



Nice Lounge

“One of our strongest values is that we operate at 51 airports across six European countries.”

EUROPE'S BIGGEST NETWORK

Jerome Ferasin, Chief Sales and Strategy Officer at AviaVIP, on the company's extensive European network

Q : Jerome, can you take us through AviaVIP's unique selling points?

JF: As the largest and most integrated FBO network in Europe, we offer a very strong, unique added value for clients. We serve three categories of clients - the VIP pax, the Crew, and the operator's ops and accounting - and we always take that into consideration. Our aim, always, is to make customer life easier and better, and we can do this because we are the only handler and FBO operator who can provide this degree of integration and simplification across 6 countries.

To talk about integration, we offer today one OCC (Operations Control Centre) in Italy and are deploying soon two more in



Spain and France. These OCCs are integrated into a single, central AviaVIP operation. It is one team, spread across three locations, with complete visibility across all three.

One of our strongest values is that we operate at 51 airports across six European countries. If you are the operator and you have a private jet that needs to go to four different locations, say Rome, Mallorca, Nice and Amsterdam, if you were not going through us, you would need four different agreements with four companies for these flights, plus all the ancillary concierge work in 4 locations. You'd need to talk to each FBO involved, manage 8 slot requests, look to the catering, Limousine and so on. It would take many phone calls/emails and consume a lot of time from your team to get that flight sorted out.

In the end, you would get four different invoices with different prices and on different forms. With AviaVIP, there is one single agreement for 51 FBOs across 6 countries and soon one request, whatever the locations of the flights. Our staff take care of everything. You get a single bill that you discuss with just one person. Everything is done for you.

From our side, AviaVIP OCC then engages with each FBO individually. It means that if your itinerary changes en route, because, say, you are delayed in Rome, our OCC handles all the changes that ripple on from that delay for you. We rearrange everything based on that one phone call.

We have a fully harmonised, contractual operation and invoicing system, with the same operating software across



all our operations (MyHandling). This creates a really good, simplified system for the client, as well as for our team. Our logic is simple: AviaVIP OCC does all the communication with customers, background concierge stuff and airport slot books. This means that instead of spending 50 percent of the time dealing with those requests, our staff at the FBO have 50 percent more time to focus on what really matters: take care of the VIP, the crew, the aircraft, be proactive, solve issues, and ensure the best services to our clients.

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Q: How did AviaVIP come to build up such a big presence that encompasses 51 airports?

JF: The history is like this. Aviapartner is the leading commercial handler in Europe. The company managed over 100 million pax in 2023, in more than 50 airports in Europe and South Africa. Back in 1995, Aviapartner developed Business aviation handling at Nice airport. A few years later, an FBO was setup, which is still one of AviaVIP's flagship FBOs. Then we started to expand in Europe. We set up FBOs in France, Belgium, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, and Germany. Then Argos Italy joined the family.

In 2023 we brought everything together under one brand, AviaVIP. Our FBOs are run in parallel with Aviapartner Commercial and have their own dedicated staff, GSE and corporate identity. Aviapartner Commercial and AviaVIP teams still work closely together, of course, for the benefit of our VIP clients.

This is essential because in Spain and Italy, for example, FBOs cannot handle Boeing and Airbus aircraft on their own due to regulations and the required investment mandated by those GSEs. So, they subcontract the handling to a commercial handler. Today, AviaVIP is the only handler and FBO that can do the full spectrum of business aviation jets, from a CJ2 to an ACJ, and we do this with our own licenses and our own people.

We have a highly trained ground handling staff, while our OCC staff are very experienced in handling concierge matters, interacting with the airport, customer interfacing and so on. AviaVIP OCC in Italy is fully operational. Our Spanish OCC will be operational this summer and France will go live towards the end of this year. The OCC will be 24x7 and directly connected to client operational software through MyHandling.

Q: Are you still making acquisitions?

JF: Indeed, we believe there are still great harmonisation opportunities in Europe and beyond, where the combination of AviaVIP added values and local FBOs expertise would

benefit to our clients. Our logic is to partner with successful independent FBOs to integrate them into the AviaVIP family and expand our network. We have some promising ongoing discussions and most of them are regarding FBOs where the founder is still managing the business. As we place a high value on their expertise, network and knowledge, we always offer them the opportunity to stay on board as the Managing Director and as an AviaVIP top executive.

FBO owners are keen on considering AviaVIP offers because the group as a whole has a single individual owner, who is very involved in the business. We can move very quickly when opportunities arise and that makes us very flexible and unique for a leading player in our business. We think long-term, our vision is always focused on the next 20 years and when we open somewhere, we are not there just for a few years. We come to stay.

Q: Can you tell us something about the recent investments you have made?

JF: In 2023 and on through this year we have been carrying out a massive refurbishment of our FBO lounges. Nice, Malaga and Palma will be ready for the summer season. By the end of 2024, we will do Amsterdam, Majorca, Ibiza, Marseille and Rome, and hope to open our FBOs in Madrid and Barcelona by Spring 2024.

We have designed a new AviaVIP lounge ambience based on feedback from experts involved in the design of numerous five-star hotels, including Palaces from SBM Monaco. It gives a common look and feel across all our FBOs. The result is a relaxed, peaceful and calm environment. All the furniture is high-end, from the same providers.

We have taken care to ensure that the Crew comfort areas are on a par with the VVIP areas, with, wherever possible, separate crew restrooms. The crew generally spend more time in the FBO than the passengers so we need to ensure that they enjoy the same level of comfort. **BAM**



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