

# BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

*At 200 feet long and 20 feet wide, kitting out Boeing's behemoth in VVIP configuration is quite a feat. Liz Moscrop looks at how AMAC has risen to the challenge.*

**A**MAC Aerospace was on the verge of delivering what it believes is the world's first VVIP Boeing 747-8 business jet to an unnamed client as *Arabian Aerospace* was going to press. The work took two years for full nose-to-tail outfitting at the firm's Euro airport Basel Mulhouse facilities.

Last December, Washington's Greenpoint Technologies delivered a VIP 747-8. However the Swiss-based firm believes its offering is kitted out to a much higher specification.

AMAC COO Bernd Schramm explained: "We have an excellent product and are hoping to be the first to deliver a VVIP 747-8. The delivery is imminent and we believe we will be the first to deliver a VVIP nose-to-tail customised aircraft."

So what makes it so special?

According to Schramm, the aircraft is of a modern design and incredibly luxurious. The aft section is decked out with first-class seating, while the upper deck includes a fully customised VVIP interior, incorporating two bedrooms (one master), a private office, plus two master lavatories with showers. There is also a dining room and travellers can enter via the ground or upper deck. There are other guest areas and special lighting and configurations for both day and night.

There is also an Greenpoint Technologies' Aeroloft installed, which provides eight private sleeping berths above the main deck in the aft section.

Schramm continued: "VIP clients appreciate the benefit of providing guests with a private rest area for additional relaxation and comfort."

There are huge television screens throughout – up to 60-inch, specified to the latest technology, and the on-board satellite communication system is both Ku and Ka band capable, meaning passengers can take advantage of the latest technology as it comes online this year.

## Hollywood films

For those wishing to be entertained or kept up-to-date with news and sport, there is also Live TV on board, as well as audio video on demand. The aircraft is also the first in the industry to offer early window content – the opportunity to watch Hollywood films before they are available on the open market.

Schramm said the main difficulty in certifying the aircraft had been the sheer size of it. "It's like four or five BBJs in one project," he explained.

The tough stuff comes with the amount of work required to coordinate to get everything designed and engineered in the right sequence. Although, he said, there was nothing "extremely new" to consider, he continued: "It is a different challenge providing an in-flight entertainment (IFE) system for a 30-to-40-seat aircraft to one with 130-140 seats in a much bigger area. The integration of the cabin management system and IFE and lighting needed around three tonnes of additional cabling, although that had no effect on its overall weight in terms of range and fuel required."



The aircraft was due for certification as *Arabian Aerospace* was going to press, and he was confident that it would pass muster. "We kept our deadlines and ensured the quality of the engineering and detailed tooling documentation were up to European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) specifications. We have submitted a report on every process."

The next steps are to bring the crew in for training on the IFE, emergency lighting and LiveTV systems, as they will need to cater for up to 100 people travelling at once.

It has been a real labour of love for the firm, which has assigned up to 200 people on the project at any one time. However, the fact AMAC has kitted out two VIP Boeing 777s to date has been help, said Schramm. "People expect that the design of a VVIP 747 is a dramatic challenge. However it is the same for a BBJ; what makes it beautiful is the quality of the workmanship."

**Bernd Schramm: "VIP clients appreciate the benefit of providing guests with a private rest area for additional relaxation and comfort."**

**The world's first VVIP Boeing 747-8 business jet on its way to the client.**