



The Comlux team that designed, completed and operates the ACJ320 on display here at EBACE includes, left to right, Tim Callies, head of creatives; Christophe Lapierre, VP of commercial operations for Fly Comlux; Etienne Rodaro, president of Comlux America; and Fly Comlux CEO Andreea Zanetto.

Comlux wows EBACE with its ultra-chic ACJ

by Matt Thurber

A unique Airbus ACJ320 arrived here on Sunday and is on static display; the first Airbus to be designed, completed and operated by Comlux the Aviation Group. The ACJ320 flew to Malta, where it was reregistered as 9H-AWK, then made stops in Zurich and Toulouse, France, before arriving in Geneva for its commercial debut.

Fly Comlux, the group's charter/management division, now operates six Airbuses, including three A318 Elites, two ACJs and the ACJ320 (Airbus has rebranded its VVIP jets as ACJ318, ACJ319 and so on). The entire Fly Comlux fleet totals 18 aircraft, and four more will join the fleet, including one more ACJ319 this year and another next year. The ACJ320 will be based at Comlux's new Bahrain base.

The interior and exterior of

the newest Comlux ACJ320 was designed by Comlux Creatives, and all interior work was done at Comlux America in Indianapolis, Indiana. "We started with the idea: Where is the aircraft flying?" said Tim Callies, senior architect and head of Comlux Creatives. "It's going to the Middle East, so we thought, what are the colors of the Middle East, what are the themes of the Middle East?"

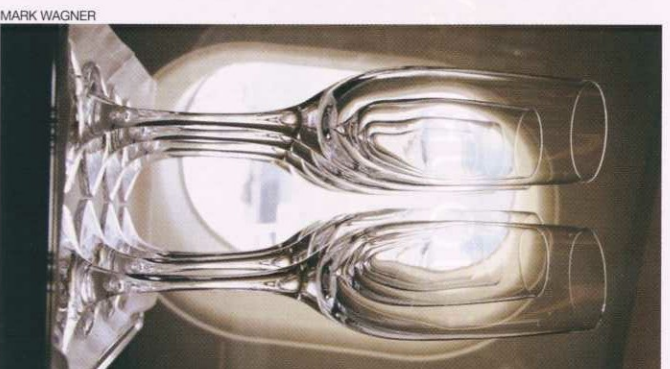
The result incorporated the theme of the vast sandy deserts adjoining blue oceans, he explained, using "blue and beige colors to give the impression to the customer who is going to fly this aircraft that he feels at home and cozy." The carpet, by Tarping, echoes the fractal beauty of undulating dunes.

Wood veneer throughout the cabin is multi-layered, which was a real challenge, according

to Callies, as it was necessary to build the layers of Wenge veneer on top of a honeycomb core to keep weight to a minimum. A satin finish on the veneer doesn't show fingerprints as would a glossy finish, and the closed grain adds a natural look. Smooth but visually striking Zebirano veneer adds a lighter touch to the lavatories, which also feature handsome stone mosaic tiles.

"We combine sand colors with the nice blue ocean colors," Callies said, "and it helped us to have a fresh feeling inside the cabin. It's not only brown and beige; it's also some new colors we never had before in our aircraft. It's, on the one side, a very warm atmosphere but on the other side not boring [with] maybe too much beige and browns. You always find something with your eyes to give you some new impressions. That's something I like very much."

A variety of Majilitte artificial leathers in styles, such as faux stingingray, accent the walls, the dining table and other items. Some of the faux leather-clad walls feel almost silky. The



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advantage of not using real stingray skin, Callies pointed out, is that there are no seams in the Majilitte, not to mention no need to kill a lot of stingrays.

The Comlux ACJ320 has a three-cabin layout, with two galleys—a smaller one behind the cockpit and a larger galley aft. The main room up front has two club seats and seating for six, including an L-shaped divan, around the six-place dining table. A private lounge in the center of the airplane has a divan and large seat that convert to a queen-size bed, plus a private lavatory with a full shower.

The largest of the three big video displays is found in the lounge, a 41-inch unit. The other two, mounted on bulkheads in the forward main cabin, are slightly smaller. Aft of the lounge are business-class seats, and behind those some higher-density seating. The airplane can carry up to 19 passengers and fly as far as 4,000 nm.

LED lighting adjusts to set the mood in the cabin, which features iPod stands, touchscreen cabin controls, Wi-Fi connections to satcom-provided Internet access and multiple Blu-ray and DVD players.

"I am very proud of my team who worked on this project," said David Edinger, Comlux America CEO. "Our craftsmen did a remarkable job and exceeded our client's expectations in terms of quality."

"This is one of the first A320s that will be available for charters," said Francois Chazelle, Airbus vice president of executive and private aviation. "It's an aircraft that we'll be able to show our customers and will represent the whole Airbus ACJ family, so we're proud to see this addition to the charter family of Airbus corporate jets." □

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Making its commercial debut here in Geneva, the Comlux ACJ320 joins a fleet that also includes three ACJ318s and two ACJ319s. The Airbus on display is the first to be designed, completed and operated by member companies of the Comlux family.

Comlux Aviation for Maintenance

The FAA has approved Comlux Aviation Services, based in Indianapolis, Indiana, to provide maintenance services for the Gulfstream GII, GIIIB and GIII models. Customer demand is such that Comlux will soon add the GIV and GV to its approvals, according to Tony Bailey, vice president of operations. "We have had numerous requests by GII and GIII operators that want the same level of service we provide to our Bombardier customers," he said.

—M/T

Nexus sets roots with new base in Rwanda

by James Wynbrandt

Middle East-based flight operations group Nexus is moving into Africa with plans to establish a flight operations center (FOC) in the Rwandan capital Kigali. Nexus has just signed a memorandum of understanding for the project with the Rwanda Development Board.

"We are very excited about the new Nexus Africa, since it is the first step in our global expansion and we believe Rwanda to be the perfect place for our inaugural Africa base," said Nexus chairman, Mohamed Al-Zeer. "Our ultimate aim is to be globally recognized as the leading African provider of flight operations services, employing the best, serving the elite, and being respected by industry leaders. This is just the first step."

The facility will be built in partnership with the government of Rwanda, which has been working through its Civil Aviation Authority to make the country a regional hub for air transport. The FOC will offer the same level of service Nexus currently offers at its centers in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, and Manama, Bahrain, catering to both local and international customers.

"We are delighted to welcome Nexus into our country as their services will provide links for travelers all over the world, not just to Rwanda but to the whole of Africa," said John Gare, CEO of the Rwanda Development Board. "This move is aligned with our vision as well as our initiatives to promote tourism and trade and to also improve aviation safety and security within the entire region."

Rwanda made headlines in the last decades due to its civil war, which officially ended in 2003. With its current stable political climate and central location, it is an ideal site for the FOC, according to Nexus. A date for commencing construction has not been set. □

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