



GLOBAL BUSINESS AVIATION LEADER - JET AVIATION

INTERVIEW WITH **JOHN RIGGIR**,
VICE PRESIDENT & GENERAL MANAGER,
SINGAPORE

Interview by Litalia Yoakum

Global business aviation leader Jet Aviation has been ensuring safety in the Asia-Pacific region for over two decades. With the region's growing fleet and limited capacity, ASG spoke with John Riggir to discuss his background, the difficulties in the region, and Jet Aviation's greatest successes.

Tell me about your background in the industry.

I started my aviation career in general and business aviation in the engineering design office and two years later transferred to aircraft maintenance, serving a five-year apprenticeship with a well-established operations company in New Zealand. In 1994, I moved to Singapore with my wife to work for Hawker Pacific to help with the establishment of their aircraft maintenance service business at

Seletar Airport. I joined Airclaims in 2001 and returned to Hawker Pacific in 2006, where in Senior Management I helped forge the way in establishing premium business aviation services from new infrastructure at Seletar Airport. In September 2014, I joined Jet Aviation, based in Singapore, to be responsible as Vice President Asia and General Manager Singapore operations.



How has the industry evolved throughout your career?

During my time in Asia, I have been very impressed by the substantial development of infrastructure and focus on support for the business aviation industry in Singapore. Through long-term land lease arrangements, and the willingness of the Singapore Economic Development Board to get behind innovation and promote growth with effective engagement and incentives, significant investment opportunities in the industry have been made available. Training and development of a generation of new engineers has, in the last five years, become very effective; introducing engineering students to our industry at early stages of their development and interest. We are also now starting to see the emergence of smart technologies in the commercial management of our businesses. Although they are measured for step-by-step progress to ensure the right technology is used in this critically important area, they are driving better practices through project management and more customer engagement.



How is Jet Aviation catering to the growing regional fleet?

We are addressing the entire Asia-Pacific market with our refurbishment, modification, and upgrades (RMU) capabilities and carry registration approvals for 13 countries to address the Southeast Asia market, as well as the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), China, India, Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) Australia and all Bermuda and Cayman approvals. There are numerous aircraft in this market in need of RMU work, as the average age of aircraft stretches out. Aircraft are being operated longer due to the higher rate of changing ownership in the region, and this drives demand for what we see as a growing requirement going forward.

What services are offered at the service centers in the Asia Pacific?

Jet Aviation Hong Kong offers line maintenance, inspections and defect rectifications, as well as Aircraft on Ground (AOG) support, and has access to two ramps and hangars. The company holds Hong Kong Civil Aviation Department (CAD) maintenance repair station approval and an FAA repair station certificate #6JAY388B, and mainland China Joint Maintenance Management (JMM) approval for PRC-registered aircraft. In addition, it services aircraft registered in 11 other countries through Jet Aviation's maintenance approvals in Singapore, which include EASA #145.0461, Aruba DCA, Australian CASA, Bermuda DCA, Cayman CAA, Indonesia DGAC, Macau MAR-145, Malaysia DCA, Philippines ATO, Singapore CAAS and Thailand DOA.

We also have a 24/7 aircraft management and charter operation in Hong Kong that currently manages more than 30 aircraft. Six of these aircraft are G650s.

Our Macau facility is not yet operational, but our intention with this facility is to grow our capacity and capabilities to support our Hong Kong facility and ultimately address more maintenance opportunities from within the North Asia market once these facilities become available.

Jet Aviation Singapore provides scheduled and unscheduled maintenance, aircraft repair, defect troubleshooting and rectifications, and aircraft modifications. In addition, the company offers interior refurbishment, avionics modification and exterior painting services. Jet Aviation Singapore holds repair station approvals from various countries, including FAA and EASA. It is a Factory Authorized Service Center and Warranty Repair Facility for the Gulfstream series, and a Boeing BBJ line maintenance station. It further supports Bombardier Challenger, Global and Learjet series aircraft. The company also offers FBO services in Singapore at Seletar and Changi International airports.

Lack of infrastructure is a big issue in business aviation. What is Jet Aviation doing to overcome this challenge?

We lacked the necessary hangar capacity to effectively deploy our services, so we built a new hangar in Singapore, adding 5,000

square meters in 2014. We also secured tenure of a new hangar in Macau that year, which will provide an additional 4,000 square meters in Q4 2017. And, of course, we are now building another new 3,850sqm hangar at Seletar Airport, to be completed in Q3 2017.

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We've had to develop synergies to better link and standardize our entire worldwide FBO network. Across regions we harmonized our systems using FBO1 to connect and manage our operations. We also recently received registration to the IS-BAH™ (International Standard for Business Aircraft Handling) across our entire FBO network in EMEA and Asia, establishing consistent and well-controlled operational, safety management and quality systems, and processes into the Jet Aviation operations.

Regarding personnel, we recognized that we needed to develop and retain a skilled workforce. To address this need, we focused on engaging a core group of experienced maintenance and interior specialists. In addition, we support Government and private initiatives in the development of industry apprenticeship schemes and technical training institutes.

What are some of the difficulties Jet Aviation faces in this region?

Airports still don't really accept or understand the importance of private jets to the region. They need to recognize the economic value that the industry brings, including other tangible investment benefits the owners bring to cities and regions.

We also don't yet have one agreed standard set of regulations. A harmonized set of regulations for Asia and Pacific Airspace would be much easier to work with.

What are a few of the milestones Jet Aviation has achieved since entering this region?

Jet Aviation launched its MRO and FBO facility in Singapore at the Singapore Airshow 1996, and proudly celebrated 20 years of quality maintenance, AOG and FBO service provision in Singapore from its original platform last year.

The company was established at Seletar Airport as an Authorized Service Center (ASC) for Cessna Citation aircraft, gaining Gulfstream ASC status in late 1996 and Bombardier Service Center authorization for all product lines the following year. We have continued to expand and upgrade our facilities and services ever since.

Jet Aviation's aircraft management and charter center in Hong Kong was officially founded on September 17, 2001, when we received our Aircraft Operator's Certificate.

In 2006, FBO services in Singapore were extended to Changi International Airport. Two year later, in 2008, Jet Aviation expanded its footprint in Asia with the establishment of a maintenance facility in Hong Kong.

In 2013, Jet Aviation formed a strategic alliance with the Air Transport Training College (ATTC) at Seletar Aerospace Park in Singapore to build up a pool of local talent by providing on-the-job training to engineers.

A major milestone was realized in May 2014 when Jet Aviation opened a new multi-million-dollar hangar facility adjacent to its existing location, effectively tripling its size to meet growing regional demand. The company further developed its cabin refurbishment business by adding a large interior shop and broadening its interior service offerings, while also introducing its new hangarage and parking services.

In addition to the above, we will continue executing our business case, which underpins our investments to date, to expand our operations and serve new markets where there is demand, ultimately aligning with and benefiting our group strategy and growth plans.

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