

LATITUDE CALLS AT BGAD, BIGGIN HILL

News / Business aviation



Cessna's new Citation **Latitude** business jet is making its Dubai Airshow debut this week in a region where the company's similar Citation Sovereign has proven popular. Textron Aviation's new twinjet received FAA certification this summer and European (EASA) certification is expected by the end of the year.

"With one of the most comfortable and spacious cabins available in the midsize category and best-in-class operating costs, we anticipate the Latitude will be well received in this market," said Cessna regional v-p sales for the Middle East, Africa and India, Ali Ashban.

As well as flying the aircraft for a full test report prior to certification, AIN flew on the aircraft recently from London Biggin Hill Airport in the UK when the \$16.3 million, nine-passenger aircraft was commencing a three-week European tour.

The Latitude accelerated quickly along Runway 21 at historic Biggin Hill and hooked an early left turn to avoid Biggin Hill town for noise abatement. The pilots then headed up to East Anglia—the Latitude is capable of climbing to FL420 in 26 minutes and has a service ceiling is FL450, while the cabin altitude is kept at a very comfortable 5,950 ft. The aircraft has a range at MTOW of 2,850 nm (useful load is 12,394 lbs), which from Dubai gives plenty of direct options around the region and beyond.

During the flight, Cessna salesman Tom Perry said the type received FAA certification in June and entered service in August with a U.S. owner. He said European (EASA) certification was anticipated by the end of 2015, so first deliveries to European customers could commence in early 2016.

Perry said the Latitude is “unique” in the Cessna product line, having a flat floor and six-foot ceiling. He added the company expected to “take the midsize market by storm;” the type is positioned between the superlight XLS+ and the midsize Sovereign+. The Latitude has the same wing and PW306D1 engines as the Sovereign+, although the latter has two more seats and 300 nm more range.

The Garmin G5000 flight deck is pilot-friendly with its touchscreen controllers and clean, simple look. But it is the cabin that was designed to bring Citations up a notch, with the more spacious, comfortable feel—all the better to compete with Dassault’s new 5X and Embraer’s Legacy 500, which entered service in Europe in May.

At the same time this aircraft was scooting around Europe, another Latitude in the “global debut” initiative was conducting a 28-day, 39-airport coast-to-coast tour of the U.S., starting August 31 when it took off from Chicago Executive Airport. Stops planned included “Milwaukee [Wisconsin], Indianapolis [Indiana], Cleveland, [Ohio] White Plains [New York], Orlando [Florida], Atlanta [Georgia], Houston [Texas], Dallas [Texas], Denver [Colorado], Salt Lake City [Utah], Boston [Massachusetts], Seattle [Washington] and several cities in California,” said Cessna.

This time it is the Middle East’s turn, with the Dubai Airshow being the key stop-off to showcase the new aircraft to potential customers here.

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