

BUMPY ROAD AHEAD FOR JET AIRWAYS IN LIFE AFTER ETIHAD

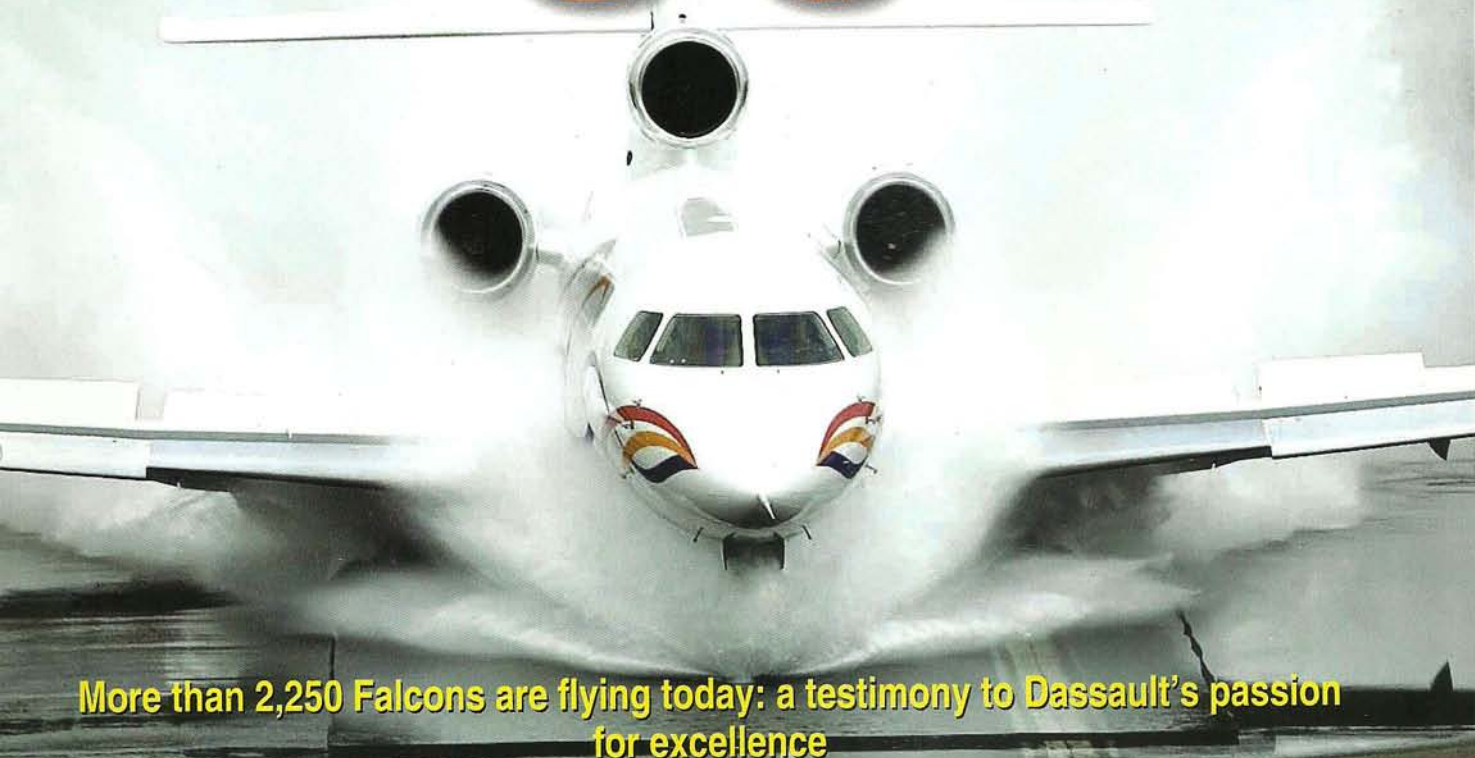
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FALCON FLIES AT

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More than 2,250 Falcons are flying today: a testimony to Dassault's passion for excellence

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Business of business aircraft readies for a comeback

Dassault@50: Continuity

by change

Preserving a heritage yet moving on and keeping in tune with the rapid technological innovations is in Dassault Aviation's DNA. **K Srinivasan** visited the aviation major's facilities in France and was struck by the dedication, commitment and loyalty of all those working there



HEADY OPERATIONS: (Top) John Rosanvallon President and CEO Dassault Falcon Jet (extreme left) talking to visitors at the Le Bourget facility, (Main photo) a Falcon 2000LX, and, (top right) an inside view of the assembly line

Last December, Eric Trappier was named as the new Chairman and CEO of Dassault Aviation, the French aviation giant that runs a unique military and civil programme side by side with great success. The group's international Executive Vice President 53-year-old Trappier succeeded Charles Edelstenne. He is the chosen one to take Dassault to the next level. For India,

it may be of some interest that Trappier played a key role in marketing the Mirage in the mid-eighties and Rafale fighters worldwide including to India.

But that's not the point. The underlying theme in the handing over the baton process at Dassault is continuity. Edelstenne had spent over 50 years at the company. Trappier arrived at Dassault as a young engineer more than a quar-

ter century-plus ago. He hasn't worked anywhere else and it's unlikely he ever will. As he told me during an interview in April, "I am not the only one in Dassault to have spent my whole working life here. There are many, many others. Most of us have spent our life in this environment, it's like family. Aircrafts is in our genes."

It's ditto for John Rosanvallon

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President and CEO Dassault Falcon Jet, who cut his teeth as a young management graduate selling Falcon Jets to the Americans and is now more American than French and operates from Teterboro (New Jersey). It's a singular recognition of how important has been America both for the Falcon's growth and its history. Ditto again for Olivier Villa, Senior Vice President, Civil Aircraft, Dassault

Aviation. When I asked him about life outside Dassault, he smiled and said: 'Unthinkable.' For him it was simply a way of life; they woke up and went not to work every day, but actually to have a good time.

Interestingly for Trappier, while the sale of the Rafale to India will mean the opening of several new and exciting markets across the BRIC (Brazil, Russia,

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India and China) nations, he cannot forget that it's the Falcon business that is at the heart of Dassault Aviation today. Almost 70 per cent of Dassault Aviation's turnover comes from its Falcon jets or its Business Jets division. It is unlikely to taper off anytime soon. If anything, the ratio is likely to continue for years to come; slowly but surely, the company has moved being viewed essentially as a military superstar to one that shines brightly in the business jet firmament.

This is only reaffirmed by the fact that almost half of its customers come from the rest of the world and that would mean addressing a wide variety of challenges from across the globe, particularly the needs of the BRICS nations.

One of the unique advantages that the company has is that its design office (a state-of-the-art workplace in St Cloud, Paris) creates for defence and the spin-off has huge implications in the civil value chain as has been seen in the evolution of the Falcon from the 900 to the 7X. Not just that, the Dassault factories like the ones in Mérignac and Martignas near each other in the city of Bordeaux produce both civil and military aircraft from the same shop floor.

Jérôme Camps, an engineer at Dassault Aviation's main design centre, is a master in presentation. And his presenta-

tion of the CATIA, 3-D proprietary software was exhilarating. This software is now the industry standard and has even found application widely outside the industry. The Boeing 777 was the first aircraft designed in the US using the CATIA software. US Automobile companies include giants like Ford routinely use the software to upgrade their models. You can literally project a 3-D model of any of the

Falcon jets and go to the aircraft's fuselage or skin to feel and look at what's inside and how to structure it. What it's done is seminal. It helps you trash paper drawings and real mock ups. The 7X, for example, was the first aircraft to be completely certified based on its 3-D design. It is not just that it helps engineers across plants to work real time. A consequence is that the final design went to the production tooling

AHEAD WITH TECHNOLOGY:
The Dassault Centre at the Le Bourget Airport, their biggest centre worldwide



COVER STORY



DOWN MEMORY LANE: Eric Trappier, Chairman and CEO, Dassault Aviation speaking at the 50th anniversary celebrations. On his right is the restored Mystère-Falcon 20 that made its first flight on May 4, 1963

The numbers

For the first quarter of 2013, Dassault's business jet deliveries dropped but the company expects shipments to improve throughout the year and remain on track to reach its best figures in the three years. The anticipation is that they will deliver 70 Falcons this year, up slightly from the 66 in 2012 and 63 in 2011. The backlog too, is building up and is now at over 107 aircraft in 2012.

Furthermore, the new orders were more than the cancellations and included 58 positives last year. At the core is the best-selling Falcon that accounts for 45 per cent of Falcon sales over the past two years. The 2000 has a market share of 40 per cent of the sales. With both the Falcon 2000S and Falcon 2000LXS receiving certification in March, it is likely to improve its sales performance.

Deliveries of the 2000S started immediately in April, while the LXS should begin in the second half of the year. The 900 LX does about 15 per cent of the overall sales and continues to be an important cog in the Falcon wheel.

General Aviation generated 70 per cent of Dassault's 3.9 billion euros or \$5.1 billion, in revenue last year.

stage straightaway with no need for trial fittings.

It's also helped the company continually work with its peers in Europe. The nEURon, an armed drone demonstrator, was built by an European consortium lead by Dassault using the same CATIA platform. It's also the same software that developed the Rafale.

"50 years of passion and innovation" in many ways represents the essence of what Dassault stands for. For the employees of Dassault, it's a way of life. For its design team and engineers, it is a continuing series of opportunities to ramp up to the next level and provide what they believe is the best general aviation aircraft in the world.

As it celebrates the 50th anniversary of its first business jet, the Mystère-Falcon 20 that made its first flight on May 4, 1963, it's time to look back and look ahead. The first jet was based on technologies designed for the Mystère IV fighter.

It bore more resemblance to an airliner than to an executive aircraft when the Mystère 20 started rolling off the assembly line in Bordeaux-Mérignac, France on April 1, 1963. The first flight on May 4, 1963 was witnessed by a Pan Am delegation headed by Charles Lindbergh. He had been

asked by Pan Am boss Juan Trippe to find the right aircraft to equip Pan Am's new executive aviation division. Lindbergh wired back: "I've found the bird!"

Since then, Dassault has produced 20 different Falcon business jets, culminating in the super-luxurious, high-tech Falcon 7X.

Today, more than 2,250 Falcons have been delivered to 82 countries around the world. Its fleet has surpassed 16.2 million hours of flight time — testimony to the reputation for quality and performance that the Falcon family has acquired within the aviation community.

There is no doubt that the man who started it all, Marcel Dassault had a stroke of genius in him. For someone who was deported by the Germans during World War II to the Buchenwald concentration camp, Marcel Dassault came back after the war to completely energise and restart his company, Avions Marcel Dassault, now the Groupe Industriel Dassault, and make it what it is today.

As Eric Trappier said: "Marcel Dassault has been a part of our DNA. We are born with the legend of Marcel Dassault. He died. But we are still with the legend of the Dassault family involved in this business. They trust in aeronautics and they trust and love their people." ■



Jérôme Camps
Engineer,
Dassault Aviation



Olivier Villa,
Senior VP,
Dassault Aviation

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1951: Marcel Dassault, Founder of Dassault Aviation



1965: Jacqueline Auriol, French Aviator in one of the Dassault jet



1971: Engineers of Dassault Aviation in Falcon 20 freighter

1963: Dassault Aviation unveils Mystere 20 jet



1970: Falcon 10 jet in the skies



1976: Falcon 50 jet zooming past the Statue of Liberty in New York



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YEARS OF PASSION
AND INNOVATION



1984: Dassault Falcon 900 on its way for the first take-off



1996: Dassault announced Falcon 50 EX to replace the Falcon 50



2013: With deliveries beginning in 2014, Falcon 2000LXS will replace 2000LX

Statue of

1993: Dassault Falcon 2000 was built in association with an Italian firm, Alenia

2005: Falcon 7X touted as one of the best Falcon jets ever

