

ABACE 2016 - THE ULTIMATE IN CABIN LUXURY, BEAUTY AND FUNCTIONALITY

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ABACE 2016 is an aircraft interior design aficionado's wonderland. The work of the world's leading artisans, craftsmen and interior specialists is on display in the cabins of the business jets open for inspection on the static line, while inside the exhibition pavilions, the companies that create the most refined of these interiors showcase their completion and refurbishment capabilities.

Comlux

“We invite everyone to see our aircraft on display and talk to our cabin specialists,” said Richard Gaona, founder and CEO of Zurich, Switzerland-based Comlux the Aviation Group (Booth P528), which created the interior in the new executive configured ACJ319 at the Airbus display. “It’s really an amazing cabin,” said Gaona. “It’s extremely quiet, with a 48 dB sound level. The quality is top VVIP, and it’s equipped with the latest Internet equipment.”

The ACJ’s interior design, fabrication and installation was performed at Comlux America, the company’s completion center in Indianapolis, Indiana in the U.S. Airbus is showcasing the ACJ to illustrate the interior possibilities the airframe offers. Comlux owns and operates the ACJ for its own charter business, and that experience with Airbus (and Boeing) narrow- and wide-body platforms is invaluable for its completions customers, Gaona said. “Because we operate these airplanes, we know what has to be improved, not just as a completion center, but as an operator who can share our recommendations—we know all the aspects of the business.”

The company is currently completing a BBJ for an undisclosed Chinese customer, and also performs maintenance and cabin upgrades and refreshments for regional customers. Comlux provides regional support through its Hong Kong office. “I’m a strong believer that you have to be close to the client,” said Gaona, who anticipates an uptick in regional business. “I do believe the China market is still going up, even if the economic downturn is slowing this market. It’s a good opportunity for refurbishing upgrades, and secondhand aircraft moving from one hand to another.” Comlux is seeking a Chinese partner to realize this regional potential, said Gaona. “We are open to cooperation with any big players in China.”

Jet Aviation

Jet Aviation (Booth P312) also sees growth ahead, having just signed its first contract with a regional customer for a BBJ completion, with contracts for two additional completions “imminent,” said Matthew Woollaston, v-p completions sales. “Jet Aviation is absolutely focused on growing its presence and clientele in China.

The company believes narrowbody ACJs and BBJs have a bright future in the region. “I think Chinese business will look upon those types of aircraft as a necessary tool for global business operations, and even for domestic operations, China being the size it is,” Woollaston said.

The Zurich-based full services provider has also been active in refurbishments for regional clients, recently delivering an upgraded Bombardier Global Express. The refurbishment included interior veneer, headliner, sidewalls and updated galley, complemented on the exterior by a full strip and repaint performed at Jet Aviation Singapore, the first in the region on this platform.

“Our Chinese clientele are extremely particular,” said Woollaston. “The style and level of opulence differs from one customer to next, but what’s consistent is their extremely high expectations and standards.”

To help ensure those expectations are met, the company recently introduced its JetVision app, enabling customers to “see the progress of their aircraft in real time, from the development of engineering through installation, from the comfort of their homes,” Woollaston said, noting that the app also facilitates “much quicker decisions” from customers, accelerating completions. “We think JetVision is going to revolutionize the completion process,” he said.

Also in this region, Jet Aviation Hong Kong provides maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) services, and the company will open an MRO facility in Macau this year.

Jinggong Global Jet

Jinggong Global Jet Co. (Booth P338), a charter/management joint venture between Switzerland-based Global Jet and China's Jinggong Group that was introduced at last year's ABACE, announces this year the addition of interior design services to its portfolio. Already a staple of Global Jet's offerings through sister company Pegasus Design, the same completion and refurbishment expertise will now be available to customers of Jinggong, based at Hangzhou Xiaoshan International Airport. "The design team can really help clients rethink the interior," said Héloïse Converset, sales and marketing executive. Though primarily known for executive airliner projects, the Pegasus team, with offices in London and Monaco, can work on the interior of any size of airframe, and is also noted for its exterior paint projects. At its booth here, Jinggong has iPads and large displays screens offering an extensive selection of images illustrating Jinggong's new design capabilities.

Meanwhile, Geneva, Switzerland-based Global Jet also has seven large-cabin aircraft under management in Asia, including an ACJ319, and here at the show it's displaying a Falcon 2000EX EASy, its first B- (China) registered aircraft available for charter within China. Global has a Beijing facility for its charter/management services, supported by a Hong Kong office.

Flying Colours

Flying Colours (Booth P121), the Peterborough, Ontario, Canada-based Bombardier completions and MROspecialist, just delivered the first of eight CRJ 200 conversions performed with Chinese joint venture partner Sparkle Roll Technik (SRT). The first features a 29-seat multi-class shuttle configuration while the next four aircraft will be outfitted with 15-seat VIP interiors similar to Flying Colours' Challenger 850 ExecLiner conversions, with a full, updated Rockwell Collins Venue cabin management system "custom to the aftermarket," said Eric Gillespie, Flying Colours executive v-p. Flying Colours and SRT design teams collaborated on theVIP styling.

Performed at Flying Colours' headquarters facility, the conversions are being carried out under a Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC) approval through the company's Approved Maintenance Organization designation, the first time a B- (Chinese) registered CRJ aircraft has been reconfigured outside of China and returned to service and approved for operations on the same registry.

Gillespie also noted Flying Colours' Bombardier Authorized Service Facility in Singapore, now celebrating its first anniversary, has enhanced its capabilities and is performing full refurbishments of Bombardier Global and Challenger aircraft. The core of the team of just over a dozen is comprised of local employees trained in Canada.

Since opening, the facility has worked on some 50 to 60 interiors with everything from minor repairs to full refurbishments, according to Gillespie. The facility gives operators in Asia a choice of where to go for refurbishments. "We can do a lot of interior work in Singapore, and Bombardier can do maintenance work there," said Gillespie, but the headquarters facility in Canada is also popular, "especially with the Global platform, where the [aircraft's] range makes it a sensible choice," he added. "Our message is, we're available anywhere you want."

Amac Aerospace

Amac Aerospace (Booth P640) has delivered several completions and refurbishments since the 2015 ABACEshow, and has other projects that have been started and contracted since then, also. The Basel, Switzerland-based company redelivered its first head-of-state configured B747-8i, the cabin featuring custom furniture, exotic materials, and bespoke artwork. The project gave the company “valuable insight into what is feasible,” said Bernd Schramm, Amac’s group chief operating officer. This would “pay dividends” on its next widebody project, said Schramm.

Amac also returned a BBJ3 (737-900ER) to service following a cabin interior reconfiguration that included upholstery for new VIP seats, electrical high-low tables and a new VIP handmade carpet. Existing divans were modified to enhance functionality and comfort.

Amac has also received a refurbishment contract for a BBJ 737-700, which calls for reupholstering all cabin seats and divans and addition of a customized hand-made cabin carpet; and is scheduled to perform multiple cabin modifications on a Boeing 777-200 as part of a new heavy base maintenance contract.

Some of the projects reflect a growing desire among owners to combine maintenance events with cabin refurbishments, as Amac’s Basel facility holds both EASA- and FAA-approved repair station status for Airbus, Boeing, Bombardier and Gulfstream aircraft. Recent projects include a private A320 that underwent a simultaneous landing gear overhaul and seat refurbishment, and a second A320 that had an upgrade of its satellite communications and cabin connectivity systems while undergoing heavy base maintenance.

Ensuring that the company will have the space to accommodate expected growth, late last year the fourth hangar at Amac’s headquarters became operational, creating what the company claims to be the “the largest privately owned facility in the world” for completions and maintenance of bizliners and business jets.

Haeco Private Jet Solutions

Haeco Private Jet Solutions (Booth H425), the first completion center in Asia Pacific that’s both Airbus-approved and Boeing-licensed, is showing its “East Meets West” cabin concept for the A330-200 airframe for the first time at ABACE. The interior concept is adaptable to any widebody aircraft, said Henry Chan, v-p commercial of the Xiamen, China-based company.

The design continues Haeco’s signature approach of combining traditional Asian design elements with Western motifs, introduced two years ago with its feng shui-inspired “Xiao Yao” narrowbody interior. The Asian elements in “East Meets West” include latticework and silk embroidered Fromental wallpaper with dragon and bamboo representations, while Western style can be seen in its bold color contrasts of matte gold and pale green, and open, clean lines. The combination creates a luxurious and expansive cabin evoking “a comfortable feeling like a home,” Chan said. Among the unique touches: The dining room features a sushi bar. “It’s a new gourmet concept. If you swing by Tokyo, you can buy fresh catch-of-the-day and have it prepared on board,” Chan noted. A study with book-lined shelves, master area with ensuite bath, and an exercise area with treadmill and stationary bicycle are also incorporated into the design.

Haeco is also highlighting here in Shanghai new developments, including a new collaboration with luxury carpet manufacturer Tai Ping to provide business aviation solutions. Haeco was recently appointed to the Airbus ACJService Centre Network, and named an authorized dealer for U.S.

avionics manufacturer Rockwell Collins.

Aloft AeroArchitects

U.S.-based narrowbody completion and refurbishment specialist Aloft AeroArchitects (Booth H200), the former Pats Aircraft Systems, recently redelivered a head-of-state BBJ2 to His Majesty the Sultan of Johor of Malaysia. The interior was designed in partnership with Edese Doret Industrial Designs of New York. Like all BBJs, the aircraft is equipped with Aloft's Auxiliary Fuel System. Aloft is the exclusive provider of auxiliary fuel systems for Boeing B737NG, B757 and B767, and Bombardier CRJ aircraft.

Sierra Completions

Sierra Completions (Booth P139) of Colorado Springs, Colorado, U.S., the new cabin interiors subsidiary of the Sierra Nevada Corporation (SNC), is making its ABACE debut. Sierra Completions' services include interior design, modification, integration, modernization, and aircraft maintenance and overhauls. The company recently broke ground on a completions hangar at its Colorado Springs Airport headquarters. The 2,880 square-meter (31,000-square-foot) facility will be capable of handling ACJs and BBJs. Ed Topps, v-p programs for Sierra Completions, recently reported the company is in "active discussions with a number of customers already" about performing completions at the facility.

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