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## Citadel Completions: We Build Your Dream Plane

Michael Goldstein | Contributor

*Michael Goldstein is a journalist and playwright based in Los Angeles.*

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*A Citadel Completions team celebrates the completion of interior and exterior work on a Boeing 737 before client delivery. Lake Charles, Louisiana.*

### CITADEL COMPLETIONS

Most people think of private jets as business aircraft from the likes of Bombardier, Cessna or Gulfstream.

But there is a booming category of much larger business jets based on airliners. Boeing Business Jets, BBJ, offers 737s on up to the [BBJ777X](#), the longest-range business jet in the world. Airbus Corporate Jets, ACJ, offers business, private or corporate versions of the A220, A318/A319neo, A330 and A350 airliners.

Business, government and private versions of airliners are typically not finished, or “completed,” by the aircraft manufacturer. Customers instead rely on completion companies like [Citadel Completions](#) of Lake Charles, Louisiana. Designers, suppliers and completion center collaborate with clients to create a plane’s custom interior.

For example, a narrowbody Airbus A319 airliner can seat between 110 and 160. The private version, the [A319 CJ](#), typically holds just 19 passengers but can be configured for up to 48. The cabin is often divided into VIP quarters, with office, bathroom with stand-up shower and bed and a high-density passenger seating area for take-off and landing.

Depending on the plane and the customer’s requirements, completion can cost anywhere from \$5 million to \$140 million or more.

A handful of big widebodies, like the ACJ350 or Boeing’s 777, are sold into the business market off the assembly line. Companies like Citadel will start designing the interiors for customers long before the plane actually rolls off.

Customers also buy airliners in the used market for conversion. They then bring them to Citadel for the design and installation of a new interior and upgrades. Citadel has refurbished planes as large as Boeing 747s. The 260,000-square-foot facility has a 10,700 ft runway to accommodate large aircraft, with multiple hangars for simultaneous projects.

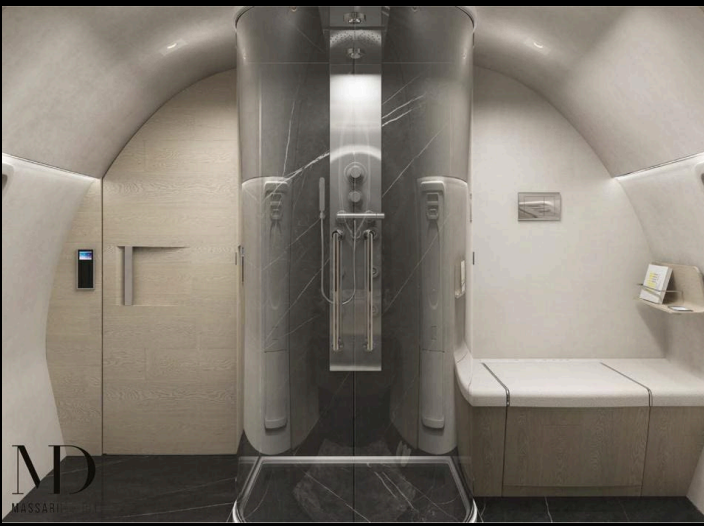


*A lounge in an airliner aircraft to be completely refurbished, designed by Design Q and with installation of a new interior to be done by Citadel Completions of Lake Charles, LA.*

### DESIGN Q

Citadel can support aircraft registered worldwide, as it holds Part 145 Repair Station certifications from the FAA. While the company is best known for its interior “completions,” its skilled labor force of 220 can provide heavy maintenance, repair, and overhaul services. Such scheduled maintenance checks also help drive additional revenue and sales.

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*A full-size shower and bathroom in a Boeing airliner concept created by Massari Design for a VIP client of Citadel Completions of Lake Charles, LA. MASSARI DESIGN*

Gas fireplaces and hot tubs are definitely in the no-fly zone. Safety is also key for TTOL—Taxi Take Off and Landing. Boyle says, “For instance, not every seat can be occupied around the conference table then.”

Boyle: We don’t use the word no. It’s always—that’s a great idea. We’ll get back to you, or let’s see what we can do!

You can use our own designer or yours. You validate whether that design can be done throughout that aircraft, considering weight, speed, cargo, fuel, and center of gravity. It sounds less complicated than it is. It can take 12-18 months to go from idea to finished design for a project. It’s a long process, sometimes eight months. Larger aircraft can be 24 months. Four or five project managers can be on the client’s team, ensuring every detail is correct.

You go room by room, put in the carpet, the ceiling. Each step is authentic down to the stitching, the piping, the embossing of seats, only ten stitches per inch; the possibilities are endless. We’ve put in 24-karat gold finishes, silk carpets, and upholstery.

We team up with leading interior designers such as Design Q or Massari Design of Fano Italy, known for their design excellence in private homes, aircraft, hotels, casinos, and other world-renowned designers. We strive to involve the client before the project starts, sometimes up to a year before.

Boyle adds that Citadel isn’t just doing the interior or the paint. “We can install the satellite communications or even help with the military side on certain aircraft, such as threat detection or missile defense systems.”

## Once you’ve designed and put in a new interior, how do you continue to profit from a completed aircraft?

RMU—refurbishment, maintenance and upgrades. Maintenance has to be done on either an hourly or calendar basis. We can do upgrades—cameras, connectivity, upgrading wiring, appliances, door latches, inflight entertainment, cabin management, lighting. And ultimately, perhaps refurbishment, removing the interior and putting a new one in.



*A full-sized kitchen design by Design Q, all new interior to be completely refurbished and installed for a VIP Client by Citadel Completions of Lake Charles, LA.*

**DESIGN Q**

## How long does a completion take?

That’s the biggest question customers have; when can I get my airplane and travel? We have done an Airbus A320 or Boeing 737 in 8 months. We want to reduce cycle time—clients have paid significantly. As long as the design, engineering, and fabrication are completed, the turnaround time after aircraft induction is quick, pre-planning is the key.

**So who are your customers?**

Our clients are high-profile, discreet, and very private. We have served Presidents, Heads of State, rulers of foreign countries, private owners, family businesses, domestic and corporate agencies, half a dozen professional athletic teams.

**Can you give us some names?**

Personally, I never share the name of a client.



**Neil J. Boyle, SVP of Operations and  
General Manager for Citadel  
Completions of Lake Charles, LA**

**CITADEL COMPLETIONS**



[www.citadelcompletions.com](http://www.citadelcompletions.com)