

EUROPEAN BUSINESS AIR NEWS

EUROPE • RUSSIA • MIDDLE EAST • AFRICA



Stephen Vella, centre, with Kestrel Aviation's completions team onboard their BBJ 787 project. Photo courtesy of Kestrel Aviation Management.

Business aviation interiors ride the wave of design excellence

Business aviation is seeing a renaissance in design innovation, influenced in part by superyacht design that sees the placement of crystal chandeliers, hot tubs, bikes, marble bathrooms, even a helipad, on board. And while it may not be practical to have a helipad on a Global Express, there's a crossover in these markets in the need for imaginative design that exploits relatively small spaces.

The growth in superyacht numbers has attracted more interior designers into the field, with the result that products and layout have become much more creative and original. As attention turns towards business aviation, designers are increasingly challenging the more traditional norms and the entire industry is shifting forward to support more flexible, comfortable living in the air. Owners are embracing and translating the trends in luxury yacht, car and even fashion design.

Huge design influence comes from the automotive industry. The design studios of several auto manufacturers such as BMW Designworks, Porsche Design, Mercedes-Benz Design and Pininfarina are balancing form with function in aircraft interior design. And for a clientele accustomed to driving luxury automobiles and living in sumptuous homes, there is a desire for continuity in the sky.

Recent changes in regulations have resulted in new safety criteria



Jet Aviation Basel Design Studio's Elisabeth Harvey uses electrochromatic partitions to create flexible living spaces for long-range travel.

being implemented in the cabin, but solutions are constantly evolving that balance elegance and complexity. Although seat certification requirements have become more stringent, manufacturers are improving the design of the underlying seat structures, which in turn has allowed the overall designs to be enhanced, even when considering restrictions such as body-to-body contact or leg flail. In-flight entertainment systems and the customer's use of technology, for example iPads to operate IFE, have freed up cabin space. Substrate materials are becoming stronger and lighter, which allows for more creativity regarding the aesthetic without compromising weight or



Bombardier's Tim Fagan says the Global 7000 interior is a series of meticulously crafted enhancements including a new cabin management system.

acoustics.

Evolutions in cabin interiors are also driven by customer preferences, and the prevailing preference today is for flexibility. Gulfstream says its clients want a seamless transition from the home or office, and to have on-board options to enhance productivity and relaxation while at the same time ensuring that passengers arrive at each destination feeling refreshed.

For long range aircraft, flights often involve crossing international time

zones and Bombardier plans its cabin design around passengers who may want to work privately, connect with the office, enjoy a meal or sleep. Its low-altitude cabin pressurisation and advanced air management system can regulate cabin temperature and provide fresh air, and its lighting can be crisp task lighting for working, soft and warm for meal times and dimmed when watching a movie.

Jet Aviation Basel Design Studio director of design Elisabeth Harvey is seeing larger aircraft flying with fewer passengers nowadays, which further opens the design scope to include open-plan living concepts and associated possibilities for the segmentation of space. Technologies such as electrochromatic partitions have arrived in recent years, further enabling designers to create flexible living perfectly designed for long-range travel.

Embraer believes that each interior development should be backed by ergonomics, craftsmanship and design. Within the Legacy 450 and 500, it suggests its technology 'acts as a butler in the sky', ready to serve at a moment's notice yet invisible when not needed. Hiding some of the technology means that

Continued on next page

Continued from preceding page

those parts becoming obsolete within the operational lifetime of the aircraft will not be on display in the cabin. On its Lineage 1000E the interior is modular so it can be configured in sections or in its entirety; imagination and certification are the only limits.

Canada-headquartered Flying Colours Corp notes that in the pre-owned business jet market owners typically want the aircraft to be redesigned to a personal motif and their purchase decision is often influenced by interior options.

Gulfstream says its passengers' desire for cabin flexibility is a key driver in its aircraft interior developments. Interior design director Tray Crow says that with long-range travel the norm, those on board want to be able to use their aircraft as work, dining, entertainment and resting spaces. The four-living-area G650 accommodates all of these aspects of flight.

Where clients want a quiet atmosphere and plenty of room,

comfort and a good use of space is important. Seats are becoming more comfortable and their design more adaptive. Storage areas must be large and customised, and sited at the cabin entrance; being able to access baggage has become a priority.

Configuring cabins to maximise comfort

Captain Hani Alsohaibi of US-based Rayan Aviation believes aviation industry interiors still lack the innovation and style of their superyacht counterparts. "Some of the best first class seats were installed in the '80s in some of the best long haul airlines during that era, British Airways and Continental." The red velvet seats on the Saudia Airlines B-747 aircraft made a particularly strong impression on him and he welcomes a return towards comfort being the main priority for business jet interiors.

Comfort in aircraft is not only



Vision Systems' Alexandra Martin-Devau explains how the light coming in can positively affect passenger perception and flight experience.

about hardware but also about perception. "It is a tangible and intangible state of wellbeing that must meet customer expectations," says Washington, USA-based Kestrel Aviation Management CEO Stephen Vella. Design needs to transition

into concepts that can easily be engineered, certified, fabricated and installed.

London Biggin Hill airport-based RAS Interiors has been working closely with aircraft grade foam and material suppliers to provide firm yet