

EBACE *preview*

THE INDUSTRY WILL CONVENE IN GENEVA, SWITZERLAND, ON 23-25 MAY FOR THE EUROPEAN BUSINESS AVIATION CONVENTION & EXHIBITION (EBACE). IN THIS PREVIEW, EXHIBITORS PRESENT KEY INNOVATIONS TO SEEK OUT AT THE SHOW, WHILE DESIGNERS BASED IN EUROPE SHARE THEIR INSIGHTS ON THE BIGGEST TRENDS

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50+ aircraft will be on display



Q&A

WHAT AESTHETIC TRENDS HAVE YOU NOTICED LATELY?

Simplicity, an uncluttered look and ambience. While everyone sees luxury in varying guises, there is definitely an element of restraint in the overall aesthetic being employed recently. Also, with what looks like an imminent renewal of some of the Middle East fleet, you can be sure there will be cultural influences that still inspire designers to create some form of opulence.

WHAT MATERIAL INNOVATIONS HAVE CAUGHT YOUR EYE?

It's important that the sustainable aspect of material selection is not limited to décor materials. Substrate material from the build-up is just as important, as the industry strives to educate the general public that business aviation is a tiny fraction of the global sustainability picture.

Switzerland-based Bcomp's unique approach to apply the latest composites knowledge to natural fibres has caught the interest of many. Bcomp's natural fibre-based lightweighting solutions enable substantial weight and CO₂ emission reductions versus standard materials.

WHAT ENTERTAINMENT TECHNOLOGIES ARE TRENDING?

The growing abilities of portable electronic devices (PEDs) mean an aircraft is merely another conduit to the digital world. Improvements to satellite links and stable wi-fi connection are the main focus to emulate the speed and connectivity we experience on the ground. We are not there yet but this should be the focus of tech firms. This is great news for aircraft interior completions. Less infrastructure (in the form of electrical cabling) can significantly impact weight and therefore fuel consumption.

WHAT OTHER TRENDS WILL IMPACT THE INDUSTRY?

The aircraft industry and its regulatory bodies need to utilise consumer technologies to keep enhancing safety while looking to cut the approval time for new technologies and products. Business aircraft owners never truly understand the lag for technology and general materials and processes entering the aviation sphere.

IS THERE GROWING DEMAND FOR SUSTAINABLE INTERIORS?

We need to keep full throttle on the development of décor materials. We can see the green shoots of the supply chain's R&D – this has to continue but we also need focus on other areas of the cabin design, substrate structures and materials. There is a global demand for 'cleaner' raw ingredients to produce materials. 'Clean' ingredients facilitate development of smarter and more sustainable products.

INNOVATIONS YOU'D LIKE TO SEE?

We've seen several manufacturers try to develop simpler seat structures that could be customised by designers, but we've yet to see these products really grow into the market. It takes a lot of investment and quantity of manufacture to really change things. Some OEMs (Bombardier and Gulfstream) have introduced their own seat designs, but the offering for VIP narrow- and wide-bodies are limited. Bringing these new products safely into the market is still a gamble on investment return – I would like to see this change.



RIGHT: AN ALTEA GALLEY DESIGN

IMAGE: ALTEA