

FULFILLING A STRONG LOCAL MARKET DEMAND

Eric Gillespie,
Vice President,
Business Development

Interview by Anthony Lam



Flying Colours Corp. has built an international reputation since founder John Gillespie repainted his first King Air just over thirty years ago. It is now a global aviation company providing a service led by the core philosophies of technical innovation, business integrity and service flexibility. This has underpinned the work ethic at the family owned-and-run business. At its Peterborough, Ontario headquarters in Canada the company specializes in green completions, interior refurbishment, maintenance, component services, avionics installations and upgrades and, staying loyal to its roots, exterior paint work.

In 2015, the company launched Flying Colours Corp. Asia PTE when Bombardier Aerospace selected the company to provide full service interior refurbishment capabilities on Learjet, Challenger and Global business jets at Bombardier's wholly owned Singapore Service Centre located at Seletar Airport in Singapore.



"The local facility brings real benefits to aircraft owners and operators in the region who no longer have to experience lengthy downtimes whilst aircraft are sent to Europe or the USA for interior upgrades. With our local base we are fulfilling a strong market demand," says Eric Gillespie, VP Business Development. Since opening, the facility has worked on over 50 aircraft supporting a range of projects including refurbishing and refinishing woodwork and cabinetry, repairing and restoring upholstery, and upgrading interior furnishings. The aim is to employ a mainly local workforce with each employee benefiting from a specially developed three-month training program in Canada. Through additional on-the-job training and specific aircraft project-led work, it is expected employees will then become proficient in all the interior skills currently provided by Flying Colours. "We are always looking for the right candidates and are keen to ensure their development. Right now the skills needed to deliver the quality expected for Bombardier aircraft are rare, which is why we wanted to recruit team members who really understood the challenges and could rise to them," said Gillespie.

Flying Colours has extensive experience in Asia. It has completed or refurbished for Asian clients over 30 aircraft in the last four years, including a number of special mission projects. In 2014 it confirmed its strong position in the Asian market when it announced a joint venture with China-based Sparkle Roll Technik Co., Ltd. ("SRT"), a total technical solution provider for business aviation based out of Beijing, China. The partnership launched with the ambition of converting eight B-registered CRJ-200 regional jets into VIP configurations.

The first of the aircraft has just been completed with a mixed class shuttle format. Sparkle Roll and Flying Colours jointly created the striking cabin, incorporating black furnishings and rose gold accents. The cabin has been divided into three separate areas incorporating a 20-seat economy section, a central two double

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club layout, and a three seat divan alongside a double club business class seat in the front cabin. An aft lavatory and small forward galley complete the layout.

The Chinese Civil Aviation Authority (CAAC) awarded a new STC for the format and certified the B registered aircraft. "As far as we know, this is the first time that a B-registered aircraft has been reconfigured outside of China and then returned on the same registry with all the approvals obtained outside of China. Our understanding of the certification paperwork, registration process, STCs and extensive modification knowledge complements our partnership and supports our ambitions to further develop our business in the region,"

says Gillespie. The next three aircraft are currently in process and are expected to be finished by the autumn.

The final five will be redelivered in a Flying Colours CRJ ExecLiner VIP format with a 15 seat configuration, a style mirroring a Bombardier Challenger 850. The CRJ ExecLiner is a format developed by Flying Colours that has already proved popular in the Asian region with a dozen of the aircraft type already delivered. The VIP jets will incorporate an advanced inflight entertainment system and the installation of a supplemental fuel auxiliary system engineered by Flying Colours Corp. specifically for CRJ conversions.

During the conversions, a team of three SRT technicians have been, and will continue to be, present on site in Canada to learn the skills and techniques required to complete the cabin to the high standards expected by private jet passengers. "We think it's important to share our technical expertise with our partners in Asia. The region has huge potential and we are proud to continue to strengthen the human resource infrastructure."

Looking to the future, Flying Colours Corp. continues to bolster its team with new sales, engineering and technical representatives joining on a regular basis. "We have a unique position in the aviation environment and we intend to continue growing our Asian customer base whilst, of course, remaining focused on our existing loyal and valuable customers," concludes Gillespie.

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