December 1984 and was certificated in the Soviet Union in March 1986. The type has replaced the earlier L-410UVP on the production line, a total of 213 UVP-Es having been built by January 1 this year. In total, more than 860 of the unpres-surised L-410 have been produced, of which more than 600 are in service with Aeroflot. Prod-uction is expected to run until around 1993. In addition to its basic passenger and cargo roles, the type is also available for executive use, para-chuting, air ambulance work, and aerial survey-ing. The aircraft is priced in the $1-7-1-8 million bracket, and the L-410 received its first Western European sale last year, when Swedish carrier Liz-Air purchased the type.

LET 610 The larger compatriot of the earlier L-410 Turbolet, the L-610 first flew last Decem-ber, and is scheduled to enter production in 1991. The aircraft is of a similar layout to the L-410, although larger, seating 40 passengers, and powered by Walter M602 turboprops. Five proto-types are to be built, including one fatigue test airframe, and the test programme is expected to be completed in October 1990.
LET is in the enviable position of having early production guaranteed, with the Soviet airline Aeroflot requiring some 600 L-610s to replace existing types. Deliveries are planned to start with 15 aircraft in 1991, 20 in 1992, and 40 per year thereafter. The Czech national airline, CSA, is also expected to procure the type, and LET plans to market the L-610 aggressively in the West, where it will sell at a basic price of around $5 million. Production slots for non-Soviet export aircraft are likely to become available in 1992.

Partenavia (Italy)
AP-68TP-600 VIATOR First flown in July 1984, the Viator ("Wayfarer") is an updated and stretched, retractable-gear version of the Partenavia Spartacus design. A commuter version with seating for ten passengers is offered, and is priced at around $1,252,000. Sales of the AP.68TP stand at 12 aircraft.

Piaggio (Italy)

P.180 AVANTI Rinaldo Piaggio is studying a 14-seat commuter derivative of its P.180 Avanti business aircraft, under the designation P.181. If launched, the aircraft is likely to feature a 2m fuselage stretch, more powerful engines, and strengthened undercarriage, among other detail changes.
The company is confident that a commuter

Avanti is a feasible project, but has yet to under-take marketing studies, and will not launch the project until production of the standard Avanti is well established.

Pilatus Britten-Norman (UK)

BN-2B ISLANDER This best-selling British aircraft continues in production, with more than 1,100 of all models, including the Trislander, having been sold to date. The current production piston-engined model, the BN-2B, is available powered by either two Avco Lycoming O-540s or two IO-540S, designated BN-2B-26 and BN-2B-20 respectively. Both variants can be fitted with improved tip tanks as an optional feature, and, from late 1989, three-bladed propellers will become available. Military variants of the Islander, the Defender and Maritime Defender, are also available.
The Islander is manufactured by IAv Bucuresti of Romania, which delivers airframes to PBN at Bembridge, where they are fitted out to customer specification. The aircraft is also produced by PADC in the Philippines. PBN quotes indicative unit costs for the BN-2B-26 and -20 as £340,000 and £365,000 respectively.

BN-2T TURBINE ISLANDER First flown in 1980, the turboprop-powered BN-2T is available in the same range of applications as the piston-engined Islander. The Allison 250 turboprops allow operators to use lower-cost jet fuel, instead of scarce avgas, as well as offering lower noise levels. First deliveries were made in December 1981. The basic price of the BN-2T is approxi-mately £750,000.

Saab (Sweden)
SAAB 340A Saab has now built over 140 340s, which are in service with 25 airlines on five continents. Twenty-seven airlines and three corporate customers have chosen the aircraft, which was the first of the new-generation pressur-ised 30-40-seaters to go into service.
Intended specifically for the shorthaul commuter market, the 340 has been designed with the emphasis on simplicity of systems, oper-ation, and maintenance. Saab and Fairchild Industries announced in January 1980 that they would jointly develop, build, and market the 340, Saab undertaking to build a new factory at Lin-koping for the aircraft's final assembly. The proto-type first flew in January 1983, and the type entered revenue service with Crossair of Switzer-land in June 1984. In November 1985, the part-

nership between Saab and Fairchild dissolved, the latter withdrawing because of financial problems. Saab bought out Fairchild's financial obligations to the programme, although the latter remained a subcontractor until the end of 1987. Since aircraft number 109 Saab has been the sole builder of the aircraft.
The 340 continues to sell well, with over 180 firm orders held at the time of writing. By the end of 1988, a total of 136 Saab 340s had been deliv-ered, with production continuing at a rate of three to four aircraft per month. Since May 1988, all 340s have been delivered with a new interior, incorporating larger overhead bins and an improved toilet area. The price of the 340A is around $7 million.

SAAB 340B Saab announced the go-ahead for the "hot-and-high" version of the 340, designated 340B, in September 1987. The first aircraft, converted from the number two prototype, has now flown, and differs from the earlier 340A in having CT7-9B engines, an extended-span tail-plane, and improved landing gear. Certification of the 340B is planned for the middle of this year, with first customer deliveries being made around September. All Saab 340s beyond serial number 159 will be in the 340B configuration. The aircraft costs about $7-5 million.

SAAB 2000 In December 1988 Saab announced its decision to launch development of a new 50-seat aircraft, designated Saab 2000. Common-ality between the Saab 2000 and its smaller brother, the 340, is to be a leading feature, and will include cabin cross-section, cockpit, tail-plane, and many subsystems. The 2000 is to be some 85ft long and will have a wingspan of around 78ft. Cruise speed will be in the region of 360kt. Crossair is the launch customer, with an order for 50 aircraft—25 firm and 25 on option—and first deliveries are targeted for 1993.

Shorts (UK)

SHORTS 330 and UTT/SHERPA Developed from the Skyvan STOL utility transport, the Shorts 330 (originally designated SD3-30), first flew in August 1974, and entered service with Time Air in August 1976. Although largely over-taken in terms of commuter airline purchases by its larger stablemate, the 360, the 330 remains available in both commuter and freighter versions. The 330 is powered by two PT6A-45R engines, flat-rated to 1,098 s.h.p. for take-off and 1,020 s.h.p. for maximum continuous operations. Over 120 Shorts 330s and its variants have entered service worldwide.

The Saab 340, left,
vies with the
Embraer Brasilia for

the highest market
share in the 30-seat

regional airliner
category

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