



STUDIO E/MOTIONS
 ART, FRANCIS MUNCH
 FLEXIBILITY
 AND
 PRAGMATISM

Francis Munch, founder of Mulhouse-based Studio E/motions works in the rarefied atmosphere of high-end aircraft interior architecture for heads of state, members of Royal families and VVIP customers. The French designer has signed numerous projects of cabin interiors of exclusive private airplanes, none of which have ever been publicly seen before. With the recent delivery of AMAC Aerospace's first Airbus A320 completion for a Middle Eastern Head of State, Altitudes proudly presents an exclusive report on the designer's concepts for narrow and wide body VVIP aircraft. **BY Sylvie Péron**

lived a thrilling experience with the completion of this aircraft!" declares Francis Munch. "Everyone took on this challenge with a large smile on their face, determined to complete it in time and within budget. It was hard work, but the results exceed all of my expectations! I have not seen such quality of workmanship in a decade!" Like everyone else in the industry, we had been well aware of Francis Munch's solid reputation. As eager to profile him as we were, the very nature of his projects for VVIP customers induced a level of privacy that did not allow for publication. So it came as a pleasant surprise when Altaïr Aero Projects, in charge of the entire A320 purchase and outfitting project released the announcement of AMAC's first completion delivery, late December 2009.

Cyprus-based project manager

"By and large, Altaïr Aero Projects' business consists in providing turnkey solutions aiming at ensuring that an aircraft undergoing a transition, like for instance, a VVIP conversion, is kept under control throughout the whole process," explains Christian Castang, the Cyprus-based company's Executive Director. "In this particular instance, the client was a Middle Eastern head-of-state who tasked Altaïr Aero Projects to manage the whole project from defining the right aircraft, assisting with the purchase of the brand new airliner, proceeding to the selection of the designer and of the completion centre as well as overseeing the supervision of the outfitting all the way through to final delivery. AMAC Aerospace, of Basel,

Switzerland was eventually selected out of four contenders, at a time when they were merely... a business plan".

Taking on the challenge

"We were the first to dare take a large project to a completion center that did not even have a hangar at the time! However, in my opinion the risk was limited since we thoroughly evaluated their business plan and their capabilities during our selection process and they ranked first by far. So we were convinced of their expertise and capacity to deliver the job". Not one to mince his words, Munch adds: "My conviction is that people who have everything to prove will achieve a better result than those who are settled in their position. Several Key individuals of AMAC's staff used to work at Jet Aviation, in the days when I was part of the team. We're all part of the same family!"

Founded in Basel, Switzerland in 2007, AMAC was built on sound aviation knowledge and expertise. The founding members cumulate years of experience in the industry. The Chair-

man of the Board, Kadri Muhiddin, counts over 33 years in the business of aircraft/engine heavy maintenance, overhaul and modification. He seats on the Board of other aviation ventures, and shares his knowledge, industry insights and network of relationships with the new company.

Heinz Köhli, CEO, is a well-respected figure in business aviation. His success as the Chief Executive Officer of a leading international aviation group has brought him industry-wide respect. Over the last 30 years, he has developed a network of solid relationships with customers, manufacturers and suppliers worldwide.

Bernd Schramm COO, brings strong operational and procedural expertise in MRO and VIP Completions, due to his 13 years of experience as General Manager, Senior Vice President and Vice President of Completions in earlier business aviation endeavors.

Mauro Grossi, CFO, is an expert in optimization and organizational restructuring and operational and financial project management. He previously held the position of Chief Financial

Wide body aircraft 3D study for Master suite and Main Majlis.
 As a rule, Munch prefers not to delegate. "I do not let anyone else draw the design for me. I am a firm believer of the saying that one is never better served than by oneself!"





I HAVE A TECHNICAL AND PRODUCT DESIGN FORMATION BUT AT THE END OF THE DAY, I AM AN AUTODIDACT.



Altair Aero Projects fully and successfully managed the A320 V-VIP for their client, a Middle East head-of-state, and as such, was Amac Aerospace's launch customer. Top: A320 - 3D Virtual Mockup and lamp Concept Study. Opposite page: AMAC's completed A320 - Private Suite

Officer in other companies for twelve years. His key client relationships establish secure and dependable financial footing for AMAC Aerospace throughout Europe. AMAC's shareholders, whose combined experience is impressive, collaborate with an exceptionally motivated management team and staff to fulfill the demands of their customers, airworthiness authorities and OEM's. The completion center endeavors to become the world's leading providers of private, VIP and corporate aviation services.

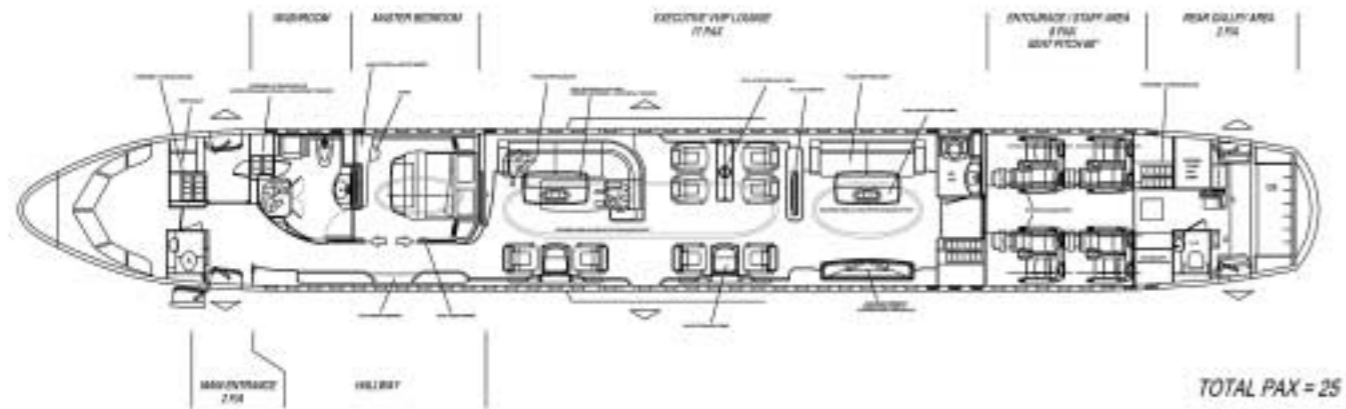
Hands on experience

Born in Alsace, a region of France bordering Germany, where the values of hard work and commitment to a job well done seem to be holding firm, Francis Munch' skills are numerous and extremely versatile. He first joined Jet Aviation Basel in 1987 as a mechanical engineer. His main focus was structural installations and repairs, systems engineering such as oxygen, water and air conditioning, galleys and furniture constructions. "He has a tremendous and amazing professional expe-





Opposite page: A320 family - VVIP Lounge Virtual 3D concept. Master Lavatory and VVIP Social Lounge. Below: custom Lighting concept.

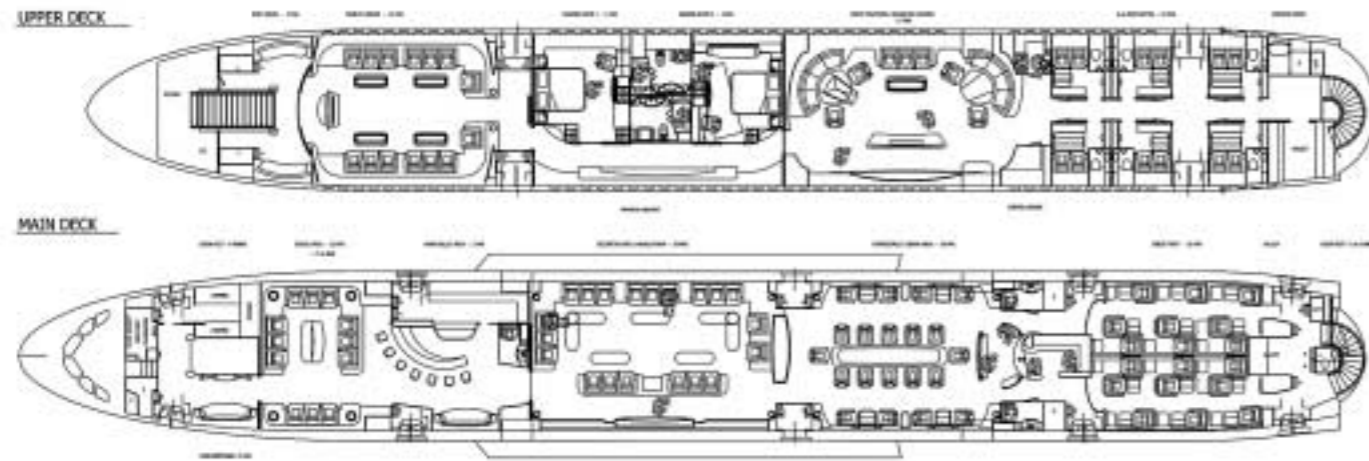


“I AM ETERNALLY THANKFUL TO THE FORMER JET AVIATION’S MANAGERS WHO, WAY BACK THEN, DID NOT HESITATE TO THROW US IN THE ARENA.”

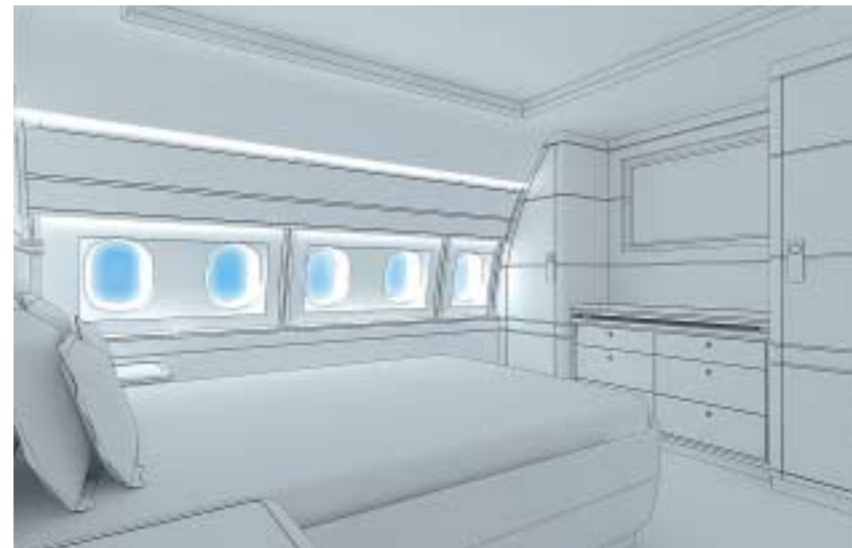
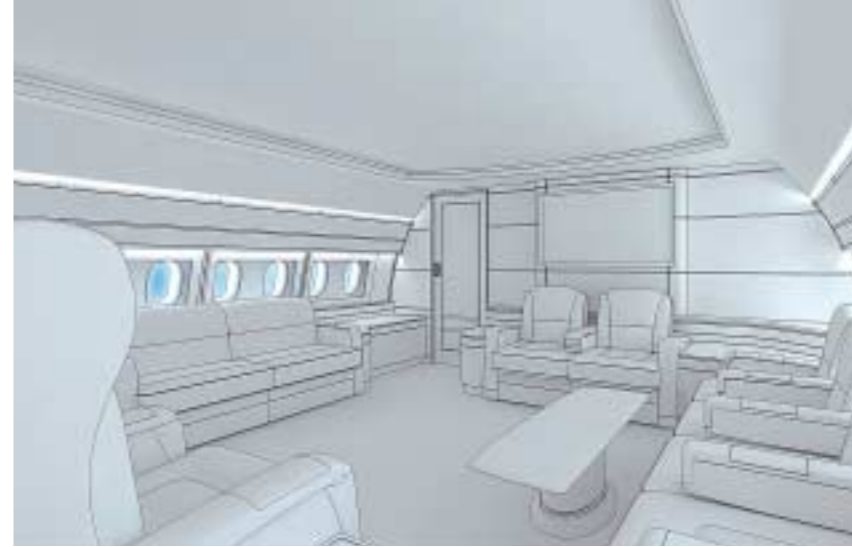
rience, as he started as a mechanical engineer before becoming a designer,” says Altair Aero Projects’ Executive Director Christian Castang. “That alone gives him a very hands-on approach to the design process. It is not simply art it is also realism and pragmatism, which is quite reassuring”. Learning and acquiring his skills along the way, “self-taught” Munch moved up the ranks rapidly. From 1992 until his departure in 1999, he headed the Design Studio Department as Manager of VVIP/Head of State completions. In this capacity, he provided extensive project management design, specifications and quotations for Boeing 707; B727; B767-200; B757-200; B737-700; BBJs, B737-300, B737-200; IL96; Airbus A340,

A319C); Gulfstream GV; Bombardier Challenger CL601-3A as well as Dassault Falcon 900; 2000 and 50. In his position, he interfaced with many high profile customers and interior designers to provide state of the art interior outfitting presentations, detailed specifications and intensive completions support. “Francis is very sensitive, which he couples with a great capacity to listen,” explains Castang. “This allows him to understand and perhaps even more important, feel what is needed and required. This intuitive understanding smoothly translates into his design, as Francis is extremely flexible and gently adapts to the client’s wishes”. Unassuming and discreet, Francis Munch is a

true gentle man, not one to brag about his success as one of the world’s heads of states and Royals’ favorite designers. In fact, he has not been written about much; has no web site and not even a land phone! Hard to get in touch with and loving it that way, he surrounds himself with a nucleus of close friends. He has known them forever and trusts them thoroughly. His customers-base is strictly word of mouth. Occasionally, completion centers will call him to the rescue. He has supplied support in the past when a company needed an interior architect and did not have one in-house. “ In the past, SoGERMA for example asked me to assist them, so I got in the loop to fill in the gap!”



Top: A380 Floorplan concept.
 Opposite page: virtual concept for a wide body aircraft cabin interior.
 Francis Munch likes to work with the crème de la crème suppliers: carpets by Dallas, Texas-based Kalogridis International, artwork by Karlsruhe, Germany-based Manne Gelmar and France's Metal Composite for metallic surfaces and inlays.



“CONSTRAINTS HAVE NOT TO DO WITH MANUFACTURERS BUT WITH AIR TRANSPORT RULES AND CERTIFICATIONS”.

Studio E-Motions

“I am eternally thankful to the former Jet Aviation’s managers who, way back then, did not hesitate to throw us in the arena, giving us the opportunity to learn our skills and allowing us to get our independence. I doubt this would be possible today, as every job is so diversified”. Pressed by a number of design agencies to come and join them, Munch resigned from his position and created his own Studio E-Motions in the summer of 1999. The context was favorable and for the next three or four years, Munch worked in partnership with a New York-based design agency. Today the Studio E-Motions in Mulhouse is a network of 14 individuals with Francis as Artistic Director and General Manager. There are

three senior designers, three engineers, two material specialists and one high profile woodwork specialist, and four 3D modelers. Besides the permanent team, the agency enjoys a worldwide network that allows it to be represented in Europe, the Americas and the Middle East. As a rule, the designer prefers not to delegate. “I do not let anyone else draw the design for me. I am a firm believer of the saying that one is never better served than by oneself!” Sobriety and pragmatism guide the designer’s approach to a project. Munch favors light colors and lighting techniques that enhance passengers on board. Discreet luxury is achieved through the use of the highest quality materials available while

the overall design brings on board the aircraft, technical and regulatory constraints. “Beyond the design itself, Francis’ team proves to be excellent as supervising the outfitting so that the close collaboration with Altaïr Aero Projects has proven both efficient and easy. AMAC’s successful launch project, the A320 aircraft has been equipped in full VIP configuration including 44 seats, a bedroom, shower and state of the art cabin entertainment system including audio and video on demand, wireless LAN and SATCOM. The total completion time was achieved within nine months and AMAC was proud to deliver the aircraft on time and within budget. This could not have happened without a close, efficient and harmonious teamwork of all parties involved. ■