



MARK VAN MANEN/VANCOUVER SUN

London Air Services president Wynne Powell stands in front of the company's new Challenger 604 jet. The \$40-million aircraft gives the company four jets that offer customers luxury charter service to anywhere in North America.

# Private charters soaring

**AVIATION** | London Air cashes in on higher demand for executive flights

**BY WYNG CHOW**  
VANCOUVER SUN

Less than four years after taking off on its inaugural flight, London Air Services is already operating in the black, allowing the Vancouver-based charter airline to accelerate its business plan by several years, company president Wynne Powell said Tuesday.

The private company, a subsidiary of the H.Y. Louie Group, took delivery of its fourth plane — a new luxury \$40-million Bombardier Challenger 604 jet — which it showed off at Vancouver

International Airport.

"The purchase of the aircraft signifies the continued growth and success of London Air Services, even at a time when the air travel industry is experiencing hardships," said Powell, who is also president of the London Drugs retail chain.

"The Challenger enables us to offer a unique long-haul service, with efficient operating costs."

The airline's fleet currently includes two Learjet 45 aircraft, also made by Bombardier, costing \$15 million each, along with another Challenger 604.

To keep up with rising demand for executive-style charter flights, LAS has ordered two more Learjets, scheduled for delivery in 2004 and 2005.

Established in 1999, the airline operates a private 24-hour, seven-day-a-week travel service to cities across North America, as well as to Europe and Asia.

Powell said his dedicated customer base is largely composed of entrepreneurs in the forestry, oil, gas and movie industries. Celebrity clients have included former U.S. president Bill Clinton and

actor Al Pacino.

Capable of speeds up to 870 km/h, the Challenger, seating up to 12 passengers, has a range of 7,551 km, while the Learjet, seating nine, can hit 859 km/h and fly for 3,924 km.

Both aircraft can reach most U.S. or Canadian destinations in less than five hours.

A return charter flight from Vancouver to Calgary aboard a Learjet would cost about \$5,400, while Toronto or New York would cost about \$24,000. The same trip aboard the Challenger would cost twice as much.

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