

# Certification delayed for Cessna Citation X

GRAHAM WARWICK/WICHITA

CERTIFICATION OF the Cessna Citation X high-speed business jet has been pushed back from August to November, but the manufacturer still plans to deliver the first customer aircraft in April 1996.

Flight-test hold-ups will delay delivery of the first two Citation X demonstrators to late November or early December, says marketing-support director Mike Fuhrman.

Three aircraft are now being flown — the prototype and first two production aircraft — and more than 600h have been logged on 410 flights so far. US Federal Aviation Administration pilots will begin certification flight-testing of the Citation X in March, Fuhrman says.

An increase in maximum Mach number (MMO) is expected to be announced shortly, he says, Cessna having dive-tested the Citation X to Mach 0.98. The current MMO is 0.9 at 37,000ft (11,000m), but the aircraft is flying faster at higher altitudes than predicted.

The MMO is likely to be increased to 0.92 at 37,000-39,000ft, 0.91 at 41,000ft and 0.9 at 41,000-43,000ft, Fuhrman believes. The reduced fuel burn at the higher altitudes will enable operators to take advantage of the time saving possible with the increased MMO, he adds.

Fuhrman says that Citation X sales continue to be "slow but steady" and that production is sold out to mid-1997, representing an order total "well into double digits", he indicates. □

## Tridair aims for Gemini in-flight engine-start certification

TRIDAIR HELICOPTERS, the California-based developer of the modified twin-engine Bell 206L-1/3/4 (known as the Gemini ST), plans to certify it for in-flight starting of the second engine in 1996.

The modification will allow pilots to take off using one of the helicopter's two engines and then start up the second engine later on during the flight, a procedure now limited to emergencies.

Tridair president Doug Daigle says: "The aircraft will be certified with normal procedures to allow an engine to be started in-

flight. We'll make it foolproof by installing Allison 250-C22 engines which have FADEC [full-authority digital engine-control]."

Bell Helicopter, which produces licence-made 206L-4 TwinRangers using the Gemini concept, says meanwhile that it has no plans to follow Tridair in seeking single-engined certification of the TwinRanger.

Daigle says: "Basically, we have agreed to disagree with Bell."

Tridair's Gemini ST gained single-engined Category A operation twin certification of the helicopter in 1994 after Washington-based Soloy made further tests and changes to the combining gearbox at the heart of the conversion.

The US Federal Aviation Administration is expected to grant single-pilot instrument-flight-rules certification by early April. This now extends the normal operating range of the helicopter by 740km (400nm), or provides the ability to complete a flight in the event of one engine failing. □



PETER MARICH

## Aerobatics champion picks Sukhoi

WORLD, FRENCH AND BREITLING WORLD CUP aerobatics champion Xavier de Lapparent is to fly a Sukhoi Su-31 in this year's competition season. De Lapparent is pictured flying a Su-31 owned by UK Sukhoi agent Richard Goode, who will provide a Breitling-liveried example for the Frenchman.

## Learjet may add aircraft to reach model 45 schedule

LEARJET IS considering adding a fifth aircraft to the Learjet 45 flight-test programme, to ensure that it meets the December 1996 deadline for certification of the new business jet.

The manufacturer has promised to deliver eight aircraft to customers by the end of parent company Bombardier's 1996 financial year in January 1997, says vice-president for programme management, Andre Brais.

The company admits that assembly of the first aircraft is behind schedule, with the first flight planned for the second quarter, "...but there is flexibility to catch up during flight test", says Brais, particularly if a fifth Learjet 45 is added to the programme.

The manufacturer added aircraft to the Lear 60 certification-test programme to overcome delays and meet its pledge to deliver the first customer aircraft by the end of Bombardier's 1992 financial year.

Plans are to use the first four production Learjet 45s for aerodynamic, mechanical-systems, avionics and function-and-reliability flight testing. There is no prototype, Brais says. A Learjet 35 will be used to flight-test the aircraft's AlliedSignal TFE731-20 turbofan, beginning in February.

The company says that it has orders for more than 50 Learjet 45s, with roughly the first two year's production of the new business-jet already sold out. □

## Reims may return to light singles

REIMS AVIATION president Jean-Paul Pellessier says that he will decide on whether to resume licence production of Cessna piston-singles "within a few weeks", following the US manufacturer's decision to re-start production of such types at the beginning of 1997.

"I am very enthusiastic about it, but there are still questions about the market and the investment that would be necessary," says

Pellessier. Reims Aviation retains the manufacturing licence for all small Cessnas sold to Europe and Africa. It has continued to produce Cessna 406 twins at its Reims factory in France.

The company has undergone hard times since Cessna, hit by US product-liability legislation, stopped producing its line of small singles. Changes in the legislation have resulted in Cessna's decision to move back into the sector. □

### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### ■ CARAVAN DELIVERY

Cessna delivered the first two of FedEx's order for 50 additional Caravan utility turboprops on 30 January. The 1994 order will be completed in May 1996.