



The automobiles of private-jet owners are sheltered in XJet's indoor parking facility. Members of the club can rely on their cars being detailed and fully fueled when they return to the airport.

## XJet vows to lavish luxury on wealthy fliers at Centennial

By James Paton  
ROCKY MOUNTAIN NEWS

It is hard to believe that the upstart company based at Centennial Airport will rival Dubai's Burj Al Arab Hotel, often described in travel stories as the world's first provider of "seven-star" service.

But that's what Josh Stewart boldly promises.

Even if his company, XJet, is getting a little carried away with the seven-star claim, it's, indeed, providing amenities — and a business model — other private jet facilities cannot offer.

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### Full treatment

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- Lower fuel prices
- A fancy members lounge
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- Travel planning
- Auto detailing, maintenance

chef Bruno Bruesch, an art gallery, a library, a lounge and hangars. XJet employees will offer massage and travel planning and remember everything from the names of members' spouses to their favorite wine. When customers touch down, their cars will be detailed and full of gas, with music they like in the CD player.



PHOTOS BY KEN PPALEO/ROCKY MOUNTAIN NEWS

Workers for XJet get a hangar at Centennial Airport ready for a news conference Tuesday morning. XJet introduced its luxury private jet center, which aims to provide services to wealthy fliers that are well beyond the services ordinary fixed-base operators provide.

The company, started in 2005, is a fixed-base operator, an FBO, providing fuel, hangar space and other services. But unlike the competition, which makes essentially all its money from fuel sales, XJet has a different approach. Stewart's company is selling fuel without a markup — currently at about \$3 a gallon, compared with the airport average of \$5.

XJet members will pay up to \$90,000 a year in fees to belong to the elite club. In addition, each customer will hand over a hangar charge that will be more than the dues. XJet will be able to accommodate 22 planes and 12 extra nonowners.

"They've taken the FBO business model and turned it upside down," said Robert Olislagers, executive director at Centennial Airport, which has three other FBOs. "The typical FBO makes money off fuel sales. That's what

people need. But (people) don't like paying a lot for stuff they need. They don't mind paying for stuff they want."

Olislagers said he could think of only two similar jet clubs, in Las Vegas and Washington, D.C.

The company caters to executives who already have their own planes, but it also will offer access to a fleet of fancy jets, such as a Citation X, billed as the fastest private plane in the world.

XJet has plans to open clubs in several other locations across the United States, including Grand Rapids, Mich. The company eventually hopes to expand outside the country, Stewart said.

The XJet chief, a native of Ireland and a former Royal Air Force pilot, showed off the digs to reporters Tuesday, introducing his colleagues, including his main financial backer, oil executive Alex Cranberg, and his "director of hos-

pitality and world services," Stuart Kupfer.

Kupfer, who previously ran the concierge desk at the Broadmoor hotel in Colorado Springs, said he was accustomed to the five-star and even six-star realms.

"So you can imagine my exhilaration when I got that call from Josh Stewart," Kupfer said, adding that Stewart "challenged" him with the notion of "seven-star service."

The Burj Al Arab Hotel says on its Web site that it serves guests with a "chauffeur-driven Rolls-Royce" and a "brigade of highly trained butlers who provide around-the-clock attention."

Stewart has stayed at the Burj Al Arab. "It's amazing," he said, "and that's exactly what we're all about."

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