

TAM beats Varig to Europe and US routes expansion

MARIO FONSECA/RIO DE JANEIRO
PAUL LEWIS/WASHINGTON DC

TAM HAS EMERGED as the clear winner in the heated contest with Varig to be awarded more European and North American routes, following the allocation of new international services by Brazil's International Air Navigation Studies Committee (CERNAD). TAM is also finalising deals to boost its Airbus fleet to cater for the expansion.

Forty three of the 63 international route allocations, some of which originally belonged to financially struggling local rival VASP, have been awarded to São Paulo-based TAM by the CERNAD, with the remainder going to Varig. As outlined by the CERNAD, TAM's new international routes cover seven weekly flights to Madrid and an equal number to Frankfurt – along

with an additional weekly flight to Paris.

According to TAM, the services to Frankfurt and Madrid will be codeshared with Lufthansa and Iberia, respectively. On the North American route system, TAM will double the number of services it can perform to Miami, from the current 14 to 28 weekly flights. Seven of these will cover the Brasília-Manaus-Miami route from May 2001, TAM stating that it intends to attract US tourists to the Amazon region with these flights.

TAM has also scooped-up all the existing routes to Buenos Aires and Montevideo that had been formerly flown by VASP, with TAM to operate five weekly flights to the former and 14 to the latter from March.

Although Varig was not awarded all the flights it requested, the allotment of all six available Canadian

routes came as an unexpected surprise. The carrier was also given a weekly frequency increase on some of its existing routes, with a further two flights to Germany, three to Spain and one each to France and Italy – aside from seven to the United States.

The airline recently received its fifth Airbus A330-200, and is seeking between three and five additional aircraft for its new services. Two A330s are expected to be taken in March on lease from an Asian airline (possibly Korean Air). According to sources, TAM is in discussions with several leasing companies including GATX Flightlease, CIT Aerospace and GE Capital Aviation Services for additional A330s. GATX Flightlease is providing TAM with six ex-South African Airways A320s to add to the airline's existing fleet of six A319s, and four A320s of 38 that it has on order. □

Galaxy signs a deal with Pacific Airlines to fly Vietnamese routes

Galaxy Airways recently signed a contract with Pacific Airlines of Vietnam to operate a Boeing 737-400 on its behalf on daily flights between Saigon and Hanoi, and Taipei, Taiwan. The Greek private airline is expanding its charter business, and is negotiating deals to operate services for other international carriers. It recently concluded a deal to fly for Greek tour operator Golden Sun Holidays. □



Sabena restructures its long haul Airbus fleet

SABENA HAS abandoned plans to acquire four additional Airbus A340-300s that it has on order for delivery in 2001 and 2002.

The Belgian flag carrier has taken the decision as part of its "Operation Blue Sky" cost analysis

programme, which was initiated in a bid to boost Sabena's poor financial health. The SAirGroup-owned airline's four aircraft order will be taken over by one of the other Qualiflyer Group airlines.

Earlier this year, Sabena put its two A340-200s up for sale as it

reduced capacity on long haul routes. The aircraft are still in storage awaiting disposal. Following the termination of its Johannesburg and New York Newark services in April, Sabena will dispose of its other two A340s or possibly two of its 10 A330s. □

MARKETPLACE

++ Johannesburg-based **Intensive Air** has acquired its third 75-seat Fokker F28 Mk4000 from **Scandinavian Airlines** in a deal arranged by **Aircraft Leasing and Management (ALM)**. Meanwhile ALM is remarketing a 23 year old, ex-United Airlines (msn 21353) Boeing 747-200. The Pratt & Whitney JT8D-powered aircraft is due to be returned off lease by United in April. ++ **Air Seychelles** has concluded a lease deal with **International Lease Finance (ILFC)** for a single Boeing 737-300. ++ **Pegasus Aviation** has leased a Boeing 727-200Adv to Miami-based **Falcon Air Express**. ++ Thai regional start-up **Air Andaman**, which is due to start operations on 4 December with a British Aero-space J31, has bought a second aircraft from **Osprey Aviation** of Southampton, UK. The first aircraft, bought from Sweden's Flying Enterprise, will be used on domestic services to tourist destinations in Thailand from the holiday island of Phuket. ++ **Asiana** will acquire a third Pratt & Whitney PW4090-powered Boeing 777-200ER on ten year lease from ILFC in April 2002. ++ Canada's **Skyservice Airlines** has completed a lease deal with **Singapore Aircraft Leasing Enterprise (SALE)** for one International Aero Engines V2500-A5 Airbus A320 for delivery in March. The A320 will be operated by the airline's new low cost arm **RootsAir** which will serve Calgary, Edmonton, Halifax, Montreal, Ottawa, Vancouver and Winnipeg. ++ **TAP Air Portugal** is acquiring an Airbus A310-300 on lease from ILFC. ++ The Indonesian airworthiness authority DGAC-Indonesia has validated the Dutch type certificate of the Fokker 50, clearing the way for operations by Jakarta-based charter airline **Indonesia Air Transport**, which has two Fokker 50s. ++ **Volare** will receive a CFM International CFM56-powered Airbus A321 on lease from SALE next November. ++ **Air France** is adding an additional Airbus A321-200 to its existing fleet on lease from ILFC.