



Oman Air has introduced two new ATR 42-500s on regional shuttle routes, connecting Muscat with Abu Dhabi, Doha and Dubai

Emerging power

Oman Air is embarked on a programme of expansion and restructuring

MAX KINGSLEY-JONES/MUSCAT

OMAN, ON THE GULF'S eastern side, rests in the shadows cast by the cosmopolitan regions to its west, such as Abu Dhabi, Bahrain and Dubai. The country has chosen not to follow its neighbours into the "fast lane" and remains relatively unspoiled. It is therefore no surprise that its air transport industry has trailed that of Dubai and the other major Gulf states – until now.

With Oman an equal shareholder in Gulf Air, the country's capital, Muscat, has always figured

in that airline's network, but perhaps not as significantly as the Omanis would like. Over the past six years, Oman Air has worked to raise the nation's profile in the air transport market. It has just completed a major transformation from a small local transporter into a fully fledged international carrier. The airline recently launched a regional shuttle service with newly delivered ATR 42 turboprops and is poised to introduce widebody Airbus A310s.

Airline operations began in March 1993, when 12-year-old Muscat-based Oman Air Services (OAS) started a scheduled domestic



Clive Raymond, general manager, Oman Air