

Luxveria[™] Luxurious Living

Planes, Trains & Automobiles

PRIVATE JET TRAVEL:



By Anita Shavin



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BEYOND FIRST CLASS

You're sitting in the First Class lounge at Los Angeles International Airport, sipping premium cognac, watching one of several 42 inch plasma TV screens that decorate the private clubhouse for elite passengers. Complimentary snacks are plentiful and you have 24/7 access to the Internet, conference areas, newspapers and plush furnishings to relax in before your flight. On board, you're greeted by amiable flight attendants who escort you to your priority seat where you kick back in comfort as 200 some passengers settle in. You select a cocktail and one of several enticing meals offered from the menu. Once airborne, you're immersed in the extravagance of privileged travel - crisp white tablecloths, bona fide silverware and glassware, and award winning movies to choose from. It's

the ultimate in luxury travel and it doesn't get much better than this...right? Well, actually it does and it's called the luxury of choice.

It is true that in First Class you can drink top of the line champagne and enjoy a delicious meal; however, you can't cater your own feast or have your favorite bottle of red waiting for you. You can choose a flight schedule that best suits your needs but you can't tell the pilot when to depart or at which airport you want to land at. You can lay out the best plans, but you can't do anything when your flight is overbooked, delayed or cancelled. And as soon as you step off the plane, you line up at baggage claim and/or customs like everyone else.

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Now enter the world of private jet travel, beyond any imaginable first class experience. When you travel by private jet, you quickly learn the real meaning of choice, from the size of the aircraft to the location of both your departure and arrival to personalized catering. With a reported 500 private jet operators worldwide, up from only 100 five years ago, it is clear that private jetting is no longer just for rock stars, celebrities, and the super rich. Private jet travel is the fastest growing segment in the aviation industry and is attracting an unprecedented number of customers from high net worth business executives and corporations to leisure travelers choosing a better travel experience. According to the FAA, there is an expected 59% increase in private air travel by the year 2020. Such momentum has prompted the industry to re-

spond by lowering rates and offering more private jet travel options for the well-heeled traveler.

So what's driving the jet setting trend?

"Within the last 10 years, there's been significant growth as a result of the deterioration of service in the commercial airline industry and the unreliability of flights for business travelers," says Frank Milian, president and chief operating officer of Jet Source, a full service aviation company based at the McClellan-Palomar Airport in Carlsbad, CA. "It's very difficult to plan a business meeting and then have the airline oversell, delay or cancel your flight so you can't get there."

Opposite page: Getting work done is made easy inside a Schubach Aviation jet.

This page: Lush interiors are found in this Flexjet private jet.



Another obstacle associated with commercial air travel includes the post 9/11 security screening process, albeit necessary, that tacks on extra hours to any trip. Between the airlines' request for you to arrive early at the airport, lengthy security lines and flight delays at an all-time high, you could literally be spending three to four hours in an airport before you even take off.

Milian says many commercial business travelers are forced to leave a day early in order to participate in a meeting that's potentially only a few hours long. This impedes productivity and wastes time as top executives and sales people spend countless hours in airports.

Roy Irwin, general manager of Schubach Aviation explains, "From a business standpoint if you can get to your destination quickly, make your sales pitch and close a deal in one day, there's an economics factor there. We can take passengers from Carlsbad to Florida in 4 ½ hours."

Carric Teclitz, charter operations manager at Jimsair, a Charter and Management Company says, "It [private jet travel] also offers travelers the ability to make one, two, three, or four different stops in one day and still be home for dinner."

Instead of maneuvering your way through major commercial airports, you can literally drive up to your private aircraft and board your flight five to ten minutes prior to take off. Your car is parked for you in a safe, private lot. Changes and rescheduling can be made at the last minute. You can even alter your destination(s) while flying due to a change in plans or unexpected surprises. There's never a problem with baggage either. It's put on the plane when you arrive and handed to you as you depart. Luggage weight is determined at time of booking and depends on the size of the aircraft and how many people are flying.

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"One of the tremendous advantages of private jet travel is that there are more than 5,000 smaller airports in the United States for private jets to land at," says Nathalie Bloomfield, director of marketing for Bombardier's Flex-jet, one of the largest and more established fractional jet ownership providers in the U.S. "When you fly to Dallas on a private jet, you don't have to fly into DFW, you can fly to Love Field, which is right in the center of Dallas and be downtown in less than 10 minutes."

Another perk is there are no security lines. There are no embarrassing moments as you get called out of the line for a more detailed search just because you happen to be passenger number 137.