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BBJ Displays First VIP 787 at EBACE

by James Wynbrandt May 23, 2016, 8:30 AM

Boeing Business Jets and Kestrel Aviation are displaying at EBACE the first 787 Dreamliner with a custom VIP interior this week at EBACE 2016. It is the largest aircraft ever to be displayed at the European business aviation show. (Photo: David McIntosh/AIN)

Marking its 20th anniversary, Boeing Business Jets and Kestrel Aviation is displaying at EBACE the first 787 Dreamliner with a custom VIP interior. The BBJ 787 was brought by Boeing and Kestrel Aviation Management to EBACE. It was designed by Kestrel Aviation Management with PierreJean Design studios, "This is the largest aircraft ever displayed at an NBAA-sponsored event," said BBJ president David Longridge.

The completion was performed by Greenpoint Technologies at its Moses Lake, Wash. facility. The project was initiated and directed by Washington State's Kestrel Aviation Management on "spec," with no buyer contracted, though a sale is reportedly in the final stages of negotiations.

The BBJ 787-8 arrived here nonstop from Moses Lake, with Capt. Rene Gonzalez, Boeing's chief pilot, in command. The 5,000-nm (9,260-km) journey, flown at the 787's Mach 0.85 cruise speed, was not much more than a crow hop for the Dreamliner.

"This airplane is all about range: you can get just about anywhere, from just about anywhere in this. The range is basically unlimited," said Longridge.



The 787 is also designed to ensure passengers arrive refreshed after journeys that may last as long as 16 hours, maintaining a 6,500-foot cabin at its 43,100-foot ceiling.

The 40-passenger interior, featuring a palette of neutral brown and gray tones, was designed by Kestrel Aviation Management with Pierrejean Design Studio of Paris, and includes a forward master suite with bedroom, an expansive lounge area and, in the rear, a guest cabin with first-class passenger seating.

FAA certification will be completed by the end of next month, according to Stephen Vella, Kestrel's chief executive, and it's expected the Dreamliner will retain its U.S. registry.

With the aircraft completed, a purchase deal with an undisclosed prospective buyer is near conclusion, Vella said. Under the terms of the deal, the aircraft is to be operated by Beijing-based Deer Jet (Booth M073) and will be available for charter. A Deer Jet executive said the aircraft will have no permanent base.

In highlighting this latest milestone, Longridge recounted BBJ's long-term and recent successes. "If you told the people who built this company that in 20 years they'd be landing an airplane that hadn't been invented at an airshow that didn't exist, they wouldn't have believed it," he said, noting that initial projections for BBJ sales estimated a total market demand for 40 executive-configured Boeing airliners.

Since last year's EBACE, nine BBJs have been ordered, eight have been delivered and 10 have entered service, bringing the brand's numbers to 238 aircraft ordered, 215 delivered and 191 in service.

Two other BBJ 787s are currently in operation, one owned by a Middle East airline and the other by the

government of Mexico, but neither has an all-VIP interior, and both were among the first fifty 787s built, before specifications for the all-composite aircraft were standardized. As such, they have less range than current Dreamliners (8,760 nm/16,224 km with 25 passengers).

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