

LATITUDE



The In-Flight Magazine of SimAirlines.net
December 2007

2007 Awards



ALSO INSIDE:
Cape Training
Virgin Blue's Airlines
Emirates' Growth

CONTENTS

LATITUDE
DECEMBER 2007

9 COVER STORY

Our 2007 awards for our real-life counterparts.

Cover Photo: Ondrej Smrtka

KLM's operations at its Amsterdam hub.



5 FROM THE SOUTH, PART II

Ali Abou-Zeid shares the conclusion of his primary flight training.



8 BEHIND THE NAMES

Our Virgin Blue operations actually cover four separate but connected airlines.



11 AVIATION OASIS

A look at Emirates' incredible growth and the political background of the airline's ambitions.



- 3 Viewpoint
- 4 News Briefs
- 7 VA Spotlight
- 10 Hub Focus
- 13 The Tail Section



VIEWPOINT

As you have probably read by now, my computer recently crashed, setting me back a week in my work for SimAirline.net as I restored my system on a new computer. (Fortunately, no data was lost.) Recovering from such a loss is never easy, and I'm very grateful for your patience as I get back up to speed in keeping SimAirline.net running.

One thing you can do to help SimAirline.net is to fill out our Annual Survey, accessible from the main page of any of our virtual airlines. We use the information from the survey to help determine what changes we should make for the coming year and what areas we need to focus on for improvement. As always, the results of this survey are made public upon its completion. The survey will be available through early January.

One great change we have made is switching to the oneworld alliance timetable for use at Virtual British Airways and Hong Kong Virtual. In addition to the convenience of using just a single program for two virtual airlines, it offers the added benefit of having more detailed aircraft information (e.g., not just an A320-series, but an A321). We had previously used the individual airlines' timetables because the oneworld timetable did not include Dragonair.

This month, we have two articles from guest writers. Ali Abou-Zeid shares the second half of his flight training experiences in South Africa, while Ben Grinblatt looks into

Emirates' dynamic and growing role in the airline industry.

Happy Flying!

Aaron Robinson

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AOL Instant Messenger: SimAirlineNet



KLM was selected by *Latitude* as our Airline of the Year.

Latitude welcomes the opinions of its readers to issues raised in the magazine. Letters should be directed to latitude@simairline.net. SimAirline.net will not print anonymous letters, but names will be withheld upon request. *Latitude* reserves the right to edit letters as it sees fit and does not guarantee publication.

NEWS BRIEFS

Emirates Announces Record Aircraft Order

Emirates made the biggest splash at the Dubai Air Show, announcing orders for 70 A350s with 50 options and orders for an additional eleven A380s and twelve 777-300ERs. The aircraft are worth approximately \$34.9 billion at list prices. In addition, a possible order for the 747-8I may be forthcoming in the next few months. When Emirates' currently ordered aircraft are all delivered, it will be the largest operator of the A350, A380, and 777. It is currently the second largest A330 operator in the world.

British Airways Withdraws from Iberia Bidding

Turning away from years of speculation, the British Airways/TPG consortium withdrew their interest in bidding for Europe's fifth largest airline because a friendly takeover was no longer possible after shareholder Caja Madrid said it would increase its shareholding from 10% to 23%. British Airways' stake in Iberia is 9.95%.

Virgin America Announces New CEO

C. David Cush, currently the Senior Vice President of Global Sales at American Airlines, will take over as CEO of Virgin America when Fred Reid steps down later this month. Reid previously worked with Cush at American and is well-known to Chairman Don Carty, himself the one-time Chairman and CEO at American.

Hawaiian Turns to Airbus

A longtime McDonnell Douglas and recent Boeing customer, Hawaiian Airlines announced orders for six A330-200s and six A350-800s, plus an additional six options for each type. The new aircraft will eventually replace the fleet of 767s and give the airline the ability to expand to the Eastern U.S. and Asia.

Aeroflot Opts Out of Alitalia Privatization

Aeroflot Russian Airlines has withdrawn its interest in buying a stake in Alitalia, leaving only Air France-KLM, Air One, and Lufthansa in the mix. The privatization process has drawn on nearly a year at this point, far longer than originally hoped for.

Airbus Sets New Sales, Production Records

Despite the underway Power8 restructuring plan and the dollar's continuing decline, Airbus has quietly set new records for orders in a year (1,204 through the end of November, beating 2005's 1,111 sales) and is expected to deliver a record 450 aircraft by the end of the year.

American Airlines to Spin off American Eagle

The world's largest airline is planning to divest itself of the world's largest regional airline. AMR Corporation, the parent company of American Airlines and American Eagle, will sell off the latter following months of shareholders urging the company to follow the success of Air Canada parent ACE Holdings and sell off non-core business units to unlock shareholder value. AMR is considering a variety of ways to sell its regional unit.

Virgin Nigeria Orders Regional Jets

Virgin Nigeria Airways ordered eight Embraer 170s and two 190s at the Dubai Air Show, which it will use primarily to replace the 737 and Fokker 50 in its domestic operation. The order, plus an additional six options and eight purchase rights, make the airline the launch customer in the region.

Korean Air's LCC to Begin in May

Korean Air has sped up the timetable for its low-fare carrier, known as Air Korea, to begin service. The airline will launch in May with three A300s and two 737s flying primarily leisure-oriented routes.



Cape Flying

Ali Abou-Zeid

It's been two months since I returned from South Africa as a proud holder of a PPL, giving me a great feeling about officially being a "pilot." When I had written my last article (see September 2007 *Latitude*, p. 5), I had only a few hours left to log with the following flights still to be flown: my dual cross-country, my solo cross-country, and my PPL practical test.

On 4 September 2007 I had passed my last written exam (navigation) and I only had to complete those three flights. The next day I flew my dual cross-country, with my instructor Dale on a different plane, a very unstable Jabiru 400, than my usual Ikarus. I had planned to fly George-Riversdale-Stillbai-George. I filed my flight plan, received a meteorological report from the Meteorology Office, and called Overberg (a military airbase) to inform them I would pass through their airspace.

The previous student flying the plane was nice enough to fill it up with fuel after his flight and I was ready to go. I did my pre-flight check and asked for clearance for my flight plan. Everything went very well except that the handling of the plane was totally different and it took some time to get familiar with it. A touch-and-go at Riversdale was planned, and my first touchdown with the Jabiru wasn't really nice at all; it's a heavier plane and its rudder pedals need a large force to move them.

A second touch-and-go (was much better) and Dale said, "Ok, now I want to divert to Oudtshorn. I have control, do the plan, and tell me when you're ready." He kept circling over Riversdale until I wrote the new plan and calculated my new track. After I announced that I had control, he took all my navigation equipment and threw them to the back of the plane, leaving only my map. "Now, navigate only using your map."

We had done a few touch-and-gos at Oudtshorn until I could really get that Jabiru on the ground smoothly. Its final approach speed and stall speed with full flaps are really close, only 5 knots apart, so it was really tricky at times. We'd done all different kinds of approaches, including different flap settings and glide approach.

On the way back to George, everything was normal and the touchdown at George was really nice as well. After we parked the aircraft I was instructed to plan to solo from Swelendam to Stillbai. "Make it 3.0 hours, 2.9 it doesn't count, and 3.1 you pay extra." So, I really had to plan the flight to exactly 3.0 hours.

It was almost the same flight plan, except that Swelendam's airfield was a bit farther than Riversdale. On paper my flight plan was about 2.2 hours, but 0.8 would be enough for expected delays caused by headwinds, and in the worst case if I come early, I'd fly around the General Flying Area for a while. The first bad news came when I called the Meteorology Office and they said there would be overcast clouds, clearing at 0900Z; my planned departure time was 0700Z. In the morning the weather wasn't really on my side. I called George Tower and asked them to delay my departure time by one hour.

Half an hour later as I was waiting for the weather to clear, my instructor called me and told me to go fly. I trusted him and left, but there was a lot of turbulence after departure and I couldn't climb to 3500 ft. because of the clouds. I kept the aircraft at 1500 ft. and as I neared Riversdale, I decided to divert as I didn't know what the weather would be like on the way to Swelendam and feared I would get stuck there and have to cancel my flight.

I made a touch-and-go at Riversdale, which wasn't at all good since the winds changed direction on short finals and I got caught in wind shear; also, the runway's surface was very bumpy. I felt it was no picnic to stay on this runway, especially since it was only 3000 ft. long and I had already lost some of the distance trying to keep the aircraft on the centerline. Therefore, I cleaned up the aircraft's configuration for takeoff, applied full power, and started climbing off the runway. I kept circling over the airport for a while to draw my new route on the map and determine my new track, distance, and time.

-continued on page 6-

As I finished that and set my new track, I contacted Overberg, who was really helpful after they realized I was unable to climb due to weather. I reported leaving their airspace and entered the General Flying Area, and there I heard Dale's voice, flying with someone else. I had asked him for George's altimeter setting, and proceeded with my flight. I thought of just staying in the area for a while, practicing a few stalls and steep turns and maybe a forced landing and precautionary landing as well.

But because the weather was so bad that I couldn't even maintain a steady flight, in the end I opted for just flying around the area, which I also had to abort as I heard everybody leaving the area to return to the flight school due to weather. I kept my variable pitch at "fully fine" to go as slow as possible to waste time; I still had 0.8 hours to fly. After it was getting even worse I decided to go back to George and maybe do some circuit training there. I circled over an island for a while and decided to leave after the next decimal point counted on the Hobbsmeter. Once it did, I set track for George and called them to ask permission to enter the airspace.

As I entered the airspace I asked for permission to do circuits and the lady on duty was so nice that she granted my request for "only two" circuits. The first touch-and-go was nice, then I entered a right-hand traffic pattern; on downwind I thought of asking for a full stop landing since if I went up again, I'd exceed 3.0 hours. On a very short final, I got caught in the winds again and quickly corrected it for a centerline landing, to which the controller commented, "nice landing."

As I taxied in, I was only waiting for a 0.1 to switch on the Hobbsmeter. I taxied down the taxiway, backtracked, and parked my aircraft and at that moment I had logged exactly 3.0 hours. I shut down, finished the logbooks, and sent a text message to my instructor informing him I was safely on the ground, to which he replied with my flight plan for my test the following day.

As I knew what airports I'd be overflying the following day, I grabbed my navigation equipment and sat all alone in the classroom to plan my flight and fill in the flight plan form. After I checked my numbers (distances, tracks, Flight Levels, etc.), I called the Cape Town Briefing station to file my flight plan, then called the Meteorology Office to get forecast weather information. All looked well, and to my surprise, the owner of the flight school, Gerald

Todd, had decided to conduct my flight test.

After I finished everything, it was time to guess where I would be diverted to (I had planned three diversion paths). To be honest, I was nervous the morning of my flight test, even though my instructor kept telling me, "you'll be fine." Even though I knew and believed there'd be nothing to be afraid of, I was still so nervous, that I was avoiding eating or drinking.

The time had come to start my flight: I had finished my pre-flight checks and was ready to go. I flew my flight normally and over Riversdale, my examiner asked me to divert to a certain point (the mouth of a river), that wasn't in my plans. However, he was nice enough to take control of the aircraft while I planned my path.

The new diversion path would take me over the northeastern sector of Overberg's Restricted Airspace, so I contacted them and received permission to cross. As we reached the river's mouth, I switched frequencies and was back in the training area. There I was asked to demonstrate a few stalls, steep turns, and even a spin. I had done the most amazing spin ever, it made even me scared. I also demonstrated a forced landing, but overran my landing field a bit. However, had that been a real forced landing, I would still be writing about it now. In other words, it still would have been safe.

After the forced landing, Mr. Todd asked me to return to George and request two touch-and-gos. Things were happening so fast then, and I got the weirdest pattern joining instructions ever. The active runway was Runway 11, and I had to fly north of the field, then join the left hand downwind for Runway 11. As I was turning base, Mr. Todd made me a really nice offer. "Look, young man: if you do a really nice landing, I'll call for a full stop, we'll all go home, and I'll congratulate you for your PPL."

That made me more and more nervous. If you put this in your mind and keep reminding yourself on final approach that this is going to be your best landing ever, chances are, it's going to be the worst. So, I had to get those thoughts out of my mind and just relax and fly the plane.

On final approach, he started talking to me and poking me with his elbow, to which my response was as if it was not happening at all. He even increased the power and frequency of poking, repeating the words, "are you concentrating, young man? Ha? You're concentrating?" He kept doing that until I touched down.

I was getting ready for another departure, cleaning my configuration, as I heard him speaking the words, "George, DRW, this is going to be a full stop landing." This counted as one of the most amazing moments in my whole life. Afterwards as we taxied, he said, "Congratulations, however, I want you to practice more and more forced landings."

During my test, the cockpit environment was very nice and friendly. I was tense for sure, and he was trying to just make me enjoy the flight as if it were any other flight, which is actually the main objective of the flight test. I was being congratulated by everybody at the flight school, and I cannot thank my instructor Dale enough. I had sent him a message thanking him for everything, to which he replied: "It was a pleasure; I'm really proud of you."

Later that day, I still had 1.7 hours left and was scheduled to fly a Cessna 150 with Dale. This counts as my favorite flight to this day. It felt just like we're two friends taking a Cessna for a ride before sunset. We did a few stalls and spins, then later three or four touch-and-gos, with the last spin and full-stop landing captured on video.

I'm returning to Cape Flying Services in late January to continue on to my Commercial Pilot's License, but in one of my final moments, I was told about a comment from Mr. Todd: "Ali came very well prepared for his flight. He gives the aviation industry the respect it deserves."



A view off the wingtip over South Africa.

VA SPOTLIGHT

swissair virtual 



An A330-200 over New York

Long considered one of the top passenger service airlines in the world, Swissair was the most recognizable symbol of Switzerland until its collapse in 2001. At the time, it was the fifth largest airline in Europe.

Swissair was well-known for its industry innovation in passenger service and maintenance, and was part of the world's first true airline alliance, a cooperative effort with SAS in 1958.

In an effort to be the leader in its own airline alliance, Swissair in the 1990s began buying stakes in less profitable (or even unprofitable) European airlines and replacing their management with Swissair executives.

These airlines joined the Swissair-led Qualiflyer Group, but equally importantly, these airlines began purchasing airline services such as ground handling, catering, and maintenance from Swissair subsidiaries.

However, the strategy failed, largely

because the airlines Swissair targeted were unprofitable due to structural reasons, not poor management, eventually dragging down Swissair itself. Swissair management were recently acquitted of all charges related to the airline's collapse.

The Swiss government restructured the airline's assets around Swissair regional subsidiary Crossair, which renamed itself to Swiss International Air Lines.

Interesting Facts:

- In 2006, the film "Grounding" opened in Europe, a docudrama about management's effort to keep the airline alive during its final days; it was the most popular movie in Switzerland that year.
- Swissair was arguably McDonnell Douglas' best customer, purchasing every aircraft type (except the MD-90) that the company ever built.
- Even though Switzerland was neutral, Swissair was forced to suspend all service during World War II.



A Saab 2000 departing Lugano

Identity Crisis



Joe Corrigan

The Virgin Blue brand is actually comprised of four different airlines, each with its own identity, yet coordinated to create a single product and network. Much like other such groupings in other regions of the world (for example, AirAsia in Southeast Asia, LAN and TACA in Latin America, and the TUI group of airlines in Europe), the multiple airlines are necessary to get around ownership barriers. Unlike these other cases though, these barriers are not only political ownership regulations, but also business restrictions.

Virgin Blue is, of course, the parent brand and is used domestically within Australia. However, the Virgin Blue brand can not be used outside of Australia. When Singapore Airlines purchased a 49% stake in Virgin Atlantic in 1999, the Virgin Group agreed not to use the Virgin franchise for any Australian airline (plans for Virgin Blue had been announced, but the airline had not begun flying) on flights outside of the country. Singapore Airlines was seeking (and still is) rights to fly from Australia to the U.S.

After a fast start-up period, thanks largely due to the 2001 collapse of Ansett Australia, Virgin Blue was ready to break out of the Australian market, but needed a new identity for such operations. The solution was to form a subsidiary operation, Pacific Blue, which would handle all international flights. Pacific Blue began flying trans-tasman routes in 2004 and eventually expanded to the South Pacific as well. The company's New Zealand headquarters also made it easy for the airline to start domestic operations earlier this year.

A new opportunity for further South Pacific expansion presented itself in 2005, when Samoa's Polynesian Airlines ceased international operations. Needing a new airline for international services, the Samoan government formed a joint venture with Virgin Blue to create Polynesian Blue, which would be branded similarly to Pacific Blue and fly Polynesian Airlines' former routes to Auckland and Sydney.

The final piece of the puzzle is V Australia, whose name was determined, like Virgin Blue, in a public naming contest. V Australia will begin transpacific service next year. With speculation rife that Singapore Airlines would be selling its Virgin Atlantic stake, the V Australia name would allow an easy transition to 'Virgin Australia.' However, V Australia's livery is very different than its 'Blue' counterparts—the aircraft aren't even red.

What does the future hold for the four Virgin Blue airlines? The Virgin Blue name is well-recognized in Australia despite less than a decade of operations, and Virgin decided not to use 'Virgin Australia' when naming the airline. With Singapore Airlines moving closer to selling, the door would be open for branding and corporate unification for Virgin Blue, Pacific Blue, and V Australia—the Samoan government would likely insist that 'Polynesian' stay in its own carrier's name.

It is therefore entirely possible that four brands will just reduce three—Virgin Blue for Australia and New Zealand, Polynesian Blue, and Virgin Australia for the longhaul operations. As with most questions in the airline industry, only time will tell.

Annual Awards

Airline of the Year – KLM Royal Dutch Airlines

The Dutch national airline may not be flashy or at the forefront like other airlines, but its Amsterdam hub is considered one of the finest in the world and KLM has quietly been one of the best managed airlines over the last few years. This past quarter, Air France-KLM reported a massive €736 million (\$1.09 billion), nearly double the previous year's quarter. It has taken some of this profit to help renew its fleet, with orders this year for the 737-700, 777-300ER, Embraer 190, and additional A330-200s, International trade has been part of the Dutch psyche for centuries, and KLM is keeping that tradition alive and well.



Eric Meijer

Aircraft of the Year – Boeing 777-300ER

After several years of sluggish sales, the 777-300ER has become one of the best-selling aircraft in the world over the past few years thanks to its high capacity and long range combination, making it an excellent 747 replacement. SimAirline.net airlines with the type in operation or on order include Air Canada, ANA, Cathay Pacific, Emirates, KLM, Korean Air, and V Australia, the last five of which ordered the aircraft just this year.



David Brook

Executive of the Year – Gerald Grinstein

Gerald (Gerry) Grinstein, the now-retired CEO of Delta Air Lines, took over the reins in 2004 to try to repair a company that had gone astray from decades of model employee relations. During Grinstein's three years as CEO, he followed employees' wishes by restoring the 'heritage' widget logo and returning the widget to the fleet's tails, helped lead a major route restructuring with a focus on international routes (see June 2007 *Latitude*, p. 5), united employees to fend off a hostile takeover bid from US Airways (see photo at right), and led the company through a successful bankruptcy restructuring. Grinstein recently retired at age 75 after receiving a minimal salary, and today remains on board as a consultant for Delta at a nominal salary of \$1.



Delta Air Lines

Comebacks of the Year –

Delta Air Lines, Northwest Airlines

It is only fitting for SimAirline.net to recognize both Delta Air Lines and Northwest Airlines for their successful emergences from bankruptcy this spring. Both were able to shed or renegotiate unfavorable aircraft leases, simplify their fleets, reduce labor costs, and restructure their route networks. Our congratulations to both airlines and our best wishes for their future success.



HUB FOCUS

Melbourne Airport (MEL/YMML)

Like the city it serves, Melbourne Airport has long taken a back seat to Sydney Kingsford Smith International Airport. However, the airport still served 21.9 million passengers in 2006, good for 52nd in the world, and not far behind Sydney's 30 million.

The airport, often known as Tullamarine because of its location, replaced the old Essendon Airport in 1970, which was too small for widebody aircraft.

The airport's international services have declined in recent years, with no European airlines serving the airport today, and only United Airlines from across the Pacific.

At SimAirline.net, Melbourne has flights to fourteen domestic destinations thanks to Virgin Blue. On the longhaul side, SimAirline.net's British Airways, Cathay Pacific, Emirates, Korean Air, Pan American, Thai, Virgin Atlantic (via Ansett Australia codeshare), and Virgin Blue all serve



Phil Vabre

An overview of three of Melbourne's four terminals. The center terminal is for international flights.

Melbourne, connecting the city with thirteen destinations in Asia, Europe, North America, and other parts of Oceania (New Zealand and the South Pacific islands). V Australia will likely offer longhaul service from Melbourne when it begins operations.

Interesting Facts:

- Like SeaTac in Washington, Melbourne Airport is an official suburb name that came about after the airport's construction.
- British Airways was not the last European airline to serve Melbourne, but rather, Austrian Airlines.
- Although Sydney received the first A380 commercial flight, Melbourne was the first Australian airport to be A380-capable.
- Melbourne Airport was the primary hub for Ansett Australia until the airline's collapse in 2001.



Jonathan Rankin

Melbourne is one of Virgin Blue's three main hubs, with Brisbane and Sydney.

Beyond Pipe Dreams

Ben Grinblatt



Dubai Megaprojects

“Those who neglect the new will remain at the back of the line; those who wait for luck to make things happen will be disappointed” These words from the Emir of Dubai, Sheikh Mohammad bin Rashid Al Maktoum, have certainly been taken to heart—the Dubai government is consistently trying to move Dubai forward and is not waiting for luck.

Instead they are using their resources to make things happen—and fast. Not even 60 years ago, Dubai was a small desert city where no electricity could be found, and where residents had not yet discovered the huge oil reserves under their own soil. In the 1950s, Dubai began catching up with the rest of the world by introducing electricity, telephone services, and air service. In thirty-five years the population had more than quadrupled.

Since the turn of the millennium, Dubai has been home to one of the world’s fastest growing economies (13.4% annually). Dubai’s economy was originally built upon its large oil and natural gas reserves, but today “oil money” only accounts for 6% of Dubai’s income, with the oil expected to run out in twenty years. Having recognized that fact decades ago, the ruling Al Maktoum family opted to lead Dubai on a new path: much like Singapore in Southeast Asia, they are trying to fashion Dubai as a regional center of trade, education, and culture.

In addition to the fast economic growth of the emirate, Dubai is growing exponentially as a transport center for the world. Dubai is located in the center of the world, with no major city outside of an 8,000-nautical mile radius, allowing connections between any

major cities with only one stop. Over half of the world’s population lives within a eight-hour plane ride.

Dubai International Airport (DXB) is a key part of the emirate’s ambitions. Today the airport is the largest passenger hub in the Middle East, with much of the credit belonging to Emirates, today the region’s largest airline. The airline was founded in 1985 with two aircraft and flew between four cities (Dubai, Delhi, Karachi, and Mumbai). Emirates began service to Europe in 1987, and to Asia in 1990.

Today Emirates is the world’s twelfth largest airline, with aspirations often likened to those of Singapore Airlines—creating a global aviation network by focusing on longhaul travel and excellent service.

Emirates has used Dubai’s strategic location to expand throughout the world, offering flights to nearly 90 destinations. Emirates has taken care to diversify its network: aside from London and Singapore, no routes account for more than 2.5% of the airline’s traffic.

The airline will be receiving at least 58 A380-800s in the next decade, and has also been pushing for the stretched A380-900. The airline has also ordered 50 A350s, and will take delivery of at least 65 777s over the next few years, making it the largest 777 operator in the world.

Emirates is one of the most profitable airlines (\$988 million operating profit in 2006, fifth in the world), leading many other airlines to question the legitimacy of Emirates’ “self-made success.” These airlines note that

-continued on page 12-

Emirates is 100% owned by the Dubai government and that Sheikh Ahmed Bin Saeed Al-Maktoum, the chairman and CEO of the airline, is a senior member of the Dubai ruling family, opening up the possibility of political favoritism. Former Qantas Chairman Margaret Jackson opined that “life must be wonderfully simple when the airline, government, and airport interests are all controlled and run by the same people.”

Emirates acknowledges that the airline doesn't have to pay any income tax, but refuses to agree with claims that it receives financial aid from the Dubai government, stating that besides \$10 million in launch aid, the airline hasn't received “one cent.” Emirates has offered to “open its books to any [airline], but these airlines must be prepared to respond with their accounts.”

The phrase “the sky is the limit” is often closely associated with Dubai's and Emirates' business strategies. The Dubai government only seems to allow construction if the building will be a world



JXB will be the world's largest airport for both passengers and cargo volume.

landmark. Instead of just trying to renovate the existing facilities at DXB, the airport is building a brand-new terminal to handle the A380. “This means we will be able to handle 25 A380s simultaneously. We will be the biggest in the world with this capability,” said Khalifa Al Zaffin, director-engineering and projects of the Dubai Department of Civil Aviation. Twenty of the 25 A380 stands will

be exclusively for Emirates.

In order to support this passenger growth, a second airport in Jebel Ali (JXB) is being built, expected to be completed by 2017. JXB is expected to be the largest airport in the world (“typical Dubai style”) by any possible metric—it will feature six parallel runways and will be able to handle 120 million passengers.

Dubai is also becoming a major cargo hub—from 2000 to 2004, cargo throughput increased by a phenomenal 102%. Emirates SkyCargo accounts for much of Dubai's cargo throughput, over 1.5 million tons annually, and is growing at more than 20% per year. Dubai has started a project to expand its cargo capacity, and will reach almost 5 million tons of cargo by 2018; JXB will eventually be able to handle 12 million tons. In context, the world's largest cargo hub today handles less than 4 million.

Emirates has many strengths; the airline has targeted secondary destinations such as Birmingham, Cochin, and Perth to attract additional passengers. Emirates offers high frequencies for longhaul services, with at least two daily flights on most routes.

The airline also offers excellent in-flight service, with 600+ channels of entertainment and luxury seats for first class passengers. First class passengers also receive complimentary taxi and limousine rides to and from the airport. Dubai is also convenient as a transfer point due to its lack of transit visa requirements, in contrast to the U.K. and U.S.

There are, however, a few concerns about the airline's business strategy. The airline's service is supposedly not as good as it was a few years ago. More importantly, Emirates will someday operate a fleet of 250 widebodies. Will Emirates be able to fill up these planes? Although some people believe that the airline, like Dubai, just likes to spend money, they obviously have high aspirations and are planning for the future. It's possible that Emirates is overordering.

Many compare Emirates to the path pioneered by Singapore Airlines, today one of the world's most respected airlines. Emirates and Dubai have followed the path well so far, but will they continue to follow Singapore's trajectory in their ambitions to become a true global powerhouse?

THE TAIL SECTION

SimAirline.net Trivia

One trivia submission may be made per pilot in the [topic](#) in the Latitude Discussion section of the Message Boards. The first correct responder for each question will be announced in the following month's issue.

This month's questions:

1. Two of SimAirline.net's hubs offers service to three cities of the same name. What hubs are they, and what are the three cities?
2. In Atlanta, one can arrive from one Manchester (England) on a SimAirline.net flight and depart to another Manchester (New Hampshire). Atlanta offers ten such city possibilities. What airport offers the second most?
3. Which active aircraft (a specific registration, currently flying for one of our airlines) has flown for the most SimAirline.net airlines?

Answers from last month:

1. What active passenger airliner (specific registration) of our airlines has flown continuously for that airline the longest?

Air Canada's 767-200 C-GAUN has been flying for the airline continuously since March 1983 (Takabiro Tanaka identified the airline, but the incorrect type and registration: C-GAVC, a 767-200ER, entered service in October 1984).

2. SimAirline.net currently has 94 hubs, three of which have nonstop flights to 52 other hubs. What are those three airports?

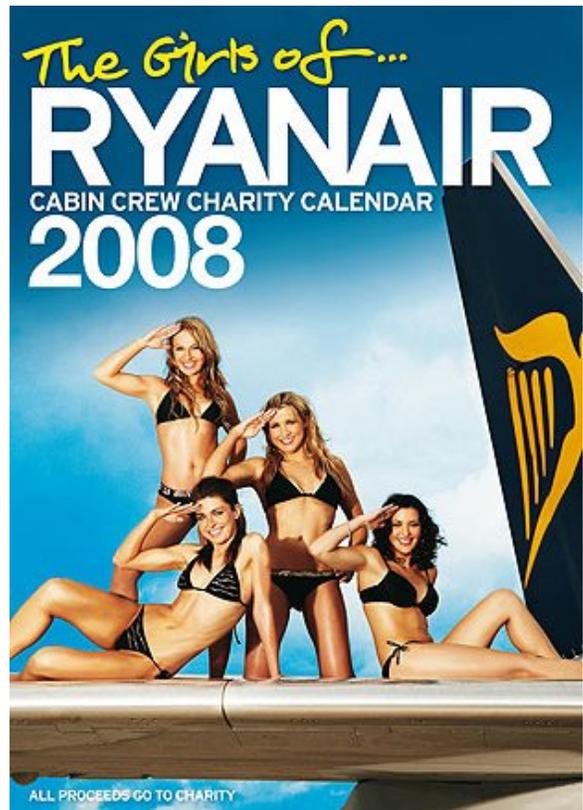
Atlanta, Newark, and New York Kennedy. The result is not too surprising, considering that many of those 94 hubs are in the U.S., and that an airport would need to also be a major international gateway to have flights to enough overseas destinations.

3. SimAirline.net has three of the world's current airlines with faces on their tails: AeroMexico, Alaska, and Hawaiian. What is the fourth?

Norwegian Air Shuttle has photos of famous Norwegians on its tails, including Roald Amundsen, Sonja Henie, Henrik Ibsen, and Edvard Munch.

Content submissions to *Latitude* are encouraged and should be directed to latitude@simairline.net.

United's latest effort to repair its troubled labor relations left a bad taste in workers' mouths—literally. The airline prepared elaborate meals for employees working over the Thanksgiving holiday, but the food prepared at Chicago O'Hare ended up making five employees sick enough to go to the hospital. After the meal was disposed of, United distributed airport food vouchers to on-duty employees.



Ryanair is raising—or lowering?—the bar once again. The airline is selling calendars featuring its cabin crew to raise money for children's charity Angel Quest. Each calendar is just £5 .