



Private Air Readers
Put the G200
Through Its Paces

A Five-Star
Deserted
Island

The Great New Way To
(Get Someone Else To)
Pay for Your Plane

THE LIFE:

- BUGATTI VEYRON
- PILOT TIMEPIECES
- AVIATOR SHADES
- GIN & TONICS

Private Air

FLYING DOWN HOME WITH OSCAR-WINNING PILOT
MORGAN FREEMAN



AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2007
www.privateairdaily.com



Display until September 25, 2007
\$7.99 US



NAVIGATOR

HOW I USE MY PLANE + FBO PICK + THE BUSINESS + **HANGAR** + PIMP MY PLANE + AVIONOMICS



The X Factor

FINALLY, A HANGAR
DESIGNED FOR
THE PEOPLE WHO
PAY THE BILLS.
BY THOMAS P. FARLEY

“We’re upsetting an industry,” says entrepreneur Josh Stewart. Maybe it’s his Belfast accent, but when this 34-year-old pilot speaks about radically changing one of the most stable sectors in all of aviation, he seems to mean business. “The problem with most FBOs,” he explains, “is that they cater to airplane pilots, not airplane owners.”

His new company, XJet, which recently opened outside Denver, aims to change that. Shifting the focus from pilot to owner is a bold goal — and a surprising one for Stewart, given that he’s spent most of his own air time in the cockpit, not the cabin. Yet with 5,000 hours under his belt — from serving in Britain’s Royal Air Force to shuttling VIPs, relief workers in Africa and, later, news crews in California, Stewart has also spent more than his share of days sitting around general-aviation airports. And what he’s witnessed has convinced him that customer service and amenities for aircraft owners are often sorely lacking. Spend any amount of time at a typical FBO, Stewart says, and “you’ll feel as though you’re staying at a Holiday Inn Express.” You’ll also pay dearly for jet fuel.

As Stewart imagined it, the ultimate owner-friendly flight based

operator would have luxury amenities and the full range of flight-department services — from on-the-ready pilots and crew to negotiated discounts on fuel and aircraft insurance. When XJet unveiled its first facility at Denver’s Centennial Airport (APA) earlier this summer, that vision finally became a reality. The premises include two hangars — each measuring roughly 25,000 square feet and capable of sheltering about seven aircraft apiece — a climate-controlled garage for owners’ automobiles, private office space for members and a comfortable, stylish terminal.

As of opening day, XJet had signed up a dozen “program participants,” each a high-net-worth individual will-

HANGAR STEAK:

XJet looks like a typical facility from the outside, but packs in a five-star concierge, great deals on fuel and a planned gourmet restaurant.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MCCORRY JAMES



SEVEN-PLANE GARAGE:
Each XJet hangar has 25,000 square feet of shiny floor space.

ing to plunk down between \$50,000 and \$80,000 per year to get onboard. In addition to hangar space, members enjoy five-star concierge service (in Denver and wherever they travel), the aforementioned discounts on fuel and insurance, plus, a "managed membership" option. This plan gives owners access to a dedicated team of pilots, crew and factory-trained maintenance and service technicians (all billed at industry-standard rates). The latter have already saved owners tens of thousands of dollars in maintenance fees, thanks to scrupulous record-keeping and the securing of warranty extensions from manufacturers. "We're giving our customers a level of service that only the flight departments of *Fortune* 500 — no, *Fortune* 100 — companies can offer them," Stewart says.

In another popular feature, owners also have the option of placing their jets into a friends-and-family program, whereby trusted associates of other

members will be able to hire one of the pooled aircraft anytime it's not being used. Owners garner 85 percent of the charter fee levied; XJet receives the other 15.

Two staunch believers in the company's business model — and the company's principal investors — are husband and wife Alex Cranberg and Susan Morrice. With a pair of crude-oil and natural-gas exploration and production companies to run (he, Aspect

ONE CUSTOMER REQUESTED A TRIP TO MANITOBA, CANADA TO STUDY POLAR BEARS AND WATCH WHALES SPAWN.

Energy, she, Belize Natural Energy), this power couple spends a lot of time traveling for business and pleasure, often with their two young daughters in tow. They've tried just about every stylish means of getting around — including a fractional jet program — but, Morrice says, "It just wasn't the same level of service we now get with XJet." Morrice says the concierge will "secretly" ascertain her kids' favorite films or a wine that she and her husband are partial to and make sure these (and more) are always available on Cranberg's company's Falcon 50.

If the amenities please members, the hard numbers please their accountants. Discounts start to become attractive the bigger the jet and the more an owner uses it. For example, Stewart says program participants will pay \$2 less per gallon for fuel than at other Centennial providers. The savings don't end after the jet leaves Colorado: XJet has negotiated fuel-price reductions averaging 87 cents at FBOs around the world. By Stewart's calculations, if Falcon 50 fliers, such as Cranberg and Morrice, were to fly 400 hours a year (with 60 per-

cent of their flying done from Denver and 40 percent from elsewhere), their savings could add up to as much as \$220,000. Not too bad a return for the \$70,000 fee to enroll a F50.

That's especially true when those savings come with all the other perks that really make XJet such a bargain for members. For instance, one XJet customer requested that the concierge set up a special trip to Manitoba, Canada, to study polar bears from the air and to watch Beluga whales spawn. And Stewart recently lined up a sunset B-17 outing for his customers. In addition to the prospects for high-level networking and hobnobbing with other über-entrepreneurs while flying in a World War II-era bomber, members are looking forward to the next phase in the company's development, scheduled to be in place by spring 2008: a private club and gourmet restaurant. The build-out will also include two new hangars, enabling the program to expand to as many as 25 members.

As he makes plans for XJet's next outpost — at Gerald R. Ford International Airport (CFIA) in Grand Rapids, Michigan — Stewart acknowledges that he's come a long way from his days as a boy growing up in Northern Ireland. Back then, he would gaze up in awe at the military helicopters that filled the skies of what was still a war-torn province. Now, he says, "I'm living my dream in America." And helping others do the same. ■





DATE: August/September 2007 Issue, Pg. 50
SOURCE: Private Air Magazine

The X Factor

Finally, a hangar designed for the people who pay the bills.

BY: Thomas P. Farley

"We're upsetting an industry," says entrepreneur Josh Stewart.

Maybe it's his Belfast accent, but when this 34-year-old pilot speaks about radically changing one of the most stable sectors in all of aviation, he seems to mean business. "The problem with most FBOs," he explains, "is that they cater to airplane pilots, not airplane owners."

His new company, XJet, which recently opened outside Denver, aims to change that. Shifting the focus from pilot to owner is a bold goal – and a surprising one for Stewart, given that he's spent most of his own air time in the cockpit, not the cabin. Yet with 5,000 hours under his belt from serving in Britain's Royal Air Force to shuttling VIPs, relief workers in Africa and, later, news crews in California, Stewart has also spent more than his share of days sitting around general-aviation airports. And what he's witnessed has convinced him that customer service and amenities for aircraft owners are often sorely lacking. Spend any amount of time at a typical FBO, Stewart says, and "you'll feel as though you're staying at a Holiday Inn Express." You'll also pay dearly for jet fuel.

As Stewart imagined it, the ultimate owner-friendly flight based operator would have luxury amenities and the full range of flight-department services from on-the-ready pilots and crew to negotiated discounts on fuel and aircraft insurance. When XJet unveiled its first facility at Denver's Centennial Airport (APA) earlier this summer, that vision finally became a reality. The premises include two hangars each measuring roughly 25,000 square feet and capable of sheltering about seven aircraft apiece a climate-controlled garage for owners' automobiles, private office space for members and a comfortable, stylish terminal.

As of opening day, XJet had signed up a dozen "program participants," each a high-net-worth individual willing to plunk down between \$50,000 and \$80,000 per year to get onboard. In addition to hangar space, members enjoy five-star concierge service (in Denver and wherever they travel), the aforementioned discounts on fuel and insurance, plus, a "managed membership" option. This plan gives owners access to a dedicated team of pilots, crew and factory-trained maintenance and service technicians (all billed at industry-standard rates). The latter have already saved owners tens of thousands of dollars in maintenance fees, thanks to scrupulous recordkeeping and the securing of warranty extensions from manufacturers. "We're giving our customers a level of service that only the flight departments of Fortune 500 no, Fortune 100 companies can offer them," Stewart says.



In another popular feature, owners also have the option of placing their jets into a friends-and-family program, whereby trusted associates of other members will be able to hire one of the pooled aircraft anytime it's not being used. Owners garner 85 percent of the charter fee levied; XJet receives the other 15.

Two staunch believers in the company's business model – and the company's principal investors – are husband and wife Alex Cranberg and Susan Morrice. With a pair of crude-oil and natural-gas exploration and production companies to run (he, Aspect Energy, she, Belize Natural Energy), this power couple spends a lot of time traveling for business and pleasure, often with their two young daughters in tow. They've tried just about every stylish means of getting around – including a fractional jet program – but, Morrice says, "It just wasn't the same level of service we now get with XJet." Morrice says the concierge will "secretly" ascertain her kids' favorite films or a wine that she and her husband are partial to and make sure these (and more) are always available on Cranberg's company's Falcon 50.

If the amenities please members, the hard numbers please their accountants. Discounts start to become attractive the bigger the jet and the more an owner uses it. For example, Stewart says program participants will pay \$2 less per gallon for fuel than at other Centennial providers. The savings don't end after the jet leaves Colorado: XJet has negotiated fuel-price reductions averaging 87 cents at FBOs around the world. By Stewart's calculations, if Falcon 50 fliers, such as Cranberg and Morrice, were to fly 400 hours a year (with 60 percent of their flying done from Denver and 40 percent from elsewhere), their savings could add up to as much as \$220,000. Not a bad return for the \$70,000 fee to enroll a F50.

That's especially true when those savings come with all the other perks, that really make XJet such a bargain for members. For instance, one XJet customer requested that the concierge set up a special trip to Manitoba, Canada, to study polar bears from the air and to watch Beluga whales spawn. And Stewart recently lined up a sunset B-17 outing for his customers. In addition to the prospects for high-level networking and hobnobbing with other über-entrepreneurs while flying in a World War II-era bomber, members are looking forward to the next phase in the company's development, scheduled to be in place by spring 2008: a private club and gourmet restaurant. The build-out will also include two new hangars, enabling the program to expand to as many as 25 members.

As he makes plans for XJet's next outpost – at Gerald R. Ford International Airport (GFIA) in Grand Rapids, Michigan – Stewart acknowledges that he's come a long way from his days as a boy growing up in Northern Ireland. Back then, he would gaze up in awe at the military helicopters that filled the skies of what was still a war-torn province. Now, he says, "I'm living my dream in America." And helping others do the same.