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NEW AIRCRAFT New Supersonic Age in Flight Coming, Says Aerion Chief



Aerion, in partnership with Airbus, is developing the Mach 1.5+ AS2 supersonic business jet (SSBJ), which is now expected to be certified in 2023. Final assembly is likely to be conducted in the U.S. Photo: Aerion Corp.

Speaking at the Wichita Aero Club towards the end of September, Aerion Corp. chairman Brian Barents said that “we are on the verge of a new supersonic age” in air travel. Aerion, in partnership with Airbus, is developing the Mach 1.5+ AS2 supersonic business jet (SSBJ), which is now expected to be certified in 2023. Final assembly is likely to be conducted in the U.S., he revealed.

The company’s market studies suggest a demand for 600 SSBJs over 20 years, even at the three-engine AS2’s \$120 million price point and with a restriction that the aircraft be operated at subsonic speeds over land, he noted. “For the first 10 to 15 years, the supersonic market will consist of entrepreneurs, ultra-high-net-worth individuals and, over time, more corporate customers, as well as perhaps governments,” Barents told attendees. “These will be the pioneers of the new supersonic age.”

Speaking about the AS2’s powerplant, he said that Aerion is seeking an engine that meets Stage 4 noise and emissions standards, as well as provides

for growth. “We have had some fruitful discussions with the major engine suppliers,” Barents noted, “about which we hope to have more to say soon.”

He said the largest hurdle for the company is not sonic boom mitigation—since the AS2 can reach about 5,000 nm at either Mach 0.95 or Mach 1.4 - but meeting airport noise standards. “Without a change to community noise regulations, a new generation of low-boom supersonic [aircraft] will literally not get off the ground,” Barents maintained. “That is why we are advocating in our discussions with NASA, the FAA and international bodies for new research aimed at the development of an appropriate noise standard for supersonic aircraft—one that provides an equivalent level of noise reduction to that required of subsonic aircraft.”

This “physics based” approach is consistent with the “equivalent technology” and “economic reasonableness” principles that the FAA has employed in the noise-reduction requirements in current rules. “A new standard would enable the development of supersonic aircraft that are aerodynamically efficient, fuel efficient and minimize community noise emissions consistent with maintaining economic viability,” Barents said. Meanwhile, Airbus “will play a large role in the development of the AS2,” he noted, adding that the airframer is “our OEM partner” and is with Aerion “to the finish line.” Barents also pointed to Airbus’s “significant U.S. resources,” saying that he would not be surprised to see the company collaborate with Airbus divisions in the U.S. “Aerion will own the AS2 type certificate,” he said. “And we anticipate Aerion will conduct final assembly in the U.S., with extensive support from Airbus in engineering manufacturing and certification.”

■ More information visit – www.airbus.com and www.aerionsupersonic.com

PEOPLE IN BIZAV AWARDS

ConnectJets founder Gabriella Somerville to be awarded



- Honorary Global Exemplary Award for Entrepreneurship 2015

Gabriella Somerville, the founding managing director of London based business aviation charter and sales company ConnectJets, is to be presented with the Honorary Global Exemplary Award for Entrepreneurship 2015 by the EU-WIIN (European Union - Women Inventors & Innovators Network).



Gabriella Somerville.

The award, originally launched five years ago, to celebrate the achievements of women working in traditionally male dominated fields, recognises Gabriella’s inspirational and exemplary achievement within the aviation industry.

Gabriella will receive her accolade at the EU-WIIN International Conference & Awards Ceremony which takes place at The British Library, London, on 14 October 2015.

Gabriella launched ConnectJets, initially with an all-female team, to provide charter, lease and aircraft sales opportunities to clients across the world. Currently based in Mayfair London, ConnectJets has recently secured fresh investment to expand both the charter and sales division.

Testament to Gabriella Somerville’s sales and marketing prowess in the sector, in 2014 she secured a contract with Piaggio Aerospace to be the company’s exclusive Sales Agent for their distinctive business turboprop in the UK, Channel Islands, Isle of Man and Ireland. Gabriella became the first business woman to be appointed sales agent for the company.

Virgin Startup business mentor

Just recently, Gabriella was selected as a mentor for Richard Branson’s Entrepreneurial Programme, Virgin StartUp. Virgin StartUp, is a not-for-profit organisation, which gives entrepreneurs the funding, information and support they need to get their business ideas off the ground. Gabriella embarked on her aviation career at Virgin Atlantic and credits her success to her formative years under the leadership of Richard Branson and the Virgin Atlantic team.

Sir Richard Branson, Virgin Group Founder said: “Congratulations to Gabriella. She is doing stellar work in the aviation sector and I’m proud she started her career with Virgin Atlantic. I’m delighted she has agreed to support our Virgin StartUp scheme for aspiring entrepreneurs and I’m sure she will be an inspiration to anyone who has the courage to launch their own business.”



Gabriella, who founded ConnectJets and has grown it into a multi-million pound business, said: “I am delighted to be nominated for this award and hope it will encourage more women to take up leadership roles within industry in general, and the vibrant business aviation sector in particular.

“Female entrepreneurship is vital in challenging the status-quo and breaking the glass-ceiling and it is right that women’s successes are properly recognised”.

■ More information visit - www.connectjets.com www.euwiininternational.eu and www.virginstartup.org