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JetBird moves closer to air taxi launch

By Kate Sarsfield

Air taxi start-up JetBird has taken a step closer to the commercial launch of its pan-European operation in September with the unveiling of its online flight booking system.

JetBird has firm orders for 59 Embraer Phenom 100 very light jets and has an option on a further 41 Phenom 100s and/or Phenom 300 light jets.

The start-up says the booking system - which is now in its testing phase - is unique to the European private jet industry. "While most scheduled commercial airlines currently offer an internet-based, real-time booking service, no existing European private jet operators, whose services are by their nature unscheduled, provide such a service. Instead, only web-based quoting services are provided, while booking must be completed on the phone or via an intermediary."



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The Ireland-based operator adds: "Customers can currently obtain a quote, and upon commercial launch will be able to make a booking and payment on JetBird's website within minutes. Similar to existing services provided by scheduled commercial airlines, the booking engine allows instant bookings.

"This removes the need for intermediaries, further reducing the cost for the customer. The system also provides complete price transparency for customers by detailing all charges which may arise, including taxes, airport charges and landing fees."

The reservation system has been developed in conjunction with Coastal Aviation Software's real-time booking and pricing platform and is intended "to provide customers with the first internet-based end-to-end quote and booking confirmation service in the European private jet industry", JetBird says. The booking system is designed to scale up as the operator expands - it aims to add more than 100 aircraft over the next five years.

Four Phenom 100s are scheduled to join the fleet before services begin in September - focusing initially on the Rhine-Ruhr region of Germany, one of Europe's largest metropolitan areas. Six more aircraft will be added to the fleet before the end of the year, says JetBird.