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AIRPORT REVIEW

AIRCRAFT SATELLITE COMMUNICATION
AIRWAYS INDUSTRY

LANICA
AIRWAYS HISTORY

Airways®

MAY 2023

Dashing into the Sunset

By BRANDON FARRIS
Photography by JOE G. WALKER



SPECIAL
The Boeing 707s
of Homa

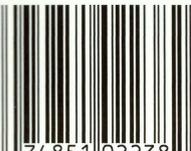
EXPERT COLUMN
Alliances
and Codeshares

AIRMAN'S CORNER
Fedex DC-10s

USA \$8.99 | CANADA \$8.99

\$8.99US \$8.99CAN

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1 PHOTO: CHRIS GOULET / PHX



2 PHOTO: MARIO CARUANA / MAVIO NEWS / MLA



3 PHOTO: YOBER ARTEAGA / CCS

1 ALASKA AIRLINES

BOEING 737-9
N8936AK MSN 43379 LN 8245

Alaska Airlines (AS) debuted its latest San Francisco Giants-themed livery. This is the third AS plane celebrating the baseball team. While the other two designs have been retired, this one will fly throughout the airline's network until 2025.

2 QUALITY AVIATION

CASA CN 235-300
N883QA MSN O-135

A Quality Aviation CASA CN235 aircraft lands in Malta (MLA) on February 28. There is very little information about Quality Aviation and what line of business in which it is involved.

3 RAVSA VENEZOLANA

MCDONNELL DOUGLAS MD-83
YV3499 MSN 49392 LN 1272

RAVSA Venezolana (VN) has updated its colors. The new livery features a blue wavy cheatline covering the tail and engines and continuing underneath the fuselage, which is also adorned with two wavy green lines on its sides.

Roberto Leiro
CONTRIBUTOR

Alliances and Codeshares *Why Airlines are Seeking More of Them*

Just a few years ago, air travel analysts were casting doubt on whether airline alliances were effective. Some were raising concerns about aggressive expansion practices, and others were wondering if the risks inherent in equity partnerships outweighed the benefits.

SINCE THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, all of that has changed. Today, airlines are feverishly establishing, renewing, and extending partnerships—and some of the couplings are surprising the industry. The first of these came into being in early January, when, after years of sour relations, Emirates Airline (EK) and United Airlines (UA) announced a partnership. Long gone are the days in which United, together with American Airlines and Delta Air Lines, argued that Emirates, Qatar Airways, and Etihad (all state-owned carriers) were competing unfairly because of the financial support they received through hefty government subsidies, accusations those carriers denied.

According to a regulatory filing submitted on January 5, Emirates and United plan to cover 299 flights under their new codeshare. These include 126 flights from Chicago (ORD), 105 from Houston (IAH), 41 from San Francisco (SFO), and 27 from Dubai (DXB) to India, the other countries in the Indian subcontinent, and Africa. The agreement is still pending regulatory approval.

Another recent unexpected alliance was born when Qatar Airways (QR) and Air Serbia (JU) launched a new, extensive codeshare. The move came as a surprise, as Etihad (EY)—a competitor of Qatar Airways—holds 16.4% of JU's shares.

In a recent interview, Jiri Marek, CEO of Air Serbia, highlighted the airline's role as a feeder to other airline hubs. "Any expansion or cooperation is driven by the step-by-step evolution of existing partnerships," Marek said, "such as the current significant expansion of the interline cooperation with American Airlines (AA)."

Air Serbia plans to launch a service to Chicago (ORD) from Belgrade (BEL), starting in May 2023.

This trend toward codeshares and interline agreements in the air travel industry appears to be driven by a series of factors stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic. First, as borders reopened and pandemic-related limitations were lifted,



PHOTO: J. DAVID BUERA / EMIRATES AIRLINE



PHOTO: MICHAEL RODEBACK - SLC

there was a sudden surge in demand for air travel. Second, airlines have fallen behind in hiring and training new employees to replace those who have retired prematurely or have left the industry in the wake of the pandemic. And don't forget the snags and slowdowns in the global manufacturing chain supply; new aircraft aren't being delivered, or are arriving more slowly than anticipated or than airlines would have liked.

These conditions have left airlines with little or no chance to expand. Codeshares and partnerships offer airlines an affordable and simple way to keep growing their networks amid the post-pandemic perfect storm of a spike in air travel demand combined with a scarcity of resources.

Another change in the so-called 'new normal' post-pandemic era sees airlines relying on their global alliance networks. The incorporation of Alaska Airlines (AS) in the oneworld global travel alliance in March 2021 broke the paradigm that only one airline from a determined country would be part of a global travel alliance.

Now, Alaska and American Airlines not only are both oneworld members, but they are also engaged in a major partnership on the US West Coast. Thanks to such alliances and partnerships, AS travelers can fly to destinations all over the world on one itinerary, which was previously not feasible, and Alaska can expand its route network without having to invest in long-range aircraft. American Airlines can now extend its reach deeper into the US Pacific Northwest, particularly on smaller routes, without having to deploy its equipment into those destinations.



PHOTO: MARTY BASARIA - BOS

On the opposite coast of the United States, American Airlines has its Northeast Alliance (NEA) with JetBlue Airways (B6). Both airlines are now operating from New York and Boston under a partnership that enables both to set their schedules accordingly. The Biden administration has challenged the alliance, which was approved by the US Department of Transportation under the Trump administration.

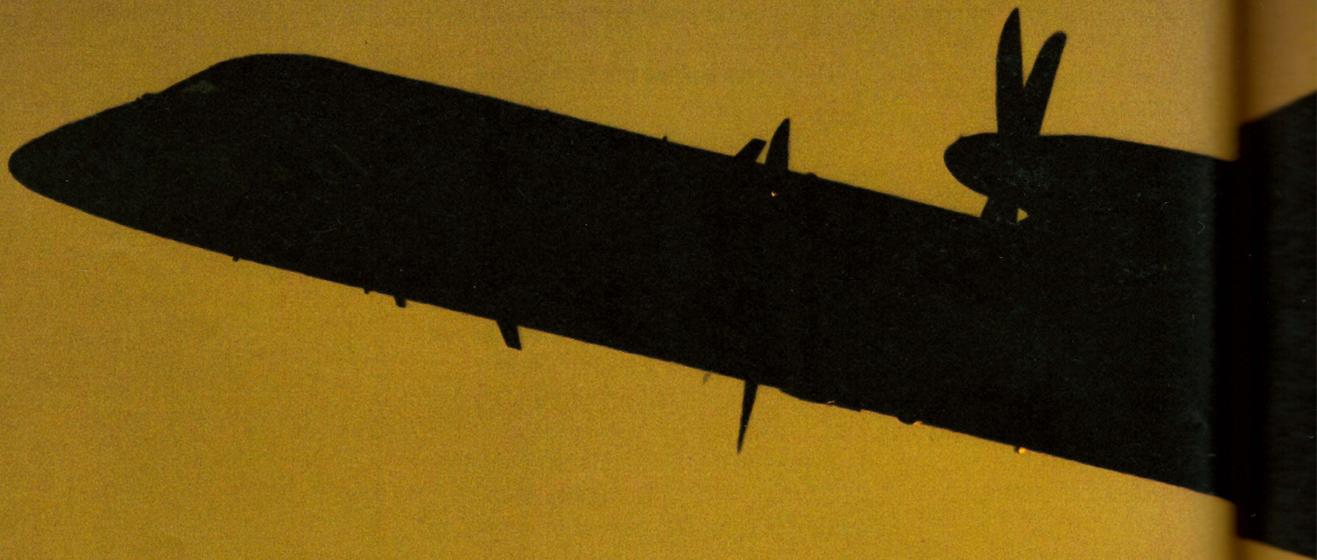
According to the United States Department of Justice, "This extensive combination ... will not only eliminate important competition in these cities but will also harm air travelers across the country by significantly diminishing JetBlue's incentive to compete with American elsewhere, further consolidating an already highly concentrated industry."

While a court decision has not yet been reached, there is a consensus in the industry that the ruling may have implications for JetBlue and its planned US\$3.8bn merger with Spirit Airlines (NK), which still needs regulatory approval. JetBlue and Spirit aim to close their merger by the first quarter of 2024, as it was approved by the latter's shareholders in October 2022.



PHOTO: JETBLUE AIRWAYS

In this post-pandemic era, in which the air travel industry is recovering at a faster pace than expected, codesharing and partnerships are a solution whereby airlines can engage in expansion while remaining competitive. However, the reach and scope of such alliances may also hurt travelers in those markets in which two large competitors join forces, creating conditions that can drive fares up and limit connectivity. ☹️



A DASHING FAREWELL

**HORIZON AIR, ONCE
THE WORLD'S LARGEST DASH 8 Q400 OPERATOR,
RETIRES ITS FORMER FAVORITE**

STORY *Brandon Farris*

PHOTOS *Brandon Farris, unless noted.*

JANUARY 26 IS AN IMPORTANT DATE in the history of Horizon Air (QX). Back in 2001, the regional airline based in SeaTac, Washington, became the North American launch customer of the Bombardier Dash 8 Q400. Twenty-two years later, on the very same date, QX bade farewell to the last of the type.

"That was a coincidence," Joe Sprague, President of Horizon Air, said to *Airways* about the repeating

January 26ths. "One of the avgeeks posted after they saw the date. And, while I would like to say we planned it this way, it was anything but."

At one point, Horizon Air was the world's largest operator of the Dash 8 Q400, with 52 in service on routes around the US Pacific Northwest., QX estimates that, during the 22-year history of the type, the Q400s have flown more than 250 million miles, carrying around 50 million fliers.



The send-off of the last Q400 ended an era for Horizon Air. The Alaska Airlines feeder, which has operated turboprops since its founding in 1981, is now jets-only.

GOING RETRO FOR A LAST TIME

The commemorative Flight AS2400 from Spokane (GEG) to Seattle (SEA) was operated by N421QX (MSN 4149), delivered new to Horizon Air in 2007. In

2019, the aircraft had received a special retro color scheme featuring the airline's original and distinctive orange and white colors. It was a fitting choice for the carrier to use this scheme on the final flights.

Flight AS2400 was bittersweet. Airline employees lined the ramps in Spokane and Seattle to catch a glimpse of it. Once a common sight, the venerable turboprop has now receded into the aviation history of the Pacific Northwest.

1 A Horizon Q400 departs on a sunny afternoon from SEA.

2 This picture from the mid 1980s show a Fairchild F-27, which was the first aircraft ever in the Horizon Air fleet. A De Havilland Canada Dash 8 100 and a Fairchild Metroliner are also seen. //

PHOTO: JOE G. WALKER · SEA

3 Horizon President Joe Sprague talks to an employee on the ramp at SEA before the last round trip.

4 25th Anniversary special N425QX landing at SEA.

5 University of Oregon Ducks special N407QX landing at SEA.

6 The displays in the cockpit of the Q400 N407QX.

7 The 2x2 seating on all Horizon Q400s. They would later upholster some aircraft with a blue colored leather interior.

8 One of the two Comfortably Greener Q400's N438QX and N439QX landing at SEA.

9 Washington State University Cougars special N401QX departing from PDX.

Onboard, the mood was one of mixed emotions. Still, there were many cheerful claps of joy to celebrate the type retiring as we landed in Seattle. Some aviation enthusiasts onboard had come from as far away as Miami just to be a part of the moment.

“Over the years, I witnessed so many extraordinary Pilots who truly have the ‘touch’ with this airplane,” said Horizon Air Captain Perry Solmanson, who has flown for Horizon Air since 1989, always on the turboprop side of the airline.

“Horizon has some amazing aviators here,” he said. “It’s a privilege to serve in an organization that attracts and retains such gifted Pilots, a legacy I know we’re continuing on the E175,” he said, referring to the Embraer type that is now Horizon’s mainstay.

Horizon’s ability to retain talent is no accident. To Milt Kuolt, one of the airline’s co-founders, success was built from employees. Happy employees meant a better experience for the airline’s

customers. And one thing that kept customers happy was Horizon’s unusual practice of offering one free beer and wine on all flights.

Onboard the last flight, all guests received surprise gifts: a certificate of their being on the final flight, and a commemorative safety-like card that featured historic notes about the Q400 along with an artist’s rendering of every scheme in which the Q400 ever flew with Horizon Air.

PROUDLY ALL-EMBRAER

The phase-out of the Q400 from Horizon Air’s fleet ushers in the dominance of the Embraer E175. QX, which currently operates 33 of the type, expects to total 41 by the third quarter of this year and 50 overall by 2026.

“We’re at a unique moment in time,” said Sprague. “With our shift to a single fleet of E175 jets, we’re laying a major new cornerstone of the foundation for our future.”

For passengers, the Embraer E175 is an upgrade. The aircraft has larger overhead bins than the Q400, which means that they can now take their carry-on bag onboard. And the E175s are equipped with Wi-Fi provided by Intelsat, a feature lacking in the old turboprops.

Intelsat and Horizon Air will debut a new gate-to-gate Wi-Fi service, scheduled to start in 2024 as part of a US\$25 million investment. The companies say that the new service will be the first commercial-airline application of an electronically steered antenna, mounted atop of the E175.





AIRWAYS FEATURE



10 From the jumpseat as Pilots would taxi planes from South Satellite at Seattle after clearing customs back to the main ramp for departure.



APU CONTROL
RWD START GEN 2L APU

ENGINE START
OFF NORM ABORT START SELECT

TEMP CONTROL
CABIN WARM
CARGO WARM
CARGO COOL

EXTERIOR LIGHTS
TAXI
STOP
CARGO

CONTROL SHUTOFFS
RUD 2 RUD 2

STICK PUSHER SHUT OFF

ELEVATOR TRIM SHUT OFF

ANTI SKID TEST
ON OFF

N4310X

NTOP 90s BLEED
3

NTOP 90s BLEED
70.5

660

492

51

LEFT NOSE BENT

LANDING TEAR UP

LOCK RELEASE

DPWS LANDING FLAP

HYDRAULIC CONTROL

ELECTRICAL

BATT	APU GEN	AC GEN 1
TRU 1116 .03	A 1116 .03	B 1116 .03
TRU 1118 .03	C 1118 .05	
DC BUS	AC GEN 2	
TRU 1118 .05	A 1118 .25	B 1118 .25
TRU 1115 .25	C 1115 .25	

FLAP

HYD PRESS	HYD QTY
TRU 1 1 2 3	TRU 1 2 3

1600 NPA

1400 NPA



11



12



13



The Embraer E175 also extends the standardization of classes of service throughout Horizon Air and its owner, Alaska Airlines (AS). From now on, QX will be able to offer the same classes of seat as in the AS mainline Boeing 737 fleet.

HORIZON RISES

Horizon Air was the creation of founders Milt Kuolt, Joe Clark, and Bruce McCaw, who made plans in May of 1981 to begin flights within Hawaii—but later decided it would be more useful to start flights around Washington State. On September

1, 1981, Horizon Air launched its first flight with a Fairchild F-27 between SeaTac and Yakima Airport. The airline initially started with three of the type.

In June 1982, just a year after launching, Horizon acquired Air Oregon, as both airlines were struggling to be profitable. In September of 1983, Horizon purchased Utah's Transwestern Airlines to once again reduce the debt being picked up from operations.

In July of 1984, Horizon bought its first Fokker F-28 Fellowship from an African airline, and



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JOINING THE ALASKA AIR GROUP

Alaska Airlines struck a deal to acquire Horizon Air in November of 1986, just a year after Alaska had implemented some corporate restructuring and launched the Alaska Air Group (AAG). In December, following approval from the US Department of Transportation, the AAG became the parent company and owner of Horizon Air. Upon joining the AAG, Horizon began code-sharing with its new partner AS and ended its codeshare agreement with United.

Horizon Air continued to operate under its own branding until it entered a Capacity Purchase Agreement (CPA) with Alaska starting on January 1, 2011. Horizon continued to operate and maintain its fleet while Alaska Airlines set the scheduling, marketing, and pricing of flights. The pact meant retirement for the Horizon Air brand. From then on, AS's icon Chester smiled from the tail of the Q400.

Shortly after announcing these plans for Horizon Air, the AAG entered into a CPA agreement with SkyWest Airlines: Horizon sold its remaining five Bombardier CRJ700s to SkyWest, which put them

initially put it on the Seattle to Pasco Tri-Cities route. In 1985, Horizon launched an initial public offering after only one year of being profitable since its 1981 launch. That summer, United Airlines began code-sharing with the Seattle based airline. On September 8 that same year, Horizon Air put in an order for the airline's first-ever brand-new aircraft, the de Havilland Canada Dash 8-100 twin turboprop.

For Horizon, international service began when the carrier launched flights north of the border to Calgary, Alberta.

11 University of Montana Grizzlies special N402QX sitting on the ramp in SEA.

12 Oregon State University Beavers special N440QX departs from PDX.

13 Boise State University Broncos special landing at SEA.

14 One of the Q400s sold from Horizon to Conoco-Phillips seen here landing in ANC.

15 The infamous icicles colors that took over the Horizon branding in 2010 landing at SEA.

 DELTA



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on six West Coast routes. By selling off these aircraft, Horizon Air became an all-Bombardier Q400 operator.

In March of 2014, Alaska Airlines decided to base three Horizon Air Q400 aircraft in Anchorage and have the regional airline operate some intra-Alaska flights. Service began on March 3, 2014, when Horizon Air Flight 2821, operated by aircraft N443QX, took off from Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport at 06:25 local time on its inaugural flight to Kodiak, where it landed one hour and 15 minutes later.



Horizon extended its Alaskan service to Fairbanks and Deadhorse, but this foray in Alaska ended in March of 2018, and its Q400s were all moved back to the lower 48.

A WILD ARRAY OF COLORS

At its peak, Horizon Air operated as many as 52 Bombardier Q400s. One of its very first special liveries was the one often referred to as Skittles or Party Plane. Having being purchased used from Chang An Airlines in 2006 along with N424QX, N425QX was dedicated

to the airline's 25th anniversary, but would only ever be painted in standard colors.

After that, the airline used four Pacific-12 college schemes, promoting the University of Oregon (N407QX), Oregon State (N440QX), Washington (N435QX), and Washington State (N401QX). Later, it added Boise State (N437QX), University of Idaho (N400QX), Montana State (N403QX), University of Montana (N402QX), University of Alaska Anchorage (N441QX), University of Alaska Fairbanks (N443QX), and, finally, San Diego State University

(N414QX) when Horizon began Q400 service to San Diego.

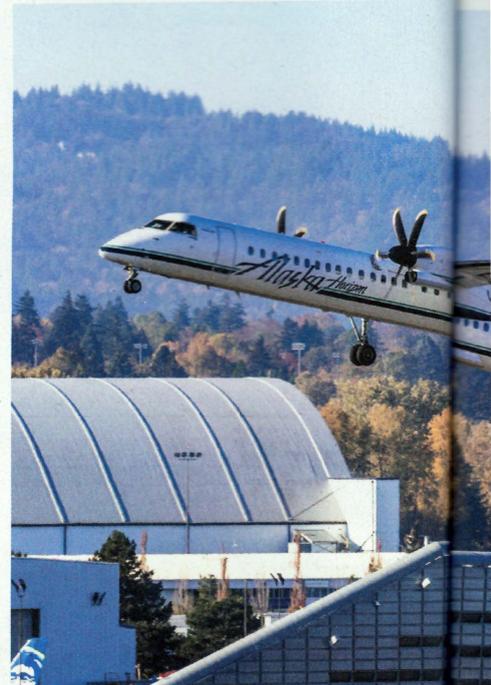
Bombardier partnered with Horizon for two special green-themed aircraft known as Shrek (N438QX) and Fiona (N439QX) and featuring the words 'Comfortably Greener'. When N452QX arrived from Bombardier, it featured a special 'Employee Powered' scheme that was similar to that on Alaska Airlines' N568AS (a 737-800). Both planes featured the signatures of all the employees who took part in a training program called Flight Path.

16 An aircraft arriving from either YJY or YLW coming into the South Satellite for customs on a nice SEA afternoon.

17 The special Employee Powered Q400 N452QX landing in SEA featured all employees' signatures.



University of Alaska Anchorage Seawolves special N443QX on the ramp in Kodiak completing the first intra-Alaska flight for Horizon.



One of the ex-Horizon CRJ's flying for Skywest landing in SEA.



University of Washington Huskies special N435QX departing PDX.



A CRJ in Horizon colors getting ready to taxi out at SEA.



San Diego State Aztecs special N414QX landing in SEA.



N429QX on her final flight from PDX to HIO to be donated to the Portland Community College.



University of Alaska Fairbanks Nanooks special N441QX landing in SEA.



The last Horizon full paint plane, N424QX lands at SEA.



Montana State University Bobcats special N403QX getting ready to depart SEA.



University of Idaho Vandals special N400QX parking at the gate in SEA.



28

28 A Horizon Q400 sits on the ramp in SEA between flights.

29 The final colors the Q400 wore with the latest Alaska scheme departing from PDX.

30 An EJ2 that's replacing Horizon's Q400s lands at SEA.

31 Horizon Retro special N421QX taxis out on its final morning of Q400 operations for the carrier.

32 The new Horizon retro jet N652MK on the ramp at SEA.



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The last special on a Q400 before its retirement was a retro paint job that featured Horizon's original 'meatball' colors. This was applied to N421QX, the plane used on the airline's final flights.

That retro scheme lives on. It now sits on N652MK (17000929). The 'MK' in the registration is a nod to Milt Kuolt. Originally, another Q400 had this honor (N434MK · MSN 4227); it featured the signature of the founder of Horizon Air on the nose area.

BEYOND HORIZON

With the fleet now officially being retired, Horizon President Sprague told *Airways* that the remaining Q400s will be sold to new customers

who will be "getting some beautifully maintained airplanes thanks to the skills and expertise of Horizon maintenance technicians and engineers over the past two decades."

Several of the Q400s have found new homes back in the state of Alaska, when ConocoPhillips Aviation bought three to operate flights from Anchorage to Deadhorse oil fields. These were N428QX, N431QX, and N433QX, which were re-registered with the Federal Aviation Administration as N792CP, N794CP, and N796CP.

The other aircraft to already have a home was N429QX, which was donated to Portland Community College and will be stored in Hillsborough, Oregon, where it will be used to train future aviation technicians. This plane was also the last in the AAG fleet to wear the famed 'icicles' livery, which was retired in 2016.

A NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

As someone who spent five and a half years working on the ramp with the Q400, it is a rather bittersweet moment. From the ramp operation's perspective, the aircraft was one of the best you can ever work on, given that a person could fully stand up in the baggage compartment. However, when the aircraft was in a mood, you did not want to be anywhere around it. ©