

EasyJet launches with easy fares

THE EASYJET Airline Company (*Flight International*, 9-15 August) is to start scheduled services from London Luton Airport on 10 November, with three daily services (two at weekends) to Glasgow, adding similar frequencies to Edinburgh on 24 November. Services will initially be operated by GB Airways with Boeing 737-200s, until EasyJet obtains its own air-operator's certificate early in 1996, when it plans to add several European destinations to its network.

EasyJet is staking everything on a concept of direct customer sales (by-passing the travel agent), and rock-bottom, simple fares. Only

single, non-restrictive fares are offered, starting at a very low £29. For the first two weeks, all seats will be available at this price.

After that, the fare structure will be based on guaranteed numbers of progressively more expensive seats for each flight: the first to be sold will be at £29, with the rest being sold at £39, £49 or



Haji-Ioannou: what's worth more?

£59. EasyJet guarantees to provide 100,000 seats a year at £29. (Air UK offers a £74 fare from London Stansted to Glasgow, and Ryanair

one of £59 from Stansted to Prestwick — with free rail travel to anywhere in Scotland thrown in.) The in-flight service is based on an "EasyKiosk", which offers the passenger only what he/she is willing to pay for.

The airline is owned by chairman and chief executive Stelios Haji-Ioannou, founder of the Stelmar Tankers shipping company, and his brother and sister. Haji-Ioannou says: "We are not in the business of taking away market share from other airlines, but we are encouraging people to take impulse decisions to fly, instead of spending money on other items such as a pair of jeans." □

USA targets South America

CONTINENTAL AIRLINES will offer flights between Newark (New Jersey) and Lima in Peru, via Bogota in Columbia, and American Airlines will increase services to Brazil, under liberal new bilateral agreements secured by the USA with Peru and Brazil.

Continental is the third US carrier to serve Peru, but the first

from Newark, and it is the first US carrier to serve New York/Newark-Bogota.

American will add seven weekly flights to Brazil, having previously been allowed to increase its service from Dallas/Fort Worth. The US DoT has also allowed both United and Tower Air to expand their Brazil services from Miami. □

ERA introduces safety initiative

THE EUROPEAN Regional Airline association (ERA) has launched a major initiative aimed at changing the public perception that regional aircraft are less safe than those operated by the majors.

The move follows the crash in 1994 of an American Eagle ATR 72 turboprop after the pilot lost control in severe icing conditions, which led to widespread media speculation that turboprops, in particular, were more prone to

accidents than jet airliners.

ERA airlines carried 44 million passengers in 1994, only three of whom lost their lives. ERA director general Mike Ambrose says: "We have an excellent safety record, which is comparable to that of the majors." At its annual convention in Baveno, Italy, the ERA launched a brochure entitled *Every ten seconds a regional airliner lands or takes off safely in Europe*, to underline the point. □

Fokker 70 trials nearing completion

FOKKER SAYS that completion of flight trials of the Fokker 70 in Granada, Spain, clearing the aircraft for steep descents to airports such as London City is "imminent". European Joint Airworthiness

Authorities approval will allow Air France to introduce Fokker 70s now operated by Air Littoral in time for the winter season beginning at the end of October. Other airlines are expected to follow suit. □

Safety spotlight shifts on to loss of control

IN-FLIGHT LOSS of control is now the biggest single killer of airline passengers, replacing controlled flight into terrain (CFIT), according to a recent Boeing analysis of the subject.

Boeing's chief engineer for aeroplane safety engineering Paul Russell says that from 1990 to 1994, 1,056 people died in loss-of-control accidents and 1,004 in CFIT accidents.

Boeing emphasises that Russell's observations are not based on any new figures or information. Highlighting the issue, however, may signal an imminent industry-led initiative similar to that directed at CFIT.

Three major loss-of-control accidents are cited by Russell: the United Airlines Boeing 737-200 event at Colorado Springs, USA in 1991; the China Air Lines Airbus A300-600 accident at Nagoya, Japan in April 1994; and the USAir 737-400 crash at Pittsburgh, USA in September 1994.

All three involved dramatic departures from normal flight attitudes: crew misunderstanding of control mode was a major factor in the Nagoya accident, but the causes of the other two incidents

remain unknown. This increases the industry incentive to find ways of preventing the occurrences.

Already, some carriers such as United incorporate recovery from unusual attitudes in their simulator continuation training. The Air Line Pilots Association (ALPA) at United says, however, that there are distinct limits to what can be achieved in simulation, and that it wants a feasible, realistic means of "extreme attitudes" training to be developed. □

NEWS IN BRIEF

■ INTERIM LEASE PLAN

China Southern Airlines plans to lease two Boeing 747-400s for two years from March 1996 onwards. The lease is an interim measure until the carrier receives all of its six Boeing 777-200s in 1998. The first of its General Electric GE-90-powered aircraft was due to be handed over on 12 November, but has been delayed by engine-certification problems and a strike at Boeing.