

Amac Thinks Big With The Middle East In Mind

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In October, Amac Aerospace delivered the first BBJ 777-200LR—completed for a private customer in the Middle East—to Jeddah-based Aviation Link.

The significant investments in expanding the aircraft completions and maintenance capabilities of [Amac Aerospace](#) have surely been made with the Middle East very much in mind. In October, the Swiss-based group handed over its first widebody VIP airliner completion when Saudi Arabian management company Aviation Link took delivery of a Boeing 777-200LR on behalf of an undisclosed private customer in the Middle East.

The extensive completion project took 19 months and more than half-a-million man-hours. The 777's cabin interior weighs almost 64,000 pounds and covers a total surface area of 2,852 sq ft. The cabin is divided into several sections: a private hallway; a master bedroom with en suite bathroom; several private lounges; a *majlis* seating area for the principal and his entourage; four *cabanas* (symmetrically divided-L-shaped spaces with lavatories and adjustable day/night seating configurations); multiple galleys, including an aft galley with induction hobs and dishwasher; and two separate areas for guests and staff.

The contract called for a complex array of high-performance in-flight entertainment systems, including audio/video on demand, monitors up to 64 inches in size, Blu-ray players, live TV, fiber-optic star lighting, RGB-colored mood lighting, external cameras, a cabin humidification system, satellite communications, VoIP mobile phone access and Wi-Fi throughout the cabin.

“The principal [customer] set very high standards for this elegant interior,” said Amac group chief operating officer Bernd Schramm. “We are extremely pleased we were able to meet the demanding and challenging requirements specified.”

According to Schramm, Amac has as a strong relationship with Boeing, as evidenced by its recent appointment by the U.S. airframer as a warranty service center. The company has just started the completion of a new 747-8 widebody. “Amac is proud that, again, we were able to redeliver our first widebody completion project on time and on budget to the highest satisfaction of our customer,” he said.

The company is set to deliver its next VIP widebody by the end of the first quarter of 2013. Amac maintains a variety of corporate aircraft, including members of the Airbus Corporate Jet and Boeing Business Jet families. It holds European Aviation Safety Agency Part 145 approval to do heavy base maintenance on 777s, 747-400s and -8is, as well as the Airbus A330/340 series.

Expansion in Turkey

Amac was founded five years ago and now has 560 employees and an order book worth more than \$1 billion. It also wants a slice of the growing Turkish market for business aircraft support, and with this in mind opened its new hangar at Istanbul’s Atatürk Airport back in September. The company aims to receive its European Aviation Safety Agency Part 145 approval for the new base by year-end.

In addition, its new Turkish operation has been appointed as Pilatus’s Middle Eastern distributor for the PC-12 single turboprop business and utility aircraft. According to Atilla Guney, COO of Amac Aerospace Turkey, it also intends to provide maintenance for Middle Eastern PC-12 operators in Istanbul.

“The PC-12 is a great machine. Once one or two people buy it in the region, it will open their eyes,” said Amac’s executive group CEO and chairman Kadri Muhiddin. “It offers [for example] \$695 an hour [operating costs] versus \$1,000 for a jet.” He added that the aircraft can operate to and from relatively short runways, with a variety of surfaces, and it is also pressurized and has modern avionics. Amac (Stand 622/ChaletA20) is demonstrating the aircraft here at the MEBA show.

Also during September, Amac opened its third hangar at its Basel, Switzerland headquarters. The company is no longer purely a completions specialist and can now offer a full range of MRO services, up to D-checks on the largest bizliners.

Amac’s aim is to draw on its specialist knowledge of business aircraft interiors to differentiate it from other MRO organizations that mainly specialize in airliner support. “We won’t do airliners, and airline MROs don’t have the know-how to maintain these interiors. The most value is in this,” Muhiddin told **AIN**.

“We are not just a completions center, we are an EASA-approved MRO,” he said, adding that, at present, all its completions work is from Middle East customers, including governments, and mainly

from Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates. "We are in dialogue with other [potential] customers from the Middle East."

According to Schramm, the company is trying to "find the right balance" between completions and maintenance. "We are 60 percent completions but maintenance is more stable, which is why we've decided to go into maintenance more," he said.

Amac is already approved to undertake heavy and base maintenance on Boeing 777s and Airbus A330/340s and expects to receive Boeing 747-400/-400-8i approval later this year. In May, the facility—whose three hangars total 231,000 sq ft—became a Boeing warranty service center. "We have done phenomenally well in winning completion, refurbishment and maintenance work contracts to the point that we have a secure and stable workload until 2014," said Muhiddin.