

Hemmeter dominates in Hawaiian ground service

Upscale hospitality and service attract trans-Pacific clientele.

By Grant McLaren



HEMMETER Aviation, the metamorphosis of the Hemmeter corporate flight operation into an FBO, has developed a specialized market niche catering to flight crews flying the larger categories of turbine aircraft. The market is small but is the elite of corporate aviation. Of the possibly 1000 corporate jets capable of flying the 2200 nm between Honolulu and the mainland against 90%-probable headwinds, Hemmeter Aviation serves about 400.

A busy day at Hemmeter Aviation will amount to six or seven corporate aircraft movements while an average month will rack up about 60 arrivals. "We have time to handle every single customer with an almost intensive level of service," says Executive Vice President Robert Fishman. "Our goal is to expand on what corporate flight departments expect and on what the Hemmeter flight department has experienced around the world."

Before Hemmeter Aviation opened in 1985 corporate flightcrews had only the option of planeside handling at HNL, a gas-and-go, direct-transfer-to-hotel proposition. Suddenly, the crews were confronted with multi-member greeting crews, fresh flower leis and an FBO lounge which is something of



Warm Hawaiian welcome for passengers and crew of a Gulfstream 3 (top) arriving at Hemmeter Aviation HNL (Honolulu). Keeping a genial eye on the operation is Hemmeter Aviation Executive VP Bob Fishman (above).

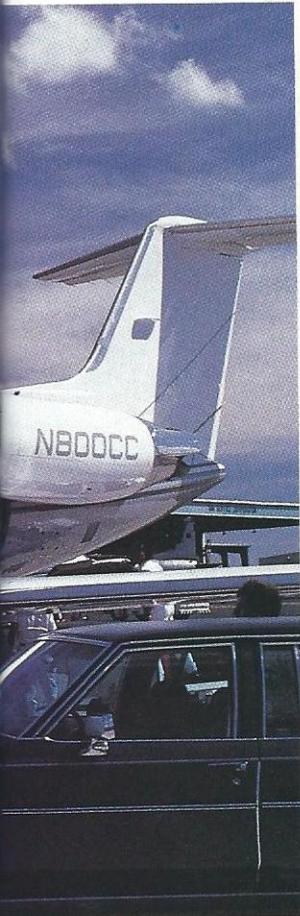
an encapsulated Hemmeter resort. Behind a landscaped courtyard twin bronze Thai lions guard the entrance to an elegant grey marble and chrome interior with huge sprays of tropical flowers and antique oriental art. Crews have access to private offices, a flight-planning room and a lounge area stocked with macadamia nuts and as-

sorted tropical fruit juices.

Almost immediately, Hemmeter Aviation captured a share of the transient corporate market at HNL. It took Fishman another two years, however, to conquer the 95% of that market he now enjoys. Fishman attributes this success to a high level of professional service and attention to detail on the line.

Roughly 85% of the FBO's business is from US-registered aircraft although an increasing number of heavy jets are now coming in from Australia and New Zealand. Half of the traffic, predominantly from among the top 100 of the Fortune 500, are enroute across the Pacific. While most of the aircraft are larger category Falcons, Gulfstreams, Challengers and Boeings, the occasional smaller jet does come through. Learjet 30-series equipment, Westwind 2s, Sabreliners, Citation 3s and BAe 125s make up about two percent of the total traffic.

Hemmeter Aviation is open for business 06:00 to 20:00 for office hours but is on call 24 hours. "One of the nice things about being in the middle of the Pacific is that there are few surprise arrivals and we usually have at least a few hours notice," says Julie Nurré, director of marketing. The FBO



Passenger and crew reception areas at Hemmeter HNL (right) are topflight, like the attention provided by Guest Service Coordinator Suzanne Sinclair (below, left) and Guest Services Manager Ann Vasconcellos (below, right) under the guidance of Julie Nurré, director of marketing. Aircraft from Pacific rim nations, like the Boeing 737-400 from Korea below, far right, are frequent callers at Hemmeter Aviation.



Grant McLaren



Grant McLaren



Tom Gillen

keeps a file on all its regular customers and can look after their particular needs and wants immediately. Full catering can be arranged from excellent outside sources and the FBO will do aircraft laundry and look after the clients' fine crystal and china place settings in-house. Two seven-place Turbo Commanders with white leather interiors are available for client charter to the outer islands.

Apart from its regular corporate flight handling the FBO services some non-scheduled users who prefer the privacy and comfort of this side of the field. Recent clients have included Boeing 737-400 and 757 delivery flights to operators in Korea and China. Each year about half a dozen Concorde charters come through for 25,000-gallon fills and to disgorge passengers.

Hemmeter Aviation operates fuel trucks and smaller FBOs also on the islands of Kauai, Maui and Hawaii. A limited number of corporate jet operations are handled in addition to the fueling of dozens of locally based helicopters and some airline movements.

Jump-off for transpacific flights

Clients continuing beyond Hawaii generally leave the world of US stan-

dard FBO services behind them. Travelling to Japan or southeast Asia will often require one or more fuel stops. Amway Corporation Captain Paul Jernberg frequently flies to southeast Asia by way of Hawaii and finds FBO services in the far Pacific of wavering reliability. "At Majuro there is only a coral reef strip and fuel facilities, but when no one shows up and they forget to turn the lights on it's a problem," says Jernberg. Wake Island and Midway Island, traditional fuel stops enroute to Japan or the Philippines, have primitive FBO facilities. At Nandi, Fiji, crews often wait hours for service. In other places a handler, if he shows up, may decline to empty the lav or assist in arranging catering. Amway flight attendant Dan Erla finds FBO handling at many airports outside the US less than perfect and will usually carry the aircraft's dishes and cutlery to the hotel in a taxi to wash them. "We appreciate a US-standard FBO like Hemmeter Aviation even more on the return trip back from overseas," says Jernberg, who operates a B727-100, BAC1-11s and Bae 800s.

Fishman would like to clone his Honolulu FBO at various gateway locations to North America, perhaps in Europe, Asia and the Caribbean. He

feels that operators of large turbine aircraft will respond well to overseas bases with US FBO standards and a recognizable American identity. "US aviation departments are highly sophisticated. The rest of the world looks to us for a standard of FBO handling and service," says Fishman.

From mid-Pacific to mid-Atlantic

This gateway principle — capturing primarily the US-based large corporate aircraft — is being test-marketed at Hemmeter Aviation's new FBO in Gander, Newfoundland. "Gander fits the profile well," says Hemmeter Aviation VP Tom Anusewicz. "We are providing the same service to the same market. Often they are the same customers."

Corporate traffic movements at Gander are twice that of Honolulu and average six to 10 movements a day with a broader range of equipment sizes. Although transiting flight crews do not linger in Gander as long as they might in Hawaii, they are taking advantage of the FBO's new 2000-sq ft, designer-decorated lounge. If the test site proves the concept Hemmeter Aviation may soon become a world player in the aviation ground services field. ✈