

TRAVEL TRENDS

Private Jets Adapt to Help More Beat the Hassles of Air Travel

NewsUSA

(NU) - Remember when you thought flying was fun?

That was before the days when airplane cabins felt like cattle cars, when baggage wasn't something to be nickel and dimed over, and when TSA screeners – yes, them – thought frisking 89-year-old former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger at LaGuardia Airport recently made perfect sense.

“Surely there's ... some middle ground between illegal profiling and patting down octogenarians,” the New York Times editorialized.

Little wonder that research by the U.S. Travel Association suggests that about 41 million people avoid air travel yearly because of the so-called “hassle factor.”

Ah, but you don't have to put up with the hassles.

These days, it's easier than you think to travel by private jet – largely because of wider choices that include buying anywhere from an entire jet to as little as one-sixteenth of a share in one, as well as purchasing jet cards. Flexjet (www.flexjet.com), for example, through its expanded portfolio of solutions, caters to those seeking even more flexibility.

“We wanted to make it easier for people to see why we're the premium experience in the private jet industry,” said Fred Reid, Flexjet's president.

Picture it: After deciding as few as 10 hours earlier that you want to weekend in Aspen, say, or need to pack a multiple-city business trip into a single day, you arrive at one of the 5,000 airports accessible by private aircraft nationwide (compared to just 450 for commercial airlines). Whereupon, instead of long lines and pat-downs,



Private jets eliminate the “hassle factor” of flying commercial.

you're whisked aboard by ID-checking flight attendants.

Within minutes, you're airborne and nibbling a bowl of warm nuts. (You remember nuts, right?)

“No oxygen-mask tutorials, no guy shoving his backpack into your overhead,” said Reid.

Then the real pampering begins.

Haute cuisine served on Pickard china. Ergonomic armchairs from which to comfortably work the phone. A table area that converts into a full-size bed with 600-thread count Egyptian linens.

All that was what convinced Tom Wyatt, the 33-year-old president of a private golf club in South Carolina, to start flying privately late last year. “It's just so simple and painless,” he told the Wall Street Journal.

As a division of Bombardier, the world's largest business aviation manufacturer, Flexjet boasts the youngest fractional aircraft in the industry (averaging about five years) and impeccable customer service, and is about to add the much-anticipated, all-new Learjet 85 to its collection of Learjet and Challenger jets.

About the Learjet 85 aircraft: It can fly really, really fast.