat.

### ACTIVITIES (A+):

If you're an arts or music aficionado, look into the many international festivals that take place annually, such as the Havana Biennial, which transforms the city into the world's largest art gallery (May–June); the Havana International Book Festival (February); the International Jazz Festival (December); and the International Festival of New Latin American Cinema (December).



# Exploring Cuba's water world

by Thomas R. Pero

As soon as I slid over the side of the fiberglass flats fishing skiff into the knee-deep shallows of the Caribbean Sea, I knew I was in a special place. All around were the sights and sounds of abundant wildlife: herons and egrets hunting prey in the thin tide, rosette spoonbills kicking up a ruckus in clusters of ancient red mangroves, brown pelicans plunging into jade and turquoise channels, ospreys circling overhead and squealing against the deep-blue sky.

A pod of tailing bonefish flashing and splashing 50 feet ahead riveted my attention. These sleek, silvery game fish were tipping downward, their snouts in the

grassy marl, grubbing for shrimp and worms and little fish. I stripped off fly line from my reel and began my own stealthy stalk.

On that first trip to Cuba 16 years ago, I found myself off the island's southern coast, in the middle of the Caribbean's finest remaining original reef ecosystem, where everything felt pristine. Fly rod in hand, I waded through the limpid waters of Jardines de la Reina—a stunning saltwater Serengeti encompassing 850 square miles of coral reefs, sandy islands, and mangrove forests.

Natural, quality habitat and conservative management of spawning stocks make this destination ideal for fishing. In 1996 the Cuban government set aside Jardines de la Reina as the country's first national marine reserve. With minor exceptions, commercial fishing was eliminated. Ecotourism was introduced with a focus on low-impact diving and snorkeling, as well as light-tackle inshore fishing that emphasized live

release of valued large spawners.

The sea life responded immediately. Now, two decades later, green 100-pound turtles and 500-pound groupers—extinct or endangered in most of the Caribbean—are thriving here. Reef, lemon, black-tip, hammerhead, silky, and nurse sharks patrol the coral canyons and drop-offs, mixing with vast schools of sergeant majors, parrotfish, and other brightly colored fish.

Over the years, Cuba has added many other areas to the marine reserve program. Today more than 25 percent of the country's critical reef systems, coastal bays and beaches, and estuarine wetlands are protected. I've explored some of these marine parks and reserves, most recently as the U.S. government was in discussions leading to easing of restrictions on Americans visiting Cuba. Here are several of my favorites:

**Jardines de la Reina:** After a three-hour trip by yacht, your home for the week is a small floating hotel 60 miles off the central southern coast in the middle of a watery wilderness of endless mangrove-lined channels and flats. For explosive top-water action, try casting for barracuda among the coral heads. The fresh fish and lobster here, which are prepared with an Italian flair, are the best food I've eaten in Cuba.

**Cayo Largo:** Off the southern coast, below Havana, this island is easily accessible by small scheduled



ALL PHOTOS: THOMAS R. PERO

To get the most from your trip with a minimum of hassles, book through a travel organization that knows the best guides with boats and where to stay. Two I recommend are Yellow Dog Fly Fishing Adventures ([yellowdogflyfishing.com](http://yellowdogflyfishing.com), 888-777-5060) and Avalon Cuban Fishing Centers ([cubanfishingcenters.com](http://cubanfishingcenters.com), +54 9 261 6721577). —T.R.P.

commercial airliners. Lodging is a condo-style beach resort swarming with too many tourists for my taste, but you're driven each morning to a nearby dock and whisked away by flats skiff for your day's fishing without another soul in sight. Afterwards, you can enjoy a swim right out your door at what I think is Cuba's most spectacular beach.

**Cayo Romano:** Fly into a small modern airport called Cayo Cruz, on the central north coast, and drive an hour to an old sugar-plantation town called Brasil, where you'll stay in a charming, newly restored governor's mansion from the 1920s. You'll be driven each morning about one hour across a long coastal causeway, where your guide will meet you to fish vast flats with only one boat per 30 square miles. **BJT**



Above, a green iguana, a giant herbivorous lizard, on a wild Cuban island. Below, a trophy-sized permit caught in a lagoon on Cuba's north coast.



Regular contributor **Thomas R. Pero** ([tpero@bjtonline.com](mailto:tpero@bjtonline.com)) is publisher of Wild River Press and the author of two books about fly fishing.

# Politicians on business jets could land in hot water

Complex and sometimes inconsistent rules apply to candidates' use of your aircraft. Ignoring those rules could result in serious consequences.

by Jeff Wicand

Maybe you're an aircraft owner who'd like to offer transportation to a political candidate you support. Or perhaps you're a candidate who wants to grab a ride on a friend's business jet. Either way, you'd be well advised to do some homework first, regarding the federal and state rules that apply to such flights.

A candidate's trip on a private or corporate aircraft can constitute acceptance of illicit campaign contributions or gifts, and the fallout can be harsh, especially since non-compliance with the rules can attract the attention not only of regulators but of the media. During the months before the last U.S. presidential election,

for example, a New York Times story questioned whether Rick Perry's \$21,000 payment was sufficient for use of a Citation X belonging to a Texas businessman (described by the paper as "under investigation by federal securities regulators"). The Times obtained a \$60,000 estimate from a third-party charter operator for the same flights that Perry took, raising the issue of whether he was in effect receiving a significant unreported campaign contribution.

Since 2016 is another presidential election year, companies and politicians across the U.S. are struggling again with the complicated rules for carrying candidates for public office and their associates on private jets. The complexity begins with determining to whom the rules apply, because they variously relate to elected officials, family members, campaign staffers, reporters, security personnel, leaders of political action committees, and others. Further, the

rules vary depending on whether the aircraft is private, commercial, or government-owned. Finally, you can't pay attention to just one set of rules; there are many sets of rules, which aren't always consistent and which keep changing.

The Federal Election Act of 1971 governs what candidates for federal office must pay for private air transportation. The Act was amended by the so-called Honest Leadership and Open Government Act, which took effect in 2007, but the Federal Election Commission caused considerable confusion for candidates and aircraft owners by failing to follow up with new regulations until 2010.

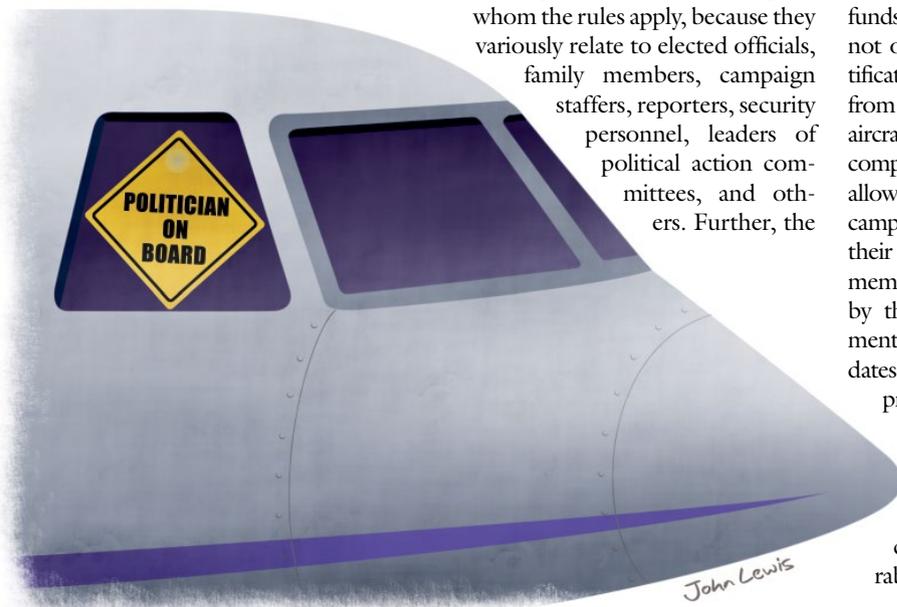
The FEC rules prohibit candidates for the U.S. House of Representatives from using campaign funds to pay for travel on aircraft not operated on a commercial certificate, which basically bars them from accepting free travel on private aircraft unless operated by a charter company. (The rules generously allow the House candidates to use campaign funds to pay for flights on their own aircraft or those of family members, as well as aircraft owned by the federal or a state government.) On the other hand, candidates for more illustrious offices—president, vice president, and senator—are simply required to reimburse the flight provider at the normal and usual charter fare (or rental charge) for the trip on comparable aircraft. Thus, the FEC no

longer allows reimbursement to be calculated based on scheduled first-class or coach service.

The FEC views all elected officials as candidates, which isn't entirely unrealistic, and requires them to file reports about air travel with the Commission within seven days after the trip. In addition, the FEC requires aircraft operators to maintain records that show what candidates they transported on what dates and between what locations. If more than one candidate is on the same flight, the rules allow for expenses to be shared pro rata.

To see how this would work, suppose Bill and Bob, two candidates for the U.S. Senate, fly in Mr. Smith's Gulfstream G450 from Teterboro, New Jersey to Chicago and back. Bill brings along two campaign officials, while Bob flies alone. Let's assume the round-trip flight time is four hours. Mr. Smith's aircraft isn't on a charter certificate, but a typical G450 charter rate at Teterboro, including the fuel surcharge, is approximately \$7,000 an hour, so Bill and Bob would have to pay \$28,000 for the trip. (If charter rates for a G450 weren't available, the candidates could look to rates for "comparable" models.) They would then share the cost in a ratio of 3:1, based on the number of passengers traveling for each campaign.

This brings us to the next layer of regulation. The IRS regards the flights as "commercial" for tax



purposes because the candidates are paying Mr. Smith, who has what the IRS calls “possession, command, and control” of the aircraft. Consequently, the candidates would also have to pay the 7.5 percent transportation excise tax, which adds \$2,132 to the cost of the trip when the \$4 segment fee is included.

Because the candidates are paying Mr. Smith, the flight is “commercial” for FAA purposes as well. But remember that Mr. Smith’s G450 isn’t on an FAA charter certificate; he is operating the aircraft under Part 91, which doesn’t generally permit payments for flights. Fortunately for Mr. Smith, the FAA recognized that federal law required candidates and campaign travelers for federal office to pay for flights on aircraft operated under Part 91, and it created a regulatory exception to permit such payments—in an amount not to exceed what the FEC requires. Note that if Mr. Smith’s aircraft were on a charter certificate, the FAA would expect him to operate (and charge for) the flights under Part 135, and FEC rules would allow candidates for the House to fly on his aircraft as well.

FAA rules also permit state and local candidates to pay for air transportation to the extent required by applicable state or local law. Reimbursement may be prohibited if the flight isn’t specifically for a campaign, such as travel by an elected official on the business of the political party, notwithstanding what ethics rules or applicable law require.

Many government agencies, including both the U.S. House and Senate, have enacted ethics rules regarding the conduct of members who pay for air travel. These rules apply only to elected officials, not to candidates who aren’t already serving. The main

questions raised by such rules are:

- Am I allowed to fly on private or non-commercial aircraft?
- If so, do the rules require that I pay for the flight?
- And if so, does the FAA permit me to make the payment?

The House rules, for example, prohibit members from using official, personal, or campaign funds to pay for use of non-commercial aircraft. An exception applies for certain flights “provided on the basis of personal friendship” when House business or campaign activity isn’t the purpose of the trip, but even then the member must in most cases get permission from the Committee on House Administration.

## In 2012, a news report questioned whether Rick Perry’s use of a Citation X represented an unreported campaign contribution.

The consequences of failing to comply with the rules for carrying elected officials and candidates vary widely. The aircraft owner can be fined by the FAA, which could also ground the aircraft. For candidates, federal and state penalties include fines (the FEC helps out with a “fine calculator” at [fec.gov](http://fec.gov)) and even imprisonment for egregious violations. For many candidates, though, the biggest penalty can be the negative publicity and the impact on their electability that can result from violations. It’s worth paying attention. **BJT**

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# TRAVELER CALENDAR



The Boston Marathon is set for April 18 and the London Marathon for April 24.

The April 7–10

## THE MASTERS GOLF TOURNAMENT

Augusta, Georgia. Golf fans unite over pimento cheese sandwiches and anxiously await the presentation of the green jacket. **Info:** masters.com

April 12–14

## ASIAN BUSINESS AVIATION CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION

Shanghai. At this major show, **BJT** will distribute our 2016 Buyers' Guide, China edition, and our company will publish the daily *ABACE Convention News*. Visit [ainonline.com](http://ainonline.com) for event coverage. **Info:** [abace.aero](http://abace.aero)

April 13–24

## TRIBECA FILM FESTIVAL

New York City. The festival has screened more than 1,400 films from about 80 countries since 2002. **Info:** [tribecafilm.com/festival](http://tribecafilm.com/festival)

April 15–24

## COACHELLA VALLEY MUSIC AND ARTS FESTIVAL

Indio, California. Popular-music event will feature Steely Dan, St. Vincent, and many other artists. **Info:** [coachella.com](http://coachella.com)

April 18

## BOSTON MARATHON

Boston. Prequalified athletes will compete in one of the premier events for runners. **Info:** [baa.org](http://baa.org)

April 22–May 1

## NEW ORLEANS JAZZ & HERITAGE FESTIVAL

New Orleans. Crafts, food, culture, and, of course, lots of jazz. **Info:** [nojazzfest.com](http://nojazzfest.com)

April 24

## VIRGIN MONEY LONDON MARATHON

London. It's too late to register online, but runners wanting to participate can still secure spots through many of the teams running for charity. **Info:** [virginmoneylondonmarathon.com](http://virginmoneylondonmarathon.com)

April 30

## WHITE HOUSE CORRESPONDENTS' DINNER

Washington, D.C. TV talk-show host Larry Wilmore is set to host this year's event. **Info:** [whca.net](http://whca.net)

May 7

## KENTUCKY DERBY

See box.

May 9

## GREATER WASHINGTON AVIATION OPEN

Leesburg, Virginia. This annual golf and tennis tournament raises money for several charities. **Info:** [gwao.org](http://gwao.org)

May 9–July 2

## AMERICAN BALLET THEATRE

Lincoln Center, New York City. The season includes *Sylvia*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, *Swan Lake*, and more. **Info:** [abt.org](http://abt.org)

May 10–15

## THE PLAYERS CHAMPIONSHIP

Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida. This annual event offers the biggest prize fund of any golf tournament. **Info:** [pgatour.com](http://pgatour.com)

May 11–22

## CANNES INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

Cannes, France. The stars come out for the most prestigious of film festivals. **Info:** [festival-cannes.com](http://festival-cannes.com)

May 16–June 5

## THE FRENCH OPEN

Paris. Also known as Roland Garros, after the famous French aviator, this is the only tennis grand-slam event played on clay courts. **Info:** [rolandgarros.com](http://rolandgarros.com)

May 21

## RUNNING OF THE PREAKNESS STAKES

Baltimore. The second leg of horseracing's Triple Crown. **Info:** [preakness.com](http://preakness.com)

May 24–26

## EUROPEAN BUSINESS AVIATION CONVENTION AND EXHIBITION

Geneva. Our sister publication, *EBACE Convention News*, and [ainonline.com](http://ainonline.com) will provide daily coverage at Europe's premier annual bizav gathering. **Info:** [ebace.aero](http://ebace.aero)

May 26–29

## MONACO FORMULA 1 GRAND PRIX

Monte Carlo, Monaco. The race, which dates back to 1929, employs a track that consists largely of curvy city streets. **Info:** [monaco-grand-prix.com](http://monaco-grand-prix.com)

May 29

## INDIANAPOLIS 500

Indianapolis. This 500-mile auto competition offers 200 laps of pure speed. **Info:** [indy500.com](http://indy500.com)

June 10–12

## CHICAGO BLUES FESTIVAL

Chicago. Three days of music, food, and people-watching in a city long known for great blues. **Info:** [cityofchicago.org](http://cityofchicago.org)

## Run for the Roses... and a Julep Jubilee

The Kentucky Derby at Churchill Downs Race-track in Louisville is part one of horseracing's Triple Crown. (The Preakness and Belmont Stakes follow.) The race, set for May 7, is known as "the most exciting two minutes in sports"—and for the more than 100,000 mint juleps that will be served during the event. Can't attend? You can make your own perfect mint julep. Just muddle four fresh mint leaves, a teaspoon of powdered sugar, and two teaspoons of water in a highball glass or silver julep cup. Add two ounces of Kentucky bourbon, stir well, and garnish with fresh mint. **Info:** [kentuckyderby.com](http://kentuckyderby.com)

—Jennifer Leach English



COURTESY OF THE KENTUCKY DERBY

For a long-range events calendar, please visit [bjtonline.com/calendar](http://bjtonline.com/calendar).



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# Tool? or toy?

Stereotypes and misinformation persist, but companies like Taylor Guitars underscore the truth about corporate aircraft use.

by Mark Phelps

Discussing ethical use of business jets with Taylor Guitars cofounders Kurt Listug and Bob Taylor for this issue's cover story was refreshing (*see page 18*). These are guys who really get it. In fact, they get it so profoundly that they have difficulty fathoming how anyone doesn't intuitively grasp what constitutes appropriate use of a business airplane. Taylor told me that he has had people ask him for "a ride" on his company's Gulfstream G450, as if it were a speedboat. "That can be an opening for a conversation about what a business jet is," he said with a chuckle.

It's a frustrating, never-ending struggle for the business aviation industry. To an overwhelming percentage of the general population, any aircraft without an airline logo is a luxury for the pretentious elite. Passengers alighting from business jets are assumed to be thumbing their noses at the masses of shoeless zombies trudging through the airline terminal on the other side of the runway.

To counter that image, private aviation industry trade groups promote stories like that of Taylor Guitars—stories that show, for example, how private aviation enriches a small business's bottom line, enables a job-rich factory to locate in a rural area, or stimulates an untapped market. But those stories fall on mostly deaf ears, as do tales of business jet operators serving humanity with disaster-relief missions to Haiti,



Taylor Guitars' Kurt Listug with the company's productivity-enhancing Gulfstream G450.

medical flights via Corporate Angel Network, and free transportation for heroes-in-need through the Veteran's Airlift Command.

Part of the problem for the industry is that the general public associates private jet travel largely with the relatively few but often high-profile users who are simply paying for the opulent ride that they can afford. What's not well understood is that thousands of corporate aircraft serve economically justifiable business missions and that a clear dividing line exists between the privileges of a private aircraft owner and the responsibilities incumbent on an officer of a public company.

Someone who owns an airplane personally and operates it on his or her dime (OK, maybe more than a dime) is entitled to treat that airplane as private transportation. But someone who works for a corporation that owns an airplane, even the CEO, is not only beholden to stockholders to use the company asset appropriately but also has a legal responsibility to follow specific guidelines. Those rules were clarified as part of the 2002 Sarbanes-Oxley law that defines the ethics of corporate accounting.

A corporate airplane isn't meant to be a perk of the job. It exists to allow businesspeople to accomplish missions on behalf of the company that would not be possible without it. Yes, it's more convenient and pleasant to travel on a business jet than it is to ride on airliners, but that ought to allow the passengers to accomplish more—not simply to fly in greater comfort. And like Taylor Guitars' founders, the boss can encourage any employee with a legitimate reason for going along to strap in to one of the empty seats.

Business success depends largely on building relationships, and corporate aircraft can do more for person-to-person contact than just about any other asset. Whether it's visiting your top 100 distributors, as Taylor Guitars' Listug did when he first began flying privately, or spending invaluable time aloft with clients, partners, and employees, there is a human value to corporate aircraft flying that has no equivalent. **EJT**

**Mark Phelps** (mphelps@bjtonline.com) is a private pilot and a managing editor at **BJT** sister publication *Aviation International News*.

  
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