AIR TRANSPORT

An artist's impression of the MD-87 in joint launch customer Austrian Airlines' livery. Deliveries to Austrian and Finnair will begin in 1987

European
airlines

launch

MD-87
LONG BEACH

McDonnell Douglas has
officially launched its
130-seat MD-87 following
orders from two European
flag carriers. Finnair has
signed for eight of the smaller
version of the MD-80, and
Austrian will accept four
MD-87s. Deliveries will begin
in late 1987.

Both carriers operate MD-
80 series types. Finnair was
joint launch customer
(together with Alaska Air-
lines) of the MD-83, the
extended range version of the
MD-80 which made its public
debut at Long Beach on
December 17. In addition
Finnair operates three
MD-82s. Austrian was one of
two launch customers for the
MD-81, and now flies nine of
the type.

Finnair will put the MD-87
to work on its European and
Middle East services and also
on some charter work. It will
receive four aircraft in 1987
and the remaining four in
1991. Austrian plans to use its
MD-87s mainly on its Middle
East services currently flown
by 100-seat DC-9-32s. "The
aircraft will enable us to
perform non-stop flights into
the Middle East instead of
having to make intermediate
stops as we do with the
DC-9-32s," a spokesman said.

Austrian will also utilise the
aircraft on some charter
flights to the Canary Islands
and West and East Africa.
Both airlines, as MD-80
series customers, stress
that they selected the
MD-87 mainly because they
could save considerably on
the cost of maintenance and
components.
McDonnell Douglas says
that the high degree of
commonality of the MD-87
with the MD-80 family will
minimise costs for airlines
which operate more than one
version, through the use of the
same training equipment and
servicing facilities. The flight
deck and flying character-
istics of the MD-87 are almost
identical to other models and
flight crews can be quickly
and easily cross-qualified to
operate any MD-80.

McDonnell Douglas has
scheduled a 33-month pro-
gramme to design, manu-
facture, flight-test, and
certificate the MD-87.
Douglas president James
Worsham says that airlines
worldwide have expressed
interest in the MD-87 oper-
ating together with the
MD-80 and revealed that new
orders are likely in the next
few months.

The MD-87 will be powered
by the new series Pratt &
Whitney JT8D-200 engines
with take-off thrust levels of
20,0001b and fuel burn reduc-
tions of up to 2-5 per cent
compared with present
JT8D-217A powerplants. The
MD-87 can take-off from
6,000ft runways and carry a
full passenger load 4,345km.
% MDC has announced an
order for one MD-83 from
West German charter airline
Aero Lloyd for delivery in
March 1986.

Braniff opposes
wet-lease decision

DALLAS/FORT WORTH~

Braniff is appealing a Fort
Worth Federal bankruptcy
court decision that its joint
services agreement with
Northeastern, in which the
Miami carrier had been sub-
leasing five of Braniffs 30
727s, is "in contravention and
violation" of the latter's leas-
ing agreement with the BRNF
Liquidating Trust—the owner
of the aircraft.

Judge Michael McConnell
ruled that Braniffs agree-
ment with Northeastern
should cease and that the
carrier be "permanently
enjoined from entering into
identical or similar agree-
ments with other parties",
which Braniff had been nego-
tiating. McConnell stated
that there was no common
definition of a joint services
agreement in the airline
industry.

Northeastern president
Stephen Quinto expressed his
dismay at the court's decision.
As a result of the ruling his
airline has been forced tem-
porarily to give up new
services from Miami to Los
Angeles, San Diego, Las
Vegas, and New York JFK,
inaugurated in late November
with five of Braniffs 727s.

"We have relied in all good
faith on Braniffs continued
assurances as to the strength
of their position in the legal
matter concerning their right
to enter into a joint services
agreement with us. We are
shocked and dismayed by this
development and we have
taken every possible step to
minimise the impact of this on
our passengers and employ-

ees," he said after the hearing
BRNF took Braniff to court-
in late December to seek a

preliminary injunction block-r
ing such wet lease arrange-
ments. Braniff maintains that
BRNF had filed the suit only >
because the market for used
aircraft has improved now,
and it wants to reclaim the
aircraft to make more money
for itself.
While Northeastern ack-
nowledges that there is noth-
ing to stop it leasing aircraft
direct from BRNF, it claims it
will be more advantageous for
Northeastern eventually to
look for aircraft elsewhere. •*

UK-US

accord on fares

LONDON

The US Department of
Justice has given the UK
Government assurances tha

British airlines will not run,J
into any anti-trust problems
by offering cheaper trans-
atlantic winter fares effective,
January 1-March 31.
British Airways and British
Caledonian have moved
swiftly to get a new round of
winter fares approved by the
UK Department of Trans-
port. They include a British
Airways' £259 London-New'
York advanced purchase fare
—£40 less than the carrier's
present lowest fare on the
route which is just £1 above
Virgin Atlantic's uncondi-
tional fare. BA had wanted a-<
£259 Late Saver fare on the
route, which can be purchased
in the last three days up to
and including the day of
departure, but this was
rejected by the UK Civil.
Aviation Authority. The CAA
has given approval, however
to late-saver price cuts on tlM
11 other US destinations BA
serves and on BCal's London-
Los Angeles services.

The UK Government origi
nally blocked plans by B A and
US rivals last October to cut
the London-New York fare to
£259 fearing that Virgin
Atlantic would launch an
anti-trust suit.
In November President
Reagan tempered the Justice
Department's ardour when he
ordered that it must drop its
criminal anti-trust enforce
ment efforts against BA and
several other foreign carriers
for allegedly conspiring ti'
put Laker out of business

FLIGHT International, 12 January