



Monarch's A330s was modified before delivery, while the other is yet to be repaired.

The airline has been an established Airbus fly-by-wire (FBW) flightdeck user for six years, operating single-aisle A320s since 1993. Monarch has eight A320/A321s, and the airline also flies four A300-600Rs, seven Boeing 757-200s and its single DC-10.

Monarch has recently begun to pool crews from the smaller aircraft into an A320/A330 MFF group. "We will eventually run with twice as many A330-rated crews as we need. They will fly half the time on the short-haul fleet, and the other half on long haul with the A330," says Stealey. Pilots transferring to the widebody twinjet have been impressed with the larger aircraft's handling and performance, he says. "It's a hot ship with much better performance than the A320," says Stealey.

The A330 has also proved to be an easy aircraft to load, with its generous centre of gravity (cg) limits. "Compared to the A300-600R, which is very cg critical, you can chuck payload anywhere," says Stealey.

"Airbus has been progressively improving the comfort of its [FBW] flightdeck, and noise levels are lower on the A330 than earlier mod-

els," says Stealey. This is due primarily to the suppressing of cockpit air conditioning and cooling unit noise, he adds. "The FMC [flight management computer] also has a few extra functions, which makes life easier, but, otherwise, flying one type is much the same as any of the other [FBW] ones," says Stealey.

Monarch's A330s have been recording a dispatch reliability of 97%, which Poole concedes should ideally be "a little bit higher". In mitigation, he points out that it is a new type and that the airline's small fleet makes relatively few departures, meaning that any glitches can have a major impact on the dispatch rate.

Monarch's forward "Premium" cabin features Matsushita System 2000E IFE in-seat personal video screens, while the main cabin has overhead monitors. Poole says that the system has been "as reliable as we dared hope".

CANADA 3000'S EXPERIENCE

Canada 3000 chose the A330-200 to expand its long-haul charter services, and the Toronto-based airline signed a lease deal in August 1996 with ILFC for three GE-powered aircraft plus an option on a fourth. The deal made it the launch operator for the A330-200, receiving its

first in April last year. It now has all three in service, with the fourth aircraft firmed up and due next May.

The A330s are operated in a single-class, 340-seat configuration (76cm/30in pitch) on charter services to the South Pacific. The twinjet's long legs are used to fly from Toronto and Vancouver to Honolulu, Fiji, Sydney, Auckland and the Cook Islands. The A330 is also deployed on flights to London from Calgary, Toronto to Montreal, Gatwick to Montreal and Calgary to Edmonton-Cancun.

Canada 3000 has operated the A320 on its short/medium-haul network since 1993, and has five in service, giving it considerable experience of the Airbus FBW flightdeck. The airline makes the most of the two families' commonality, with all of 90 A330 pilots cross-qualified in an A320/A330 MFF pilot pool.

The airline's inaugural flight with the A330-200, from Toronto to Vancouver, was interrupted when the flightcrew received a low-oil warning from one of its CF6-80E1A4 engines, and diverted to Winnipeg. The problem was traced to an oil leak in the D-sump which acts as a reservoir for the number four bearing, and required the very low-time engine to be removed.

GE instructed all of its A330 operators to inspect their engines, and plans to offer an upgrade to all CF6/A330 operators in a two-year programme beginning next year (see *The manufacturers' view*).

Canada 3000 says that the A330-200's restricted turning circle has not led to any restrictions at the airports to which it operates. The airline has also suffered the same problems as other carriers have with the MLG shock absorber seals, and has had to replace one.

It's A330s are the most heavily used examples worldwide, averaging 15.7h utilisation a day or 110h a week. This reflects the long-range missions for which the carrier has chosen to use the aircraft. Its longest sector is 8.45h from Calgary to Munich.

In overall terms, the A330-200 has performed well during its first 18 months in service. It has delivered all that Airbus and the engine manufacturers had promised, and provided existing FBW Airbus operators with another string to their bows.

However, Airbus must work to rectify the aircraft's key remaining glitches to ensure that its launch operators continue to keep the faith. □



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