

FBO International supplement

ExecuJet | Landmark Aviation
London City Jet Centre | YU Lounge

Brazil: World Cup 2014

Lider Aviação | Colt International
Universal Weather and Aviation

PROFILE:

Mark Lakin

Travel photographer and philanthropist



Rizon Jet's Chief Executive:
Allan McGreal
Changing the game for FBOs

first thought



Samba, anyone?

Big events such as the Superbowl, a presidential inauguration or, yes, the Football World Cup - the most watched sporting event on the planet - are a huge test of the operational skills of the service side of business aviation. Flight planners, dispatchers, ramp services, charter operators and most of all, the FBOs closest to the venues themselves, are all put under severe pressure to perform.

On Thursday 12 June, the Opening Ceremony of the 2014 Football World Cup will take place in Sao Paulo's Itaquera Stadium, to be followed at 9.00 pm that evening by the first of the matches, featuring the host nation, Brazil, against Croatia. The final takes place on Sunday 13 July and between these two dates, private jets and commercial charters will be flying to and fro between 12 host cities and stadiums across the fifth largest country in the world, with an area of over 8.5 million square miles, with a notably under-developed road and rail infrastructure. Add in security restrictions, flight bans on match days and grid-locked traffic and it all looks, well, somewhat testing as well as frenzied!

In this issue we introduce a major new section to EVA, FBO Spotlight, and we couldn't have chosen a moment more likely to put FBOs under sharp scrutiny. This issue features interviews with Execujet, who handled 95% of the traffic for the South African Football World Cup in 2010; with Lider Aviação in Brazil and with flight planning specialists Colt International and Universal Weather and Aviation. We also profile Landmark Aviation, London City and YU Lounge's FBOs in Mauritius and St. Kitts.

We're delighted to announce that we have now mapped out the agenda for EVA's Future of Business Aviation Conference 2015, to be held once again at the Heathrow Hilton, Terminal 5, on Thursday and Friday, 19-20 February 2015. We'll have more on this in our NBAA edition, but it is safe to say the 2015 event is going to be a tremendous occasion, both a mind-stretch for speakers and delegates, and a celebration of business aviation - one of the most innovative of all industry sectors with an unmatched record of being an early adopter of new technologies! The 2015 "Futures" event will feature panel discussions as well as presentations from leading figures across the industry.

The global economy continues to present the industry with a mixed picture, with encouraging growth in the US being offset by political adventurism in Europe. As Andy Hoy, senior Vice President, aircraft sales, for EMEA for Jetcraft, the world's biggest broker of pre-owned jets, notes in our *Macro Economic Window* feature, Russians are now selling more business jets than they are buying, while the Chinese, worryingly, are selling about as many jets as they are buying. Neither situation helps to promote growth in private jet usage.

Despite these, hopefully, passing clouds, EBACE, as usual, will be a great incentive to all to drive business onwards and upwards. Business jets continue to be one of the most powerful tools for corporate deal-making and project execution, going where the scheduled commercial services can't or won't. As global growth picks up, the whole sector gets galvanised. I expect the mood at EBACE this year to be strongly positive!

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The *FBO International Special Report* is a new feature for EVA and we plan to make it a regular part of each issue. This inaugural report kicks off with a preview of the challenges associated with getting private jets into Brazil for the 2014 Football World Cup. We have interviews with Brazil's leading FBO and charter company, Lider (p.34) and with flight planning specialists Colt (p.36) and Universal Weather (p.37) ExecuJet's Mark Abbott talks about the company's experience handling the 2010 South African Football World Cup (p.40). This issue also profiles Landmark Aviation (p.42); YU Lounge (p.46) and London City (p.47).

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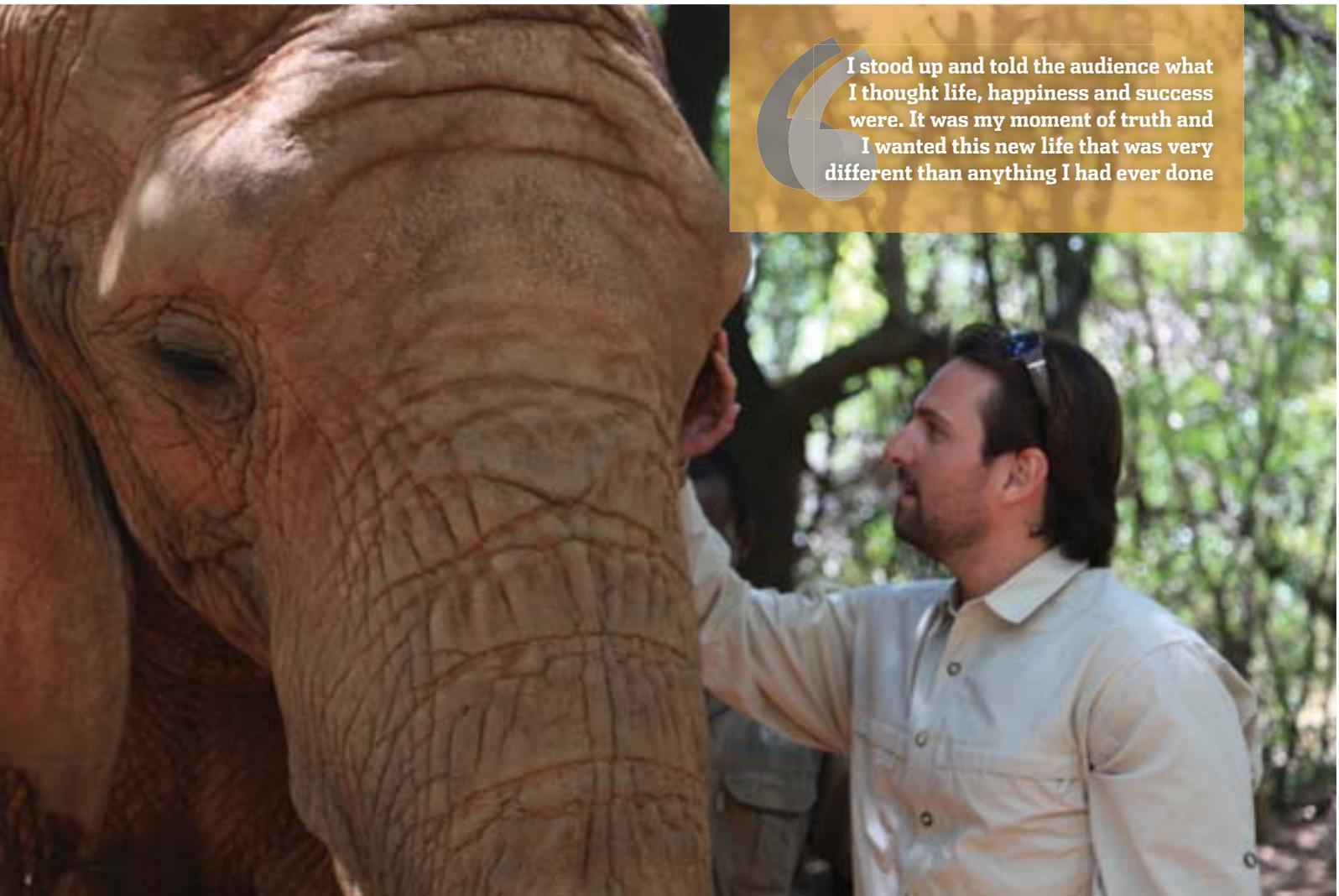
Margie Goldsmith sits down with Mark Lakin, co-founder of luxury travel operator Epic Road

Travel photographer and philanthropist, Mark Lakin, is the co-founder of Epic Road, a luxury travel operator that designs bespoke “transformative travel” experiences such as private plane whale-watching safaris in Namibia and microchipping rhinos with conservationists in Tanzania, combining the journeys with humanitarian and conservation initiatives.

Lakin began his career in 2002, practicing corporate law at a midsize, white-glove Park Avenue law firm. The position was prestigious and lucrative but Lakin’s heart wasn’t in it. Ultimately, travel became the young lawyer’s passion, though for him that didn’t mean relaxing or going to the beach. Even with only a long weekend of free time, he would choose the furthest place he could imagine such as Iceland, leaving for the airport directly from work and heading right back to the office on his return.

To document his experiences, he became a shutterbug; it wasn’t long before he went from being a hobbyist to learning the craft. “It wasn’t about traveling to shoot, it was just about traveling, but always having my camera around my neck to capture the candid moments,” he comments.

In 2006, Lakin had a pop-up gallery photography show in New York City’s Greenwich Village, a show that proved to be enormously successful. It also turned out to be a pivotal moment



I stood up and told the audience what I thought life, happiness and success were. It was my moment of truth and I wanted this new life that was very different than anything I had ever done

for Lakin as he realized that through his photographs, he could freely share his travel experiences and newly found perspective with others, a revelation that would later lead him to working in the field of travel.

By 2013, still practicing law, he realized that he'd achieved the financial success he'd hoped for, but had not found the passion and fulfillment he craved. He took a couple of months to collect his thoughts and began discussing various travel concepts with his business partner-to-be, Mark Chafian.

In early 2011, Lakin had met Christine Garde, founder of CouldYou?, a non-profit organization looking for a photographer to document an upcoming immersion experience to Africa focused on helping influential Americans find where their skill-sets intersected with the needs of human-

ity. The charity sought a cameraman who'd be comfortable interacting with the privileged and the poor and that could facilitate dialogue and effect change. The job offered Lakin everything he was passionate about: Africa, humanitarian work, and photography.

On that trip, Lakin and his business partner created Epic Road, a travel design company creating once in a lifetime transformative experiences for travelers. Lakin is also a highly respected travel photographer with his own gallery in the West Village, NYC, and has photographed everything from a bow and arrow hunt with the Hadzabe tribe of Tanzania to gorilla tracking up the volcanoes of Rwanda. He is an active Board member of Goods for Good that has helped educate more than 70,000 orphans in Africa., Plus he is on the Board of the Bodhi Tree Founda-

tion, which enables travelers to support people in need, protect cultural heritage and conserve the planet's biodiversity.; One Bodhi Tree project Lakin helps is the S.A.F.E campaign, a fundraising vehicle targeting conservation and anti-poaching efforts for elephants.

Q: He continues to lead immersion experiences in Africa for CouldYou?

A: We caught up with him at the Epic Road office in New York City:

Q: While working for the law firm, you began to travel at every opportunity. How did that influence your career path?

A: It gave me perspective that you can only get from traveling. Connecting to people from all different walks of life made me realize that there

were so many paths to happiness and I was walking down someone else's path. It was time to find my own path.

Q: What is happiness to you?

A: I was raised to believe happiness is all about the money, the house, the car, the family. I had everything I'd been told happiness was but I still wasn't happy. What I learned through travel was that people from other parts of the world considered happiness a full belly, a beautiful sunset, a hug from a friend, good health, security, freedom, democracy, community, helping others, and leaving your mark. I decided that happiness and fulfilment in my career would be about significance rather than success.

Q: What was that first trip like with CouldYou?

A: It was one of the most incredible experiences of my life. We brought food to villages that had never been visited by westerners, we

cooked the food together with local villagers in their pots using their recipes, sat on bamboo mats under the stars, ate together, sang, danced, and just lived together for a night. At the end of the evening, each person was taken back to a host family's hut, often made of cow dung, clay and straw; we slept on the floor with the families. I saw the pride with which people lived, their dignity, and how indomitable the human spirit could be when pushed to the limit. It made me realize that with all the opportunities I had at home, I had the ability to do anything I set my mind to. It also made me realize that my life's work would be a social venture where I would not just do well but do good.

Q: And how did that change your life?

A: When I came back, I hosted an event where I exhibited my photos from the trip. I stood up and told the audience what I thought life, happiness and success were. It was my moment

of truth and I wanted this new life that was very different than anything I had ever done. I was thirty-three years old.

Q: And then what did you decide to do?

A: Marc Chafian, a friend I'd known since I was 18 and I had been kicking around various travel concepts and we decided that we would create a travel concept using traditional luxury and adventure travel as a vehicle to raise awareness by peppering in inspiring and transformative experiences around humanitarian and conservation initiatives.

Q: What did Marc bring to the table?

A: Marc was the ideal partner for me: bright, successful, energetic, well-traveled and passionate about conservation. He'd previously worked in private equity. He understood business, entrepreneurship, finance and accounting, and was very tech savvy. Whenever we travelled, we were

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always working on what that extra bit looked like. For me it was always humanitarian: I want to visit an orphanage, I want to go and play soccer with kids at school, I want to visit a clinic – I've always been driven by my connection to people and their struggle. Marc was seeking out the conservation angle: he always wanted to go like shark tagging, adopt an orphaned elephant or learn about climate change and observe glacial retreat on site with scientists.

Q: And that's when you created Epic Road?

A: Like most new ventures, we went through several iterations of exactly what it would look like and the outcome of those decisions brought us to the Epic Road you see today.

Q: What was the most important advice your parents gave you?

A: They stressed education; they said I'd always have my education, that no one could take it away, and I could apply it to whatever I did. They have celebrated my successes and helped me think through my failures. The most important thing is they believed in me.

Q: You were recently appointed to the Bodhi tree board. What is that?

A: The Bodhi tree is a non-profit organization that was established by travellers for travellers

to enable the travel industry and individuals to fund grassroots initiatives that protect cultural heritage, conserve our planet's biodiversity and support people in need.

Q: You're also on the board of Goods for Good. What is that?

A: Goods for Good is a non-profit organization that seeds small businesses in Southern Africa that provide employment; the proceeds are used to facilitate orphan education in the local communities. Since its inception seven years ago, we have facilitated the education of 70,000 orphans.

Q: What would be an example of a Goods for Good trip by Epic Road?

A: Epic Road planned a trip that I led where we took five donors to Malawi to visit some of the communities and their new businesses. Goods for Goods seeds small businesses, for instance, a chicken farm or chicken roasting business or an agricultural project, we will train the community on how to run it, financial, accounting and so on, and that community will own the business. The proceeds of the businesses are used to facilitate orphan education in the local communities. We visited several businesses and met hundreds of orphans at school, on their way to a



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TEXTRON AVIATION



better life. We then took a charter plane to a beautiful resort, Kaya Mawa on Likoma Island in Lake Malawi to debrief, interpret what we'd seen and determine how we would individually take action.

Q: Do you fly privately?

A: Yes, most often for access to remote destinations. The trips that get me the most excited and those that Epic Road is known for are in the most remote places that often can only be accessed by private plane. Most of those runways are dirt and stone, so we're using single and double engine prop planes.

Q: And for longer distances?

A: For safaris combined with beach holidays in the Seychelles or the Maldives, we'll use anything from a Gulfstream 550 to smaller jets such as Embraers, Learjets, Cessna Citations and Bombardier Challengers. We also have access to other jet aircraft such as Bombardier's Global Express and CRJ.

Q: And you also do private trips by private jet?

A: Yes, we recently took two families with lots of young kids by private jet. They didn't want to deal with all the logistics of commercial flying and they wanted private time to be together. The thing about flying private is you get

I want to visit an orphanage, I want to go and play soccer with kids at school, I want to visit a clinic -- I've always been driven by my connection to people and their struggle

to control your journey, so you might fly over a migration or over a volcano or over a herd of elephants, and you can circle around and go back and see it all over again.

Q: How does flying privately help your business besides access?

A: It allows us to cater to a broader range of markets. We have many people who visit destinations because they want to photograph them and shoot video. By flying private, you have the ability to get those amazing aerial shots. Some of the planes we use have windows that allow you to fix the lens into the window so you can get unobstructed beautiful art shots.

Namibia is an incredible place to do by flying safari: you see migrating whales, seal colonies, ship wrecks rusting on the beach; and with a private plane you can fly low, circle back, join the

whale for the migration – those are experiences you never forget.

Private charter in and around Africa can be very helpful and useful. Many of our routes are not serviced by commercial air or alternatively incoming flights don't connect with outgoing flights. For this reason private air travel can cut down on unnecessary stopovers or lengthily overlays; and many locations are only accessed by private air.

Q: Which charter operator do you use?

A: It depends on the destination and the number of people which determines the size aircraft we will charter. We like Execujet. Which has an excellent fleet and the best private lounges and facilities around Southern Africa. We like Bateleur Air/Federal Air for smaller private charters like King Air 200s – they have great service. And we are almost certain to use Federal Air, mostly a Beechcraft 1900, for guests going to Kruger Park as they operate the only 'scheduled charter' service with daily departures to some of the top safari lodges in the greater Kruger area. Sometimes we switch to smaller aircraft on arrival in the Kruger area to hop over to a certain lodge. Our charter company of choice in Botswana is Mack Air; they operate the best kept and best insured fleet of small aircraft flying circuits all around Botswana.

na from 206's to Airvans to Caravans; you can buy a seat on charter and the day before travel they'll arrange times for pick-ups and drop offs at each location to make this feasible.

Q: Which FBO you frequently fly from?

A: In South Africa: Lanseria, or Tambo, Cape Town, Skukuza or KMIA; in Botswana: Maun and Kasane; in Namibia: Windhoek; in Mozambique: Vilancoulos, Pemba; in Zimbabwe: Victoria Falls; and in Zambia: Livingstone

Q: If you were to buy a jet which one would it be and why?

A: Without doubt a G5 or G6. The comfort, quality and range of these aircraft are amazing. For African travel which often can't handle a jet, so best is a prop plane which allows for maximum comfort and flexibility and can land on dirt and grass - the Pilatus PC 12 or perhaps a King Air 200. These two aircraft al-

low us access to most of our airstrips. It's only when encountering a very short and rough airstrip as in the Okavango Delta that perhaps a Cessna Caravan may be the better option.

Q: What are you most passionate about?

A: I love connecting people to things that are impactful in their lives, to be the bridge between people and the mark they want to leave in the world. Epic Road allows people to take a luxury holiday while connecting them to experiences that will love and inspire them.

As for my photography, even if a person can't afford to buy a piece, they can come in, look at it, and learn about that person or place for free. My images are designed to tell stories about people and places from the corners of the earth.

Q: What do you hope to accomplish in the future?

A: I want Epic Road to be a force in the world connecting potential donors to causes in environments that are inspiring, memorable and positive. I want Epic Road to be known as the company that created five-star vacations with a soul. I want the philanthropic experiences we create to lead with positivity and inspiration rather than guilt. We want our travelers to feel empowered to take action and to give some of that incredible intellectual and financial capital to causes that move them.

Q: What do you want your legacy to be?

A: I would like to be known as somebody that listened to needs of the world and matched those needs with the people that are capable of addressing them; to know that my clients moved into action and found the same fulfillment and happiness in their actions as I do; and to have left the world a better place. ●

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