



THE SKY'S NO LIMIT



For travellers with a taste for luxury and a need for speed, private aviation offers everything from unmatched efficiency to once-in-a-lifetime experiences

TEXT Cayleigh Bright **PHOTOGRAPHS** Courtesy of Red Carnation Hotels, Shutterstock, supplied

An upgrade to first class may be a treat, but until you've taken your first trip in a private plane it's safe to say you haven't yet reached the height of luxury travel. When it comes to business travel, chartered flights serve a practical purpose, allowing businesspeople the ability to visit multiple sites in a short period. When the moment arrives to be in the right place to seal a deal, flight delays are

not an option – time is, as the saying goes, money. On a symbolic level, private planes also have an important purpose: For the entrepreneur with ambition, a leisure trip in a private plane signals to accompanying clients that they've arrived.

The private aviation jet company ExecuJet's core customer is an affluent traveller who is not necessarily super-wealthy – yet – but whose earnings and disposable income are on the up, says ExecuJet country manager Philip du Preez. With three of ExecuJet's 33 worldwide operating facilities in Cape Town, Johannesburg and Lagos, the company is well positioned to connect Africa's established and rapidly growing business hubs. In Kenya, remote areas are more connected to the capital than ever thanks to the increasingly efficient infrastructure of small plane travel.

For Africa's affluent elite – those most likely to make use of what private aviation has to offer – a long-term vision for the continent is as important

as, and closely tied to, their own business interests. Couple this with a typically millennial sensibility of social consciousness and environmental responsibility, and it's easy to understand why it's important to young high fliers that their travel choices are as kind to nature as possible. It's been part of Philip's mission to ensure that ExecuJet's operation is carbon neutral.

For many, chartered aviation provides the means to enjoy bucket-list experiences that might otherwise have been unattainable. One standout example is a day trip from Cape Town to Antarctica, allowing you to board a plane, experience all of the breathtaking beauty of the coolest continent, then return to a warm bed in Cape Town on the same day.

Unsurprisingly, much of the leisure travel that takes place on private planes in South Africa is to safari lodges and remote resorts. Although many of the destinations are accessible by road, too, a flight allows for a quicker, more comfortable journey that shows off the landscape from a unique perspective. On arrival, guests are well rested and ready to experience delights such as whale watching, hiking and mountain biking in De Hoop Nature Reserve; botanical tours on the tip of Africa at Grootbos; and spectacular private outdoor dining at Bushmans Kloof. A little further afield, island-hopping is made effortless for visitors to Mozambique.

Want to get a taste of the high-flying life? Philip says for many people, "empty legs" are the first journey that customers make with ExecuJet. These trips are available when a plane hired by a customer is not required for

a round trip, or the traveller only requires a few seats on a chartered plane and is happy to share – as long as those joining the trip are aware they're on his or her schedule. These trips end up costing only marginally more than a flight on a commercial liner, so they're the ideal way to start your journey into the world of private aviation. Who knows? You may become one of the many travellers who graduate to a small plane you've chartered yourself, then larger aircraft as your needs, budget and taste for adventure grow.

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CLOCKWISE FROM OPPOSITE ExecuJet travellers on one-day return trips to Antarctica land and take off at this airstrip. | Guests at Bushmans Kloof – one of the luxe destinations accessible via private charter – are treated to memorable outdoor dining experiences. | A charter flight will take you to idyllic destinations on the Mozambican coast. | Philip du Preez, GM of the ExecuJet Aviation Group. | In-flight dining and drinks make a private flight the ideal environment to unwind – or seal a deal. | Fly in to De Hoop Nature Reserve and you'll discover that De Hoop Vlei is a prime spot for bird-watching; and the De Hoop Collection Opstal Houses are the ideal base from which to explore the reserve, watch whales or take a guided eco boat trip.