

Air Partner Comments on Group Charter Activity in 2018 and Trends for 2019

Jon Cavalli, Trading Manager for Group Charter UK at Air Partner, takes a look back at the group's Commercial Jets activity in 2018 and comments on what he expects to see in 2019.

Sport

"2018 has been a strong year for sport bookings, mainly focused around the FIFA World Cup in Russia. These consisted of both team and supporter flights from a number of global departure points, including several in Europe and some as far away as South America.

In addition, the demand for pre-season tours continues to grow as more and more teams incorporate these into their training regimens.

In many cases, the distance flown is becoming longer and I expect this to continue into 2019: currently, the USA is very popular and China is becoming increasingly so, despite its logistical challenges.

2019 will see the Rugby World Cup take place in Japan with matches hosted in 12 cities, culminating in the final in Yokohama City on 2 November 2019. Despite the distance, our Commercial Jets and Group Travel departments are expecting strong demand from both supporters and corporates."

Meetings, incentives, conferences and events (MICE)

"It has also been a busy year for our Group Charter and Travel divisions in terms of MICE activity, with bookings up around 20% year-on-year. Clients are travelling to a more varied range of destinations than ever before as they look for new experiences, and this year my team have booked charters to 153 different locations worldwide. Rome, Paris and Milan are the most requested among our clients, but we have also flown passengers to more unusual destinations, such as Azerbaijan and Russia.

We are also seeing a growing trend towards long-haul destinations, a prime example being Vietnam, which offers numerous world class convention centres with state-of-the-art MICE facilities. I believe we will continue to see clients head further afield in 2019, as well as increased MICE activity overall."

VIP airliners

"During the peak summer months, we witnessed a steeper decline in the availability of short haul economy aircraft than usual, due to the high demand around the FIFA World Cup. This has led to groups starting to charter VIP airliners, such as the Boeing 737-300, which in the past have predominantly been used by High Net Worth Individuals (HNWIs) and sports teams. We expect this trend to grow steadily in 2019 and beyond, with increasing numbers of VIP airliners coming to the market all the time."

Looking ahead to 2019

"As we head closer towards Brexit, full details of how this is going to impact the aviation industry are yet to emerge. Our advice to clients is to get in touch with their dedicated account manager if they have any queries about the impact that Brexit may have on aircraft charters, whether this is domestically, within Europe or further afield. For Air Partner, the client relationship is about more than just arranging and delivering aircraft charters. For us, it's about working closely with our clients so we can provide advice and extend the benefit of our experience in handling any circumstances that may affect their travel plans.

After a fruitful 2018, we have an extremely positive outlook on the year to come and look forward to continuing to deliver outstanding service to both new and existing clients as we head into 2019."

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About Air Partner:

Founded in 1961, Air Partner is a global aviation services group that provides worldwide solutions to industry, commerce, governments and private individuals. The Group has two divisions: Charter division, comprising air charter broking and remarketing; and the Consulting & Training division, comprising the aviation safety consultancies, Baines Simmons, Clockwork Research and SafeSkys, as well as Air Partner's Emergency Planning Division. For reporting purposes, the Group is structured into four divisions: Commercial Jets, Private Jets, Freight (Charter) and Consulting & Training (Baines Simmons, Clockwork Research, SafeSkys and Air Partner's Emergency Planning Division). The Commercial Jet division charters large airliners to move groups of any size. Air Partner Remarketing, which is within the Commercial Jet division, provides comprehensive remarketing programmes for all types of commercial and corporate aircraft to a wide range of international clients. Private Jets offers the Company's unique pre-paid JetCard scheme and on-demand charter. Freight charters aircraft of every size to fly almost any cargo anywhere, at any time. Baines Simmons is a world leader in aviation safety consulting specialising in aviation regulation, compliance and safety management. Clockwork Research is a leading fatigue risk management consultancy. SafeSkys is a leading Environmental and Air Traffic Control services provider to UK and International airports. Air Partner is headquartered alongside Gatwick airport in the UK. Air Partner operates 24/7 year-round and has 20 offices globally. Air Partner is listed on the London Stock Exchange (AIR) and is 9001:2015 compliant for commercial airline and private jet solutions worldwide. www.airpartner.com