

■ **International Lease Finance** has completed a series of leasing deals in January: **JetBlue** will lease an International Aero Engines V2500-powered A320 in February 2003. The New York based airline has also ordered 10 more A320s from Airbus for delivery between 2002 and 2005; **Air Asia** has taken delivery of the first of two Boeing 737-300s on seven year leases. The second aircraft will be delivered to the Malaysian carrier in February; **Air France** will take three Boeing 777-300ERs on six year leases in April and May 2004. The French carrier has also signed for two General Electric CF6-80-powered 747-400ERs for delivery in March and April 2003 on six year leases; **Air India** has added an ex-Kenya Airways A310-300 on three year lease; **Air Jamaica** is leasing two ex-Air Canada Airbus A340-300s on eight-year leases beginning in February and May; **Air Macau** will take delivery of two new A321-200s in December 2002 and February 2003 on seven year leases; **Air Tahiti** has leased an A340-300 for seven years. The aircraft was previously briefly operated by Canada 3000; **Air Transat** is leasing a new Rolls-Royce Trent 772-powered A330-200 in May on a nine year lease; **BWIA West Indies Airways** will lease two ex-Air Canada A340-300s in June and November on five-year leases. They will replace the airline's remaining Lockheed L-1011 TriStars on long haul routes. ■ Antwerp-based **VLM Airlines** has announced plans to add a Raytheon Beech 1900 turboprop for operation on yet to be disclosed, low density routes. ■ **Virgin** has sold its first ever Boeing 747, a 26 year old -200, to Nigerian airline **Kabo Air**. ■ Amsterdam-based aircraft operating lessor **IEM Airfinance** (formerly International Equipment Management) has concluded a sale and lease back transaction for four Airbus A320s with **TAM**. ■ **Safair** has purchased five Airbus A300B4 Freighters from **DHL International** in a sale/leaseback deal valued at more than €80 million.

REGIONAL AIRCRAFT CHRISTINA MACKENZIE / PARIS

ATR set to maintain 2001 sales and delivery levels

The manufacturer says the regional market was not hit as hard as the long-haul sector

ATR expects to maintain its 2001 sales and delivery levels this year, despite the current market slump.

The regional manufacturer secured orders for 25 new ATR 42s and 72s last year, and delivered 20 aircraft. Marketing director Paolo Revelli-Beaumont says ATR aims to sell and deliver at least 24 aircraft in 2002, despite what is likely to be "a difficult year".

Chief executive Jean-Michel Léonard says 2001 was "our best year ever", with turnover of €615 million (\$540 million). Of the 25 aircraft sold, "eight were signed for after 11 September".

Léonard says ATR was able "to anticipate the current crisis", largely thanks to its new structure, created on 1 June, when major shareholders EADS and Alenia Aeronautica turned the consortium into an integrated company. Léonard says that ATR is studying the feasibility of evolving into a limited company in the same way that the Airbus industrial grouping became a fully fledged company. "It takes a long time, particularly from a fiscal viewpoint, to transform a partnership into a company," he says.

Revelli-Beaumont says that "the regional aviation sector was not hit as hard as the long-haul business after 11 September, because the flow of passengers, travelling largely for business rather than leisure, is more stable than for the major airlines." He adds: "2003 will also be a difficult year, but the regional airlines historically suffer less."

Despite a dearth of sales in the USA in recent years, and the impact on the country's airlines at the terrorist attacks, Revelli-Beaumont says that "in the next three years we intend to sell aircraft in the USA."

Meanwhile, ATR remarketed 23 second-hand aircraft last year, 10 of which were sold for cash. It also concluded 16 lease extensions.

AIRCRAFT ACQUISITIONS

Air Dolomiti boosts fleet with flexible deal

Air Dolomiti has secured a deal with ATR which will allow it partially to modernise its fleet, and provide flexibility to expand when the market recovers.

The Italian regional airline has placed a \$51.6 million order for three ATR 72-500s, with the first aircraft due for delivery in September and the other two in 2003. The deal includes a sale and lease back package for two of the 10 ATR 42-500s it now operates, which will remain in service until the delivery of the ATR 72s and could then be returned to ATR. However Air Dolomiti has the right to retain the ATR 42-500s in service if needed.

Air Dolomiti, which is a Lufthansa partner, currently operates 18 aircraft, with its fleet comprising 15 ATRs and three Bombardier CRJ200s. The carrier plans to expand its fleet to 27 aircraft in the next three years.

This year, the airline is aiming to increase revenues to €250 million (\$220 million) from €130 million in 2001, and carry 1.6 million passengers. Last year, it reported an operating profit of around €6.5 million and a sharp increase in passenger traffic despite the effects of the economic slowdown.

RETIREMENT

SAS completes McDonnell Douglas DC-9 phase out



Scandinavian Airlines (SAS) has phased out the McDonnell Douglas (MDC) DC-9 from its fleet after a 25-year association with the twinjet. A Series 41 (SE-DAS) operated SAS's last DC-9 service on 7 January (SK1606). The airline's remaining aircraft will be stored in Woensdrecht, the Netherlands and Roswell, USA. In all, SAS operated 71 DC-9 Series 20s, Series 30s, Series 40s and Series 50s, receiving its first example in 1967 through a lease with Swissair. SAS continues its association with the MDC twinjet, however, with 65 MD-80s still in operation.