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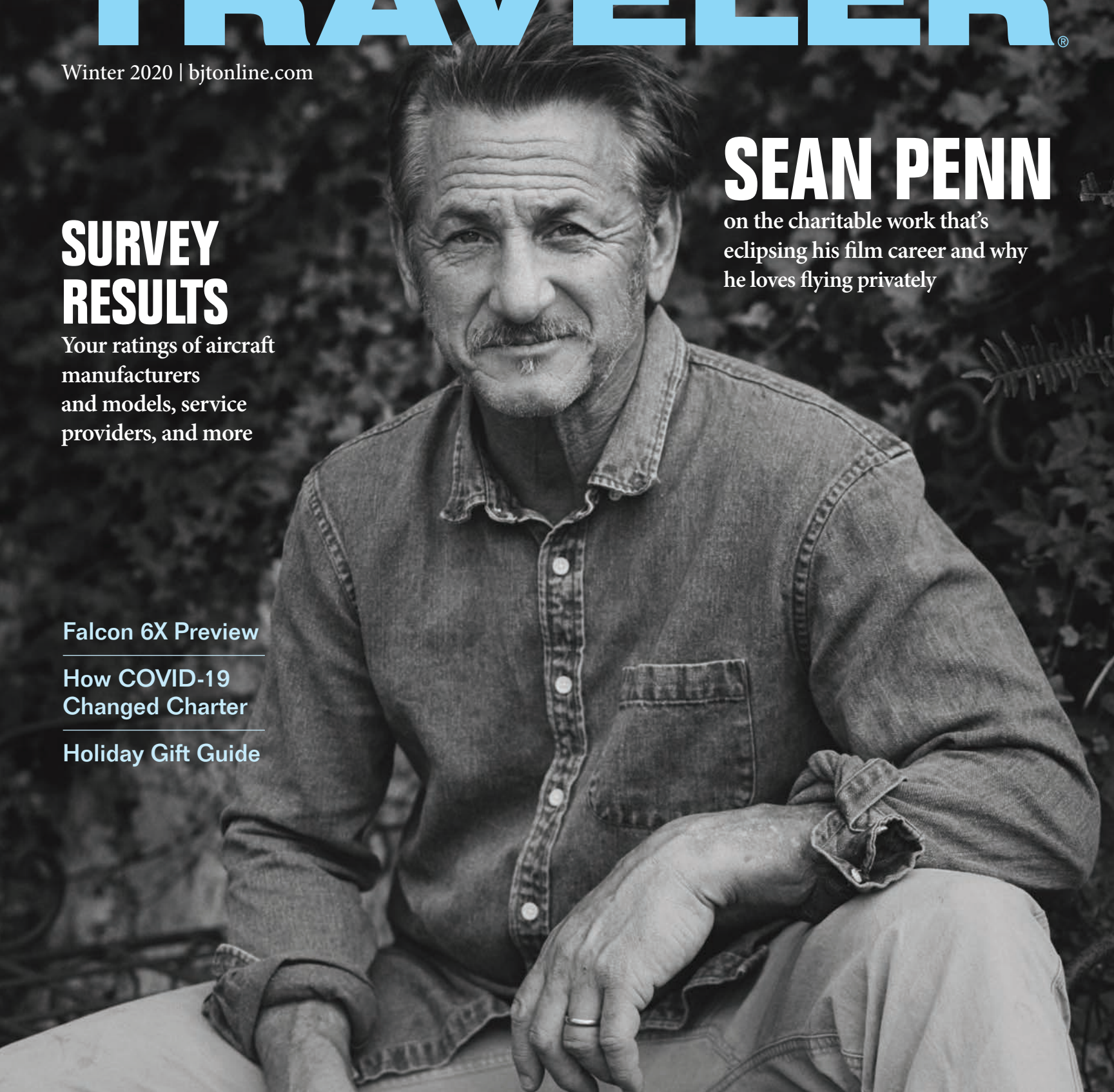
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on the charitable work that's  
eclipsing his film career and why  
he loves flying privately



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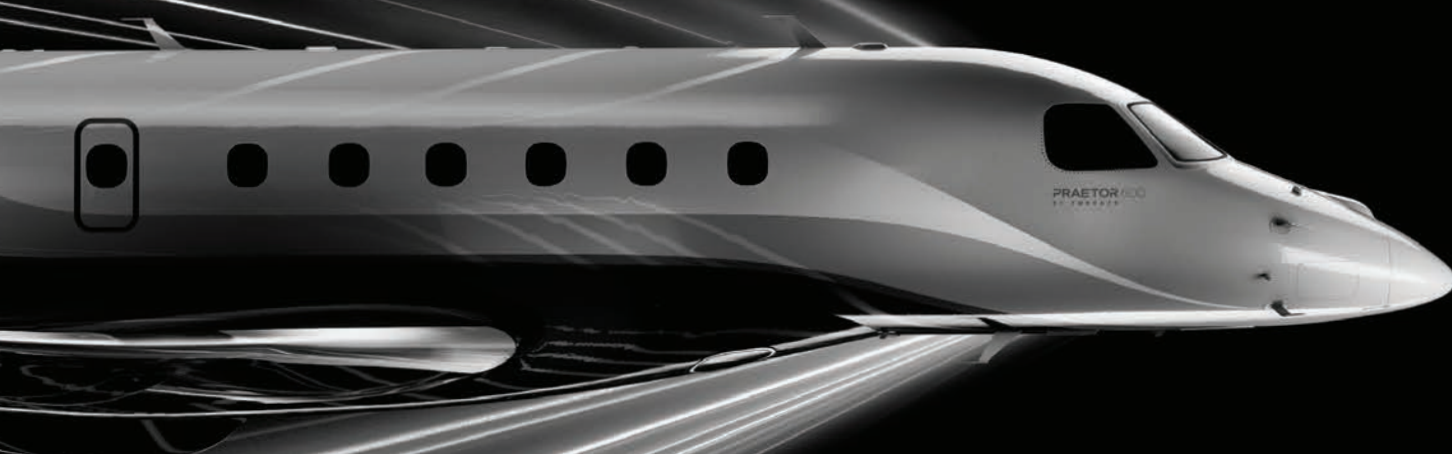


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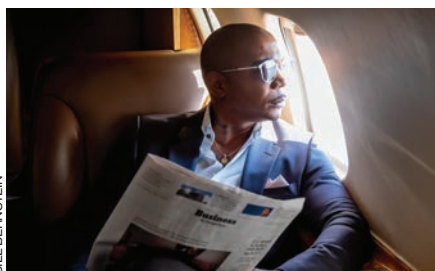
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# Up Front

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ith a virus raging, along with political and meteorological storms, and economies on roller-coaster rides, 2020 hasn't exactly been a fun time for many people. I think it's safe to say that we're all ready to turn the page and try our luck with a new year.

At **Business Jet Traveler**, we've got exciting plans for 2021. We intend to provide significantly more content to help you make educated choices about private aviation and its ever-evolving array of options. We'll also be reviving our annual **BJT Buyers' Guide** as well as adding webinars, more weekly newsletters, and—once the pandemic subsides—in-person events. Please read more about what we have planned in the letter to readers that we've inserted after page 32, then go to [BJTonline.com/subscribe](http://BJTonline.com/subscribe) to make sure you won't miss any of it.

\*\*\*\*\*

One bright spot in this crazy year has been the recognition that **Business Jet Traveler's** creative team has received. Judges in the prestigious Folio: awards recently named **BJT** the best consumer travel/transportation magazine in the U.S. In the same competition, we earned honorable mention for best article in a consumer travel/transportation magazine for Chris Allsop's feature on Western Ireland. Finally, in a category where we competed with all U.S. consumer magazines (not just travel publications), we won honorable mention for best profile or Q&A for editor Jeff Burger's interview with Stevie Van Zandt. These are **BJT's** 97th, 98th, and 99th journalism awards, and we are immensely grateful to the many staff

members and freelance contributors who have helped to make the magazine what it is.

Speaking of valued contributors: Margie Goldsmith's articles never disappoint, and this issue's interview with Sean Penn (*page 16*) ranks with her best. We would be hard-pressed to find a business jet traveler as fascinatingly complex, creative, and inspiring as Penn, an Academy Award-winning actor and director whose commitment to philanthropy and activism makes him a perfect role model for these extraordinary times. He challenges us to examine what it means to give back.



Our winter 2019 issue earned awards in two competitions for best consumer travel/transportation magazine, best cover, and best Q&A.

Another feature you won't want to miss in this issue is the one that reports results of our 10th annual Readers' Choice survey (*page 30*). Nearly two thousand subscribers took the time to complete our poll, and their feedback sheds considerable light on how you use

business aviation, what you like and dislike, how the pandemic has affected your flying, and more.

I hope you enjoy this issue and that you and your family and friends are safe and well. May 2021 bring joy, peace, health, prosperity, and stability to us all.

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## Is Lighter Than Air the Future of Experiential Aviation?

If all goes according to plan, airships will begin flying to the North Pole by spring 2024, almost a century after Roald Amundsen and Lincoln Ellsworth carried out the first confirmed successful polar trip in 1926.

OceanSky Cruises is offering day-and-a-half-long round trips from Svalbard, Norway, to fly over Arctic icebergs and spot polar bears, breaching whales, and rare wildlife. Carl-Oscar Lawaczeck, a pilot and CEO and co-founder of the experiential travel company, says the North Pole will be the first of many hard-to-reach destinations it will reach.

OceanSky is already inviting interested Arctic “pioneers” to secure a two-person cabin for 5 percent down on the \$100,000 ticket price, but there’s a lot to be determined, including which airship they’ll be boarding. Several companies are exploring lighter-than-air technology, although none have released a production model.

Because they’re filled with inert helium, not the explosive hydrogen of yore, and travel at low speeds, maxing out at around 70 miles an hour, airships are relatively safe. Because they can take off and land from virtually any flat surface, moreover, there’s no need for runways or airports, meaning they can go anywhere in the world within range.

Airlander 10, for instance, can remain airborne for five days and travel 4,000 nautical miles. Powered by four energy-efficient, jet-fuel-burning engines, it offers 75 percent savings on emissions compared with traditional aircraft (and engineers are already working on fully electric versions for 2030). Plus, it’s quiet, making it perfect for pickups in residential areas or wildlife spotting on aerial safaris.

For passengers, the onboard experience will be a game-changer. An airship’s colossal dimensions for relatively few passengers—OceanSky’s projections call for a cabin that’s wider than that of the Airbus A320 for 18 guests—mean that designers can rewrite the book on accommodations.

Creative consultancy Design Q’s Airlander 10 concept features expansive suites with queen-size beds, private bathrooms, and floor-to-ceiling windows in the standard cabin, plus several common areas for drinking, dining, and watching the world glide by. And as airships cruise at low altitude—anywhere from just above the ground to 10,000 feet—cabins don’t need to be pressurized, meaning passengers can better savor food and drink, breathe easier, and sleep more deeply.

“Flying aboard an airship is basically bringing your luxury hotel with you,” says Lawaczeck. —*Gemma Z. Price*

### How To Shoot Memorable Videos

These days, anyone with a smartphone can create pretty good videos. Here are some tips to help make yours great:

**Use landscape mode.** That way, your videos will fit the dimensions of a TV or computer screen. So, unless you have a specific reason to film in portrait mode, avoid it.

**Shoot for variety.** Instead of filming the odd bit here and there and sharing the results one by one, think about how you can tell a story through a variety of photos and clips. An assortment of close-up and wide shots will help make your video more dynamic.

For instance, you may want to film a pan of a landscape to establish where the action is taking place. Then get a few close-ups to highlight details and use medium shots to show people doing something or moving through the frame.

**Assemble your project.** Gather your elements and think about how you’ll piece them together. Maybe the story will be completely linear, or perhaps you’ll want to tease the ending before letting the narrative play out. To get started, think about the old home movies your parents may have filmed, with lots of little clips strung together.

**Take advantage of software tools.** Apps like Google Photos practically automate the editing process, though they let you manually select clips and images, change their order, select music, and make other small tweaks. This is a great starting point if you don’t want to spend much time on editing and want to share quickly. Software like Apple’s iMovie and Adobe’s Premiere Rush provides the ability to edit with finer detail, work with multiple audio and video tracks, and add on-screen text and effects. Editing with such tools can become addictive because it’s fun to figure out the right elements to tell a great story. —*Ian Whelan*



# GULFSTREAM GIV WITHSTANDS TEST OF TIME



One of the biggest tests of quality is how long something lasts. Aircraft interiors are no different. Signs of a quality refurbishment don't always show until several years after the work is done; it rests in the durability of the products selected and the quality of the completion process, most of which isn't visible in the end product.

Case in point, Duncan Aviation completed a Gulfstream GIV in 2007 that was placed on static display at the National Business Aviation Association's annual convention in Atlanta, Georgia. The aircraft had new paint as well as a fresh interior that showcased a multitude of industry firsts. A look at that aircraft today after 13 years of regular use, proves that its design was timeless and the interior installation and construction was of the highest quality.

Read the full story: [www.DuncanAviation.aero/giv-turns-13](http://www.DuncanAviation.aero/giv-turns-13)

## Don't Pack It—Borrow It

What if you suddenly needed an additional suit for an unexpected meeting on a business trip? Or suppose your meeting was cancelled and you had an extra hour to hang out at the hotel pool but no swimsuit?

These days, you may not need to race to the nearest shopping center in situations like this, because an increasing number of hotels and resorts have you covered. The Kimpton Gray in Chicago, for example, offers a “Forgot It? We Got It!” service that allows you to borrow high-end-brand clothing. “We implemented this program to anticipate the needs of our business travelers who are always on the go,” says Bobby Gonzalez, the hotel’s director of concierge services.

For unexpected events or unprepared guests, the Mondrian South Beach, in Miami Beach, Florida, will provide designer clothes. Forgot the swimsuit? The nearby Gates Hotel South Beach delivers swimwear and accessories in less than an hour with its “Bikini on Demand” program.

At four W Hotels (South Beach; Aspen, Colorado; Washington, D.C.; Hollywood, California), the



clothing can check in before you do with “Rent the Runway,” which lets you preselect apparel items that will be in your room, dry cleaned and ready to wear, when you arrive. “Skipping the packing process is a whole new level of luxury for our guests and is another way we continue to reinvent hospitality,” says Anthony Ingham, global brand leader at W Hotels.

Westin Hotels’ Gear Lending program allows you to maintain your fitness without having to pack workout clothes. One guest who arrived at the Westin long before her room was ready said under her breath, “I wish I’d brought my workout clothes.” The bellman overheard her and offered her sneakers, a t-shirt, and capris while storing her suitcase. The guest happily hit the gym and, when she finished her workout, her room was ready. The lending trend means you can travel with just a roller board and get your fashion fix at your destination. Even better, it means you’ll have fewer dirty clothes to lug home for dry cleaning or laundry. —Margie Goldsmith

## Museum Watch

### Virginia Museum Honors Suffragists

The Lucy Burns Museum in Lorton, Virginia, which is named for a leading suffragist, opened in January, just months before the August centennial of the 19th Amendment, which gave American women the right to vote. It is currently open on Saturday afternoons with COVID restrictions in place.



Lucy Burns

The museum is on the site of the 55-acre Workhouse Prison, which operated from 1890 until it was turned into an artists’ complex in 2001. In 1917, suffragists who had been arrested after picketing at the White House were jailed here for up to seven months, beaten, and force-fed. Many years later, the prison housed Watergate mastermind G. Gordon Liddy, as well as Norman Mailer and Noam Chomsky, who faced charges relating to their Vietnam War protests.

The 11,000-square-foot museum tells the story of the prison. It includes cellblocks, art and farming equipment made by inmates, and a log that lists imprisoned suffragists and the crimes with which they were charged. —Margie Goldsmith

## Giving Back

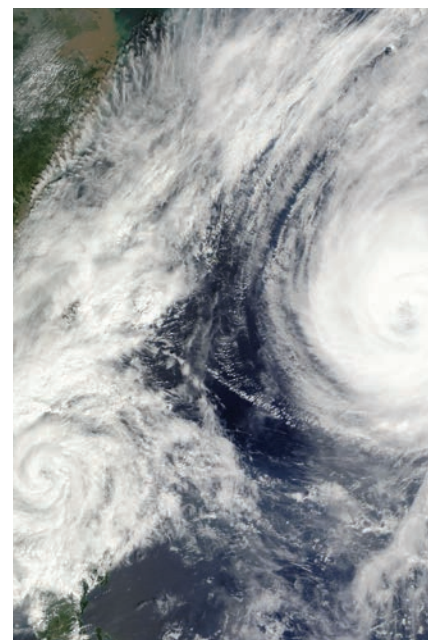
### All Hands and Hearts Smart Response

All Hands and Hearts Smart Response aims to ease the immediate impact of natural disasters such as hurricanes, earthquakes, and fires—and aid in long-term recovery efforts. By swiftly identifying community resources and engaging with local volunteers, it is able to mobilize critical support at times when every minute counts. When COVID-19 forced the organization to temporarily halt some projects, it quickly pivoted to change safety protocols for its volunteers. Those who sign up commit for 12 weeks of work and receive a small stipend.

Active projects include helping families in Louisiana, Texas, and the Bahamas rebuild homes in the

wake of recent hurricanes. All Hands and Hearts additionally constructs disaster-resilient schools and community centers so that residents are better prepared for storms. The organization is also addressing the COVID-19 pandemic in Los Angeles by partnering with Sean Penn’s CORE (see page 16) and the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank. The weekly goal is to administer 20,000 COVID tests, assemble 50,000 emergency meal kits, and provide 55,000 meals.

All Hands And Hearts Smart Response, which consistently ranks among the world’s highest-rated charities, spends 96 cents of every donated dollar on relief programs. —Jennifer Leach English



*BJT* readers—who represent one of the highest-net-worth magazine audiences anywhere—clearly have the means to contribute to a better world. To help you do that, we spotlight deserving organizations in every issue. All of them have received a four-star overall rating from Charity Navigator ([charitynavigator.org](http://charitynavigator.org)), which evaluates philanthropic institutions based on their finances, accountability, and transparency.



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# Congress considers a Big Apple helicopter ban



Some concerns are legitimate. Others make little sense.

by Jeff Wieand

**I**n June of 2019, an Agusta A109E crash-landed on top of the AXA Equitable Center building in New York City, not far from Times Square. The helicopter had taken off from a heliport on the east side of Manhattan for a flight back to its home base in Linden, New Jersey. Visibility was poor, and the pilot—the only person aboard—apparently lacked an instrument rating. No one in the building was injured, but the helicopter was destroyed, the pilot was killed, and people in the building were terrified by tremors that “felt like an earthquake.”

The news media widely reported the crash, which has become the door opener for an attempt to greatly restrict helicopter traffic in New York City. Following the accident, U.S. Rep. Carolyn Maloney and two other congressional representatives from the city asked the FAA to ban “non-essential” flights over New York, and on Oct. 28, 2019, they introduced HR 4880, the Improving Helicopter Safety Act of 2019, which would impose such a ban and require the FAA to issue or update regulations to enforce it.

Though the bill refers to “flights over major cities” and doesn’t specifically mention any metropolis, its criteria for “major cities” effectively limit its application to New York. Notwithstanding its title, the bill if passed would do little or nothing to make helicopter operations safer.

Helicopter traffic in the New York City area has been

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## FOR MANY CORPORATIONS AND HIGH-NET-WORTH INDIVIDUALS, ACCESS TO MANHATTAN VIA HELICOPTER IS A MAJOR FACTOR IN THE DECISION TO LOCATE THEIR HOME OR BUSINESS IN THE CITY.

controversial for many years. According to the *New York Times*, one of the sponsors of HR 4880, Rep. Jerrold Nadler, has been trying to ban all helicopter flights in the city since the days of the Rudy Giuliani administration.

If you're opposed to such traffic, Manhattan certainly offers plenty of it to complain about. At the Pier 6 heliport alone, tens of thousands of flights take off annually. In addition to medical and government flights, which carry everyone from local police to the president of the U.S., there are tour offerings; charters, card, and share programs like HeliLite and Sikorsky Shares; and trips in privately owned and corporate helicopters. One entrant is Uber Copter, operated by HeliLite, which started carrying passengers from Manhattan to JFK airport in July of 2018 for around \$200 a seat. In addition to lending its famous name, Uber is the program's air charter broker.

Sightseeing tours have long been a frequent subject of helicopter complaints in the city. One website lists 40 such tours. They used to take off from the East 34th Street and West 30th Street heliports but by 2010 were restricted to Pier 6 on the south end of Manhattan island.

The city introduced further restrictions in 2016, including a ban on Sunday flights and a cap on flights out of Pier 6 to 30,000 tours per year. Tour flights taking off from Pier 6 must also fly over water instead of over the city. New York City can impose such restrictions because its Economic Development Corporation owns the main heliports.

As you might expect, the restrictions caused some tour operators to bus customers from Manhattan to New Jersey and conduct the flights from there. The irony is that, by taking off from New Jersey, the operators aren't subject to the New York restrictions and can fly over the city with impunity.

HR 4880 goes well beyond putting further limitations on tourist flights; the legislation seeks to address the problem "once and for all" by prohibiting any "nonessential helicopters" from flying within New York City airspace.

The bill would exempt flights in the public interest, including ones for law enforcement, emergency and disaster response, and medical services.

Heavy-lift operations in support of construction and infrastructure maintenance and military flights would also not be subject to the ban. According to the sponsors' Oct. 26, 2019, press release, "the bottom line is, the risks that commuter, charter, and tourism helicopter flights pose to New Yorkers far outweigh the benefit to the very small number of people who use them."

One can take issue with this statement on several grounds. First, there is the inconsistency of complaining about the excessive use of helicopters in New York City while claiming that a "very small number of people" use them. The number may be small compared with the area's population, but I'd guess that the 30,000 tour flights originating in the city alone must carry over 100,000 passengers.

Second, the passengers aren't the only ones who benefit from the flights. To the extent that it's not consigned to New Jersey, the helicopter industry contributes to the New York economy. More important, for many corporations and high-net-worth individuals, access to Manhattan via helicopter is a major factor in the decision to locate their home and business in the city.

On the other hand, when it comes to risks, it is the passengers and crews who are predominately affected. The legislation's sponsors' press release lists the 10 "most known" New York helicopter accidents going back to 1997, some of which involved injuries to passengers and pilots. None resulted in injury to people on the ground; in fact, except for the AXA Equitable Center crash, all the accidents involved plunges into the Hudson or East River. That's why the AXA incident leads the charge in attempting to construe helicopters as an important safety issue: the helicopter actually crashed on a building.

Riding your bicycle in the city, however, is arguably more dangerous than taking a helicopter ride. In 2020, more than two dozen fatalities resulted from bicycle accidents in New York. But focusing on "improving residents' safety" is likely thought to be a more effective strategy for banning helicopters than complaining about noise and air pollution. (Helicopters generate many times more carbon dioxide than the average car.)

But noise is the real issue and a genuine one. Depending on where you live in the city, noise from helicopters can be a major annoyance. The *New York Times* quoted someone who claimed he didn't need an alarm clock because he could hear the helicopter engines at 6:30 sharp every morning.

HR 4880 has languished since its introduction in the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and is unlikely to be enacted. It will therefore probably do nothing to reduce noise, but it has got people's attention. Given the sweeping extent of the ban, there's plenty of room for compromise, which may be what the sponsors intended.

In response to the proposed legislation, the Helicopter Association International (HAI) suggested that New York City reconvene the helicopter task force with a broad range of participants to develop solutions reasonably acceptable to all parties. Let's hope such a task force can focus on the legitimate concerns posed by helicopter operations in the city.

**BJT**



**Jeff Wieand**

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# Market uncertainty—but also cause for optimism

The pandemic has affected every aspect of business jet sales, but signs point to a strong post-COVID recovery.

by James Wynbrandt

**T**he global pandemic has made assessing and predicting the pre-owned market's state of health particularly daunting this year.

"The near-term outlook for business aviation is perhaps more difficult to discern than at any other time in recent memory," says consultant and JetNet IQ creator Rolland Vincent.

But reasons exist for holiday cheer—especially if you assume that increasing demand and pricing stability are on the way—as the preowned market digests what appears to be an entire economic cycle of activity and changes in the course of half a year.

First, the business has likely exorcised any ghosts of 2008's market meltdown that had been haunting owners, shoppers, or sellers. Despite the collapse in market activity in March and April, as COVID-19 compromised the ability to move, view, or inspect merchandise, no desperation pricing or evaporation of buyers occurred, and transactions have since recovered smartly. After reporting 100 total preowned sales in April and May, members of the International Aircraft Dealers Association registered 177 in June and July. Market-wide, transactions in June through August were up 5 percent year-over-year, according to JetNet.

No glut in available inventory—which had been hovering between 10.1 and 10.3 percent in pre-COVID months—occurred, either: 10.7 percent of the business jet fleet (2,264 aircraft) were for sale at August's end. In contrast, in the wake of the 2008 market meltdown, inventory bloated from similar pre-crisis levels to some 18 percent of the fleet.

The passing decade has also brought acceptance that—irrational exuberance aside—preowned aircraft, like other capital equipment, decline in value. That lesson was made all the more brutal by the annual value declines of some 20 to 25 percent that many models endured in the immediate

post-crash years. Though today's value declines are greater than those in pre-crash times, the intervening shock made drops of recent years easier to plan for and bear.

From the beginning of this year (which was forecast to be a sales dud before the pandemic began) to the end of the third quarter, the average value of late-model midsize jets (including Challenger 300 and 605, Citation XLS+ and Sovereign, and Gulfstream G150), declined 7.6 percent, from \$6.6 million to \$6.1 million. That's according to Amstat, the business aviation market information service.



Large-cabin jets' average value (including Falcon 7X and 900EX, Global 5000, and Gulfstream 450 and G550) declined 10.4 percent over the three quarters, from \$16.3 million to \$14.6 million. Light jets' average value (Beechjet 400A, CitationJet, Citation II and V, Bombardier Falcon 10, and Learjet 31A) also fell 10.4 percent, from \$546,000 to \$489,000.

**W**ith personal health and safety an air transportation issue, longer-term market prospects hold significant upside. Aircraft brokers as well as charter, jet card, and fractional program professionals all report unprecedented interest from business aviation first-timers.

Meanwhile, a possible inventory shortage looms.

Aircraft changing hands are getting older. The composite profile of a preowned business jet sold in the first half of 2019 was a 2004 model priced at \$4.4 million; for the first half of this year, the aircraft was a 2002 vintage, sold for \$3.7 million, according to JetNet. (The data service derived the figures from sales of the 236 business jet models it tracks.)

With a shortage of newer pedigrees, older airframes including early Citations, Hawker 700/800s, Bombardier Challengers, and Falcons and Gulfstreams into the vintage 900 and GIV series remain in demand, if they've been well maintained,

refurbished, and upgraded, and are cosmetically appealing. Concurrently, lesser examples of these same models are being sold for the value of salvageable resale parts.

"A turnkey older business jet ready for operations will attract a substantial number of [cash] buyers," says Jason Zilberbrand, president of aircraft valuation and appraisal service Vref.

Yet even as demand for late-model pre-owned aircraft grows, new business jet shipments will shrink about 22 to 25 percent this year, JetNet forecasts. A decline in new aircraft sales, of course, creates more squeeze in the preowned market.

"The largest segment of buyers for business jets in the U.S. is those looking for a sub-\$5 million aircraft that can seat eight and travel over 2,500 nautical miles," Zilberbrand says. "Until one of the manufacturers can build a midsize jet that doesn't breach the \$15 million sales price, the preowned market will continue to attract buyers." **BJT**



**James Wynbrandt**  
(jwynbrandt@bjtonline.com), a multi-engine instrument-rated pilot and regular **BJT** contributor, has written for the *New York Times*, *Forbes*, and *Barron's*.



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# SEAN PENN

**These days, the acclaimed actor, writer, and film director concentrates on charitable works, with a little help from business jets.**

by Margie Goldsmith

Two-time Academy Award winner Sean Penn has been a household name for decades, thanks largely to starring roles in films like *Fast Times at Ridgmont High*, *Racing with the Moon*, *The Falcon and the Snowman*, *Deadman Walking*, *Mystic River*, and *Milk*. In recent years, though, the now 60-year-old actor, writer, and film director has focused more on social causes than on his Hollywood career.

Penn is a seeker of his own truth and doesn't accept the word of governments or the media—or even instruction manuals: he says that when he bought a complicated Nikon camera, he threw out the manual, explaining that he is instruction-intolerant and is better off making mistakes until he figures something out. He visited Iraq to understand for himself what was happening there; he has also met Fidel Castro in Cuba, Hugo Chávez in Venezuela, and the infamous drug lord El Chapo in Mexico.

Eleven years ago, after the earthquake in Haiti, he went there and founded the Haitian Relief Organization, which evolved into a group known as CORE (Community Organized Relief Fund). The nonprofit has helped Haiti and other countries and currently concentrates its efforts on testing for COVID-19.

While Penn approaches such missions with the utmost seriousness, he smiles often, laughs easily, and comes across as humble, shy, and self-deprecating. He smokes incessantly and says, “There are a lot of people out of work, but the job security I provide for oncologists is unparalleled.”

He spoke with us via video call from his home in Santa Monica, California.

## FASTFACTS

- ▶ **NAME:** Sean Justin Penn
- ▶ **BORN:** Aug. 17, 1960 (age 60), in Santa Monica, California
- ▶ **CAREER:** Actor, director, screenwriter, and/or producer for more than 50 films. Also a novelist.
- ▶ **PHILANTHROPY:** Founder of CORE (Community Organized Relief Effort)
- ▶ **EDUCATION:** Santa Monica High School
- ▶ **HONORS:** 2012 Peace Summit Award for disaster relief work in Haiti. Numerous acting awards, including two Oscars for best actor (*Mystic River*, 2003; *Milk*, 2008) and three more Academy Award nominations in the same category (*Dead Man Walking*, 1995; *Sweet and Lowdown*, 1999; *I Am Sam*, 2001)
- ▶ **PERSONAL:** Previously married to Madonna and to actress Robin Wright, with whom he has a son and daughter. Married third wife, Australian actress Leila George, in 2020. Loves woodworking and cross-country road trips.

PHOTOS: ERIC RAY/DAVIDSON



**Did your father and mother play a role in your attraction to acting?**

Yes. They were both actors, but they weren't part of the movie business social life, so my world was dragsters and surfing. There was no real sense of following in the family business, but they supported me once I did it.

**Who most influenced your acting?**

I was making little films with friends when I was at Santa Monica High School. A really wonderful actor, Anthony Zerbe, would come to Career Day and, when he spoke, it got me exhilarated about my newfound interest. By the time I was in acting school, it was Robert De Niro, Al Pacino, Dustin Hoffman, and Jack Nicholson. Nicholson wasn't just a great actor; he was a charismatic person.

**You directed him in *The Crossing Guard*. What did you learn from him?**

I think one tries to be a bit of a sponge and not analyze what they're sponging; but Jack Nicholson, besides being a great actor, is as smart about film and film storytelling as anyone I know. His natural relationship with the truth is something he was able to harness in a particularly compelling way.

**I know you're very proud of *Milk*, and you've said that Harvey Milk became the song in your life. What is it about him and that role that so resonates with you?**

Harvey was such a dynamic leader that you couldn't help but kind of fall in love with him. It was the combination of a wonderful story about an incredible man with a great screenwriter, Lance Black, and as good a director as we have, Gus Van Sant.

**Do you think Milk's activism was the seed for your own?**

I felt a kinship to an awful lot of it and met a lot of the great activists who were very close to him.

"Harvey Milk would have been such an important advocate had he not been killed right before the HIV plague."

Harvey Milk would have been such an important advocate had he not been killed right before the plague of HIV. He probably would have led a productive conversation about that virus on a national level [years before it was widely discussed]. I think the loss of him was the loss of many other lives.

**You once said, "I have a great love affair with humanity. But I'm not too good about humans." Why?**

Social discomfort. I'm not a natural-born social animal. So I don't think the era of quarantine is a sea change for me.

**You wrote *Bob Honey Who Just Do Stuff*, and a year later, you wrote a sequel, *Bob Honey Sings Jimmy Crack Corn*. Are you working on another sequel?**

No. I'm working on a novel that's independent of that series.

**I heard you were thinking of becoming a full-time novelist.**

There is one reason why I'm not going to be a full-time novelist yet: my bank account. Between the CORE organization and my reluctance to do certain kinds of projects, I've got about six cents in the bank. I'll find my way to write while doing other things.

**As we speak, the election is still a few weeks away, but what are your thoughts on Donald Trump?**

This is somebody who was born to damage, and we were willing to ignore each other enough for that to happen. It is absolutely possible that Trump could win the presidency again, but that would not be a triumph of him or his base. That would be a failing of the rest of us to get together and do what we know we've got to do.

**What do you think we need to do?**

We've got to have a policy of mandatory service: forestry or working with the elderly or environmental projects. It's a great way to offset student loans and give young people an opportunity, so they go out into the world knowing that their actions matter. I've seen this around the world. I see it with the volunteers and staff at CORE, mostly young



COURTESY OF FOCUS FEATURES

Penn won an Oscar for his starring role in *Milk*.



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Above: Penn films Emile Hirsch for *Into the Wild*.  
Left: Penn stars in *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*.

people. It's a different breed. Once somebody sees that they matter, it changes everything.

**Was your 2005 trip to New Orleans to aid and rescue Hurricane Katrina victims the beginning of your humanitarian work?**

In terms of hands on, yes. I grew up partly in Southern California, where we now have these fires. I experienced the way a community gets together, be it related to fires or storms and tides and sandbagging for each other. I also saw how quickly people become

disconnected neighbors right after it's done.

For me, what was most significant about New Orleans after Katrina was I had always thought that one might get in the way of a greater government deployment to these things. But what you find out when you get into these areas is that those productive government agencies and individuals are most grateful to have another hand there. Our first day we were able to bring about 40 people out of the flood zone. There was a lesson in that.

**What did you hope to accomplish in 2010 when you went to Haiti after the earthquake and started the non-profit that later became CORE?**

I was able to get enough support to get two airplanes, one for personnel. We put together a group of 30 aid workers, seven of them doctors. I'd been in contact with Paul Farmer, who had been working in Haiti for over two decades, and I asked what was needed. Even amputations were being done with no intravenous pain medication and at that time, there was one anesthesiologist in the entire country. We were able to get bulk intravenous pain

medication and deliver it to the trauma centers, clinics, and hospitals to which Paul Farmer guided us and were able to deploy our doctors to medical organizations on the ground.

We were resource people who did not know the Haitians' world, and they became the greatest resource that we could have. What started with 39 Haitians as full-time staff became 120 people with only five non-Haitians. We obtained visas for some of our Haitian staff to help in the hurricane belt in the United States, and that's where the organization became what is now Community Organized Relief Effort—CORE. We work in the Bahamas and Puerto Rico, throughout the hurricane belt, and in Haiti.

Because we had an infectious-disease history with the epidemic of cholera in Haiti, when COVID happened, through [California] Governor [Gavin] Newsom, [Los Angeles] Mayor [Eric] Garcetti, and the Los Angeles Fire Department, we formed partnerships and built out to what CORE's now doing with COVID-19 throughout the country.

**CORE has a staff of a thousand people nationwide, out of which 90 percent are women. Why do you think so many women are attracted to this?**

The father of my best buddy growing up said, "The toughest guy on the block is the one with the least to lose." And now, the toughest guy on the block isn't a guy. We're not trying to recruit women, per se; we're an emergency-response organization, identifying the strongest leaders, the best communicators, and the people with the most will and grit.

**You can get coronavirus test results in two days as opposed to the five it takes in some of the wealthiest communities. How do you do that?**

We're not a medical organization; we're sample collectors, and we need tests. People have to know very clearly that they must quarantine from the time they take their test till the time they are notified. Any contact in between can nullify that result. We have a guarantee of 48 hours or less. At that point, contact tracing has to begin immediately.



### How can people help CORE?

We are totally dependent on contributions. This is expensive work and we need constant help, so as little or as much as people can contribute will help. They can also volunteer through the website [coreresponse.org].

### What will CORE concentrate on after a vaccine is found?

We'll be looking at what models are made available for people to get vaccinations. We're encouraging flu shots because these respiratory issues are going to affect people who will be afraid they have COVID. If necessary, we'll turn our current test sites into test and vaccination sites. Until the world is vaccinated, we're vulnerable.

### How is CORE using business aviation?

This was a lifesaver for us. I had to get staff around the country and fly to eight cities mul-

tiple times as well as travel to Navajo Nation. Working 18-hour days and getting to a flight on time can be difficult, not to mention exposing our staff to the infection. Angel Flight, an NGO, helps us out. Sawyer Aviation and Glencoe Aviation helped us in the past where we needed

to really scramble. You can't go out there unless you're paying for a flight out of pocket, which is a problem if you don't have the money. We can't justify taking donor money to use private planes, so without these companies getting on board, we would not have been able to expand as we did.

### You've flown privately aside from CORE?

Quite a bit. Most of the time when I fly privately, I'm promoting a movie and the studio is paying for it. And there were times where I did something on my dime. For example, I would take a red-eye to Miami a lot to go in and out of Port-au-Prince. If I waited for the next commercial connection, I'd end up losing that day of work on the ground, so I'd fly commercially to Miami and then take the hop to Haiti on my own nut.

I was flying once on the studio's dime from Los Angeles to the Venice Film Festival with Jack Nicholson. It was a pretty spacious plane. Jack came out of the restroom and looked around. There was a lot of room over his head and he said, "Seanie, one more Batman [movie] and I'll get [a jet like this], the kind on which you can stand up."

### Is there a particular airplane that you prefer?

I like Hawkers and Challengers.

### If you could buy your own aircraft, what would you buy?

Probably something with the most range. Were it just me and I could afford it—now this is, of course, just dreaming; this is not talking about environmental impact—I would probably live in a tent if I could have a private plane at the ready to go wherever I wanted to go. I think the only thing that keeps me from more travel is going through terminals and having cell phones pointed at me, waiting for me to pick my nose for it to go on TMZ. And to go through a private terminal and get up in the sky, I don't care how long we're up there, I love it. **BJT**

### Margie Goldsmith

(mgoldsmith@bjtonline.com), a longtime contributor, interviewed former NFL quarterback Terry Bradshaw for our summer 2020 issue. This interview has been edited and condensed.



CORE cofounders Penn and Ann Lee in Haiti

COURTESY OF CORE (COMMUNITY ORGANIZED RELIEF EFFORT)



Penn at home with a friend in Southern California

ERIC RAY DAVIDSON



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# Dassault Falcon 6X

This forthcoming model continues the company's tradition of mating a big cabin with class-leading efficiency.

by Mark Huber

**D**assault has begun assembly of the first Falcon 6X long-range twin-jet in preparation for an initial flight in 2021 and says the model remains on track for entry into service by 2022. "Everything has been proceeding according to plan. The design was frozen earlier this year and the manufacturing process is well underway," says Eric Trappier, chairman and CEO of Dassault Aviation.

The front, main, and rear fuselage sections of the aircraft are being assembled at Dassault's factory in Biarritz, France. The first 6X has been powered up at Dassault's Bordeaux-Mérignac facility, and assembly of aircraft two and three is well underway.

Dassault announced the approximately \$47 million 6X last year after it abandoned work on the somewhat smaller 5X due to ongoing engine-development problems with another manufacturer. Those problems proved serendipitous. Upgrading to a Pratt & Whitney Canada engine gave Dassault the opportunity

to redesign what was to have been the 5X with a 20-inch-longer cabin, more features, and longer range. Taken together, these changes position the 6X to more effectively compete in the twin-jet, large-cabin space.

The 14- to 16-passenger aircraft has the largest cross section of any purpose-designed business jet: eight and a half feet wide, six and a half feet high, and just over 40 feet long. Like most Falcons, this one will blend good short- and long-range capabilities. It will be able to use runways as short as 3,000 feet (partially loaded) while delivering a range of 5,500 nautical miles with a top speed of Mach 0.90. The airplane is designed to stay in the air for up to 12 hours, and the range enables city pairs that include Los Angeles–London, Sao Paulo–Chicago, and Paris–Beijing at Mach 0.85. That puts the 6X in direct competition with the new Gulfstream G500 and Bombardier Global 5500.

The 6X's high-efficiency engines deliver 10 percent better fuel economy than legacy engines in their thrust class. Their core has logged more than





## 2022 Dassault Falcon 6X at a Glance

Price	\$47 million (as of 2018)
Engines	2 Pratt & Whitney Canada PW812D, 13,000–14,000 lb of thrust
Avionics	Honeywell/EASy III
Crew	2–5
Passengers	14–16
Range	5,500 nm
Fast cruise speed	Mach 0.90
Cabin	Width: 102 in
	Height: 78 in ft
	Length: 40.4 ft
Baggage capacity	155 cu ft

Source: Dassault

14,000 hours of bench testing. Dassault reports that engine testing is proceeding well, including two series of test flights of the 6X's PW812D on Pratt & Whitney's Boeing 747 flying test bed. The engine has completed high-risk certification tests, which include bird strikes and hot/cold weather trials. The six development engines have accumulated more than 1,200 hours of testing and run time. Testing of other aircraft systems also is proceeding apace, including with the digital flight controls and the hydraulic, braking, air, water, and electrical systems.

The new wing is designed to mitigate turbulence and is equipped with flaperons, leading-edge slats, and trailing-edge flaps. The flaperons save weight, improve control, and smooth out turbulence by combining flaps and ailerons into a single control surface: flaps deploy to increase lift at low speeds while ailerons regulate bank and roll. The new wing provides good high- and low-speed performance; its leading-edge slats and trailing-edge flaps combine to lower takeoff and approach speeds—up to 10 knots slower than comparable bizjets. At maximum takeoff weight, the Falcon needs a balanced field length of as little as 5,480 feet. It can also access airports requiring steep approaches such as London City.

All of the 6X's aerodynamic control surfaces are linked to a next-generation fly-by-wire flight-control system. Dassault has traditionally been a trailblazer among bizjet makers in adapting military technology such as 3D computer



## FACTORY-NEW AIRCRAFT

design, sidesticks, and fly-by-wire controls. These innovations come naturally, as the company also builds the highly successful line of Rafale and Mirage jet fighters. (Many of the engineers who designed those airplanes also worked on the 6X.) Dassault has a reputation for taking airframe aerodynamic optimization to the next level and almost an obsession with trimming weight out of the final product. The Falcon 6X continues this tradition. It is also slated to be the first bizjet with a nitrogen-based fuel pressurization system.

The new EASy III cockpit features a simplified, one-button, power-up system, the FalconEye combined vision system, and head-up display for landing in low-visibility situations and better situational awareness, and the Falcon II integrated electronic flight bag, which cuts flight-planning time and effort. New and larger crew seats provide more legroom and comfort for pilots and can recline to 130 degrees. The four large cockpit windows provide wide-angle visibility and the glare shield gives pilots an expanded field of view.

Designed with product support in mind, the 6X will use the Falcon Broadcast data-sharing system paired with artificial intelligence to enable analysts to anticipate maintenance needs before customers call with problems.

Good as these performance numbers and features are, what really sells the 6X is the capacious, bright, and airy cabin. A skylight illuminates the entryway and 30 windows flood the cabin with natural light. All that space allows for a good deal of flexibility, including the ability to have conference-table seating for six and a comfortable aft stateroom. The wider cabin also makes it possible for the 6X to offer a bigger galley.

The environmental system delivers a cabin altitude of 3,900 feet while the



DAVID MCINTOSH

aircraft is at 41,000 feet. The air-filtration system circulates and refreshes air every two to three minutes, and cabin noise is “below the level of normal conversation,” Dassault says. High-speed cabin connectivity via FalconConnect will be on par with the most sophisticated home or office systems. The system provides simplified cabin-management and entertainment control wirelessly through personal devices while providing seamless, global communications.

All these attributes combine to suggest that Dassault has a winner in the 6X. **BJT**

### Mark Huber

(mhuber@bjtonline.com), an aviation industry veteran, has reviewed aircraft for **BJT** since 2005.



THE 6X WILL USE THE FALCON BROADCAST DATA-SHARING SYSTEM PAIRED WITH ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TO ANTICIPATE MAINTENANCE NEEDS BEFORE CUSTOMERS CALL WITH PROBLEMS.

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# Boeing MD-87



PHOTOS: JET TRANSACTIONS

Want to travel in style with a small entourage?

For the money, an executive-configured version of this airliner is hard to beat.

*by Mark Huber*

**F**or less than \$5 million, you can buy a refurbished Boeing MD-87, originally designed for up to 130 airline passengers, with updated avionics, an executive interior that seats 19 to 30, and a range of 4,800 nautical miles when fitted with auxiliary belly tanks. Parts and pilots are plentiful. Moreover, the former are cheap when compared with similar components for large corporate jets because hundreds of MD-80 series aircraft have been permanently parked by the airlines in Arizona, California, and New Mexico with their parts just waiting to be plucked for pennies on the dollar.

That's the good news. Now the bad: expect fuel burn of 950 gallons an hour—nearly double that of a big Gulfstream. And with its maximum takeoff

weight of 151,000 pounds, you can't fly this bird everywhere. The runways can be short, but they need to be thick enough to support the heft, and that generally means you're going to land somewhere with a major sports franchise.

Still, for the money, an executive MD-87 is hard to beat when you want to travel in style with a small entourage. "They are an incredible value," says Andreas Mauritzson, whose firm, JetTransactions, is currently brokering a pair. "Performance-wise, this airplane does the exact same thing as a BBJ [Boeing Business Jet], with similar direct operating costs. The cabin is whisper-quiet, and the airplane delivers a very nice ride." Mauritzson, who typically brokers purpose-built corporate jets, also says that maintaining one of these

beasts will cost less than you think. “I was shocked by how [relatively] cheap these aircraft are to maintain,” he says, noting as an example that replacing a windshield on an MD-87 costs less than 10 percent of what it does on a large corporate jet.

You can trace the model’s roots back to the Douglas DC-9 twinjet, an aircraft that first flew in 1965. (McDonnell merged with Douglas in 1967 and its commercial aircraft from that point forward carried the “MD” moniker; Boeing bought McDonnell Douglas for \$13 billion in 1996.)

Two months before the FAA even certified the original variant of the airplane, Americans could see a DC-9 every Wednesday night on the ABC television network’s *Amos Burke Secret Agent*. An unmarked DC-9-10 would taxi in while nattily dressed star Gene Barry waited on the ramp with his bulletproof 1962 Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud II. The jet would stop, Barry would point his sonic pen at the cabin door, opening it and deploying the built-in air stair. And off he’d go to save the world. Five years later, *Playboy* magazine publisher Hugh Hefner paid \$5 million for a new DC-9-30, painted it black, installed a custom executive/party interior that included a round bed with an opossum cover, and staffed it with Playboy bunnies. The iconic jet became known as “Big Bunny.”



The TV show and Hefner’s jet helped to publicize the aircraft, but its design deserves most of the credit for its success: two Pratt & Whitney JT8D turbofans bolted to the back of a fuselage mated to a pair of efficient wings and a T-tail. The pieces harmonized to enable operations off 5,000-foot runways in small and mid-sized urban areas, bringing commercial jet service to millions who had thought they might never see it. Some 976 DC-9s rolled off the assembly line at Long Beach, California, before production transitioned to larger and more efficient variants known as the MD-80 series.

This series proved even more successful than the DC-9, with 1,191 built between 1979 and 1999 across six models designated from MD-81 to MD-88. The aircraft remains in service with several airlines around the world, but the last commercial carriers flying it in the U.S.—Allegiant, American, and Delta—are all scheduled to phase it out this year or early next. (Between 1993 and 2000, the manufacturer built 116 copies of a stretched version of the MD-80 series, the MD-90, which can seat 156 to 172 passengers in airline configuration; a short-



### Boeing MD-87 at a Glance

Price (used)	\$3–\$5 million
Passengers (typical executive)	20–24
Typical Cruising Speed	470 knots
Max. Takeoff Weight	151,000 lb
Range	2,900–4,800 nm*
Cabin	Height: 6 ft 8 in
	Width: 10 ft 3 in
	Length: 82 ft 8 in

\*Depends on fuel-tank capacity, which varies.



PHOTOS: JET TRANSACTIONS

ened version—initially christened the MD-95 and later renamed the 717 after Boeing bought McDonnell Douglas—sold another 156 units between 1998 and 2006. China’s Comac has built limited numbers of an airplane called the ARJ-21, which closely resembles the 717; there were more than 30 of those in service at the end of 2020.

The MD-80 series is renowned for its durability and “old school” flying characteristics. Retired airline captain Jim Russell logged 24,000 hours in MD-80s and is hard-pressed to recall any significant maintenance issues with the airplane that caused missed flights or en route drama. “It was a really solid airplane and really quiet in the cockpit and the cabin,” he says.

There have been a few accidents over the years that have accounted for 35 hull losses, but almost all have been attributable to pilot error or maintenance snafus. The most notorious of the latter occurred when an Alaska Airlines MD-83 went out of control and crashed off the California coast in 2000 due to improper maintenance of its trim system, according to the National Transportation Safety Board.

Between 1987 and 1992, McDonnell Douglas built 75 MD-87s, a variant 17 feet shorter than other MD-80s and aimed primarily at the short-haul European airline market. Approximately 11 of these were converted to VIP/executive configuration, according to Mauritzson. He says that given the airplane’s price point today, converting an old airliner MD-87 to an executive cabin probably doesn’t make sense, given the year of downtime and \$2 million cost.

The MD-87 comes standard with forward and aft built-in air stairs, making passenger entry/egress a non-issue. The aircraft that Mauritzson is selling all have fully updated avionics required for U.S. and international travel and are equipped with amenities that include a private stateroom, three lavatories (one with a shower), and two galleys. He recommends seeking out models



equipped with the Pratt & Whitney JT8D-219 engines as opposed to the Dash 217C model, as the former offers an extra thousand pounds of thrust per side. There are plenty of maintenance providers for the aircraft and costs can further be reduced by participating in Boeing’s low-utilization maintenance program, as most executive MD-87s see only 200 to 300 hours in the air per year or even less.

While admitting the market for the airplane is somewhat narrow, Mauritzson says, “The people who like these airplanes really like them.” So pull up in your Rolls-Royce and hop aboard. The MD-87 looks a little different from the 1965 DC-9 that Amos Burke jetted off in, but the world still needs saving.



**Mark Huber**  
(mhuber@bjtonline.com), an aviation industry veteran, has reviewed aircraft for **BJT** since 2005.



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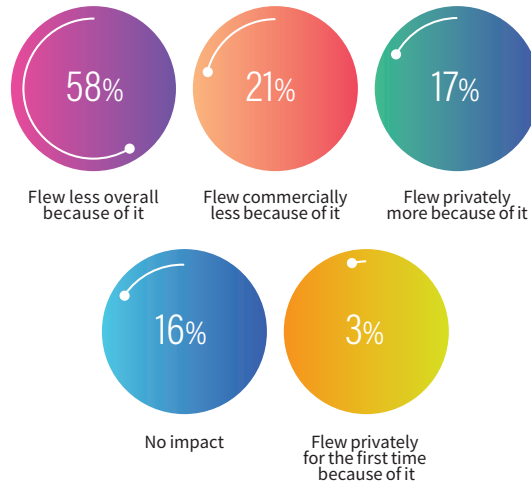
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SURVEY

Here are the results of our 2020 Readers' Choice survey, which attracted 1,854 respondents. That's more than in any year except 2019, when we received a record 2,225 responses. As promised, we have made a contribution for every completed survey to Corporate Angel Network, which arranges flights on business aircraft to treatment centers for cancer patients.

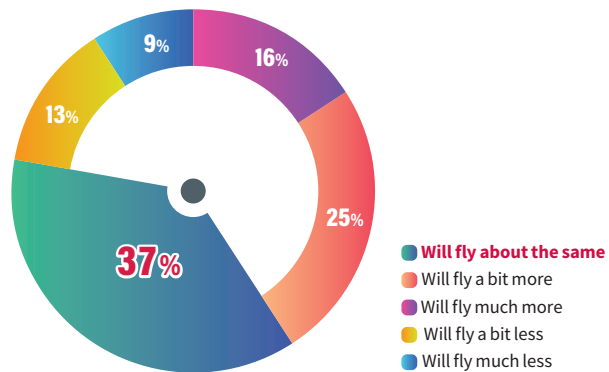
Note: percentages don't always total 100 due to rounding and because respondents were allowed to select multiple answers for some questions.

FLYING PRIVATELY

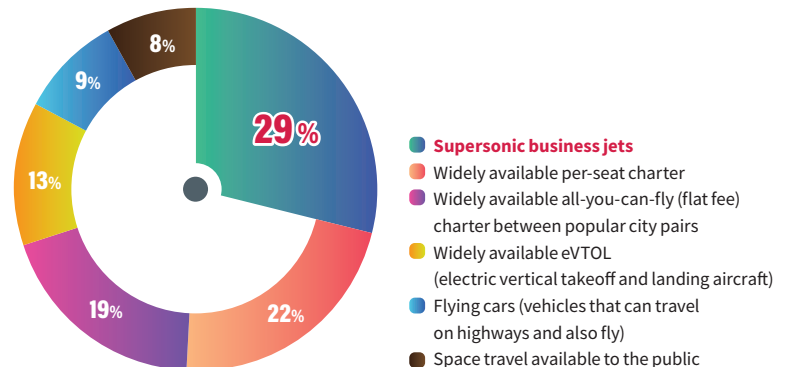
How has the COVID-19 virus affected your private flying?



After the COVID-19 crisis ends, how do you expect your private flying over the following year will compare with your private flying in the year before the crisis?

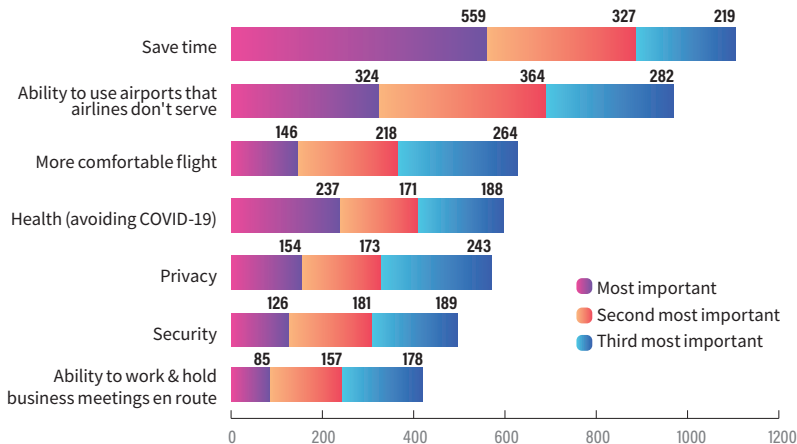


Which of the following would most interest you?

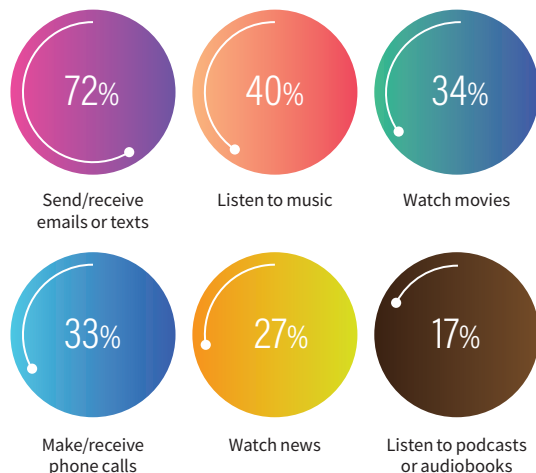




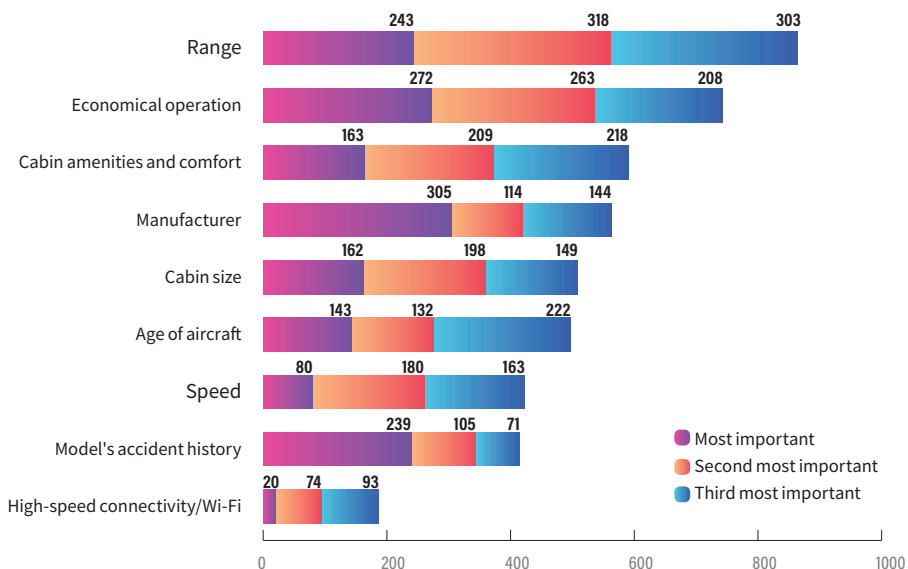
What are the three most important reasons you fly privately?



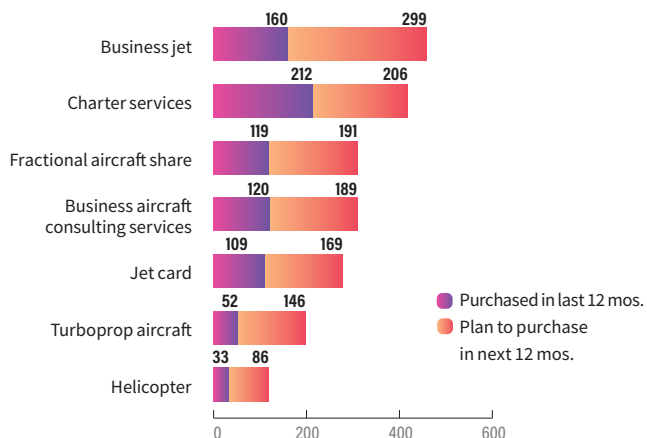
Which of the following do you frequently do in flight?



Which three of these aircraft features are most important to you?



Which of the following have you purchased in the last 12 months or do you expect to purchase in the next 12 months, personally or as a company owner or employee?



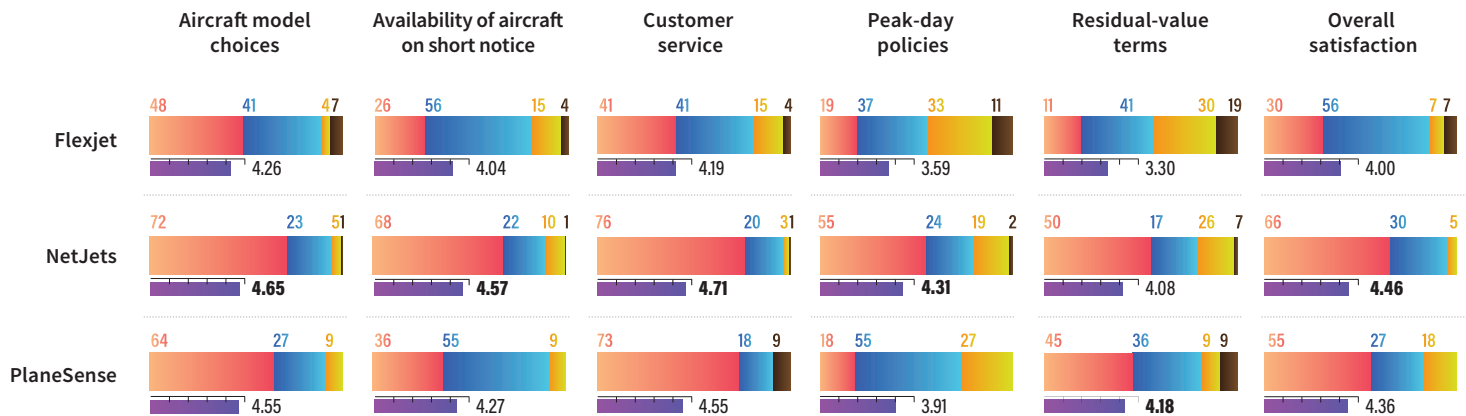


MARK WAGNER

## FRACTIONAL-SHARE PROVIDERS

■ Excellent 
 ■ Very Good 
 ■ Average  
■ Fair or Poor 
 ■ Weighted Average\*\*

Please rate the fractional aircraft provider you've used the most on each of these factors\*:



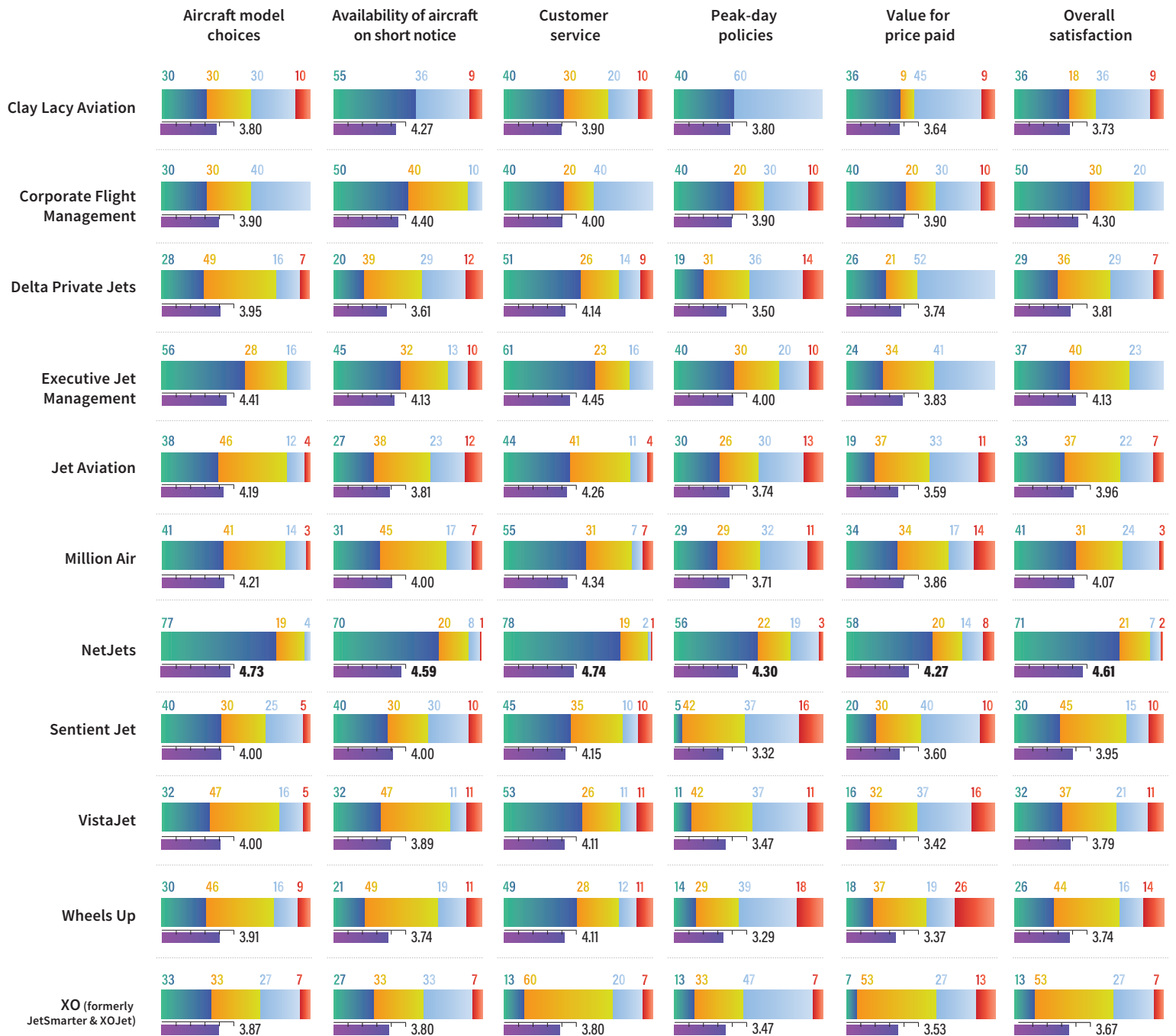
\*Asked of respondents who owned a fractional share in the past three years. Companies listed are the ones for which we received sufficient response to allow for meaningful results.

\*\*Determined by assigning points to ratings: Excellent (5), Very Good (4), Average (3), Fair (2), Poor (1)

# CHARTER AND JET CARD PROVIDERS AND MEMBERSHIP CLUBS

Please rate your most recent experience with air charter, a jet card, or a membership club on each of these factors\*:

% Excellent % Very Good % Average % Fair or Poor % Weighted Average\*\*



\*Asked of respondents who used a charter operator, jet card, or membership club in the past three years. Companies listed are the ones for which we received sufficient response to allow for meaningful results.

\*\*Determined by assigning points to ratings: Excellent (5), Very Good (4), Average (3), Fair (2), Poor (1)

# OWNED AIRPLANES

Please rate the owned airplane you use the most on each of these factors\*:

■ % Excellent 
 ■ % Very Good 
 ■ % Average 
 ■ % Fair or Poor 
 ■ % Weighted Average\*\*



\*Asked of respondents who said that they or their companies have owned an airplane in the past three years. Companies listed are the ones for which we received sufficient response to allow for meaningful results.

\*\*Determined by assigning points to ratings: Excellent (5), Very Good (4), Average (3), Fair (2), Poor (1)

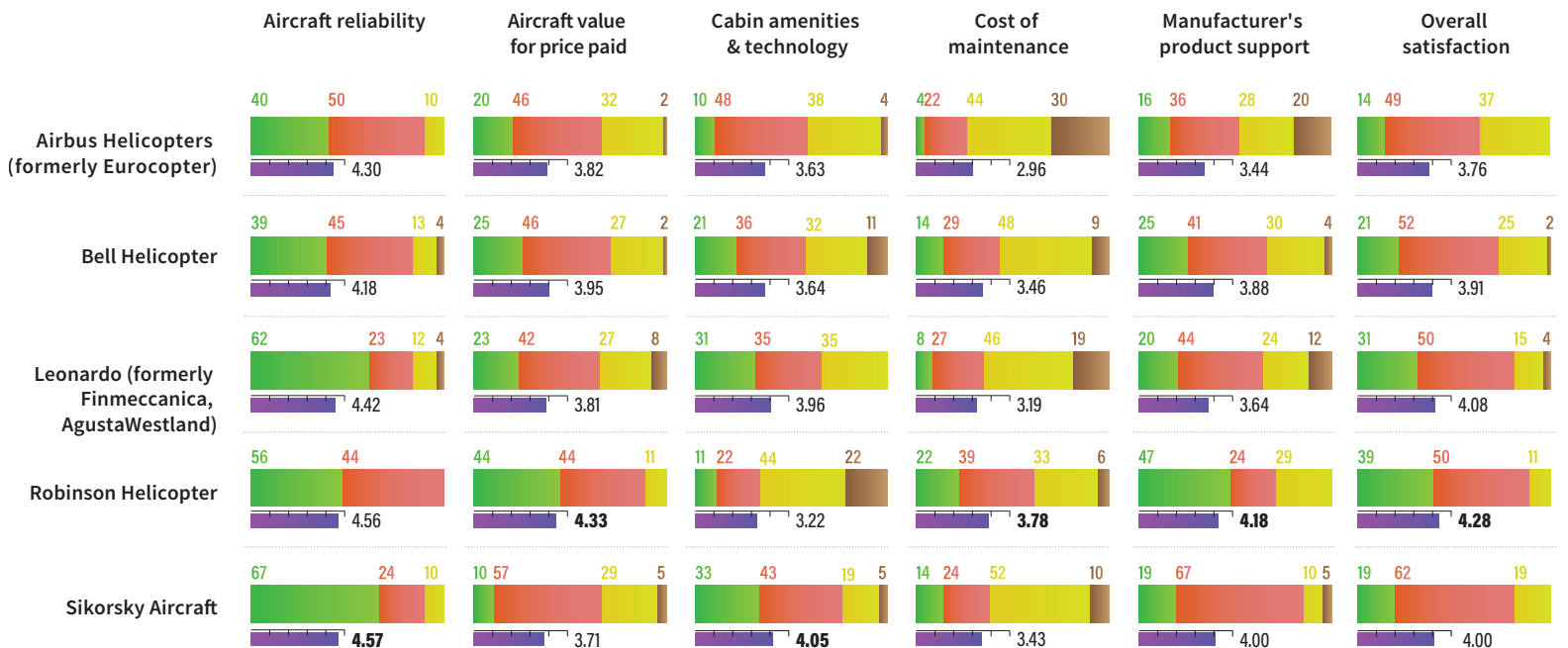


MARIANO ROSALES

## OWNED HELICOPTERS

Please rate the owned helicopter you use the most on each of these factors\*:

% Excellent % Very Good % Average % Fair or Poor % Weighted Average\*\*



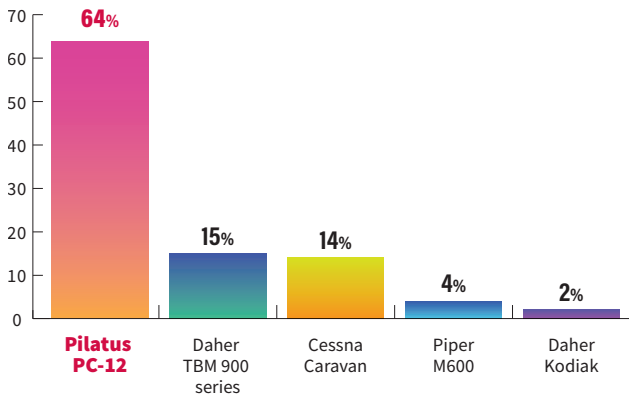
\*Asked of respondents who said that they or their companies have owned an airplane in the past three years. Companies listed are the ones for which we received sufficient response to allow for meaningful results.

\*\*Determined by assigning points to ratings: Excellent (5), Very Good (4), Average (3), Fair (2), Poor (1)

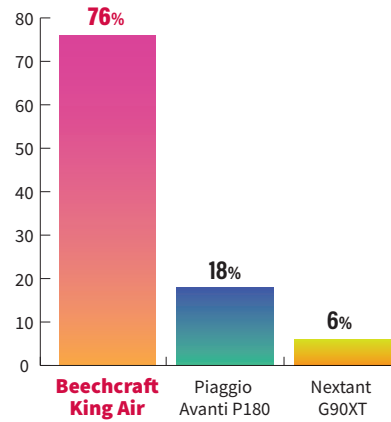
# PREFERRED AIRCRAFT

If you could regularly fly on any of these aircraft, which would you choose in each category?

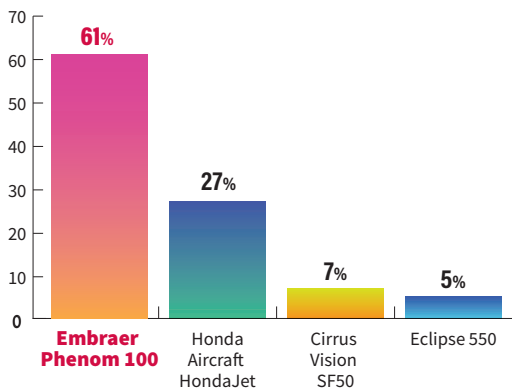
## Single-engine turboprops



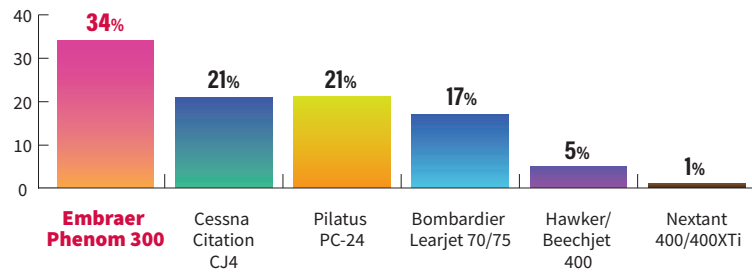
## Twin turboprops



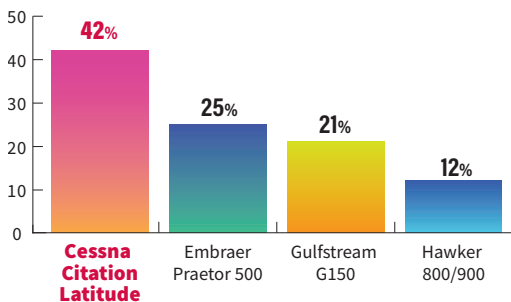
## Very light jets (VLJs)



## Small-cabin/light jets

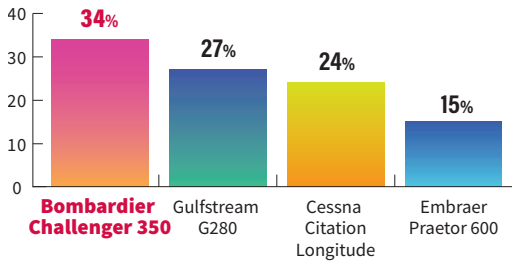


## Midsized-cabin jets

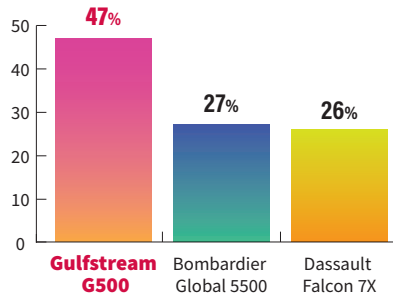


PLANESENSE

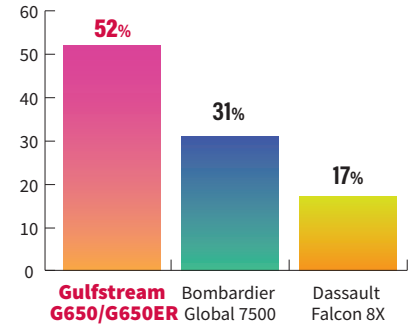
### Super-midsize-cabin jets



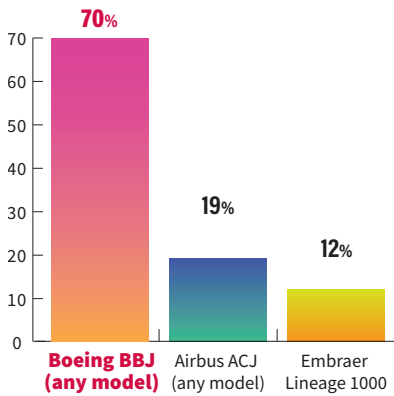
### Large-cabin jets



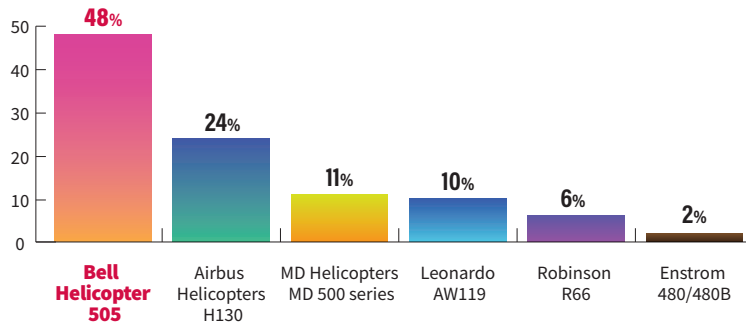
### Ultra-long-range/heavy jets



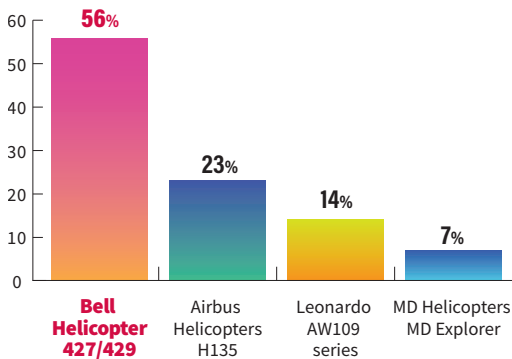
### Bizliners



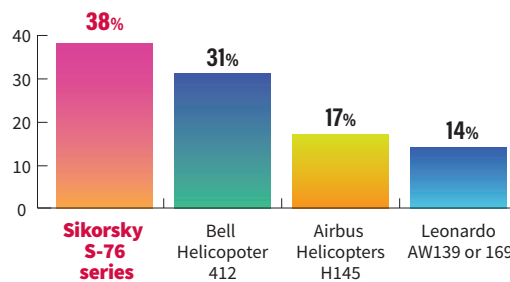
### Light single-turbine helicopters



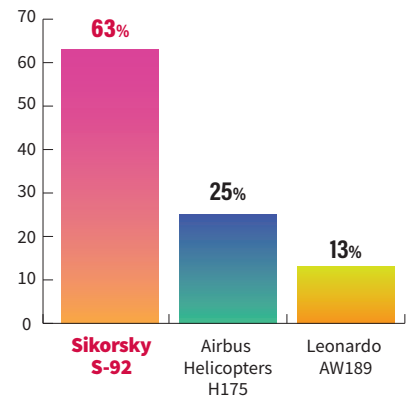
### Light, twin-turbine helicopters



### Medium, twin-turbine helicopters



### Large, twin-turbine helicopters



# How the pandemic is changing the customer experience

Providers implement safety measures but worry about the “impersonal” touch.

by James Wynbrandt

Maybe you haven't chartered since the pandemic began. Or perhaps you're a first-timer wondering what life was like on board before the flight crews wore masks. Or you could be a long-term customer curious about how your provider's new normal compares with others'. We asked some leading charter operators and brokers about the changes they've implemented and seen that affect their customers' experience with regard to prices, catering, health screenings, cabin attendant protocols, and more.

The companies we spoke with include Clay Lacy Aviation, Executive Jet Management, Jet Aviation, Jet Linx, Magellan Jets, Paramount Business Jets, Priester Aviation, Solairus Aviation, and XO. This list includes three of the top five, and half of the dozen largest charter operators as well as seasoned brokerages that utilize a network of vetted operators. So their responses reflect what any customer of a quality charter provider will likely experience now and for the foreseeable future.

First, with regard to pricing: charter costs have been swinging wildly, exhibiting “as much volatility as we've seen in the stock market,” says Anthony Tivnan, cofounder and president of brokerage Magellan Jets. The swings have been almost exclusively on the downside, with prices bouncing from the initial lockdown plunge to partial recoveries (such as in the summer travel season). These fluctuations are expected to continue at least until



international borders reopen.

Point-to-point, or one-way, pricing has become more available on some routes and less on others, respondents report. These flights are particularly in demand by first-time charterers drawn to private aviation by COVID-19 exigencies, says Leslie Cheshier, Jet Aviation's vice president for owner and charter services for the Americas. “They are definitely shopping around, looking for the best price

point,” she notes, adding that Jet Aviation is spending “more time with this market segment to help educate them.” So are other providers.

Availability at XO and Jet Linx, which are built on point-to-point charter models, is unchanged.

Reflecting demand, charter pricing on light, midsize, and super-midsize jets has resisted the discounting seen with large-cabin jets, which suffer from stagnant international activity.



When you arrive at the airport for your flight, you'll get the forward-facing view of COVID-era safety protocols that your provider has adopted. Ramp-side drop-off is the new standard, as many operators and brokers—and customers—try to minimize potentially risky time spent at ground facilities. Up to 70 percent of trip requests at Paramount Business Jets “specify direct access to the aircraft without stepping inside an FBO or otherwise interacting with non-crewmembers,” says Richard Zahir, founder and CEO of the Leesburg, Virginia, brokerage.

You will likely be asked to unload your own luggage from your car and place it where gloved crewmembers can take it directly to the aircraft without it touching intermediary hands.

Before boarding, you will sign a declaration affirming your health and lack of recent exposure to contagious infections. (You will have been asked when booking about prospective passengers' health and recent travel.)

All your charter provider's personnel will wear face masks and practice social distancing.

Once you're on board, you won't be required to wear a face mask but will be encouraged to do so. You will be asked not to approach the flight deck except to report an emergency.

Though only large-cabin jets require qualified cabin attendants, operators often provide them on super-midsize and smaller aircraft. Attendants will remain in the crew rest area when not providing services. Information will be conveyed over the cabin audio system rather than face to face.

On flights where cabin attendants aren't required, some customers have asked to fly without them, which providers advise against. Health concerns may trigger the requests, but “cabin attendants are part of stringent cleaning protocols,” explains Kevin Thomas, president and COO of XO. “We try to be clear with customers: [attendants] are responsible for so much more than just the service.”

Though he was speaking about attendants at XO and sister company VistaJet, the comment applies to all providers' attendants.

However, such attendants no longer prepare meals, and COVID has taken onboard dining, once a highpoint of many charter flights, down a star or two. Cabin attendants at Clay Lacy “would regularly source food and supplies from local farmers' markets, specialty stores, and restaurants,” says Scott Cutshall, senior vice president of business

operations. “Now, almost all food and supplies are sourced from caterers who have been verified to have their own strict COVID protocols in place.”

“Family-style” service and onboard replating of meals are out. Box lunches and individually packaged meals are in, and so is more use of disposable utensils.

Catering menus have been pared, and some of your favorite onboard snacks may be missing; operators are cutting down on the number of items carried and replenishing what they do offer more frequently, to reduce the amount of time any food stays on board.

Many services added in response to the pandemic are behind the scenes.

Though this all amounts to greatly enhanced customer service, the concern among providers is that social distancing, masks, and other safety protocols can give the opposite impression.

“We're trying to increase customer safety,” says Andy Priester, president and CEO of Priester Aviation, the Chicago-based charter/management company. “The risk is it feels a little less personal, and like less customer service.” Fortunately, he adds, “we find most people appreciate [the safety measures] and find an enhanced experience because they feel safer with the new protocols.”

Many services added in response to COVID—such as comprehensive cleaning programs and safety protocols that keep crews in hotels on overnight trips—are behind the scenes. (Providers often put details of proprietary protocols on their websites).

Meanwhile, though, some highly visible new

COVID-inspired consumer services are appearing. Jet Linx has introduced a jet card “for the consumer looking to experience our guaranteed services on a short-term, 90-day basis” and another for “businesses looking for guaranteed private jet services for their travel strategy,” says Jamie Walker, the company's president and CEO. Also, Paramount Business Jets now offers expedited pre-trip COVID-19 testing.

These new products and safety protocols are likely to remain in place until well after researchers develop a COVID-19 vaccine or cure.

“I don't think we understand what ‘after COVID’ is,” says Paul Class, a senior vice president at charter management company Solairus Aviation. He mentions issues such as the need for vaccine booster shots and more accurate testing, and adds, “I don't envision a world where we're going to get rid of this anytime soon.”

Moreover, there's one COVID change that all bizav providers agree could alter the charter world forever: the influx of clients who've avoided private aviation because they didn't feel it was a good value when they could travel first class on the airlines. Many providers report at least a doubling of such customers.

“We cannot overstate the long-term impact of these numbers,” says Brian Hirsh, president of NetJets' charter management subsidiary Executive Jet Management, which saw a fivefold year-over-year increase in first-time charterers in June. “A good portion of these entry-level, price-sensitive customers will graduate into chartering larger aircraft and increase their flight volume over time.”

**BJT**



**James Wynbrandt**  
(jwynbrandt@bjtonline.com), a multi-engine instrument-rated pilot and regular **BJT** contributor, has written for the *New York Times*, *Forbes*, and *Barron's*.



# Holiday Gift Guide

by Jennifer Leach English (except as noted)



## Food and Drink



### SOCIALLY DISTANCED AND SATISFIED

The Yeti V Series Hard Cooler ensures that outdoor dinner party guests remain hydrated—and that the beer stays cold. This stainless-steel cooler holds up to 46 cans (with ice) and features a deep-seal plug that renders it both leakproof and easy to drain.

It will also come in handy to store food from the freezer if a snowstorm knocks out power lines. **\$800 at [yeti.com](http://yeti.com)**



### BUBBLY BREAK

“Please serve yourself” takes on new meaning with this Moët & Chandon champagne vending machine, which you can stock with 360 chilled mini-bottles of bubbly and personalize with the lucky recipient’s name. **\$35,000 at [horchow.com](http://horchow.com)**

### FRESH PASTA MAKES IT ALL BETTER

Book Luca and Lorenzo for a private online cooking class for up to 100 people. Everyone will have a blast learning how to make ravioli and four other pasta shapes from two Italian brothers’ nonna’s recipe. You can also make southern lasagna or tiramisù.

**From \$390 at [airbnb.com/experiences](http://airbnb.com/experiences)**

## MERCI

Do you know a family that had to cancel a vacation to France this year (or that maybe just misses Paris)? OuiPlease will bring French luxury to their doorstep. A package will arrive bimonthly containing beautifully wrapped selections of everything from parfum to macarons. Yes please! **Starting at \$150/bimonthly at [ouipleasebox.com](http://ouipleasebox.com)**



## NO MORE WINE-ING

Let's be honest: COVID has taken a toll on our wine reserves, and a fully stocked wine fridge will likely come in handy for some time. The Ivation 46-bottle dual-zone glass and stainless-steel wine cooler will look sleek in any room and will keep reds and whites at just the right temperature. **\$700 at [amazon.com](http://amazon.com)**



## GLOBAL NOSH

For the foodie in your life: Snack Crate will deliver a monthly box of nibbles filled to the brim with treats from all over the world. Past boxes have included selections from Russia, Hawaii, and Korea. Your gift recipients may not be able to read the labels, but they'll love the contents. **About \$40/month at [snackcrate.com](http://snackcrate.com)**

## HONEY BEE

Savannah Bee Company aims to change the way people view honey by educating them about the crucial importance of honeybees—while providing some of the tastiest products around. The honey flute classic is a good starter gift for that sweet someone in your life. **\$28 at [savannahbee.com](http://savannahbee.com)**



## Clothes and Accessories

### BLING BOX

Know someone who keeps dozens of precious jewelry trinkets stacked in little boxes on various shelves and dressers? The Caroline extra-large jewelry case by Wolf offers an elegant place to store them all. It has 43 compartments lined with specially treated fabric to protect contents against tarnishing. It also comes with two travel cases to make it easy to safely take favorite baubles on the road. **\$755 at [wolf1834.com](http://wolf1834.com)**



### PUFF BALL

If the word "Woolrich" makes you think of your grandfather, you haven't seen the company's latest offerings, which include clothing and outerwear that is now as chic as it is durable. This Birch down jacket comes in four colors and will keep your chilliest friends warm and cozy—even when the temperature drops below zero. **\$695 at [woolrich.com](http://woolrich.com)**



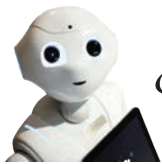
## CASH COUNTS

Luxury lovers will appreciate the beautiful lines of Louis Vuitton's Brazza leather wallet. It comes with five compartments to keep cash currencies sorted, 17 card slots, and a large zipped coin pocket. **\$850 at [louisvuitton.com](http://louisvuitton.com)**



## IT'S ABOUT TIME

This elegant, lockable leather case by Bey-Berk can wind four watches while storing five more, guaranteeing that the watch lover in your life will always be right on time. **About \$420 at [saksoff5th.com](http://saksoff5th.com)**



## Technology

## EVER EFFICIENT

Who needs cables? Belkin's three-in-one wireless charging station will keep an iPhone, Apple Watch, and AirPods powered up. And it will charge right through most phone cases. **\$113 at [amazon.com](http://amazon.com)**



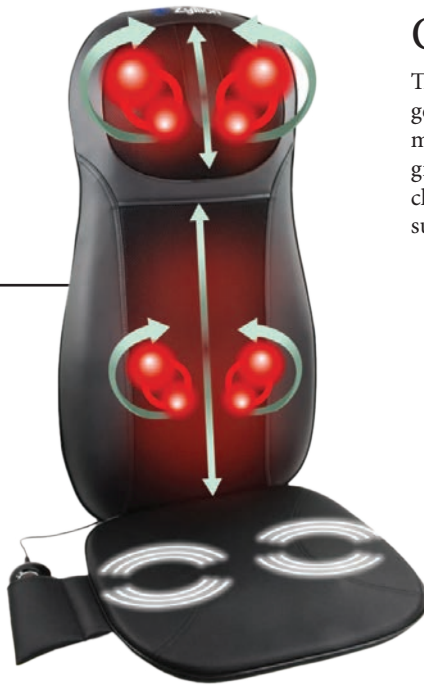
## GOOD MORNING

The Philips SmartSleep alarm clock will wake sleepers gently and leave them feeling refreshed. A built-in tracker measures bedroom light, noise, and humidity levels and gives recommendations for improving sleep, and the alarm clock doubles as a light therapy lamp that mimics a gentle sunrise. **\$170 at [amazon.com](http://amazon.com)**

## KNOTS

## NO MORE

Don't knock a portable massage mat until you've tried it. We love the Zyllion shiatsu back and neck massager, which fits perfectly on most chairs, has three speeds and heat, and does the trick almost as well as the real thing. **\$190 at [zyllion.com](http://zyllion.com)**



## 'HI, IT'S ROSIE O'DONNELL'

Cameo allows you to commission a personalized video message for that someone in your life who is a fan of a particular actor, politician, model, sports figure, or other celebrity. Most of them are C-list or below, but we spotted at least a few whose video shout-outs would make us smile. **From about \$50 at [cameo.com](http://cameo.com)**



## LIGHTS ON

Keep a city-slicker cyclist safe with the Street helmet by Lumos. It offers 360-degree lighted visibility and features built-in turn signals and brake lights.

**\$200 at [lumoshelmet.co](http://lumoshelmet.co)**



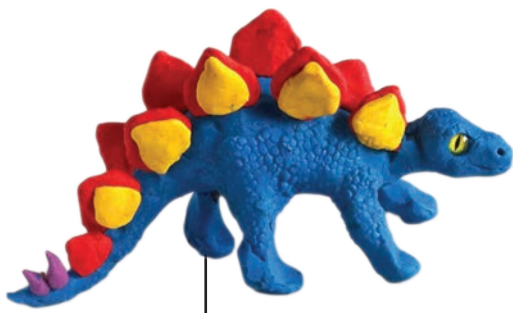
## Kid Stuff

### SMART BABY

Dozens of monthly box subscriptions are available for kids, but many that we've tried arrive filled with junk.

What a delight, then, to discover Lovevery for our little ones. The thoughtfully curated boxes—meant for children up to age three—are filled with beautiful learning toys made of wood and organic cotton and are designed to inspire young and developing minds.

**Starting at \$120/kit at [lovevery.com](http://lovevery.com)**



### DINO-MITE

Looking for a gift that will brighten up rainy days in quarantine? Check out the six-piece dinosaur modeling set by AllwaySmart. It includes plastic molds and ample clay, giving kids the freedom to create a purple T-Rex with blue and red spots or whatever their imaginations dream up.

**\$22 at [amazon.com](http://amazon.com)**

### BIZARRO CACTI!

Succulents are great starter plants for kids because they're prehistoric looking and easy to care for. We recommend Succulents Box, which even has a selection called "weirdos." You can order plants with names like "Paper Spine Cactus Tephrocactus" and "Crassula Red Pagoda Shark Tooth." Say that five times fast!

**From \$6/plant at [succulentsbox.com](http://succulentsbox.com)**



### SUSHI STARTER

Get your kids to crave spicy tuna rolls as much as you do with this 24-piece wooden set by Melissa & Doug.

**About \$20 at [nordstrom.com](http://nordstrom.com)**



### METAMORPHOSIS

Children of all ages will enjoy watching the day-to-day process of caterpillars turning into butterflies via the Insect Lore Butterfly Garden. The kit arrives with five baby caterpillars, food, and a pop-up clear habitat for easy observation. **\$36 at [amazon.com](http://amazon.com)**



# Home Decor



## IRIDESCENT SCULPTURE

This irregularly shaped vase from the Museum of Modern Art makes a perfect gift for anyone on your list. It comes in two sizes and will add a stunning touch to any home, with or without flowers.

**\$30 (small) or \$70 (large) at [store.moma.org](http://store.moma.org)**



## PETAL POWER

A customized monthly flower delivery will brighten up a loved one's day long after the holiday season has passed, and we adore Bouqs's direct-from-the-farm selections.

**Starting at \$36/month at [bouqs.com](http://bouqs.com)**

## GIVE 'EM THE WORLD

If you think the world of someone, why not give 'em the world? A Mova globe, which sits on a plastic base, rotates on its axis, powered solely by the light in a room—no batteries or wires needed. It looks like magic, and it's available in five sizes and with more than 40 designs.

**From \$160 at [movaglobes.com](http://movaglobes.com)**



# Music Boxes by Jeff Burger

## HANK WILLIAMS ON RADIO

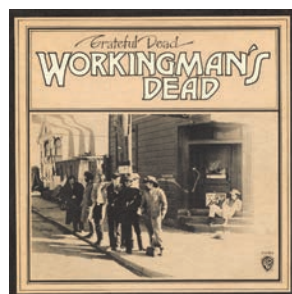
Here's the latest proof that 1998's *The Complete Hank Williams* is erroneously titled: *Pictures from Life's Other Side*, a six-CD collection of recordings from the country giant's 1951 radio show that intersperses rarities with "Hey, Good Lookin'," "I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry," and many of his other best-known songs. The newly restored material arrives in a slipcase with a lavishly illustrated hardcover book that includes informative liner notes.

**About \$70**



## LOU REED AT HIS BEST

The late Lou Reed cofounded the Velvet Underground, one of rock's most influential bands, after which he enjoyed a long solo career whose highlights included 1989's powerful, atypically political *New York*. A new deluxe edition offers a remaster of that release on CD and vinyl plus CDs containing works in progress, singles, and a live version of the album culled from three concerts. A DVD adds video of another *New York* performance, a high-resolution audio version, and a revealing Reed interview. **About \$75**

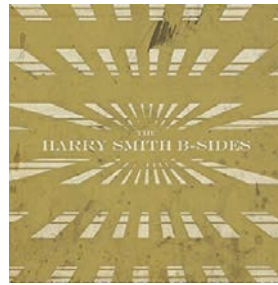


## GRATEFUL DEAD'S U-TURN

After three guitar-based, loosely constructed albums, the Grateful Dead did a 180 for *Workingman's Dead*, their popular fourth LP, which serves up concise, country-influenced music that emphasizes vocal harmonies. The record clocks in at only 36 minutes, but a high-octane, two-and-a-half-hour 1971 concert supplements the remastered copy on a 50th anniversary edition. **About \$30**

## ESSENTIAL EARLY FOLK

Harry Smith's 1952 *Anthology of American Folk Music*, which ranks among the genre's most influential albums, collects 84 singles first released between 1926 and 1933. Now comes *The Harry Smith B-Sides*, which addresses the question, What was on the flip side of all those great records? Answer: more greatness, including groundbreaking folk, blues, gospel, and country from pioneers like Mississippi John Hurt and the Carter Family. **About \$70**



## IRELAND'S FAB FOUR ON FIRE

U2 floundered a bit in the 1990s, but they came roaring back in 2000, with *All That You Can't Leave Behind*, an all-killer, no-filler collection of melodic, anthemic gems. A new five-CD anniversary edition adds remixes, B-sides, studio outtakes, and, most notably, a terrific Boston concert that includes seven songs from *Leave Behind* plus versions of many of the group's earlier triumphs. **About \$140**

## ASTONISHING GUITAR WORK

Much of the music from Jimi Hendrix's historic Fillmore East shows, which took place on New Year's Eve in 1969 and the following day, has previously been released multiple times. But it has taken half a century to get a collection that embraces nearly all of the concerts' material, and in the sequence the band originally performed it. The five-CD, 43-song *Songs for Groovy Children* presents Jimi Hendrix at his funkier and most soulful. **About \$85**



## FASCINATING BEATLES COVERS

From the seemingly endless list of Beatles covers, the three-CD *Looking Through a Glass Onion* culls 68 that were recorded between 1968 and 1972. Inventive winners are sprinkled throughout, including a jazzy "Dear Prudence" and a live, high-energy "I Am the Walrus," both by obscure groups. Like the Beatles' *White Album*, the anthology closes with "Good Night," sung here by Vera Lynn, whose 1940 recording of "Goodnight, Children Everywhere" influenced John Lennon's composition. **About \$30**



## THE REINVENTED ANIMALS

Eric Burdon's Animals, one of the best products of the mid-1960s' so-called British Invasion, racked up many hits, including "House of the Rising Sun." Then, Burdon reinvented the outfit with a new lineup and the psychedelized music featured on the frequently rewarding five-disc *When I Was Young/The MGM Recordings 1967-1968*, which incorporates such popular singles as "Monterey" and "San Franciscan Nights." **About \$40**



## PINK FLOYD'S BIG BOX

Pink Floyd's *The Later Years* packs in five CDs, six Blu-rays, five DVDs, and two vinyl singles, plus a couple of hardcover books and assorted memorabilia. The group created all of the music here after the departure of cofounder, guitarist, and lyricist Roger Waters, so this isn't quite the outfit that produced monster hits like *Dark Side of the Moon* and *The Wall*. Waters's presence is missed, but there's still lots to savor, including a ton of concert material. **About \$325**

## STOCKING STUFFERS

**Bob Dylan's** *Rough and Rowdy Ways*, his 39th studio album, doesn't depart stylistically from his other fine recent efforts, but it improves on them, resulting in his strongest collection in years... **Jeb Loy Nichols**, who surely ranks among the best folk singer/songwriters you've never heard, offers half a dozen stripped-down acoustic stunners on *Season of Decline*, a digital-only EP... *Thanks for the Dance*, released three years after **Leonard Cohen's** death, delivers an unexpected and poignant final statement from the master poet and songwriter... **Lucinda Williams's** heartfelt latest gem is the dark, challenging *Good Souls Better Angels*... *Hate for Sale*, from the great **Pretenders**, finds singer/songwriter Chrissie Hynde serving up ballads and rockers that are on par with the group's early classics... The terrific *Peace, Love & Understanding* finds **Bruce Springsteen** performing an atypical Christmas show with friends such as Southside Johnny and Sam & Dave's Sam Moore.



# 10 steps to a successful airplane purchase

It's a complex process, but these tips can make it a bit simpler while increasing the chances that all will go well.

*by Mark Huber*

So, you've decided to buy a factory-new airplane. Congratulations. Now the decision-making begins. Purchasing a new airplane can be even more complicated than designing and building a luxury home. But don't be deterred. Following these 10 simple steps will help you maximize the productivity and enjoyment you get from your new "time machine" and avoid a contrail of tears in the future.

•••• 1 ••••

**Build your acquisition team.** Unless you're well-versed in all realms of aviation tax and liability law, finance, insurance, brokerage, maintenance, and

operations, you need a specialized team of experts to guide you through the purchase process. They can also help you with such key matters as how to structure aircraft ownership. This expertise differs from what you may have required for your non-aviation businesses or assets. Go with the pros. You'll save money in the long run.

•••• 2 ••••

**Determine your mission—now and for the future.** What are your current travel needs in terms of distance, frequency, passengers, and luggage load? And what are those needs likely to be in two, five, or even 10 years?



## Is saving \$1 million really worth the price of having to eat your knees in an airplane cabin that is too small?

Buy too little airplane and it won't get the job done; buy too much and you'll be saddled with higher costs than necessary. If you fly to Europe or Asia only a few times a year, are those trips really worth the price of a 6,000-nautical-mile-range jet, or can you tolerate a refueling stop en route?



**Decide how to operate.** Do you want to take on the daunting task of managing the aircraft yourself or assigning it to your CFO, or do you want to delegate that to your pilots or a management company? This is not a job for someone who lacks the relevant experience. And depending on how much you fly, saddling your pilots with these tasks may not work out, either. A management company, on the other hand, can handle all the details, including crewing, flight and maintenance scheduling, IRS and FAA compliance, and helping you to determine whether it would make sense to charter out your aircraft to offset some of your costs. A management company also brings with it the ability and the duty to provide professional flight standards to your operation.



**Select your aircraft.** As the saying goes, "Don't marry for looks." An airplane that can't fly is a very expensive lawn ornament. Reliability and product support are the keys to the kingdom and enjoying your airplane. The annual product support survey in our sister publication, *Aviation International News*, is a comprehensive guide to who's been naughty or nice when it comes to standing behind their aircraft and the availability and pricing of parts. Performance, technology, and cabin comfort also are key considerations. You want to get to where you're going before next Tuesday; you need to access the internet and keep in touch in the airplane to stay productive; and you don't want to have to trundle off to the chiropractor after every flight. Is saving \$1 million really worth the price of having to eat your knees in an airplane cabin that is too small?



**Spec your aircraft.** This is the fun part. You can visit the manufacturer's design studio and be confronted by a dizzying array of choices regarding colors, fabrics, veneers, cabin layouts, and other options. Most airframers do a really good job of pre-engineering these items

## COVID Considerations

The pandemic has at least partially changed the way people order factory-new aircraft, says Stephen Friedrich, chief commercial officer at Embraer Executive Jets in Melbourne, Florida. While the company still encourages customers to visit its design studio, a COVID-19 protocol is in place and some aspects of the ordering process can be handled virtually. The precautions taken by Embraer are in line with those at other manufacturers.

Customers—and anyone else—coming to the sprawling company campus must complete a health questionnaire concerning their possible exposure to the virus, have their temperature taken on arrival, social distance, and wear a mask. Moreover, they can no longer access certain parts of the facility, including the production plant. The campus, which employs 850 people, gets a hospital-grade disinfection nightly, and high-traffic areas are treated two to three times a day. "We are doing what we need to do to ensure the safety of our workforce and our customers," Friedrich says. That includes contact tracing when anyone who works at or visits the campus tests positive.

Though you can't see new aircraft being assembled in person, you can tour Embraer's production facility digitally. Ahead of visits or "spec'ing" a new aircraft, customers receive a sample box with interior materials and can do a good deal of the process virtually. The virtual option has always been available for buyers who don't wish to travel to Melbourne, Friedrich says, but the pandemic prompted Embraer to "amp it up a little more with a few things."

The "amping" includes greater use of webinars and videos to engage customers. "Normally, we would have been out at shows and on demo tours. We're doing much more on a virtual basis now and that has been very helpful," Friedrich says, noting that customer engagement has actually increased during the pandemic.

While the pandemic has changed the way Embraer does things, "we have the same number of deliveries in the facility and in terms of people wanting to come in to visit, it hasn't dropped off that much," says Friedrich.

How COVID-19 is impacting aircraft interior choices is just now beginning to reveal itself, says Jay Beever, Embraer Executive Jets' vice president for interior design. "New customers are asking what can be done with regard to air filtration and surface coatings," he notes.

Embraer uses the Microshield360 anti-microbial coating on its aircraft, and HEPA filters are now available on the midsize and super-midsize line of its Praetor series business jets. Beever thinks that the pandemic is likely to accelerate the trend to interiors that eschew leathers and other organic materials in favor of upscale synthetics that are more COVID-resistant and easier to clean.

Beever notes that Embraer's new generation of hidden and passive-touch glass-panel cabin controls also make aircraft interiors easier to clean in the COVID era. "They can quickly wipe down a surface where most hands are touching things. With [old-style] switches, you can't really clean around every crack where the switches are mounted or the base where the switch is mounted. So debris and stuff can get stuck in those cracks. By having flat panels with clean glass surfaces we have a very safe, clean airplane." —M.H.



PHOTOS: ADOBE STOCK

## Using a Broker for Factory-new Purchases

Most first-time aircraft buyers equate using a broker only with the purchase of a preowned model, but long-time business jet salesman Jay Mesinger points out that that could be a mistake.

Buying a new airplane direct from the factory or one of its dealers means you won't be getting unbiased advice, says Mesinger, who is president and CEO of Boulder, Colorado-based Mesinger Jet Sales. You'll be dealing with someone who will focus only on the positive attributes of the manufacturer's products and will be unlikely to objectively compare them against competitive aircraft or thoroughly evaluate them for the appropriateness of your mission.

Airplane manufacturers "make good products and stand behind them," Mesinger says, "but they don't work for the customer. They work for themselves. That doesn't mean manufacturers are going to take advantage of you, but they are going to try to sell you their product as opposed to helping you analyze their product against the next one."

Like other aircraft brokerages, Mesinger's firm works with clients to objectively analyze the strengths and weaknesses of competing models and "bring market sense" to the process. The latter requires someone who has "the expertise to sit at the table with the manufacturer, understands the process of the manufacturer, and knows how to come out of that with a successful transaction," Mesinger says.

For factory-new purchases, he works with clients to build an annual use analysis and operating budget for several aircraft and then accompanies clients on visits to airframers. Using a broker in this situation allows clients to "ask the right questions" and "listen intently," Mesinger says. "It's important that the first-time buyer doesn't sip the Kool-Aid and is able to objectively analyze the data and come up with the right answers."

Assembling an expert acquisition team is key. Often, a first-time buyer builds

a team that includes the family or corporate attorney, accountant, and banker, but Mesinger stresses the importance of using professionals with aviation expertise—contacts a broker brings to the table.

Brokers also know how to find an appropriate aircraft management company as well as an inspector who has expertise in the makes and models you're considering. As for finance, Mesinger counsels, "High-net-worth individuals clearly have lending relationships, but they may not be the best ones for aviation. These lenders may not provide the right products or the appropriate or most advantageous terms. There are parallel paths [operations, tax, and finance] you need to go down and understand even before you order the airplane. And the manufacturer is not going to help you with that."

Without the assistance of an expert team, a first-time buyer is often at a loss about how and what to inspect on an aircraft at delivery and what to say "no" to from the inspection report. "On a new aircraft, you run into something as basic as how to spec it out and what that cabin configuration will do to resale value," Mesinger says, citing variables such as whether to include a crew rest area or conference grouping and galley location (forward or aft). "Some buyers don't care what their preferred configuration does to resale value, but that's a decision that we are able to make.

"The other big mistake can be buying at all, because the expectations of how, when, and where you can use the airplane, and how much that will cost, is not something manufacturers will sort out for you. I am just as likely to talk someone out of buying as into buying because I've listened to their expectations and what they want and can tell them, 'This is just not going to work.' And I do that, too, because I am working for them," says Mesinger, who receives a fee regardless of whether the client makes a purchase.

—M.H.

to make your aircraft completion go smoothly and with a minimum of extra cost. But if you absolutely must have that stingray hide wall covering or that exotic wood veneer, be warned that the engineering, burn testing, and certification of those items will create delivery delays and extra expense. Ditto for non-standard cabin configurations. And an odd configuration may adversely impact resale value. Using accent colors and company logos is a relatively inexpensive way to “personalize” your aircraft without creating undo expense and delay.

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**Choose your maintenance plan.** As the old Fram oil filter commercial used to warn: “You can pay me now or pay me later.” If you’re financing or leasing your aircraft, the lender will require a maintenance plan to maintain the value of the asset. And that typically means paying a set fee for every hour the engines are turning. Comprehensive plans can cover nearly everything on the aircraft: engine, avionics, airframe, cabin, and sometimes even items like tires and brakes (the so-called “nose-to-tail” plans). You can subscribe to plans for the whole aircraft or for particular components. They are available from the company that made the aircraft or the components, and from third parties such as JSSI and Engine Assurance Program. No, they’re not cheap, but they protect your airplane’s value and guard against unplanned and expensive maintenance “events.” Plans buy both you and your financial institution peace of mind. And they go a long way toward helping you understand and appreciate the true cost of aircraft ownership.

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**Pick a base.** Not all airports are created equal. Ideally, you want to find one near where you live or work that has all the amenities you need, including reasonable fuel prices and availability, maintenance, hangar space, landing systems for your class of aircraft, and onsite customs/immigration service if you do a lot of international flying. Sufficient runway length and thickness are a must, of course; if the closest airport to you falls short in this regard, you may choose to base your aircraft elsewhere and have it flown in as needed.

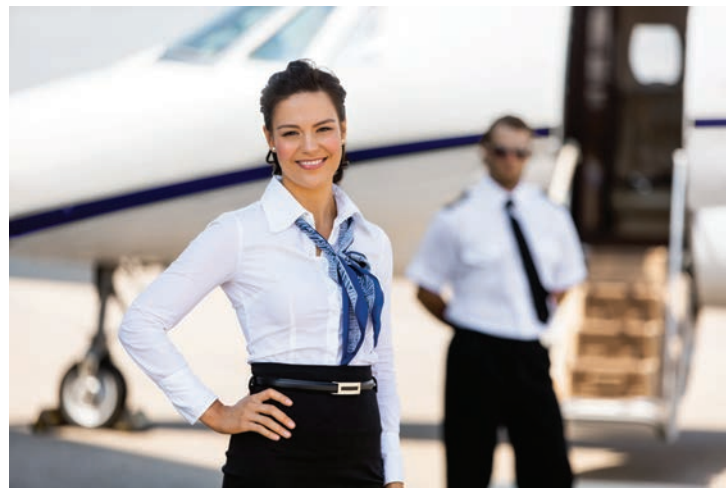
••••• 8 •••••

**Lease, rent, or build a hangar.** Your bird needs a nest. A management company or airport FBO may try to talk you into sharing space in a community hangar. Sometimes, at crowded airports, or when conducting transient operations, this is unavoidable. And yes, sharing a hangar can be more cost-effective. But the concomitant risk of “hangar rash” is present. To get the airplane out behind or beside you, some earnest young person making minimum wage is going to hook your multimillion-dollar investment to a tug and pull it around. And the first hint that the youngster got poor grades in geometry could be when your airplane’s wing collides with that of another aircraft. This is how airplanes get bent without even leaving the ground. Even when yours is retrieved uneventfully, extracting it from a shared hangar can create delays. Your own airplane in your own hangar maximizes privacy, security, and convenience. And hangars cost a small fraction of what you paid for the airplane.

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**Train the crew.** Aircraft manufacturers almost always provide pilot and maintenance technician training as part of the purchase price, and your crew or

## Comprehensive maintenance plans aren’t cheap, but they buy you and your financial institution peace of mind.



ADOBE STOCK

those hired by your management company can typically use these “training slots.” A third-party provider such as FlightSafety International, CAE, or Sim-Com typically does the pilot training. You want the crew fully trained before you take delivery of the aircraft, but not long before. Flying skills, like anything else that requires memory, are perishable.

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**Take delivery.** This process can consume anywhere from a few hours to a few days. Your aircraft is rolled into an acceptance hangar, where your designated maintenance technician and pilots inspect it for “squawks”—cosmetic items or things that malfunction or are at variance with the specification. The manufacturer typically corrects any such variances before it finalizes the delivery. You will be provided with a customer service agent to shepherd you through the process and a “customer suite” in which to camp out, enjoy some high-end catering, and do business while you wait. Of course, you’ll have to deal with an avalanche of paperwork to complete the purchase. But beyond these remedial tasks, the delivery provides you and your team with an opportunity to ask questions about the aircraft and product support, and for you to learn, and have the opportunity to play with, all the airplane’s new-fangled cabin technology. When the due diligence is done, you’ll have your picture taken in front of the airplane and off you’ll go—with a big smile on your face. **BJT**

**Mark Huber** (mhuber@bjtonline.com), an aviation industry veteran, has reviewed aircraft for **BJT** since 2005.



# Financing your business jet

Volatile times present new challenges for borrowers.

by Jeff Wieand

Because of COVID-19, prospects for both the economy and aircraft values are uncertain. In the 2007–2009 recession, business jet prices fell dramatically, but the impact of the pandemic on airplane values is much more difficult to gauge. Buyers expecting to find desperate sellers offering deep discounts have been disappointed. The number of large business jets for sale has not appreciably changed from a year ago even though sales are down, and bankers are having trouble figuring out whether the pandemic has had any significant impact on values.

Moreover, the presidential election season created waves of uncertainty among jet buyers and sellers and financial institutions, and some people put their aircraft transactions on hold until after November 3. As one experienced jet financier said to me recently, “Buying is always down before a presidential election, but the faucet will turn on again shortly afterwards.”

Given all the uncertainty, many aircraft lenders are pickier about whom they lend to and about

what aircraft purchases they are willing to finance. Some banks are so choosy in the current environment that they are suspected of not really even being in the aircraft finance business anymore. And needless to say, the pandemic is not a time to expect institutions to be offering new aircraft finance products.

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For financiers, uncertainty about aircraft values probably has the greatest impact on lease financing. When a bank takes title to an aircraft and leases it to its customer, it’s forced to make a judgment about the residual value of that aircraft, which it will need to sell when the lease ends. Banks are inherently conservative to begin with, so their estimates of residual value are likely to be especially low in uncertain times like the present. Prior to the pandemic, those assumptions were already low. (One banker I spoke with estimated that his institution’s residual-value assumptions had declined by 50 percent since the

2009 recession; another said he assumes 9 percent depreciation per annum.)

Lower residual values mean higher lease rates, as the lessor bank seeks to be compensated for the aircraft’s anticipated decline in value over time. Consequently, prospective lessees may find aircraft lease pricing to be less attractive at the moment. Many banks would just as soon avoid aircraft leases anyway; they are riskier and require deeper due diligence than loans.

On the other hand, Steve Day at Global Jet Capital reports continued leasing activity for both new and preowned aircraft, including lease extension requests from existing customers. Many jet buyers remain interested in leasing because they share the banks’ concerns about residual values, but other good reasons to lease can include a buyer’s inability to use tax depreciation on the aircraft, a desire to minimize upfront sales taxes on a purchase, or the reluctance to put ownership of a new business jet on the books of a company—especially one that

is laying off employees in the pandemic.

Tax depreciation, however, can be a powerful incentive to buy rather than lease. Current law allows you to write off up to 100 percent of the purchase price for tax purposes in the year you acquire an aircraft. "For aircraft buyers who can fully use the tax benefit of 100 percent bonus treatment," says Don Synborski at Citizens Bank, "in the current residual environment, a loan or synthetic lease is a better economic solution on an after-tax basis than a tax lease."

Uncertainty also has an impact on loan financing, especially amortization. The same residual-value assumptions that leases require figure in scheduling the repayment of the principal amount of aircraft loans. Twenty-year (or even longer) amortization schedules used to be common, but banks are leery of offering such schedules today, especially on large and long-range aircraft; 12 to 15 years is more common. Neither the borrower nor the lender is happy when the borrower needs to write a big check to the bank when the aircraft is sold because the loan balance at that time exceeds the jet's fair market value.

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Most aircraft lenders I spoke with said they have received few requests to finance factory-new business jets since the onset of the pandemic. The stoic attitude of some manufacturers has not resulted in the COVID-related discounts that many buyers think they should be offering. The preowned market is where the jet finance action is at the moment, especially with regard to super-midsize and smaller jets, though Jim Simpson at First Republic Bank reports lots of interest in financing large and long-range aircraft as well. Financiers speculate that there are relatively few buyers for large and long-range aircraft because worldwide COVID-related travel restrictions have decreased the usefulness of such aircraft—which could mean it is a good time to buy one.

Accordingly, financings for smaller aircraft acquired to fly around in the U.S. have been on the rise in the last few months. Lenders used to helping customers buy large jets are now providing cash for people buying models like the Pilatus PC-12, Cessna CJ4, and HondaJet Elite. Lenders report financing more owner-flown aircraft, and they are also being contacted by buyers new to business aviation.

"People who previously flew charter or first class and want to avoid getting on other people's aircraft or find the airlines no longer serving their routes are calling us about financing light, medium,

and super-midsize jets," says Keith Hayes at PNC. Avoiding crowds is also a major objective. As one buyer told his lender, "I will never take my family back to a commercial airport." Being new to business aviation, these buyers are often looking for smaller, older, cheaper aircraft than their financial position would justify.

Interest rates remain attractive. A year ago, three-month LIBOR was over 200 basis points; as of this writing, it's only 25 basis points. But don't think the collapse of LIBOR has led to rock-bottom interest rates. The pandemic has reportedly caused a drain on capital, with bank clients drawing down on lines of credit and opening new lines, which in turn causes lenders to allocate higher reserves for losses, pushing interest-rate spreads and borrowing rates back up. A floating-rate spread that was 100 basis points a year ago can be more than dou-

## Financings for smaller aircraft are on the rise.

ble that today. In addition, many lenders now have a "LIBOR floor"; if the floor is 100 basis points, for example, and (as is now the case) LIBOR goes below that, the lender ignores LIBOR and adds the interest-rate spread to the floor instead. Ten-year lease factors seem to be in the neighborhood of 0.8 to 0.85 percent, and more for shorter-term leases.

Most lenders report that their customers are all choosing fixed-rate financing for their aircraft purchases. As Jim Crowley at City National Capital Finance observes, LIBOR is "only going up," so he sees little interest of late in floating-rate financings. On the other hand, Ford von Weise at Citi Private Bank says most of its aircraft financings these days are floating-rate deals. "People with excellent credits can borrow at rates lower than they have ever been due to historically low base-rate indices," says Ford. "They have the option to convert to fixed rates if they think rates are going up."

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Fixed rates today are between about 2.5 and 3.5 percent, depending on the credit, the aircraft, and the lender's desire to keep an important client happy. Lenders continue to want to finance only 90 percent or less of a business jet's value, and some are seeking a 25 percent down payment, but 100 percent

financing is still available for the right clients buying the right aircraft. If you are willing to put down a higher percentage of an aircraft's value, PNC's non-recourse, no-financial-disclosure, asset-based jet financing may prove attractive. Continued low rates have led many aircraft owners to refinance their existing loans. Banks are also seeing customers coming back to finance business jet upgrades.

Should you finance your business jet purchase? It makes sense to give the option careful consideration. People who can afford to own and operate a business jet generally have something better to do with their money than invest it in an airplane. Further, some buyers who say they are "paying cash" are actually borrowing on credit lines backed by securities at their bank. Those loans are likely to be based on a lower loan-to-value ratio, whereas, as just noted, aircraft finance can provide a loan of up to 100 percent of the aircraft's value, with additional credit available for improvements. Further, if the stock market drops, credit lines backed by securities may require posting additional collateral or a loan payoff. It makes sense to save your credit line for something else.

Nevertheless, your own bank is a good place to start the aircraft finance conversation. Banks are especially keen these days to maintain good customer relations and are incentivized to provide financing to existing clients. That said, it always makes sense to obtain proposals from other aircraft lenders; often their aviation expertise will produce better terms than are available from your own bank. Different institutions also offer finance products (like non-recourse financing or synthetic leases) that may not be available at your bank, and you may have more luck obtaining an aircraft lease from a finance company than a private bank.

For a loan, your private bank may easily provide the best rate, but finance companies will often have more flexibility in structuring aircraft financings to meet your objectives on issues like loan term, loan-to-value ratio, and principal amortization. A listing of banks and finance companies offering aviation loans is readily available in the company directory at [BJTonline.com](http://BJTonline.com) and on page 53 of this issue. **BJT**



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## SPECIAL SECTION: NEW AIRCRAFT

### AIRCRAFT MANUFACTURERS

#### Airbus Corporate Helicopters

(airbuscorporatelicopters.com, +800 55 55 97 97)  
Marignane, France.  
*Manufactures full line of light, medium, and heavy helicopters.*

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#### Airbus Corporate Jets

(acj.com, +33 5 61 93 33 33)  
Toulouse, France.  
*Makes ACJ318, ACJ319, ACJ320 and ACJ321, plus VIP widebodies.*

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#### Beechcraft/Textron Aviation

(beechcraft.txtav.com, 316-517-8270)  
Wichita, Kansas.  
*Makes several King Air models.*

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#### Bell

(bellflight.com, 817-280-2011)  
Fort Worth.  
*Textron-owned company has delivered more than 35,000 helicopters.*

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#### Boeing Business Jets

(boeing.com/commercial/bbj, 206-655-1131)  
Seattle.  
*Makes BBJs plus VIP widebodies.*

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#### Bombardier

(bombardier.com, 514-861-9481)  
Montreal.  
*Makes Learjets, Challengers, and Globals.*

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#### Cessna Aircraft/Textron Aviation

(cessna.txtav.com, 316-517-8270)  
Wichita, Kansas.  
*Makes Caravans, Citations.*

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#### Cirrus Aircraft

(cirrusaircraft.com, 800-279-4322)  
Duluth, Minnesota.  
*Product line includes piston models and the Vision Jet, which is billed as a personal jet that is intended to be owner-flown.*

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#### Daher

(daher.com, +33 5 62 41 77 88)  
Tarbes, France.  
*Makes TBM 910, 940, Kodiak 100.*

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#### Dassault Falcon

(dassaultfalcon.com, +33 1 47 11 81 24)  
Saint-Cloud, France.  
*Makes Falcon models.*

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BARRY AMBROSE

#### Diamond Aircraft

(diamondaircraft.com, 888-359-3220)  
London, Ontario.  
*Manufactures full line of piston aircraft.*

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#### Embraer Executive Jets

(executive.embraer.com, 321-751-5050)  
Melbourne, Florida. Also: São Paulo; Farnborough, England; Beijing; Dubai, United Arab Emirates; Singapore.  
*Manufactures and completes Phenom, Legacy, and Praetor jets.*

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#### Enstrom Helicopter

(enstromhelicopter.com, 906-863-1200)  
Menominee, Michigan.  
*Manufactures light, single-engine piston and turbine helicopters.*

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#### Epic Aircraft

(epicaircraft.com, 541-318-8849)  
Bend, Oregon.  
*Manufactures the single-engine turboprop E1000.*

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#### Gulfstream Aerospace

(gulfstream.com, 800-810-4853)  
Savannah, Georgia.  
*Makes G280, G500/600, G550, G650, G650ER.*

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#### Honda Aircraft

(hondajet.com, 336-662-0246)  
Greensboro, North Carolina.  
*Makes HondaJet.*

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#### Kopter

(koptergroup.com, +41 44 552 33 33)  
Wetzikon, Zurich, Switzerland.  
*Leonardo-owned developer of turbine helicopters.*

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#### Leonardo Helicopters

(leonardocompany.com, 215-281-1400)  
Cascina Costa, Italy.  
*Manufactures helicopters that were previously branded as AgustaWestland.*

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#### MD Helicopters

(mdhelicopters.com, 480-346-6300)  
Mesa, Arizona.  
*Product line includes MD 500E, MD 530F, MD 520N, MD600N, and MD Explorer.*

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#### Nextant Aerospace

(nextantaerospace.com, 216-261-9000)  
Cleveland.  
*Remanufactures business jets. For example, Nextant 400XTi is a rebuilt Beechjet 400/A/XP.*

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#### One Aviation

(oneaviation.aero, 877-375-7978)  
Albuquerque, New Mexico.  
*Makes Eclipse jet.*

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**Piaggio Aerospace**

(piaggioaerospace.it, +39 0182 267911)  
Italy. Also: West Palm Beach, Florida.  
*Makes Avanti EVO.*

**Pilatus**

(pilatus-aircraft.com, +41 41 619 67 00)  
Stans, Switzerland. Also: Broomfield, Colorado;  
Adelaide Airport, Australia.  
*Makes PC-12NG turboprops and PC-24 twin-  
engine light jet.*

**Piper Aircraft**

(piper.com, 877-879-0275)  
Vero Beach, Florida.  
*Makes single-engine pistons and turboprops.*

**Robinson Helicopter**

(robinsonheli.com, 310-539-0508)  
Torrance, California.  
*Models include turbine R66, piston R22 and R44.*

**Schweizer**

(schweizerusa.com, 817-405-2100)  
Fort Worth.  
*Manufactures single-engine piston and turbine  
helicopters.*

**Sikorsky Aircraft**

(sikorsky.com, 800-946-4337)  
Stratford, Connecticut.  
*Lockheed Martin company's products include S-76  
and S-92 turbine helicopters and M28 turboprop  
airplane.*

**SyberJet Aircraft**

(syberjet.com, 210-764-3500)  
Cedar City, Utah.  
*Makes SJ30, which it bills as the world's fastest and  
longest-range light business jet.*

**AIRCRAFT FINANCIAL  
INSTITUTIONS****1st Source Bank**

(1stsource.com, 800-513-2360)  
South Bend, Indiana.

**Bank of America Merrill Lynch**

(bofam.com, 469-294-7167)  
Frisco, Texas.

**BB&T Equipment Finance**

(bbt.com, 800-226-5228)  
Towson, Maryland.

**BMO Harris Equipment Finance**

(bmoharris.com, 866-867-2173)  
Chicago.

**Chase Equipment Finance, Inc.**

(commercial.jpmorganchase.com)  
Chicago.

**CitiPrivate Bank**

(privatebank.citibank.com, 800-870-1073)  
New York.

**Citizens Asset Finance**

(citizensbank.com, 603-634-7522)  
Manchester, New Hampshire.

**City National Capital Finance**

(citynationalcm.com/home/private/creditcard,  
203-393-7247)  
Miami.

**Commerce Bank**

(commercebank.com, 847-295-4601)  
Lake Forest, Illinois.

**Credit Suisse AG**

(credit-suisse.com, +41 (0) 800 88 88 74)  
Zürich, Switzerland.

**Deutsche Bank Private Wealth Management**

(deutschewealth.com, 312-537-1926)  
Chicago.

**Export-Import Bank of the United States**

(exim.gov, 202-565-3946)  
Washington.

**Fifth Third Equipment Finance Co.**

(53.com, 866-475-0729)  
Boston.

**First American Equipment Finance**

(faef.com, 800-801-3830)  
Fairport, New York.

**First National Capital Corp.**

(firstncc.com, 866-750-3622)  
Foothill Ranch, California.

**First Republic Bank**

(firstrepublic.com, 415-296-5783)  
San Francisco.

**Global Jet Capital**

(globaljetcapital.com, 844-436-8200)  
Danbury, Connecticut.

**J.P. Morgan Private Bank**

(jpmorgan.com, 215-640-3495)  
Philadelphia.

**Key Equipment Finance**

(key.com, 216-689-3232)  
Cleveland.

**PNC Aviation Finance**

(pncaviationfinance.com, 888-339-2834)  
Boise, Idaho.

**RRML Capital Resources**

(rrmlcapital.com, 201-731-4811)  
Paramus, New Jersey.

**Scope Aircraft Finance**

(scopeair.com, 800-357-5773)  
Columbus, Ohio.

**Stonebriar Commercial Finance**

(stonebriar.com, 469-609-8500)  
Plano, Texas.

**Textron Financial Corp.**

(textronfinancial.com, 800-551-5787)  
Wichita, Kansas.  
*Formerly Cessna Finance Corp.*

**U.S. Bank Equipment Finance**

(usbank.com, 800-253-3468)  
Denver.

**UMB Bank**

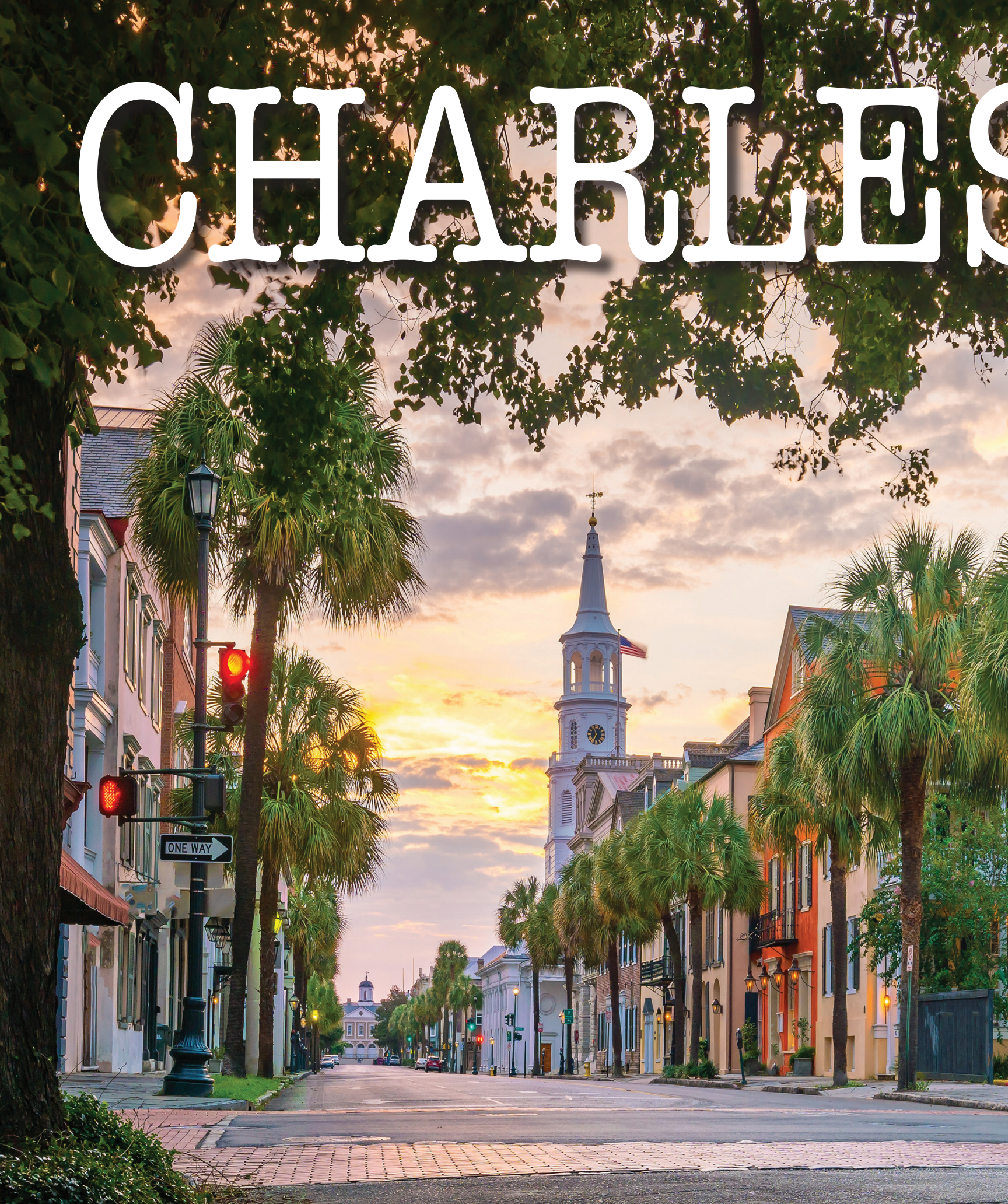
(umb.com, 316-266-6002)  
Wichita, Kansas.

**Wells Fargo Private Bank**

(wellsfargo.com/theprivatebank, 312-592-5621)  
Offices throughout U.S.

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# CHARLES





# CHARLESTON

## South Carolina

It's a gourmand's paradise, and there's plenty to do between meals.

*by Margie Goldsmith*

"After you eat the food here, you might not want to go back home," says a taxi driver in Charleston, South Carolina. "That's all people do when they come here: eat, eat, eat!"

In fact, while Charleston has some of the country's best food, that's far from its only attraction. It is a beautifully preserved, historic city (founded in 1670 as Charles Town) where you hear church bells chime on the hour, palmettos rustling, and horses' hooves clip-clopping on cobblestone streets. You see rows of homes painted in a rainbow of pastel colors and smell the fragrant odors of camellias and azaleas. There are sprawling plantations, many museums, Civil War sites, beaches, and boat tours of Charleston Harbor. You could easily spend a week here, but if you have only a couple of days to spare, you'll still be able to enjoy some of the best Charleston has to offer.

Called the Holy City because it offered freedom of religion hundreds of years ago, it is home to 134 churches, including the South's oldest Baptist church and oldest surviving religious structure (St. Michael's Episcopal Church, completed in 1761). St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, built in 1872, has a 265-foot steeple, and no building is allowed to exceed that height.

Look around Charleston's historic district and you'll see flickering gas lanterns even during the day, ornate cast-iron gates leading to flowering gardens, and antebellum architecture. There's history everywhere, especially at Fort Sumter, where soldiers fired the first shots of the Civil War.

Tours of plantations and their slave quarters offer reminders of another sad era. The plantations grew white beans and squash as well as corn to create grits, cornbread, and bourbon; but it was the Carolina Plantation Gold rice that made Charleston the wealthiest city in the British colonies. One reason rice was so abundant was that there were enough slaves to tend to the crops. Forty percent of enslaved Africans were brought to North America through Charleston's port.

ADOBESTOCK

# CHARLESTON



PHOTOS: ADOBESTOCK

You can take a horse-and-carriage tour of the city, but the carriages are too big to enter hidden gardens and narrow alleyways, so you'll see much more by walking. Bulldog Tours offers a Walk with History Tour, led by knowledgeable and entertaining guides.

One such guide took her group to four historic buildings, one on each corner of Broad and Meeting streets (known as the Four Corners of Law): a church, the federal courthouse/U.S. post office, the county courthouse, and city hall. Pointing to each, the guide said, "It's hail, mail, jail, and bail." As the group moved on to the next location, she noted that Charleston is a city of American firsts: first public library (built in 1700 but demolished after 14 years), first museum (Charleston Museum, which has operated continuously, albeit in several locations, since 1773), first native-born architect (Robert Mills, though this claim has been disputed), and the aforementioned first shots of the Civil War.

Many houses in the historic district have black metal discs on the walls that function as earthquake bolts. These discs—which were added to buildings after an 1886 earthquake destroyed much of the city—connect to a rod that bolts the house's masonry to the timber frame. Because the bolts are highly visible from the outside, craftsmen created them in decorative shapes such as circles, stars, and crosses.

The entrances to some homes have pineapple sculptures, a symbol of hospitality. Seafaring captains would return to Charleston from East Coast ports and tropical lands with pineapples they'd taken as souvenirs. They'd impale the pineapples atop the porch railings—a sign that they'd come home and were receiving visitors.



Be sure to visit the Battery, originally a defensive seawall where the two Charleston rivers meet and also a promenade where some of the city's most magnificent antebellum homes are located. The Battery's Edmondston-Alston House, a city landmark that is open to the public, is the only downtown residence with a view of Charleston Harbor.

Charles Edmondston, a Scottish immigrant and shipping merchant, built this Federal-style house in 1817 and lived there with his family until 1838, when financial problems forced him to sell the property to Charles Alston, a member of one of South Carolina's wealthiest rice-planting dynasties. On April 12, 1861, General P.G.T. Beauregard watched the bombardment of Fort Sumter from the home's veranda.

In the parlor, you can see a lithograph copy of South Carolina's Ordinance of Secession from the U.S., which was signed in Charleston in 1860, as well as the 1865 pardon document from President Andrew Johnson that restored



## Traveler Fast Facts

### WHAT IT IS:

Charleston, which is on an inlet of the Atlantic Ocean, is South Carolina's largest and oldest city. Founded in 1670, it is bursting with Southern charm, hospitality, and magnificent spring blooms. It offers history, antebellum architecture, historical plantations, and enough delicious cuisine to satisfy the fussiest foodie.

### CLIMATE:

The best times to visit are spring and fall. Summer is hot with stifling humidity; in January and February, temperatures drop into the 50s.

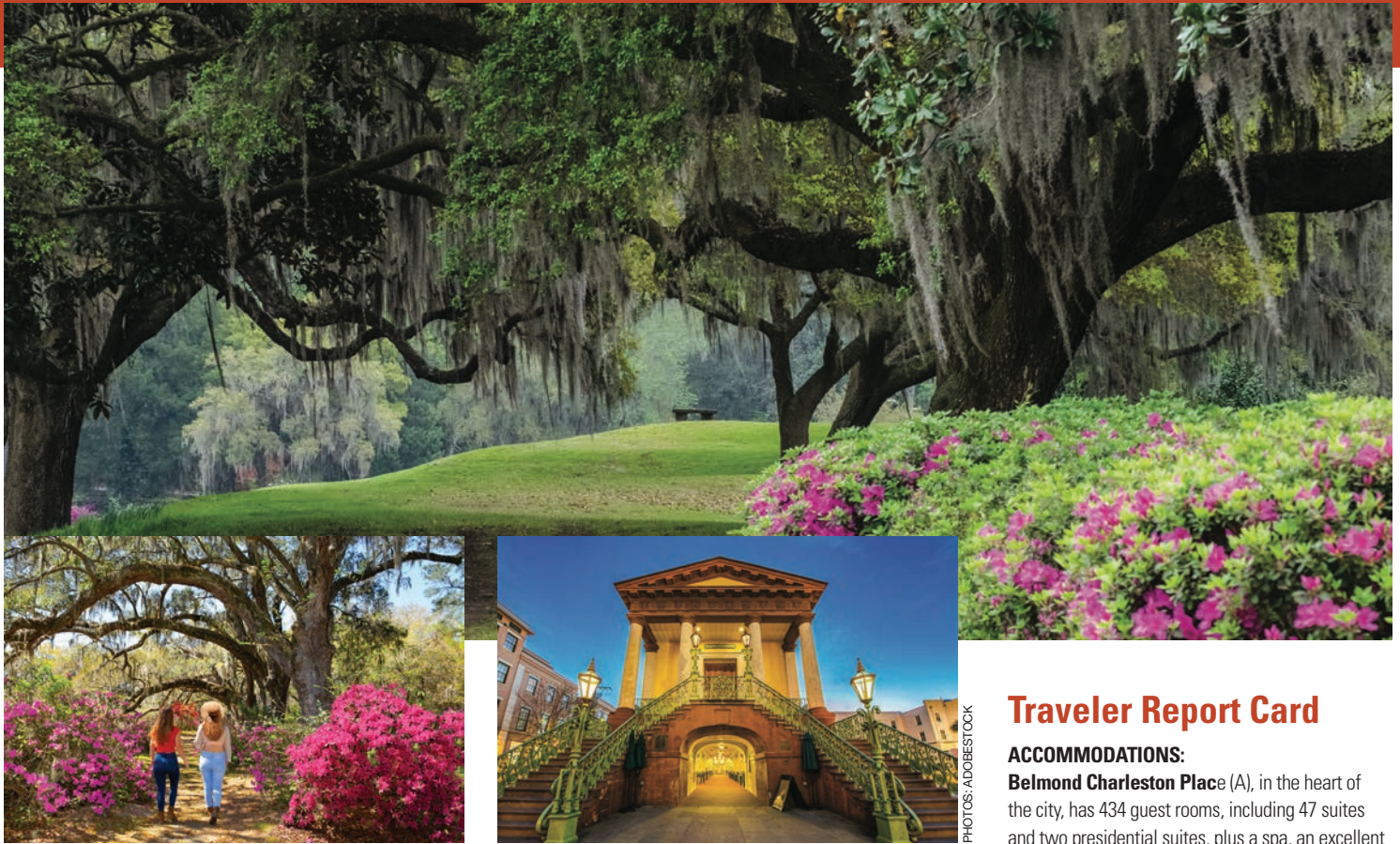
### GETTING THERE:

Charleston International Airport, where Atlantic Aviation and Landmark Aviation operate FBOs for private aircraft, has a 9,001-foot runway. Six commercial airlines serve the airport, which is 12 miles from the center of downtown.

### ACTIVITIES:

You can explore plantations or take a ferry to Fort Sumter National Monument, where the first shots of the Civil War were fired. Other options include a historical walking tour, surfing at Folly Beach, and golfing at nearby Kiawah Island or Wild Dunes on Isle of Palms. A walking food tour such as Bulldog Tour's "Savor the Flavors of Charleston" is one of the best ways to sample specialties like fried green tomatoes and she-crab soup (a creamy treat made of crabs and the roe from female crabs).





PHOTOS: ADOBESTOCK

## Traveler Report Card

### ACCOMMODATIONS:

**Belmond Charleston Place** (A), in the heart of the city, has 434 guest rooms, including 47 suites and two presidential suites, plus a spa, an excellent restaurant, a large gym, a pool, and a two-level club.

**Hotel Bennett** (A), a pet- and family-friendly new upscale hotel on fashionable King Street, offers a spa, fitness center, inside roof bar facing the pool, and 179 guest rooms. The spotless **Cambria Hotel Charleston Riverview** (B), a new property just a short distance from downtown, has 126 upscale guest rooms including 24 suites, a restaurant, a bar, and an outdoor pool.

### CUISINE:

**Charleston Grill** (A+) is a AAA Four Diamond and *Forbes* Four-Star Award establishment that offers live jazz and a 1,700-bottle wine list. Chef Michelle Weaver serves contemporary Southern cuisine such as foie gras with poached pears, candied ginger, and cinnamon raisin toast; and melt-in-your-mouth fresh flounder with grilled leeks. . . **Husk** (A+) offers traditional Southern fare in a more-than-century-old former home. The chef, Lowcountry native Travis Grimes, exclusively features Southern-grown ingredients. Options include slow-smoked pork ribs with bourbon honey glaze, toasted pecan, mountain apples, and fried cornbread; and tender, crispy catfish with sweet peppers, sugar snap peas, and fingerling potatoes. . . **Nico Oysters + Seafood** (A+), on Shem Creek, has a large selection of tasty oysters, which it serves both raw and grilled.

ownership of Alston's confiscated property to him. Look closely at the penmanship on each document—almost no one writes that exquisitely today. Look, too, at the photographs on the wall—no one is smiling because dentists back then mainly did “tooth drawing.”

In the dining room is a large wooden table that opens to seat 22 people. Dinner preparations began in the early morning for a three-hour meal with up to nine courses. The family slaves rose early to shop for ingredients at Charleston City Market, a complex established in the 1790s. The City Market is now a four-block-long indoor complex offering everything from Carolina rice, grits, pickled okra, and children's toys to souvenirs and the region's famous sweetgrass baskets.

These grass containers were sewn from the sweet-smelling plants in Lowcountry marshes. They were originally created by the Gullahs, African-Americans from Lowcountry plantations who created a new culture. During the colonial period, slaves with basket-making skills were among the most valuable because baskets were necessary for both agricultural and household use. For over 300 years, the sweetgrass baskets have been handmade, and they are prized by both tourists and locals.

Your itinerary should include Magnolia Plantation

on the Ashley River. Founded in 1676 by a family from Barbados and now run by its 12th generation, this property has America's oldest public gardens and has been open to visitors since about 1870. Luminaries ranging from Eleanor Roosevelt and Henry Ford to Orson Welles and George Gershwin have come to this tranquil place, which features towering oaks, fragrant flowers, and a swamp with egrets, alligators, and other wildlife. It was here that John J. Audubon obtained waterfowl specimens for his paintings, and two of his large prints hang in the family home. You can stroll through 700 acres of grounds and gardens planted to offer the best blooms during every season, including azaleas, magnolias, and camellias.

When dinnertime arrives, you can find plenty of restaurants whose cuisine explains why visitors rave about Charleston's food. But you'll be just as impressed by the city's long history, striking architecture, and Southern charm. **EJT**

### Margie Goldsmith

(mgoldsmith@bjtonline.com), a longtime contributor, also interviewed Sean Penn for this issue. She received complimentary air transportation to Charleston, accommodations at Belmond Charleston Place, and meals at Charleston Grill, Husk, and Nico.

# Heavenly homes for the highway

The cabins in some customized cars rival what you'll find in the most luxurious private jets.

by Gemma Z. Price

For some busy executives and other VIPs, cars represent much more than a way to get from point A to point B. They're an extension of the office and home—spaces to work, relax, or reenergize in—and they're personalized accordingly. All luxury marques offer an in-house shop for bespoke touches, and there's a thriving secondary market of firms reimagining wheels from the ground up, whether you're looking for custom cubbies for off-duty pursuits or a bulletproof mobile movie theater. Prices vary widely, of course, but the most lavish upgrades can cost millions of dollars.

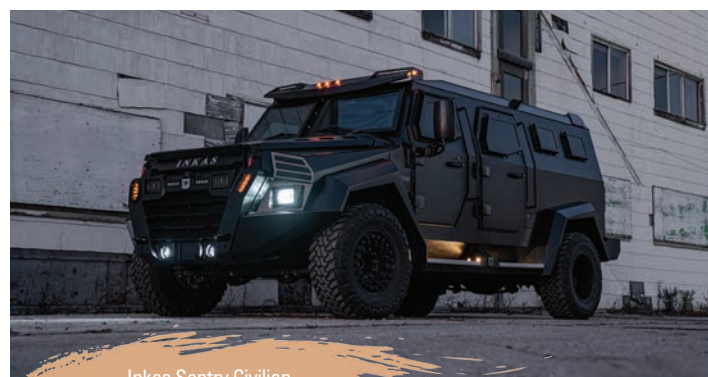
Here's a look at some of what's available.

## A SWAT Team *Experience* for Civilians

Canada-based Inkas Sentry Civilian bills itself as North America's largest privately held armored-car manufacturer. Shipping up to 50 vehicles a month, it supplies vehicles to Colombia's federal police, Mexico's border patrol, and the U.S. Department of State. It also creates bespoke bulletproof executive SUVs, luxury sedans, and special-purpose vehicles for individuals.

The company's most popular vehicles are Mercedes-Benz G Wagons, Zs, and G23 AMGs and Cadillac Escalades, all of which "sell like hotcakes," says vice president of marketing and business development Arthur Yurovitsky. But its most attention-grabbing vehicle for 2020 is the Sentry Civilian.

Built on a bulletproof Ford F-550 for reliable driving in complex conditions, the Civilian is powered by a 6.7L diesel V8 engine. Its platform was originally designed for law enforcement but has been upgraded to offer the



Inkas Sentry Civilian





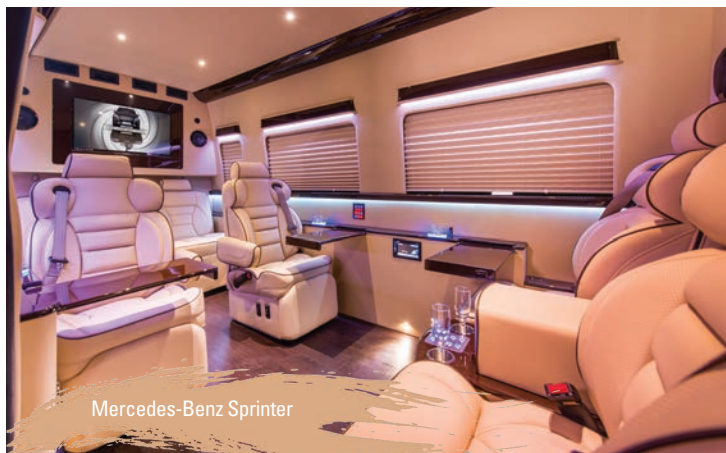
“SWAT team experience in a civilian-grade package” for your daily drive. Inkas can install night vision, gun lockboxes, and—particularly for overseas clients concerned with air quality or chemical attack—purifying ventilation systems that can purge the air inside the vehicle in one second. Inkas also offers luxury interiors, including wet bars and a proprietary control system for Netflix, Apple TV, Wi-Fi, and other essentials built into armrests and touchscreen consoles.

“It’s a practical VIP transport vehicle, offering the same accommodations that travelers on business jets are used to,” says Yurovitsky.

## A Fully *Functional* Office

Since 1996, Becker Automotive Design has been producing specialized luxury transports for heads of state, top business executives, celebrities, and other VIPs, including actors Elizabeth Taylor and Vin Diesel, Dell Technologies chairman and CEO Michael Dell, and the royal families of Dubai and Abu Dhabi.

Its limited edition, one-ton Chevrolet Suburban chassis, stretched 20 inches and armored against AK-47 assault rifles, is a popular choice. So is the



Mercedes-Benz Sprinter



Becker Automotive Design

sleek, contemporary Jet Van, which is a Daimler-approved Mercedes-Benz Sprinter equipped with a rear, bizjet-style galley (with oven, blender, coffee/espresso machine, and storage for tableware) and two large 4K LED LCD monitors. It's also a fully functional office, featuring an onboard computer system with military-spec routers with boosters and hardwired antennas and Apple TV functionality, with all features controllable via a phone or tablet.

"Clients are requesting complete mobile offices with custom luxury interiors but discreet exteriors—they want to be unnoticed from the outside," explains sales manager Troy Becker.

## Art Galleries on Wheels

In 2018, Rolls-Royce had its most gangbuster year of bespoke orders to date. At Pebble Beach Concours d'Élégance, Google's vice president of engineering and consummate petrol head, Benjamin Treyner Sloss, took delivery of a Rolls-Royce Dawn Black Badge featuring a jazzy yellow-and-blue color scheme (the colors of the Modenese flag, which all his racing cars carry). Another Dawn delivered that year paid homage to the Czech and Slovak airmen who served in RAF squadrons Nos. 312 and 313 during the Battle of Britain: the livery of their Spitfires inspired its solid gray exterior and black coachline and the door paneling is emblazoned with their squadron mottos.

The marque's Phantom offering includes a space dedicated to showcasing customer taste: a glass-fronted dashboard gallery area for commissioned art. In 2018, Rolls-Royce's Goodwood, England, factory completed a Phantom called *Whispered Muse*, which displays an interpretation of Charles Sykes's drawings of the automaker's Spirit of Ecstasy mascot reimagined in sculpted silk by British artist Helen Amy Murray (and a rose gold Spirit of Ecstasy on the hood). Earlier this year, Rolls-Royce announced that a South African patron had commissioned a visual artist and cultural ambassador from that country, Esther Mahlangu, to create a work of art for the gallery. The manufacturer is naming the car "The Mahlangu Phantom" in tribute.

## Luxury in the Wilderness

Lexani Motorcars client adviser John Wallace has overseen numerous interior upgrades for the personal vehicles of Fortune 500 CEOs, A-list directors, heads of state, Oscar-winning actors, and international royalty. While many such clients are secretive, singer, model, and *Fast & Furious* actor Tyrese Gibson posted details of his bespoke, two-bed Escalade on social media, saying it was the "most beautiful thing he ever designed or bought."

This camouflage-wrapped, off-road Lexani EXTV Mercedes-Benz Sprinter features everything you might need on a trip into the wilderness, including a front-cabin mini-fridge, storage space, a 24-inch HDTV, a Blu-ray player, Wi-Fi, Apple TV, and ambient overhead dimmable lighting inlaid into the suede ceiling and walls.

## A Bird-Lover's Dream Car

Bentley offers customizations through its Mulliner division, which also produces one-off Bentayga SUVs tailored to sports and hobbies.

The 2016 Linley Hamper by Mulliner offers fine Linley china, cutlery,



Lexani Motorcars



tableware, and crystal glass, plus fall treats by the culinary team at award-winning farm-shop collective Daylesford Organic. Mulliner's collaboration with gunmaker Purdey includes a shooting storage box with compartments for cartridges, knives, and a first-aid kit.

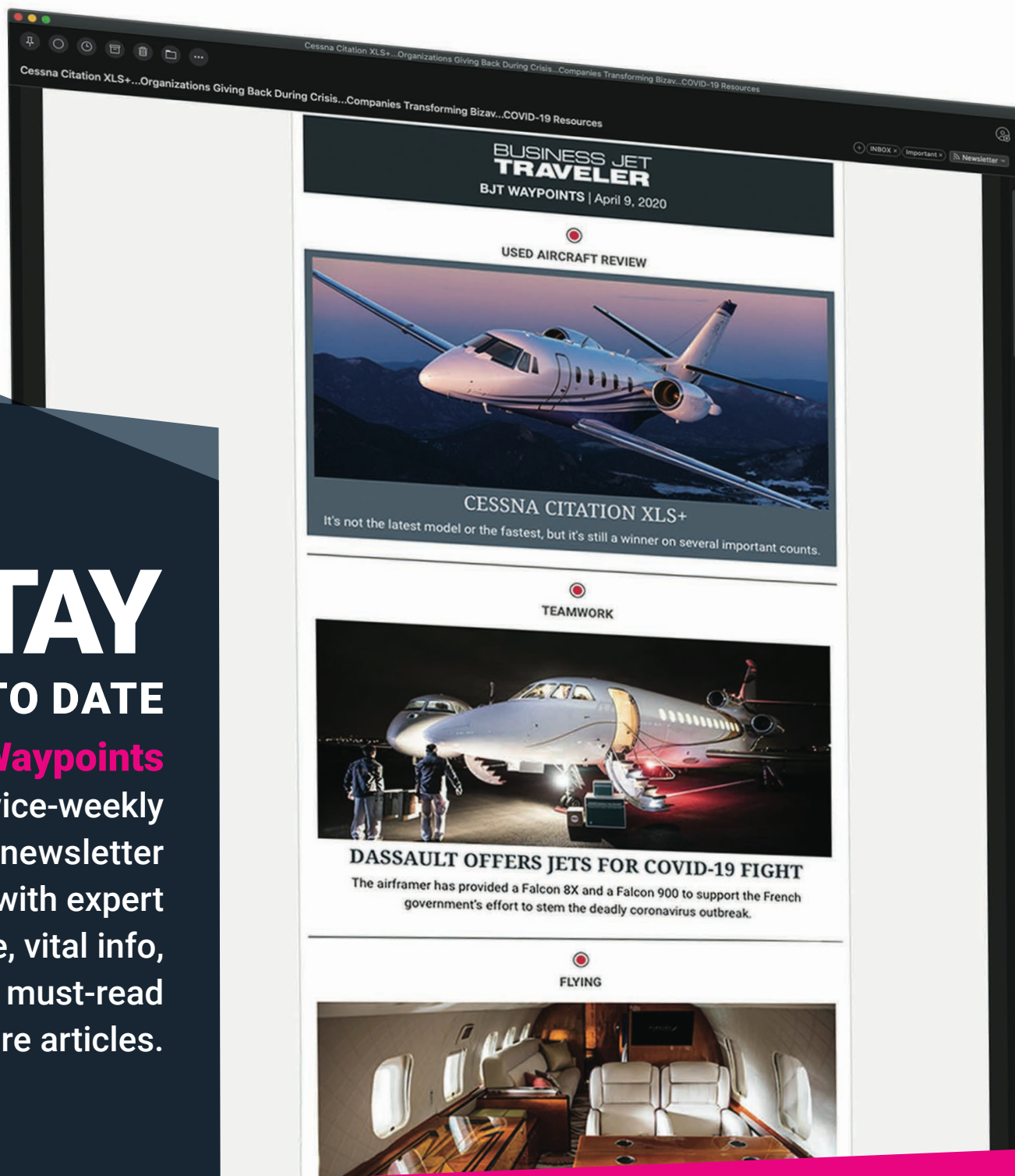
One of the marque's standout nose-to-tail concepts is the Bentayga Falconry. In the trunk are a natural-cork-trimmed refreshment case and a master flight station, equipped with compartments for GPS bird-tracking units, binoculars, and handcrafted leather bird hoods. Inside, the dash displays a marquetry desert scene featuring a saker falcon crafted in 430 pieces of wood, and a removable perch and tether over the central armrest so feathered friends can ride shotgun.

**BJT**

### Gemma Z. Price

(gprice@bjtonline.com), a frequent contributor, has covered lifestyle, culture, and travel for such publications as *Conde Nast Traveler* and *Time*.

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# This isn't your grandfather's ice fishing

by Thomas R. Pero



Thanks to modern innovations, you can catch more with less work and even stay warm while you do it.

Barb Carney lives for ice fishing. But she wasn't always so enthused. One winter day when she was young, her dad brought her to a VFW-sponsored ice-fishing tournament. She was cold and bored. At least she won a prize for the smallest fish.

Those were the days of wet woolen mittens and layers of hooded sweatshirts and of standing around in rubber boots and braving a brisk wind, often for hours, without much happening—good old-fashioned Midwestern stoicism.

"Technology has changed everything," Carney says. "The sport is nothing like it used to be."

Warm, windproof, high-performance suits that keep a person afloat, combined with portable life rafts, have virtually eliminated the fear of freezing.

Electric ice augers as light as a dozen pounds have solved the problem of drilling holes, especially for youngsters. Quiet all-terrain vehicles and snow machines whisk anglers over the ice. Cell phones offer instant location information and safety. Marine units provide a view into the depths and the ability to sight moving fish.

Carney, who lives in Wisconsin, is a U.S. Coast

Guard-certified captain. She cohosts the popular radio show *The Woman Angler*. In 2015, she started the Women Ice Angler Project, an annual event that combines camping with ice fishing. It will next be held on Lake Minnetonka, Minnesota, from Jan. 29 to Feb. 2, 2020.

Mixing camping with ice fishing is something that anglers have been working toward for years, Carey explains, and it is now possible using mobile equipment and high-end fish houses. "We will be living on the ice for several days," she says.

Carney acknowledges that technological advances—including the introduction of nearly

invisible lines and a plethora of deadly tungsten jigs and other soft-plastic lures that would have flabbergasted old-timers—have made the fish vulnerable. Public agencies responsible for stewardship of fishery resources have responded by introducing selective harvest and fostering a catch-and-release ethic.

Carney describes the growing popularity of ice fishing as a destination adventure, with anglers traveling distances on species-specific quests: to urban Milwaukee Harbor in Lake Michigan for giant brown trout; to Lake Winnipeg in Canada for huge "greenback" walleyes; and to Lake Goge-



Joe Henry with his walleye



Jenny Johnson caught a 40.25 inch pike.







bic, the largest inland natural lake in Michigan's wild Upper Peninsula, for jumbo yellow perch the locals call "teeter pigs."

And then there's Lake of the Woods, which many avid ice fishers place in a class of its own.

"We call it the Walleye Capital of the World," says Joe Henry, the director of tourism for the northern Minnesota shore of the 68-mile-long lake, which laps briefly on Manitoba to the west and reaches deeply into Ontario to the north. As the farthest-north lake in the contiguous U.S., Lake of the Woods gets the earliest ice—and an extra month of fishing because of neighboring Canada's season, which extends through March. More than two million anglers take to the ice here annually.

Henry points out that, contrary to the general perception of ice fishing being a deep-freeze sport, it's actually warmer—and more pleasant—on the ice on a typical day from December through March than it is in an open boat bouncing around in the wind and waves during other months.

"You stay in one of our full-season resorts," he explains. "After a hearty north-woods breakfast in the morning, you take 10 steps outside into the comfort of a heated ice chariot." Miles out, you arrive at your fish house, heated by propane to 70 degrees. Snacks, drinks, and tackle are waiting and the holes

are already drilled. After a day of fishing, the ride takes you back to the resort, with or without your catch, just in time for cocktail hour.

If a do-it-yourself (although still hardly roughing it) approach is more your style, you can rent a fish house by the day (some have bunk beds and stoves) and drive your pickup as far as 20 miles across the ice on a three- to four-lane highway maintained by the resorts. "Even in blowing snow," Henry says, "you still have two lanes open."

When Lake of the Woods is covered in 15 inches of hard ice (which it normally is well before Christmas), Zippel Bay Resort owners Nick and Deana Painovich tow a full-service Igloo Bar in two pieces three miles away from shore. Then they open it for business, complete with widescreen televisions, hot chili, and rods for rent.

"Out on this big ice, the stars just pop," Henry rhapsodizes. "I've never seen stars so bright. And the Northern Lights—people call me up and say, 'I know you told me, but I really had to see it for myself to believe it.'" **BJT**



BACKGROUND PHOTOS BY ADOBE STOCK. ALL OTHERS COURTESY OF LAKE OF THE WOODS TOURISM.



**Thomas R. Pero**  
([tpero@bjtonline.com](mailto:tpero@bjtonline.com)) is publisher of Wild River Press and the author of several books about fishing and hunting.

# Still awake? Read this, then turn out the light

by Joe Sharkey

**T**erry Cralle says she knows all about “sleeping your way to the top.” OK, let’s be more precise. Cralle is coauthor of a book titled *Sleeping Your Way to the Top: How to Get the Sleep You Need to Succeed*. I encountered her—wide awake—last year at a travel industry trade show where she was cohosting a presentation on sleep deprivation and business travel.

For many hard-charging business travelers, the sort who are on the road 40 nights a year or more (at least when a pandemic isn’t happening), “sleep is not really much of a priority, and it should be,” she says.

You and I could be among those who pride ourselves on hitting the ground running at first daylight, no matter what hour we went to bed. We’re adept at maintaining a prudent diet and fitting in a workout at the hotel gym, but the idea of ensuring a solid night’s sleep is secondary. That attitude reflects “a culture that devalues sleep” as a waste of what could be productive time, says Cralle, a registered nurse and frequent traveler and lecturer who specializes in clinical sleep wellness programs.

The ability to work productively in flight has always been a major selling point for business jets, of course. Stressing the importance of sleep, on the other hand, “is almost regarded as a character flaw,” Cralle says, rather than a proven necessity for optimal functioning.

Some recent business-jet innovations do reflect a recognition of sleep’s value. Bombardier promotes its high-tech Soleil cabin lighting on its new ultra-long-range Global 7500 aircraft as a high-tech aid for “stimulating or suppressing the production of melatonin—the body’s sleep hormone—to help synchronize a traveler’s circadian rhythm to the time at their destination.”

Cralle’s co-presenter at the trade show was Bryan Paul Buckley, a sleep psychologist who hit middle age realizing that his youthful disdain for shut-eye, “sometimes made me about as sharp as a bowling ball” on the road. His book, *Elite Road Warrior: Six Energy Habits to Master the Business Travel Life*, chronicles a journey into wellness with advice and pithy quotes, such as this from the leadership guru Michael Hyatt: “The more tired I am, the dumber I get.”

Cralle and Buckley’s sleep presentation was among dozens of workshops

and educational panels at the Global Business Travel Association’s five-day annual convention in Chicago in August 2019, which 7,100 business travel buyers and sellers attended. The panel was at mid-afternoon on a Sunday, so the audience was reasonably awake, including those who had indulged in the opening round of corporate parties the previous night.

During the session, Cralle called the common idea that just a few hours of sleep enhances productivity “a colossal myth.” Only a tiny percentage of people are true “natural short sleepers” who can get by on less than five hours a night, she said, citing sleep research.

“So how do you leverage the power of sleep on the road?” asked Buckley, who had lugged a rollaboard on stage as a prop. Cralle slumped theatrically as he removed bricks from his rollaboard and stashed them, one by one, into a backpack she had on. The bricks were actually made of foam rubber, and Buckley said they demonstrated a point made by William Dement, the pioneering Stanford University sleep researcher: “Every hour you’re awake, you put one brick into the backpack. By the end of the day you’re carrying 16 bricks. For every hour you sleep, you remove two bricks. When all 16 bricks are removed—eight hours—you start fresh the next day.”

That visual aid made sense to me, and also to Wendy Lue, a young travel manager at Lyric.com, a San Francisco startup specializing in luxury short-stay apartments for business travelers. After the presentation, Lue told me she had gained a lot of valuable advice, such as a tip about packing two days before a trip to ease last-minute stress.

“I would definitely do some of those things if I could,” she said, as she hurried off to another meeting. “But to tell you the truth, I just don’t have the time.”

As for me, I walked back to my hotel and took a nap. **BJT**



**Joe Sharkey**

(jsharkey@bjtonline.com), the author of six books and a longtime **BJT** contributor, wrote a weekly business travel column for the *New York Times* for 16 years.



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