



# FBO Survey 2021: Rest of the World

Report by Curt Epstein, charts and data by Dave Leach

While business aviation levels in the U.S. have rebounded to near-normal levels in the wake of the Covid pandemic, that traffic still isn't going very far afield, amid continued international restrictions aimed at curbing the spread of the virus, even as vaccination programs slowly ramp up around the world. As evidence, according to JetNet, large-cabin jet activity was down 36 percent between 2020 and 2019, while in the second quarter of 2020 those levels plunged by 65 percent.

"It is disappointing to see the Covid relapse in Europe as 2021 has progressed, which has dampened the positive expectations that we had about the recovery," explained John-Angus Smith, Signature Flight Support's managing director for EMEA (Europe, Middle East, Africa). "We continue to see little traffic from outside of EMEA which is reflected in more resilience from the light and mid-size charter aircraft traffic, with our expectation that heavy jet traffic will return when trans-Atlantic travel opens up."

That decline in international traffic has affected FBOs from Amsterdam to Australia, which have had to adapt to the situation. "We carried out a review of the staffing levels and operational hours worked," noted Carly Swetman, general manager of the London Jet Centre at London Stansted Airport. "We decided to decrease the fixed operational hours for the FBO, but increased [our] short-notice flexibility to accommodate the ever-changing demands of our aircraft clients and operators," a move she added, that has been appreciated during these unprecedented times.

Jaiyavat Navaraj, chairman of Thailand-based MJets FBO was faced with an 80 percent drop in traffic year over year at Bangkok's Don Mueang International Airport. "We managed to cut off all frills and become leaner to sustain the drastic drop of revenue," he told AIN. One of the first facilities last year to institute temperature screenings of everyone entering the facility, it has, like most, focused on hygiene and disinfection, with Navaraj noting he believes the wearing of surgical masks will be a part of the operation for years to come.

As borders began to reopen after the initial phase of the pandemic, some areas that were relatively sheltered from it began to notice trends. "Due to the fact that Sardinia was by far better off in terms of Covid-19 cases versus any other location in Italy, many owners of prestigious properties in Sardinia preferred to stay longer than ever before," said Francesco Cossu, general manager of Eccelsa Aviation at Olbia Costa Smeralda Airport. Likewise the loosening of regulations "attracted a lot of European passengers willing to spend some safe holidays in Portugal, one of the most spared countries during the pandemic," explained Omni Handling CEO Ricardo Periera.

"One trend we noticed was a definite pickup of both charter and FBO business every time a border was opened" said ExecuJet Asia-Pacific v-p Darren McGoldrick. "It was interesting to see clients who had never regularly traveled to remote destinations jump at the chance to get out and fly, seemingly just because they were now allowed to." ■

## FBO SURVEY RULES AND METHODOLOGY

This report on AIN's FBO survey covers fixed-base operations in the Rest of the World.

### History

AIN has been conducting surveys since 1981, asking about the service that FBOs provide their customers and reporting the results from these annual surveys. Initially, we sent out a paper survey questionnaire by mail to qualified subscribers in the U.S.—pilots, flight attendants, and dispatchers—the people who use or make arrangements with FBOs. In later years, qualified subscribers in the remainder of North America and the rest of the world were added to the survey.

In 2006 we moved the FBO survey online. We have continued to add FBOs each year and now offer respondents a comprehensive list of 4,500 FBOs worldwide.

### The Survey

The FBO Survey site allows subscribers to keep a list of personalized FBOs and from this list they can easily change or affirm a prior rating and leave an updated comment.

The scores in this report and on our website reflect the cumulative average of scores from 2014 through today. Only the most recent rating of an FBO is counted on a per-user basis and only FBOs that have received 20 or more ratings are eligible for their scores to be published. We did see slightly reduced feedback this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic as many readers informed us they had not flown nearly as much as they had during the prior survey period. Partly because of this we moved the rating threshold from 30 to 20 after confirming that the results are still statistically significant.

From April 1, 2020, until Feb. 10, 2021, we asked subscribers to update and give new ratings for FBOs they had visited in the preceding 12 months. We contacted readers via email and announcements in our e-newsletters. The bulk of this promotion took place from Dec. 1, 2020 through Feb. 10, 2021.

The FBO survey site asks readers to evaluate FBOs they visited the previous year in five categories: line service; passenger amenities; pilot amenities; facilities; and customer service representatives (CSRs). For each of these categories, the participant is asked to assign a number from 1 to 5, 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest.

### Observations

Each year we review ratings to ensure their accuracy. On our new site we have a system to flag, review, and, if necessary, remove ratings identified as dubious by factors such as email address, IP address, and concentration of scores.

### Score Calculations

An FBO's overall average is calculated by adding all the individual category ratings received by that FBO and dividing the resulting sum by the total number of all category ratings received by the FBO. In other words, if a particular FBO was evaluated by 50 people (and assuming that all 50 evaluators gave that FBO a rating in each of the five categories), then the FBO would receive a total of 250 category ratings. These 250 category ratings are added together and then the sum is divided by 250 to arrive at the overall average for this particular FBO.

Overall averages are calculated using the cumulative average of all ratings given from 2014 through the present. This year's results will show an FBO's increase or decrease versus that FBO's cumulative rating from one year ago.

**REMINDER**

**DON'T WAIT**—AIN's FBO survey is now open for year-round feedback. It takes only a minute, and you can do it while waiting for passengers, on the shuttle bus to/from the hotel, or any other time that is convenient for you. Log on to [www.ainonline.com/fbosurvey](http://www.ainonline.com/fbosurvey) to rate your experiences at the FBOs you visit.

## MOST IMPROVED FBOs OVER THE PAST 12 MONTHS

FBO	AIRPORT CODE	AIRPORT	OVERALL AVERAGE	CHANGE FROM LAST YEAR
JET AVIATION	OMDB	DUBAI INTERNATIONAL	4.18	0.11
EXECUJET AUSTRALIA	YSSY	SYDNEY KINGSFORD SMITH	4.50	0.10
HARRODS AVIATION	EGSS	LONDON STANSTED	4.40	0.09
ECCELSA AVIATION	LIEO	OLBIA COSTA SMERALDA	4.41	0.08
HONG KONG BUSINESS AVIATION CENTER	VHHH	HONG KONG INTERNATIONAL	4.24	0.06
VIENNA AIRCRAFT HANDLING	LOWW	VIENNA INTERNATIONAL	3.92	0.06
UNIVERSAL AVIATION	LFPB	PARIS LE BOURGET	4.23	0.05
JET AVIATION	LSGG	GENEVA INTERNATIONAL	4.38	0.05

\*FBOs with same change are listed in alphabetical order

## 4.66 Farnborough Airport (EGLF) UK



Of course, the 60 percent dip in 2020 aircraft movements compared with the 32,000 recorded in 2019 was a shock to the system, but overall the UK's Farnborough Airport has shown resilience throughout the ongoing Covid crisis and continued its more than decade-long reign as the most highly ranked FBO outside of the Americas in the AIN survey.

While FBOs outside North America tend to lag in terms of scores, Farnborough's overall rating is high enough that the FBO, which was ranked second-highest in the world by our readers this year in the facilities category (4.85), would place among the top 10 percent of North American service providers.

Its immaculate three-story, 52,000-sq-ft business aviation terminal features VIP customer lounges that can accommodate up to 60 people for high-volume flights, conference rooms, crew lounge and snooze rooms, work area, passenger and crew shower facilities, laundry service, and gymnasium. Drive-through customs and immigration clearance is available along with an on-airport hotel.

CEO Simon Geere, who succeeded Brandon O'Reilly in July 2020 following the September 2019 purchase of the property by Macquarie Infrastructure and Real Assets, now feels able to anticipate a resurgence in activity as travel restrictions start to lift.

Geere told AIN that he anticipates a "sharp recovery" with business aircraft operators better placed to respond to demand for flights than airlines that face ongoing struggles to manage yield and profitability from their less-flexible scheduled services. While acknowledging that business aviation has suffered with "expensive assets parked on the ground," he said that it has been encouraging to see new customers gravitating to private charter services in the months between the UK's three national lockdowns when travel was permitted.

Evidence of this glass-half-full perspective can be seen in plans to add a third hangar to the pair of three-bay units already onsite that offer 240,000 sq ft of climate-controlled shelter. The company will seek approval for this construction later this year, as part of a process in which it works closely with local authorities to manage growth within the currently agreed confines of 50,000 annual movements.

Farnborough is also proud of its standing as the first purpose-built business aviation airport to be certified as carbon-neutral.

"Our main focus now is on further improving the customer experience and we have an incredible canvas to build on," he commented. In addition to initiatives such as new electric ground power units, Farnborough aims to make sustainable aviation fuel available to operators within 12 to 18 months.

### TOP-RATED FBOs IN EUROPE, THE MIDDLE EAST, AFRICA AND ASIA-PACIFIC

FBO	AIRPORT CODE	AIRPORT	OVERALL AVERAGE	CHANGE FROM LAST YEAR	
FARNBOROUGH AIRPORT	EGLF	FARNBOROUGH	4.66	-0.01	Top 20%
UNIVERSAL AVIATION	EGSS	LONDON STANSTED	4.61	0.04	Top 20%
EXECUJET AUSTRALIA	YSSY	SYDNEY KINGSFORD SMITH	4.50	0.10	Top 20%
JET AVIATION	EHAM	AMSTERDAM SCHIPHOL	4.48	0.02	Top 20%
SIGNATURE FLIGHT SUPPORT	EDDM	MUNICH	4.48	N/A	Top 20%
MJETS	VTBD	DON MUEANG INTERNATIONAL	4.46	0.04	Top 20%
LONDON JET CENTRE	EGSS	LONDON STANSTED	4.42	-0.04	Top 20%
ECCIELSA AVIATION	LIEO	OLBIA COSTA SMERALDA	4.41	0.08	Top 20%
OMNI HANDLING	LPPT	LISBON INTERNATIONAL PORTELA	4.41	N/A	Top 20%
SIGNATURE FLIGHT SUPPORT (Formerly TAG Aviation)	LSGG	GENEVA INTERNATIONAL	4.41	-0.02	Top 20%
HARRODS AVIATION	EGSS	LONDON STANSTED	4.40	0.09	
GRAFAIR JET CENTER	ESSB	STOCKHOLM CITY/BROMMA	4.38	-0.08	
JET AVIATION	LSGG	GENEVA INTERNATIONAL	4.38	0.05	
JET AVIATION	EDDL	DUSSELDORF	4.38	N/A	
EXECUJET EUROPE	LSZH	ZURICH	4.33	-0.03	
MALLORCAIR	LEPA	PALMA DE MALLORCA	4.32	N/A	
HARRODS AVIATION	EGGW	LONDON LUTON	4.31	0.01	
JET AVIATION	YSSY	SYDNEY KINGSFORD SMITH	4.27	-0.02	
EXECUJET MIDDLE EAST	OMDB	DUBAI INTERNATIONAL	4.25	0.03	
HONG KONG BUSINESS AVIATION CENTER	VHHH	HONG KONG INTERNATIONAL	4.24	0.06	
UNIVERSAL AVIATION	WSSL	SINGAPORE/SELETAR	4.24	N/A	
UNIVERSAL AVIATION	LFPB	PARIS LE BOURGET	4.23	0.05	
SIGNATURE FLIGHT SUPPORT - TERMINAL 3	LFPB	PARIS LE BOURGET	4.22	-0.02	
ADVANCED AIR SUPPORT	LFPB	PARIS LE BOURGET	4.21	0.01	
JET AVIATION	OMDB	DUBAI INTERNATIONAL	4.18	0.11	
SIGNATURE FLIGHT SUPPORT	LFMN	NICE COTE D'AZUR INTERNATIONAL	4.18	-0.06	
BIGGIN HILL EXECUTIVE HANDLING	EGKB	BIGGIN HILL	4.14	-0.12	
EXECUJET BRUSSELS	EBBR	BRUSSELS NATIONAL	4.11	-0.02	
DASSAULT FALCON SERVICE	LFPB	PARIS LE BOURGET	4.07	-0.11	
SIGNATURE FLIGHT SUPPORT - TERMINAL 1	LFPB	PARIS LE BOURGET	4.07	-0.06	
SKY VALET CANNES	LFMD	CANNES-MANDELIEU	4.05	-0.02	
SWISSPORT EXEC	LFMN	NICE COTE D'AZUR INTERNATIONAL	4.01	-0.02	
SIGNATURE FLIGHT SUPPORT - TERMINAL 1	EGGW	LONDON LUTON	4.00	0.00	
BUSINESS FLIGHT CENTER	EFHK	HELSINKI-VANTAA	3.99	N/A	
AVIAPARTNER EXECUTIVE	LFMN	NICE COTE D'AZUR INTERNATIONAL	3.97	-0.04	
JET AVIATION	LSZH	ZURICH	3.95	0.01	
JETEX PARIS FBO	LFPB	PARIS LE BOURGET	3.94	0.01	
VIENNA AIRCRAFT HANDLING	LOWW	VIENNA INTERNATIONAL	3.92	0.06	
JET AVIATION	WSSL	SINGAPORE/SELETAR	3.89	-0.04	
SKY VALET	LEMD	MADRID BARAJAS	3.89	N/A	
VIPPORT VNUKOVO-3	UUWW	MOSCOW/VNUKOVO	3.31	0.03	
UNIVERSAL AVIATION / CJET	ZBAA	BEIJING/CAPITAL	3.30	0.01	

FBOs with same overall average are listed in alphabetical order

## 4.61 Universal Aviation London Stansted Airport (EGSS), UK

Universal Aviation, the ground handling arm of Texas-based Universal Weather and Aviation, operates FBOs and general aviation terminals around the world, from Beijing to Barcelona and from Singapore to Toluca, but its facility at London Stansted Airport continually earns its highest accolades according to AIN's readers. Home to the company's European



operations center, and its flight planning and trip support services, the two-story 11,000-sq-ft facility offers a wide variety of amenities and services, including VIP arrival and departure lounges, conference rooms, crew lounge and crew business center, shower facilities, dedicated in-house security screening, customs and immigration areas, and catering preparation kitchens. “Our facility is often likened to a boutique hotel,” said Sean Raftery, Universal’s senior director of international business for Northern Europe and Africa. “That is probably as much about the team and the attention given to our customers as it is about the fixtures and fittings.” Indeed, the location, which has a staff of 60 and is normally open from 7 a.m. until 10 p.m., received its highest score (4.79) this year in the CSR category.

The facility, which has obtained Stage 2 registration in the International Business Aviation Council’s IS-BAH program, has been in operation since 1984. “Our in-depth local knowledge and our long-established relationships with the regulatory and government authorities help take the pressure off the customer,” Raftery told AIN. “Passengers arriving at London-Stansted can be on the road within minutes of landing and are able to concentrate on their purpose for coming to the UK and not be distracted by complications.”

With 40,000 sq ft of private ramp, the facility has the ground equipment to handle the largest passenger aircraft. While the UK has been severely impacted by the Covid pandemic, Raftery noted the demand to fly remains. “Customers need borders to be open, but also hotels and restaurants, and while lockdown is necessary, it has of course made travel difficult.” He added that the company has worked ceaselessly with its clients to help them navigate the ever-changing regulations and requirements.

## 4.50 ExecuJet Australia

Sydney Kingsford Smith Airport (YSSY),  
Sydney, Australia



Earning its spot among the top-rated international service providers in AIN’s FBO Survey for the second straight year is ExecuJet’s location at Australia’s Sydney Kingsford Smith Airport. Over the past year the facility, which serves the country’s largest city, underwent a refreshment, including a complete interior repaint of its 3,230 sq ft of passenger and crew lounges as well as its trio of A/V-equipped conference rooms and catering preparation kitchen. The FBO also includes onsite customs, immigration and quarantine services, valet parking, and crew concierge. Other improvements were made to the ramp, with new lines drawn to extend the parking area and the maximum span of the apron increased to cater to the wingspan of the latest ultra-long-range business jets such as the Bombardier Global 7500 and the Gulfstream G700. “This is an important step in future-proofing our service offering, as new aircraft types are added to the industry, and means that the ExecuJet ramp is now the only private, direct-access bay on the airfield that can cater for aircraft this size,” said Darren McGoldrick, the company’s v-p for Asia-Pacific. The FBO has access to two hangars, one

occupied by its collocated MRO facility, as well the largest hangar on the field, which it manages. The latter can accommodate four large-cabin business jets, with room to spare for a midsize.

In operation for 35 years and part of the global ExecuJet chain since 2017, the IS-BAH stage 2-registered location received its highest scores this year in the customer-facing Line Service (4.72) and CSR (4.69) categories. “The relaxed and comfortable nature of traditional Australian customer service seeps into every conversation with the ramp and customer service agents, where clients are welcomed and the team’s combined 170 years of experience bolsters confidence in decisions and planning,” McGoldrick, told AIN.

The Sydney location—like all of the company’s FBOs—participates in the FlySkills Hygiene Certification Program, with Socotec-approved Covid control processes.

## 4.48 Jet Aviation

Schiphol Airport (EHAM),  
Amsterdam, Netherlands



In operation for more than three decades as the KLM Jet Center and from 2018 when it was acquired by Jet Aviation along with its sister location in Rotterdam, the FBO at Amsterdam’s Schiphol Airport has long been an outstanding performer among our readers.

Located just off the airport’s Runway 22-04, which is primarily used for general and business aviation, Jet Aviation’s nearly 5,000-sq-ft facility occupies approximately 60 percent of the airport’s general aviation terminal and includes two passenger lounges, two crew lounges with a pool table, beverage bar featuring everything from soft drinks to wine and beer, computer workstations, international television channels, and onsite immigration and customs clearance.

Open daily from 6 a.m. until 11 p.m., with a staff of 22, it offers dedicated refueling and deicing services on the ramp. “This setup allows us to perform quick turnarounds and fuel stops for all types of customers,” explained Edwin Niemöller, the company’s senior director of FBO operations for the Netherlands. As a result, the facility tallied its highest category total this year in Line Service (4.62). While the location does not possess hangar space of its own, it can, depending on availability, accommodate aircraft all the way up to ACJ/BBJ size.

Over the past year, like other FBOs in the world, the location worked to establish protections and social distancing during the pandemic. “We had to rapidly adjust to the challenges of Covid and do everything in our power to ensure the health and safety of everybody visiting our facilities and using our services,” Niemöller, told AIN. “Despite the uncertainties and ongoing challenges posed by Covid, I’m very proud of how our teams are supporting customers and flight operations in this environment.”

The FBO earned its IS-BAH Stage 1 registration in 2020 and, according to Niemöller, it is currently preparing for its Stage 2 certification audit, which will take place in October.

### Top-rated FBOs by Region EUROPE

FBO	AIRPORT CODE	OVERALL AVERAGE	CHANGE FROM LAST YEAR
<b>AMSTERDAM</b>			
JET AVIATION	LSGG	4.48	0.02
<b>DÜSSELDORF</b>			
JET AVIATION	EDDL	4.38	N/A
<b>GENEVA</b>			
SIGNATURE FLIGHT SUPPORT (Formerly TAG Aviation)	LSGG	4.41	-0.02
JET AVIATION	LSGG	4.38	0.05
<b>LISBON</b>			
OMNI HANDLING	LPPT	4.41	N/A
<b>LONDON</b>			
FARNBOROUGH AIRPORT	EGLF	4.66	-0.01
UNIVERSAL AVIATION	EGSS	4.61	0.04
LONDON JET CENTRE	EGSS	4.42	-0.04
HARRODS AVIATION	EGSS	4.40	0.09
HARRODS AVIATION	EGGW	4.31	0.01
<b>MUNICH</b>			
SIGNATURE FLIGHT SUPPORT	EDDM	4.48	N/A
<b>PARIS</b>			
UNIVERSAL AVIATION	LFPB	4.23	0.05
SIGNATURE FLIGHT SUPPORT - TERMINAL 3	LFPB	4.22	-0.02
ADVANCED AIR SUPPORT	LFPB	4.21	0.01
DASSAULT FALCON SERVICES	LFPB	4.07	-0.11
SIGNATURE FLIGHT SUPPORT - TERMINAL 1	LFPB	4.07	-0.06
JETEX	LFPB	3.94	0.01
<b>SARDINIA</b>			
ECCIELSA AVIATION	LIEO	4.41	0.08
<b>SOUTHERN FRANCE</b>			
SIGNATURE FLIGHT SUPPORT	LFMN	4.18	-0.06
SKY VALET CANNES	LFMD	4.05	-0.02
SWISSPORT EXECUTIVE	LFMN	4.01	-0.02
AVIAPARTNER EXECUTIVE	LFMN	3.97	-0.04
<b>STOCKHOLM</b>			
GRAFAIR JET CENTER	ESSB	4.38	-0.08
<b>ZURICH</b>			
EXECUJET EUROPE	LSZH	4.33	-0.03
JET AVIATION	LSZH	3.95	0.01

### Top Rated FBOs by Region ASIA PACIFIC

FBO	AIRPORT CODE	OVERALL AVERAGE	CHANGE FROM LAST YEAR
<b>BANGKOK</b>			
MJETS	VTBD	4.46	0.04
<b>SYDNEY</b>			
EXECUJET AUSTRALIA	YSSY	4.50	0.1
JET AVIATION	YSSY	4.27	-0.02
<b>BEIJING</b>			
UNIVERSAL AVIATION / CJET	ZBAA	3.30	0.01
<b>HONG KONG</b>			
HONG KONG BUSINESS AVIATION CENTER	VHXX	4.24	0.06
<b>SINGAPORE</b>			
UNIVERSAL AVIATION	WSSL	4.24	N/A
JET AVIATION	WSSL	3.89	-0.04

## 4.48 Signature Flight Support

Munich International Airport (EDDM),  
Munich, Germany

As the world's largest FBO operator with more than 200 locations worldwide, Signature Flight Support is likely the most-recognized name in the business aviation service industry. Its location at Munich International Airport, a part of the Signature brand since 2008, this year earned the highest score for any of its facilities outside of the Americas.

Located in the airport's GA terminal, the 5,400-sq-ft facility provides a refreshment bar, offering Germany's renowned local beer (but for those not operating aircraft, noted general manager Oliver Trono), soft drinks, hot beverages and local snacks; crew lounge with shower facilities and snooze room; onsite customs and immigration clearance; two conference rooms; business center; and for recreation, a foosball table and a pool table. Trono told **AIN** pool cues and billiard balls are among the items added to the enhanced cleaning checklist in the Covid era.



The location which is open during the normal airport operation hours of 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. has a staff of nine, and it was its CSRs that earned the FBO its highest score this year (4.78). "All our team members have been working together for many years, and this has helped us develop relationships with our visiting crews," explained Trono, adding it is nice for customers to see the same friendly faces each time they visit the facility. "Our job is to anticipate their needs and make their life easy and their journey through us stress-free."

While not new, the location was finally able to reclaim a substantial portion of its main GA ramp, which was blocked for a decade, first due to construction and then to its reassignment for commercial aircraft parking, giving it nearby parking for up to 10 large-cabin jets. All hangar space at EDDM is managed by the airport authority and is assigned on a "first come, first served" basis. For passenger and crew ground transfers, the facility just acquired a luxury Audi A8 limousine.

As with many locations worldwide, the FBO felt the sting of major events canceled due to the pandemic, including the region's most popular gathering, Oktoberfest, which typically draws large amounts of international and domestic traffic.

## 4.46 MJets FBO

Don Mueang International Airport (VTBD), Bangkok,  
Thailand

MJets FBO, which serves Thailand's capital city's private traffic aviation at Don Mueang International Airport, has been in operation for more than a decade and its new facility has impressed **AIN**'s readers since its debut in 2016, resulting in it being the highest-rated FBO in Asia.

The 26,000-sq-ft, two-story terminal celebrates its fifth anniversary this year and is open 24/7. It features onsite customs, immigration, and quarantine clearance with visa availability on arrival, a crew suite with three sofa beds and shower



facilities, a 3,400-sq-ft executive lounge, which can accommodate up to 75 guests at a time, private passenger lounge, conference rooms, and concierge, all of which helped the FBO receive its highest scores (4.62) in the Passenger Amenities and Facilities categories. Those amenities are certainly there for those who want them, but the facility is known for its quick-turn capabilities. "Normally a passenger will spend less than seven minutes in the terminal for formality and screening process before boarding the aircraft for an international trip," said company chairman Jaiyavat Navaraj. "For domestic trips it takes a much shorter time."

Customers can even arrange security services through the FBO ahead of arrival.

The location, which was the first in Southeast Asia to earn accreditation under IBAC's voluntary International Standard for Business Aviation Handling (IS-BAH), has now reached Stage 2 in the program and is currently in the process to obtain Stage 3.

A full-service FBO with a staff of 176, the location offers aircraft charter and management services, operates its own Part 145 repair station with AOG service, and has more than 86,000 sq ft of hangar space, which is currently home to 14 jets and turboprops.

## 4.42 London Jet Centre

London Stansted Airport (EGSS), UK

Operators heading to London Stansted Airport have their pick of quality FBOs with two of them there earning high recognition this year from **AIN** readers. London Jet Centre, now more than a year removed from its sale and rebranding, is known for its 94,000-sq-ft, climate-controlled Diamond Hangar. One of the largest in Europe, it can accommodate two Boeing 747-400s parked wingtip to wingtip, not to mention newer widebodies such as the 787-900 or the Airbus A330-900neo. Over the past year it received an upgrade to its internal ground power system to provide flexible support for both 28- and 115-volt aircraft needs. The hangar is undergoing a lighting upgrade, which will improve illumination for the MRO providers operating in the structure, as well as reduce the consumption of electricity for the entire complex.

Established in 2014, the IS-BAH Stage 1-registered location changed hands early last year while establishing a revised



### Top-rated FBOs by Region MIDDLE EAST

FBO	AIRPORT CODE	OVERALL AVERAGE	CHANGE FROM LAST YEAR
EXECUJET MIDDLE EAST	OMDB	4.25	0.03
JET AVIATION	OMDB	4.18	0.11

security protocol and a proactive marketing of the large-capacity site.

"The hangar and FBO facility offers unrivaled space and secure accommodation for large, widebody aircraft visiting the UK, with excellent road links to Central and developing Eastern districts of London," explained business development director Adrian Munday. The location, which has a full-time staff of nine, also has 3.5 acres of ramp and its own ground service equipment to handle head-of-state and VIP aircraft

Open from 6 a.m. until 10 p.m. with after-hours callout available, the 20,000-sq-ft terminal was designed to handle large-capacity private flights and features a large passenger lounge with a pair of VIP suites, each with direct private access and ensuite bathroom for those most discrete clients; both a cocktail bar and an espresso bar; an aviation-themed pilot lounge with a two snooze rooms; private security screening area; and an 18-seat A/V-equipped conference room.



## 4.41 Eccelsa Aviation

Olbia Costa Smeralda Airport (LIEO), Olbia, Italy

Serving as the lone FBO at Olbia Costa Smeralda Airport on the Italian island of Sardinia, Eccelsa Aviation, owned by the same company that manages the airport, has been operating in its current 48,400-sq-ft terminal since 2009.

In addition to the normal slate of FBO amenities, such as passenger lounge, pilot lounge and snooze room, porte cochere, and 12-seat A/V-equipped conference room, the facility also offers a VIP lounge with private entrance, lounge bar, indoor summer patio, and a restaurant that serves up local dishes operated by sister company Cortesa Catering. "Having the in-flight catering facility within the terminal significantly helps the quality, as this avoids all transportation issues," noted general manager Francesco Cossu, as well as eliminates the associated food-temperature control risks.

If that isn't enough, there is also a coffee shop and a market selling the best produce from Sardinia and the Italian mainland as well as luxury comestibles such as caviar, champagne, rare wines, and liquors. Specialty shops offer eyewear and vintage luxury goods, and as an indication of the clientele that transits the location, Bombardier operates a private jet sales office there, along with the San Marino Aircraft Registry and a high-end Italian boat builder.

With the region very much a leisure destination, traffic reaches a peak during the summer, at which time the FBO operates 24/7, according to Cossu, and its staff swells from 15 to approximately 50. Concierge services can arrange anything from renting an Italian sports car, to booking a helicopter flight, to chartering a yacht. “Within the legal, common sense, and the decency domain, we basically try to satisfy all the customer’s requests,” explained Cossu. “Our problem-solving approach and culture is nothing less than crucial in delivering what our clients expect from us, which is simply service excellence.”

The airport itself is currently refurbishing and expanding its 8,021-foot runway, which will add another 800 feet to its overall length before the start of the busy summer season. Also in the works is an expansion of the ramp, which has seen near full capacity at peak times.

## 4.41 Omni Handling

Lisbon Portela International Airport (LPPT),  
Lisbon, Portugal

Founded in 1998, Portugal-based Omni Handling is the largest private aviation handler in the country, with a more than 50 percent market share. It has FBOs in Porto, Faro, Cascais, Funchal, and Santa Maria in the Azores, but its facility at Lisbon’s Portela International Airport, the largest in the company’s network, earned the highest recognition this year from AIN’s readers. A complete refurbishment of the location in 2018, part of a company-wide renovation of all its FBOs, added a new façade with illuminated signage, increasing its visibility from the airside. Inside it offers a passenger lounge overlooking the ramp, crew lounge with workstations and multiple televisions, shower facilities, and offices.



“We are always trying to offer the best and renovated facilities, with state-of-the-art entertainment for our crew and clients,” CEO Ricardo Pereira told AIN. “We are always innovating and proposing useful extra services they might like: guided tours of the area, concierge services on demand, and negotiated rates with our suppliers for our clients.”

The location, Omni’s first, has a full-time staff of 13, and its CSRs this year received a world-class score of 4.83. As part of a welcoming package, they offer arriving customers products specific to Portugal such as *pasteis de nata* (egg-custard tarts).

The company transitioned to the Myairops operations software platform at all of its bases over the past year helping to streamline the reservation and billing processes for its customers. ISO 9001:2015-certified since 2012, with an annually-audited safety management system in place, the facility is open 24/7 to handle flights or requests.

While no private aircraft are based at the airport, Pereira said for those operators wishing to overnight, his company has special agreements negotiated with third-party hangar owners to shelter aircraft up to an ACJ321.

Omni Handling also provides exclusive handling services in Cape Verde since 2011 as well as in Angola, Mozambique, and São Tomé e Príncipe since 2019.

## 4.41 Signature Flight Support

Geneva International Airport (LSGG),  
Geneva, Switzerland



Under its former TAG Aviation ownership and the leadership of manager Erturk Yildiz, the company’s FBO at Geneva Airport was a perennial top finisher in AIN’s annual FBO Survey in the Rest of World category. That hasn’t changed with the location’s acquisition by Signature Flight Support last summer. The facility occupies 7,000 sq ft in the airport’s general aviation terminal (GAT) and includes three private passenger lounges; refreshments such as local snacks, artisanal ice cream in the summer, and breakfast items; three crew rest areas (lounge, relaxation room, snooze room); a private shower; kitchen; conference room; and valet parking. The entrance hall displays contemporary paintings and other artwork that are changed regularly. The airport sits astride the border between Switzerland and France, so both Swiss and French customs clearance are available onsite. As Geneva is truly an international city, among the FBO’s staff of 30 no fewer than 10 languages are spoken, virtually ensuring ease of communication with all customers.

The location is open seven days a week from 5:30 a.m. until 9:59 p.m., in accordance with the airport’s operating hours, but as Yildiz told AIN, noise-compliant aircraft can arrive or depart until 11:59 p.m.

“We own and operate our ground service equipment (GSE) and can perform deicing and fueling in house as opposed to waiting for shared airline GSE,” said Yildiz who will soon be taking on a new role in the Signature organization. “This is a rarity among European FBOs and gives Signature Geneva a distinct advantage in performing quick turns. We can also handle widebody transport category aircraft with our own equipment and staff.”

The facility believes in “going-the-extra-mile” for its clients, sometimes literally. A customer who arrived for his flight in a vintage German car was concerned about leaving the valuable vehicle at the GAT. One of the Signature staff who was well-versed in operating such an automobile was able to demonstrate this and drove it off to a secure storage facility, thus easing the customer’s mind. ■

### Above & Beyond

The below FBO staff members were recognized multiple times for going “Above & Beyond” in the field of customer service.

PERSON	FBO	AIRPORT CODE
Francesco Cossu	ECCIELSA AVIATION	LIEO
Jenny Wong	HONG KONG BUSINESS AVIATION CENTER	VHHH
Kathya Botelho	OMNI HANDLING	LPCS
Liam Murphy	UNIVERSAL AVIATION	EINN
Matthew Guy	EXECUJET AUSTRALIA	YSSY
Oliver Trono	SIGNATURE FLIGHT SUPPORT	EDDM
Rahmi Rahmioglu	GOZEN AIR FBO	LTBA
Stone Chau	TAG AVIATION	VMMC

# HondaJet POC debuts in Japan aviation museum

by Matt Thurber

On April 20, the Misawa Aviation & Science Museum in Aomori Prefecture in Japan reopened with a unique new display—the original proof-of-concept (POC) prototype HondaJet. Aomori is Honda Aircraft president and CEO Michimasa Fujino’s hometown.

During remodeling two years ago, the museum asked if Honda Aircraft would help with a plan to design a hangar dedicated to the HondaJet. The possibility of educating visitors about the HondaJet was a “great opportunity,” according to the company. “As a result, we’ve decided to donate the POC and have it permanently displayed in the museum.”



The POC first flew on Dec. 3, 2003, powered by Honda-designed and -built HF118 engines mounted in an unusual configuration—over the wings instead of on the aft fuselage. The over-the-wing-engine-mount (OTWEM) design wasn’t intended to make the HondaJet look unusual, which it certainly did, but took advantage of aerodynamic optimization that delays drag rise at high speeds. Although this was confirmed in a Boeing wind tunnel, the POC flight testing proved that the concept worked. Another key benefit of OTWEM is the larger space available in the cabin by moving engine structure and systems out of the fuselage.

The highly secret HondaJet, built in a hangar at Greensboro Airport in North Carolina, became wildly popular during the POC’s 2005 debut at EAA AirVenture in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. Early the following year Honda Aircraft announced that the HondaJet would become a commercial program.

Teaming with GE to create a joint venture for the design and manufacture of a more powerful version of the engine, the HF120-powered HondaJet received FAA certification on Dec. 9, 2015. Honda Aircraft also worked with Garmin to develop the G3000 avionics suite.

The POC was retired in 2013, but now it has a new home at the Misawa museum. Inside the HondaJet hangar, the POC is surrounded by three walls displaying historical documents, components, and explanations in Japanese and English.

“It is our great pleasure to have the HondaJet proof-of-concept on permanent display at Misawa Aviation & Science Museum in Japan,” Fujino said. “With this aircraft we proved the innovative OTWEM configuration and other advanced technology unique to the HondaJet, and achieved the best performance, fuel efficiency, and cabin comfort in our class. We hope to have many people visit the museum and view the HondaJet in person and wish that the story of the HondaJet can inspire the next generation of aircraft designers.” ■