



The Breitling Jet Team will make its first-ever tour of America in 2015. Here, the team (led by team leader Jacques Bothelin) passes in front of the famed Matterhorn in Switzerland.



# FLIGHT PLAN

BY JAN TEGLER

JIM DIMATTEO PILOTS BREITLING'S AVIATION ACTIVITIES IN THE UNITED STATES

**P**ILOT'S WATCHES ARE UBIQUITOUS TODAY, available in a dizzying array of variations from makers across the spectrum. None however, have a history or reputation matching those from Chaux de Fonds-based Breitling. From its fleet of historic aircraft to the aviation events and pilots it sponsors, Breitling is an active part of the aviation community.

So active in fact that this past winter the company appointed an expert advisor to help guide and facilitate its aviation activities in America. Jim DiMatteo is Breitling's U.S.A. Aviation Consultant.

There's a lot wrapped up in that title, but DiMatteo's highest priority is to pave the way for a very special appearance.

In 2015, the Breitling Jet Team (BJT) is coming to America. Highly regarded worldwide for their precision formation aerobatics, the BJT is the largest professional civilian jet display team, flying seven L-39C Albatross jet trainers. The unit performs throughout Europe annually and has toured Asia and Russia. Next year for the first time in its twelve-year history the BJT will cross the Atlantic for an extended tour of the United States. Jim DiMatteo is an integral



Ex-Top Gun commander turned Breitling USA Aviation Consultant Jim DiMatteo flies his VFC-13 F-5N in formation with another of the adversary squadron's Tiger II's.

part of the effort to bring the team here.

"A very significant part of my role is that I'll be the coordinator for the jet team," DiMatteo explains. "Planning their tour and getting it permitted through the FAA (Federal Aviation Administration) for both the pilots and the aircraft, contacting all of the different



A Breitling dial and a front view (opposite page) of the Breitling Navitimer GMT.

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**AUDE LEMORDANT**  
JOINS BREITLING FLIGHT TEAM

**A**S THE FRENCH AEROBATIC CHAMPION in 2013 and 2014, Aude Lemordant has also earned a world championship in the sport's singles, freestyle and team categories. Most recently, Lemordant has chosen to fly a new plane – the Extra 330SC, personalized in Breitling colors.

"I am proud to fly for this legendary brand which has contributed so much to the development of aeronautics and is the representative par excellence of the aviator's watch" says Lemordant. "I am also proud of being the first woman to join the official Breitling pilots and thus defend the position of woman pilots."

At fourteen Lemordant began flying, and two years later she obtained her glider license. After graduating from ENAC (Ecole nationale de l'aviation civile - National School of Civil Aviation), she joined Air France, becoming an airline pilot on Airbus at the age of twenty-two and today pilots Boeing 777s. However, her training also enabled her to discover aerobatics, which thrilled her right from the start. She began competing in 2005 and swiftly climbed the ranks, joining the French team in 2009, becoming champion of France and world vice-champion in 2011, followed in 2012 by French championship and European freestyle championship titles.

She will defend her titles at the 2015 world championships in France.

show sites and coordinating the entire logistical and operational effort is a major part of what I'm doing for Breitling."

It's a task he's extremely well qualified for. Captain Jim "Guido" DiMatteo spent twenty-five years flying fighters in the U.S. Navy. He logged more than 5,000 hours flying the F-14 Tomcat, F/A-18 Hornet, A-4 Skyhawk, F-5N Tiger II and F-16N Fighting Falcon. He commanded Top Gun adversary squadrons (VFC-13, VFC-111) on both coasts and led the foundation stood up by the Commander Naval Air Forces to organize the Centennial of Naval Aviation Celebrations in 2011.

DiMatteo retired in 2013 and currently serves as the Race Director for the popular Red Bull Air Races and as vice president of flight operations, features and attractions for the world's largest aviation event, EAA AirVenture Oshkosh. His deep background and connections in aviation and his experience organizing and managing large-scale events make him an ideal resource for Breitling.

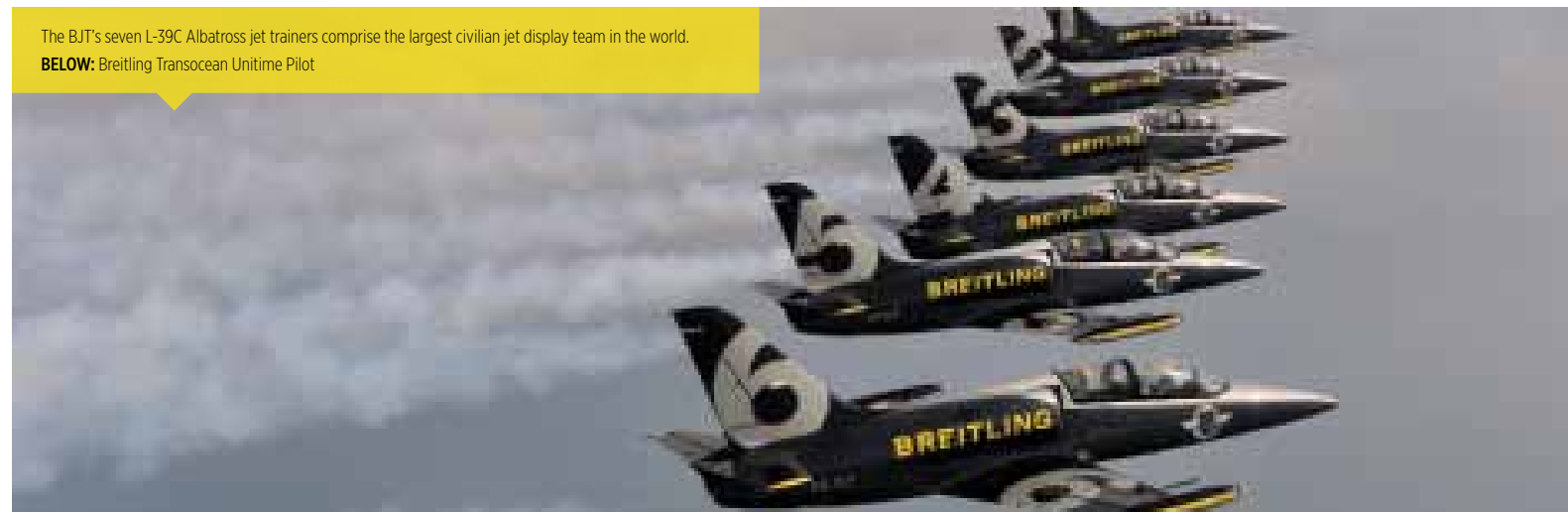
According to DiMatteo, the American air show community is abuzz about the BJT's tour. Even the FAA, usually muted in their enthusiasm for new or unfamiliar facets of aviation, is thrilled.

"We're getting incredibly positive preliminary feedback because the Breitling brand is so well recognized and because there aren't many civilian jet teams like this. Their level of professionalism is of a very high caliber. They're really like a foreign country's military jet team. The FAA is touting this as possibly the biggest thing to happen in the air show community in the last twenty years."

**ABOVE:** Retired Navy Captain Jim "Guido" DiMatteo spent 27 flying fighters with the U.S. Navy and commanding the USN's elite Top Gun adversary squadrons. Today, he serves as Race Director for the Red Bull Air Races and vice president of flight operations, features and attractions for EAA's AirVenture Oshkosh in addition to his role with Breitling.  
**RIGHT:** Breitling Navitimer QP



The BJT's seven L-39C Albatross jet trainers comprise the largest civilian jet display team in the world.  
**BELOW:** Breitling Transocean Unitime Pilot



## IT'S A MAJOR STEP FORWARD FOR SPORT AVIATION...

### TWENTY-PLUS APPEARANCES

**DIMATTEO IS WORKING IN CONJUNCTION** with the BJT and major airshow promoters to schedule a tour with more than twenty appearances for the team across the nation at major airshows including AirVenture Oshkosh and the Reno National Championship Air Races. Breitling's U.S.A. aviation consultant and the BJT are also working with the FAA to craft the first-ever reciprocity agreement between the U.S. and Europe to facilitate trans-Atlantic appearances by air show performers from both continents.

"One of the reasons Breitling wanted an American aviation expert is to lay the groundwork for the team's appearance here with the FAA," DiMatteo notes. "It's a big issue. How do you get the FAA to approve foreign pilots and the foreign airplanes? With the airplanes it's a process of mechanical and systems checks and the FAA can pro-

ceed with that very logically. The groundbreaking part of what we're doing – which Breitling is getting a lot of credit for – is developing a reciprocity agreement between the FAA and other countries, specifically Europe and the U.K."

In essence, Breitling and the BJT are the impetus for this long-desired FAA/JAA (Europe's FAA) framework. It's a major step forward for sport aviation and the international airshow industry, and a prime example of the active role a renowned watchmaker is playing in aviation.

"When you talk credibility, this is big. It takes a lot of effort and time, working with regulatory agencies and governments to get something like this done. The FAA has been talking about reciprocity for twenty years but now they're doing it because of the jet team. Lots of watch brands try to jump on the aviation bandwagon but Breitling is making a true impact. That's what sets us apart. They are really the brand for aviation." ☺