

AMAC AEROSPACE – MILAS-BODRUM

AMAC AEROSPACE – MILAS-BODRUM

Opened in 2018, the design of the 4,626 sq metre hangar at AMAC's Milas-Bodrum Airport facility offers various configurations for narrowbody aircraft. Options include three A321s or B737 NGs in staggered formation.

AMAC AEROSPACE



Bodrum base – An MRO hotspot

The Turkish Riviera may be more synonymous with sun, sand and super yachts, but for AMAC Aerospace, its MRO facility is the main attraction. Alexander Preston finds out more.

Sitting in the southwestern Aegean region of Turkey, the port city of Bodrum in Mugla Province, has a long and illustrious past.

Once known as the ancient Greek city of Halicarnassus, it was the site of the fabled Tomb of Masusolus, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, the stones of which were later re-employed by the Knights Hospitaller during the fifteenth century construction of Bodrum Castle.

Where once trod ancient Greeks later to be followed by the Knights of St John and the Ottomans, for the past two years, AMAC Aerospace has been bringing private and commercial aircraft to the area as it seeks to turn Muğla into an aircraft maintenance base.

In July 2018, AMAC Aerospace inaugurated its aircraft facility at Milas-Bodrum Airport. Opened in 1998, the airport boasts a 3,000 metre runway and airport facilities and services which can cater for aircraft of all sizes up to a B747. It is also just an hour's flight from Istanbul, where AMAC Aerospace offers maintenance services for Dassault and Pilatus aircraft, from Atatürk International Airport and Istanbul Sabiha Gökçen Airports respectively.

Based on these attributes, as well as Turkey being a gateway between Europe and Asia, AMAC saw a strategic opportunity to expand and build a new hangar in Bodrum. According to Tarek Muhiddin, COO of AMAC Aerospace,

“The original plan was to construct a twin-bay narrowbody hangar which would be able to offer maintenance services to the local and international market.”

He continues, “It would simultaneously be used to offer lighter VIP services to AMAC's already vast clientele base (especially the Middle East and Gulf regions – the company is the exclusive sales representative of the Pilatus PC-12 NG and PC-24 in the Middle East, based out of its Beirut, Lebanon office) for those wishing to perform the lighter services closer to home or their base of operations.

In April 2016, the company acquired 6,400 square metres of land from the Turkish Airport Authorities. “Just after breaking



ground,” Muhiddin says, “We had some interest from customers operating B777-sized aircraft and so approached the Turkish authorities again to see if we could gain extra ground. Once approved we could just raise the roof and add a nose box which would then be able to house aircraft up to the same dimensions as a B777-200LR. The previously planned twin-bay narrowbody hangar would now be able to accept not only the B777 but three narrowbody airliners thanks to the clever design of the extra wide nose box allowing AMAC to fit the tail of a B737 inside.”

The result is a 4,626 sq metre hangar which has secured multiple approvals including local SHGM SHY 145, FAA 145, and EASA 145 approvals. Additionally, the facility is close to having multiple back-shop capabilities so it can continue to offer services to the core element of AMAC’s work as an MRO.

To date the facility has performed 41 maintenance checks not including independent modifications and service bulletin applications on specified areas. Last

summer alone AMAC supported 49 installations on VIP aircraft.

As part of the AMAC Aerospace family, all VIP and VVIP customers at Bodrum are assured of the same high-quality standards set by the headquarters in Basel.

VIP SERVICE ETHOS

AMAC Bodrum regularly sends its engineering and technical staff to Basel for training, explains Muhiddin. There they learn how to participate in delivering VIP and VVIP levels of quality. This has allowed the Bodrum facility to perform exterior and interior cleaning services for all VIP jets landing at the location.

“Customers will enjoy their holiday with the added luxury of having a well-serviced and cleaned aircraft for their return trip,” Muhiddin says. “Flight crews also have peace of mind knowing that there is now a hangar with technical services available in Bodrum in case they face AOG or technical issues,” he adds.

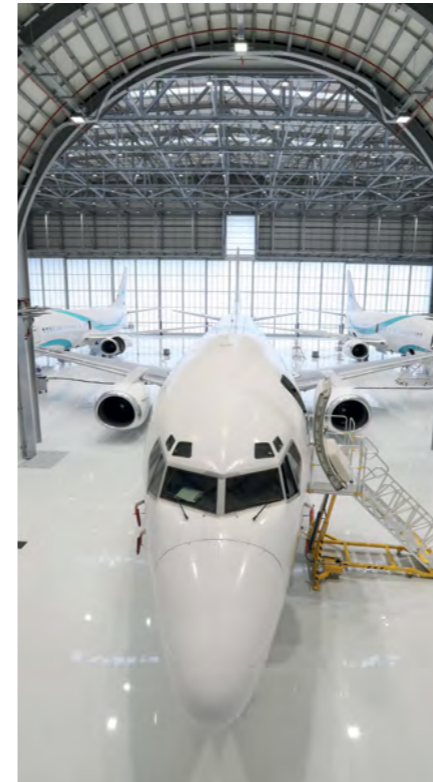
Uniquely, the Bodrum facility operates on a mixed business model where during the

winter months, the hangar carries out commercial line and base maintenance. During the summer months, the MRO services switch back to VIP business maintenance.

AMAC Aerospace is the first and only company to offer this model.

“Due to the fact that one of Turkey’s largest industries is tourism, most local airlines try to keep their planes flying during the summer season,” says Muhiddin. “This will translate to the months of May to October, meaning that they shall have the six months during the winter to perform their maintenance.” During the first seven months of 2019, Milas-Bodrum Airport handled over 2.3 million passengers.

“With some of our customer’s fleet sizes of 80+ aircraft their task of finding MROs capable of performing the maintenance becomes a very big one. Although options are available in and around Europe for them to explore, we hope to contribute to the local Turkish economy with competitive rates.



Tailwinds was Bodrum’s first commercial customer, but AMAC’s engineers have since worked on a growing roster of Turkish low-cost carriers.

During the summer months where these commercial aircraft are in the air, the Bodrum Riviera becomes a magnet for the private jets. There were 2,570 private aircraft arrivals into Bodrum during 2019,” Muhiddin adds.

One of the reasons for such high numbers of VIPs and VVIPs into the region are the three main marinas in the Bodrum peninsula, which cater for super yachts, including the award-winning Yalikavak Marina with its gourmet restaurants, luxury brands and boutique hotels.

Turkish low-cost carrier Tailwinds, which serves Milas-Bodrum Airport, was the first commercial customer for the MRO facility, where its fleet of Boeing 737-400 aircraft underwent C-checks including a full cabin removal.

Since then, the facility has welcomed other Turkish low-cost airlines, including Freebird, Anadolu Jet, Pegasus, Corendon and Sunexpress. “We have constant positive feedback on the services performed,” states a proud Muhiddin.

“AMAC strongly believes that customers will not only see the high level of work performed but will notice the reliability during their yearly operations.”

The transition to cater for commercial airlines hasn’t been an easy path, but has been a successful one, thanks in part to the VIP expertise of AMAC Aerospace, which automatically gave the team and workforce a high level of quality and expectation.

OPEN-DOOR PHILOSOPHY

As Muhiddin explains, “Using this to pass down to the rugged world of airliners is something we not only take pride in but are trying to master with the turnaround time. It is not always easy to provide top-level quality with low ground times and respectively lower pricing. However, AMAC strongly believes that customers will not only see the high level of work performed but will notice the reliability during their yearly operations. It is for this reason that we follow the same principles in Basel and allow an open-door philosophy to our customers while performing maintenance on their fleets.”

He continues, “With the fact that the employees all get the chance to support and

train in Basel, the technicians and engineers manage to gauge the difference between airliners and VIP. It is for this reason that both locations, Bodrum and Istanbul, support each other whenever there is an increased demand in manpower requirements. It is also worth mentioning that at the Istanbul facility space is limited and therefore it will also benefit from the future back-shop programme.”

It may seem that with such a mixed business model, the current ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has dealt the Bodrum facility a double whammy. But Muhiddin isn’t too despondent. “We are hoping to see a rise in those opting for private jet travel rather than airliners. On the other hand, we are still in the waiting game whereby some airlines are trying to be proactive and get their aircraft ready for when the restrictions and limitations are lifted and other airlines are debating whether to put their aircraft in long-term storage due to a fear that it shall take time before they can fill their full fleet with normal operations.” ■

The clever addition of the extra wide nose box allows AMAC to work on larger airliners. It’s large enough to fit the tail of a B737 inside.

