

SEMI-PRIVATE PLANES ARE THE NEW FIRST CLASS

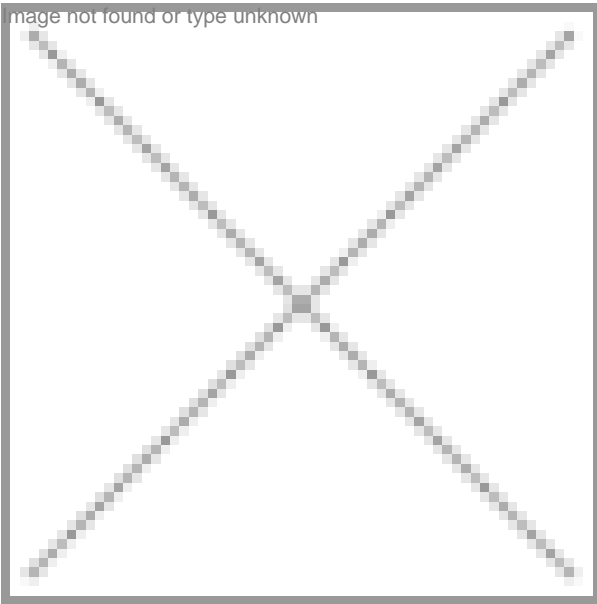
News / Business aviation



First class isn't high enough for some flyers.

"So many passengers get upgraded to first class [now] and usually you are sitting next to somebody horrible," says Oren Alexander, 28, a Soho resident who works in real estate.

Alexander is one of a growing number of wealthy — but not wealthy enough to own their own jet — New Yorkers booking seats on semiprivate planes in hopes of mingling with celebs, models and power brokers at 40,000 feet.



JetSmarter offers refreshments, snacks and even bubbly to clients. Photo: Stephen Yang

“You can’t compare the caliber of people”

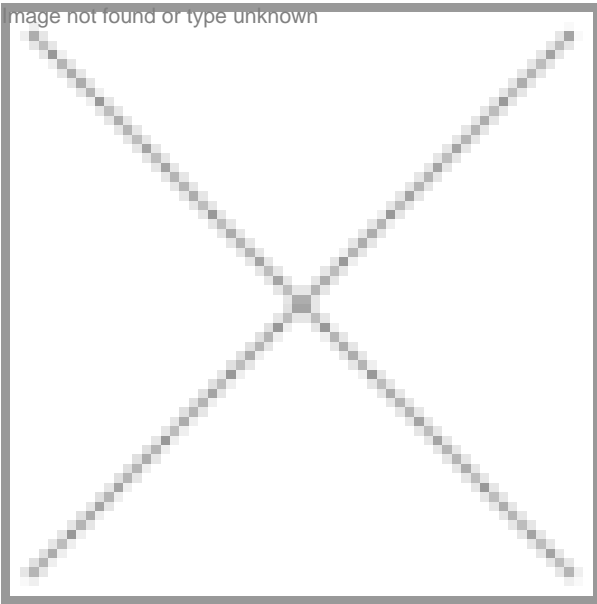
“You can’t compare the caliber of people” between almost-private and commercial, says Alexander, a member of Jet-Smarter, a private jet-booking app that operates on a country club model. For \$9,000 annually, plus a one-time \$3,000 initiation fee, members get unlimited flights to the growing number of US cities Jet-Smarter services. In-flight Champagne and helicopter transfers from Midtown to the airport in White Plains are included for no extra charge. Catering is provided on longer flights.

Oren’s brother and business partner, Tal Alexander, 29, favors Blade. Originally a helicopter company, it expanded into the jet space in December, with \$4,500 roundtrip flights to Miami, just in time for Art Basel.

“Your pickings are a lot slimmer on commercial flights,” he says. “It’s all like-minded people who fly Blade.”

Models Emily Ratajkowski and Chanel Iman recently flew with Jet-Smarter — and were hit on by fellow passengers, as The Post’s Richard Johnson reported. When Jamie Foxx was booked on a recent -flight, the company tipped members off in advance via email.

Noah Traisman, 28 and a Manhattan-based management consultant, laments the fact that the only models on a recent JetSmarter flight were male models, but he says it was still a good party.



Cesar Gueikian, Amanda Church and their son LeoPhoto: Stephen Yang

“We went through two bottles of Tito’s [vodka], quite a few bottles of Champagne, a couple of pizzas,” he says. “There were dim lights and inebriated conversations.”

Sam DeBianchi, 31, a Fort Lauderdale, Fla., real estate broker, says there’s no going back to the indignities of commercial air travel after flying semiprivate.

“I once had a very smelly person next to me; it was extremely bad,” DeBianchi says. “Any smelly people I may encounter on a Jet-Smarter flight will be giving off the smell of wealth.”

Leo Gueikian, 2, doesn’t care about his fancy seatmates, but the toddler is loathe to fly United when shuttling between Miami, where he lives, and New York, where his financier father, Cesar, works.

“[He’s] become accustomed to walking around the plane when he wants to and eating in-flight food that he actually likes,” says his mother, Amanda Church, 40. “The problem is that now we can’t get him on a commercial flight.”

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07 MARCH 2016

SOURCE: THE NEW YORK POST

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