Austria's independent airline, Lauda Air, has begun scheduled services to the Far East

Lauda

goes long
range
Austria's first independent
scheduled airline, Lauda Air,
started scheduled services last
week for the Far East and
Australia. Lauda received its
first of two Pratt & Whitney
PW4000-powered Boeing
767-300ERs on May 2 and is
now flying twice-weekly to
Bangkok and once a week each
to Hong Kong and Sydney.
Former racing driver and
majority shareholder Niki
Lauda fought for 16 months to
gain the scheduled route
licences. Austrian Airlines
objected to the licence applica-
tion; although it has no long-
haul services yet, it plans to
inaugurate New York and
Tokyo next year. Until now,
Lauda Air has operated holiday
charter flights with two Boeing
737s. It has a third 737 on order
for delivery in 1990.

Lauda has postponed ambi-
tions to serve Taiwan after the
mainland Chinese Government
expressed concern about such a
service. The Beijing foreign
ministry said that it would be
"an issue concerning China's
sovereignty if an airline of any
country having diplomatic
relations with China—even a
privately owned company-
intended to open air traffic with
Taiwan". Austria recognised
China in 1971.

"We have given up on this
project for the time being, but
we still hope to make a [Taipei]
connection in the future,"
Lauda Air says. Taipei had
granted Lauda approval for trial
flights and says that it would
still welcome Lauda.

Rocket plant explosion impact assessed
by Norman Lynn
in Los Angeles

The USA lost half of its facili-
ties for production of a key
ingredient in solid rocket
propellant, used by Nasa's Shut-
tle and US Air Force boosters
and missiles, when one of two
US ammonium perchlorate
production plants was gutted by
explosions and fire on May 4.
An initial fire before the
explosions at the Pacific
Engineering production plant
in Henderson, Nevada,
detected by a packing depart-
ment supervisor, is said to have
begun in a chemical drying
machine.
About 200 of Pacific's 300
employees were inside the
plant's 12 buildings when four
successive explosions shattered
the structures within seconds.
Employees ran for safety as
flames, smoke, and toxic gases
towered 20,000ft into the air.
Remarkably, only two employ-

ees were killed, although 250
were injured.
The blasts were equal in
intensity to underground
nuclear tests performed in
Nevada. Seismographs 200
miles away at the California
Institute of Technology in
Pasadena, California, registered
3 to 3 • 5 on the Richter scale.

The remaining half of US
ammonium-perchlorate oxi-
diser requirements is produced
by a plant operated by Kerr-
McGee, located just one mile
away from the destroyed plant.
It was slightly damaged by
the explosions at Pacific
Engineering, and production is
closed down until the cause of
the explosions is officially deter-
mined.

Nasa and Air Force space
officials are assessing the effect
of lost capacity on their launch
schedules. Nasa officials say
that there is enough solid
propellant available to meet its
limited needs this year.

Pratt & Whitney tests Stol nozzle
Pratt & Whitney is conducting sea-level testing of a two-dimensional, thrust-vectoring nozzle on an F100-220 engine. Similar nozzles will be fitted to the F-15 Stol and manoeuvre technology demonstrator when it flies later this year.

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AIRLINE MARKET

ZAS Airline of Egypt has
ordered two McDonnell
Douglas MD-83s and plans to
order a McDonnell Douglas
MD-11 Combi with an
option on another, for a total
value of about $225 million.
The MD-83s are scheduled
for delivery in late 1989 and
the MD-lls in May and
November 1991.

Norwegian Regional carrier
Norsk Air has leased an
Embraer Brasilia from CSE
Aviation of Oxford,
England. Finance was
arranged through London-
based Concord Leasing.

San Franscisco-based PLM
International has bought a
Boeing 727-200 and leased it
to London-based Dan-Air
Services.

Mexican charter airline
Latur has ordered another
Airbus A300-600R, for
delivery in October 1989.
Both aircraft are to be
powered by Pratt & Whitney
PW4158 engines.

Korean Air has ordered
six Boeing 747-400s, with
options on four more.
A previously unannounced
747-300 combi and two
747-200 freighters are also to
be delivered later this year.
The total value of the
contract to Boeing is about
$2 billion. Three previously
ordered 747-400s are being
delivered in April 1989, and,
with this new order, deliv-
eries will continue into
1994.

Polaris Aircraft Leasing has
confirmed its order for two
Boeing 787-300ERs, and is
to lease both to Bahrain-
based Gulf Air. The $140
million order is being deliv-
ered this June and Novem-
ber.

Mexican regional carrier
Transportes Aeromar has
ordered another Aero-
spatiale/Aeritalia ATR42,
with options on two more.
Transportes Aeromar's first
ATR42 entered service in
November 1987, from its
Toluca base near Mexico
City. Air Guadeloupe and
Air Martinique have also
ordered an ATR72 each.
Both airlines already operate
ATR42s.

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