PETS ON JETS: CARING FOR YOURSELF AND YOUR FURRY FRIEND

News / Business aviation

According to Euromonitor, the global spending on domestic animals will overstep the $100bn barrier for the first time in history this year, rising to $103.8bn from $98.3bn in 2014. People are so devoted to their pets that right now there are around 1 million dogs named as the primary beneficiaries in their owners' wills in the US alone. And while animal lovers opt to keep their furry friends close wherever they go, travelling with a pet on a commercial flight is still a very dangerous and sometimes even deadly practice.

During 2014, in the US alone a staggering number of 45 pets were injured, lost or killed on commercial flights, according to the Department of Transportation. Due to certain airline regulations which require every pet to remain in a cage and, most of the time, in the cargo hold, travelling animals are exposed to high levels of stress and some serious environmental challenges. The ever-changing temperatures, loud noises and air pressure drops all affect the well-being of a pet during the flight. Nonetheless, there are certain things you can do to improve the air travelling experience for your best four-legged friend.

According to Vitalij Kapitonov, the CEO at KlasJet, “travelling with pets is always stressful. However, lesser regulations as well as tailor-made services allow private jet operators to turn their pets’ nightmares into dreams. Of course, a pet owner still has to be in possession of a valid pet passport, proof of vaccination and other documents depending on the countries of departure and arrival, but travelling itself is way more comfortable and less traumatic. While each operator sets

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its own rules, almost all private carriers allow dogs, cats or parrots to sit next to their owners, without any need for a cage."

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The executive goes on explaining that there are even certain companies which go out on a limb for pet owners, whose furry or feathery friends travel more exclusively than most of the first class passengers. One of such providers is Sit'n'Stay, a flight attendant company which focuses on privately travelling pets. "Companion for a dog or cat manifests in different forms – from bringing pets oxygen masks and life vests aboard to performing an in-flight puppy massage and grooming procedures or cooking a meal that is prepared with specific pet palates in mind. Some providers go as far as showing special video clips designed to make your pet 'smile', whatever that means," shares the CEO of KlasJet.

Moreover, such pampering which costs around $500 a flight is sometimes a must rather than an option, as it turns out that huge numbers of animals fly without their owners. According to Bloomberg, some private jet companies claim that from 10% to almost 50% of their flights are conducted with non-human passengers or without pet owners at all. According to the executive, these non-humans will not necessarily be dogs, or other commonly kept domestic animals.

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"I have heard a story that one flier from Dubai is accompanied by his own goat whenever possible, just because he is occasionally thirsty for some goat milk. Another popular story involves a divorced couple in the US that spends about $50,000 per trip for a private jet every month for their dog to get from New York to LA. And these are every-day examples. As flying with pets commercially is so stressful and dangerous, customers do prefer private jets to first-class seats. This not only gives pet owners the comfort that they seek, but also translates into a way more pleasant and peaceful flight for their pets," concludes Vitalij Kapitonov, the CEO of KlasJet.

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