



DUNCAN TOUTS SEXYJET PAINT PROJECT

News / Business aviation



Duncan Aviation is proving here in Las Vegas that watching paint dry is anything but dull. At its display area (Booth N4910) the aviation services provider is showcasing a time-lapse video of what it calls the most complex and costly paint scheme design and application the company has ever undertaken, recently performed on a Gulfstream V.

Unique in both layout and materials, the design features stripes and hexagonal patterns that appear to change color, due to the characteristic “flip-flop” effect of the Chromalusion paint (often seen on show cars but rarely on airplanes) used on much of the fuselage. The colors gradiate through different spectrums as they wrap around the airframe and change angles from the viewer. The green background and red and silver stripes come together at the radome, where the shifting shades put on something akin to a psychedelic light show as they appear to change colors, appearing as silver, gold, blue and purple.

Duncan designers Ken Reita and Lori Bailey brought GV owner Mark Bonfigli’s vision for the design into reality. “It’s really complex, with a lot of logos and two different base colors,” Reita said. “We’ve done [paint schemes for heads of state] who wanted something to stand out; this is above all others.”

The exterior paint project was part of a two-phase refurbishment project for the Gulfstream.

“The GV has beautiful lines and proportions; it’s great for a scheme like this,” said Reita. “It’s basically like a piece of art, a showpiece. It really raises the bar on personal expression someone puts into a corporate aircraft like this.”

Not surprisingly, the owner is eager for the aircraft to be noticed. It will be operated by Metropolitan Aviation as **Sexyjet**, the name an homage cum branding tool for Sexy Beach Tennis, which makes beach tennis gear. Bonfigli and his wife, who compete on the professional beach tennis circuit, founded Sexy Beach Tennis and plan to expand the brand into other lifestyle products, including perhaps branded aircraft charters.

As an entrepreneur, Bonfigli was a frequent charter customer before buying his GV, and plans to offer a level of service and style he often found wanting on his charter flights. He feels Metropolitan Aviation, based at Virginia's Manassas Regional Airport, shares his service-centric philosophy. Metropolitan operates a Falcon 900 and Falcon 50s, Challenger 601, Hawker 800A, Citation Ultra and Eagle and a Piper Cheyenne II on its Part 135 certificate. Sexyjet became available for charter on November 1.

With the Gulfstream the ambassador for his brand, Bonfigli aims to "redefine what sexy means, not cheesy ads with scantily clad models hanging around Corvettes," but more aligned with attributes such as compassion and environmental awareness, he said.

Phase 1 of the interior upgrade included a softgoods refurbishment, and new carpets, headliners, sidewalls and window panels, along with installation of BE Aerospace multispectrum lighting. Phase 2, scheduled for next year, will include installation of new seats and cabinetry. "The interior is going to be just as innovative and bold and stylish as the exterior," Reita said. "The hexagon pattern will be carried through on the interior, such as in quilted insert areas of the seats, small accents that bring the interior and exterior together and complement each other."

The refurbishment cost "in the millions," Bonfigli said before the show. Asked if he could have achieved his success without business aviation, Bonfigli said, "I don't think I could have done it efficiently, and the business would have taken a hit with that inefficiency. It's hard to put a dollar value on the ability to avoid lost opportunity. I couldn't have accomplished it with a high-energy smile on my face and with the right attitude and right energy for us to create what we're creating. The reality is that feeling awesome when you get off a flight matters, and I've gotten off many flights where I feel the exact opposite of awesome, and made a very bad presentation. It makes a huge difference. I would never have traded one charter flight I paid for a commercial one."

Unfortunately, neither Sexyjet no Bonfigli are here for the show. They're in Aruba for the Aruba International Beach Tennis Championships, going on now.

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