

ADAM KATZ, LIFE AT THE TOP



FLYING HIGH ▶ Talon Air founder and CEO Adam Katz has a fleet of Hawker 4000s.

TALON AIR TAKES CUSTOMERS ON SMOOTH RIDES WITH A HAWKER 4000 FLEET

A DAM KATZ CAN reel off superlatives about the Hawker 4000 like a seasoned pitchman. One of his talking points—the business jet’s 21-minute ascent to a cruising altitude of 45,000 feet—could be completed before Katz runs out of kudos.

What’s good for Katz is also good for Hawker Beechcraft. Katz is the founder and CEO of Talon Air, Inc., a luxury private jet charter service based in Farmingdale, N.Y., that is home to the largest fleet of Hawker 4000s.

Katz, who started Talon Air with a fleet of late-model aircraft from Hawker Beechcraft predecessor Raytheon, took delivery of his first Hawker 4000 in September 2008. The 4000 fleet at Talon Air has since grown to five. Delivery of a sixth, RC42, is scheduled for April.

“It’s a 21st-century, cutting-edge piece of technology,” said Katz, whose business caters to Fortune 100 company executives, celebrities and high-profile athletes. “They struck it rich with the recipe of this thing. It’s very beautiful on the ramp, the cabin is very roomy, there’s plenty of headroom.

“You’ve also got a quiet cabin because of the composite fuselage and you’re always flying at 43,000 to 45,000 feet—far, far above any weather turbulence.”

While odds of a smooth ride are good in the Hawker 4000, Talon Air takes steps to ensure it. Its flight crews have ARG/US Platinum and Wyvern approval and IS-BAO certification, backing Katz’s promise to clients that Talon will do anything that is safe and legal.

“Our customers have experienced a 99 percent dispatch reliability,” said Jason Sanders, Talon Air senior vice president and one of the first two pilots to be certified under FAR Part 135 to fly the 4000. “That’s unbelievable for a new, clean-sheet aircraft. That says a lot for the engineering that went into it and the commitment that Hawker Beechcraft has made to stay on top of it.”

Talon Air has built a reputation for flexible service, both in the limited window of time needed to arrange trips and the luxury amenities it offers. The 4000 complements this wonderfully, offering a cabin suitable for dining, sleeping or relaxed travel. The super-midsize jet has also opened airports with short runways to Talon’s clients such as East Hampton, N.Y.; Hilton Head, S.C.; and Ocean Reef, Fla.

Katz also loves the plane’s 3,280-nautical mile range, which can accommodate 7½-hour trips. Talon Air frequently makes New York-to-London trips for business clients.

“In almost every airplane, something has been sacrificed,” Katz said. “There’s no compromise in this airplane. It’s very fast, comfortable and efficient.”

Katz, an Airline Transport Pilot and Certified Flight Instructor, flies the 4000s three to five times weekly. Sanders has logged approximately 400 hours as pilot in command of the 4000s, taking them on journeys to South America, Central America and Europe.

Flying the jet hasn’t become old hat to them, however, and it certainly isn’t that to anyone Katz encounters.

“They’re fascinated by it,” he said. “Each person discerns something different about it. Whether it’s the spacious cabin, the double club configuration or how incredible the acceleration is on the runway, everyone just has a different comment.”

Katz’s commitment to Hawker Beechcraft products is strong across the board. Twelve of Talon Air’s 20-aircraft fleet carry the Hawker and King Air name.

“Without their customer support and active support throughout the years, there’s no way we could have been as successful as we’ve been,” Katz said. “Nobody can go at it alone in aviation.... There’s a very unusual attitude (at Hawker Beechcraft) in that they’ll go the extra mile or the extra five miles for you. You never feel like you’re not going to be taken care of.”

All of which has Katz, who launched Talon Air in 2001, excited to add another Hawker 4000 to his fleet this spring.

“I never miss an opportunity to go pick one up at the factory,” he said. ■