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The Whispering European soon makes her debut

NEXT summer Swissair plans to introduce A310 services between Zurich and London, Paris, Frankfurt, Lisbon, Istanbul and Athens, and also between Geneva and London, Paris, Lisbon and Athens. The definite A310 routes next summer are still subject to some government and pool partners' agreements.

With the A310, Swissair intends to maintain its established two-class system. The aircraft will seat 22 first class and 190 economy class passengers in the same comfortable seat pitch used on the DC-9s – 36 inches in first class and 32 inches in economy.

New, however, is the wide-body comfort to be available in Europe; both classes have two aisles, the seating being arranged in three sets of two in first class, and one pair of seats on each window side and two pairs in the centre in economy, making eight seats across with no passenger further than one seat away from an aisle.

The aircraft is equipped with two galleys for meal service, one in front to cater for first class and the other in the rear for economy. Seven flight attendants will look after the passengers.

Their special training for the A310 starts next January when Swissair's Zurich training centre will have an A310 cabin mock-up available for instruction.

Swissair assigns a very important role to the A310 as a cargo carrier in Europe and to the integration of its potential for containerised cargo with that of the Boeing 747 and DC-10 long-haul fleet.

With a full passenger load, the A310 can still carry up to seven tons of cargo and mail, two and a half to three times as much as the DC-9s at present on European routes.

Assuming five European sectors per day, the daily uplift capacity is about 35 tons – equal to the load capacity of a Boeing

Swissair has 10 Airbus A310s on order, with another 10 on option. The first A310 is due to join the fleet next spring and to be introduced into service in April/May. Three more are to follow during

1983. Preparations are, therefore, now in full swing in all departments of the airline to prepare for this new, advanced wide-body jet which Swissair, together with Lufthansa, helped to launch.

707 or DC-8 freighter aircraft.

The A310 cargo compartments can accommodate practically all lower-deck unit load devices presently in use on wide-body aircraft. Cargo can therefore be carried between the A310 destinations in Europe and overseas without the need to repalletise in Zurich or Geneva.

Loading is performed by automated equipment, taking no longer than for smaller aircraft, despite the A310's much greater capacity.

Last year, Swissair decided to operate the Airbus with a two-man flight deck crew. This was based on the advantages of the advanced A310 flight deck with its improved displays and navigation aids, and on many years' experience of safely operating shorthaul jets with two-man crews.

Pilot training for the A310 is taking place initially on the Aerofomation simulator and on the aircraft itself at Toulouse. Swissair's own A310 flight simulator is expected to be available for use during the second half of 1983.

By the end of 1982 Swissair will also have a flight manage-

ment system trainer to instruct pilots on the A310's advanced navigation and memory system containing all the required operational and performance data. This will allow FMS training to be separated from actual flight training and ease the pressure on available aircraft time.

Several Swissair captains have already flown the aircraft in the present flight test program. All have been impressed with its behaviour and performance. They described the A310's flight and handling characteristics as "pleasant and problem-free".

In particular, the pilots commented favourably on the multi-colour visual display units which have replaced the conventional dials and indicators of earlier aircraft models, and on the clarity of the colour imagery.

In common with Swissair's DC-9-81s, the A310 will have a digital flight guidance system and be equipped for Cat.IIIA all-weather autoland capability.

Intensive work is proceeding at Swissair's Zurich engineering base and at Zurich airport itself in preparation for the A310. Swissair will look after the airframe

overhaul of its own and KLM's A310s, and maintain the engines and electrical components of its own aircraft.

Among other measures, this involves an extension of the power plant workshops where Swissair will overhaul the Pratt and Whitney JT9D-7R4 engines specified for both the A310 and the Boeing 747 SUD (stretched upper deck) on order.

Swissair assumes a need for up to four stand spaces for A310s in its Zurich hangars. It is planned to provide these after phasing out four DC-8s scheduled to leave the fleet next year. New hangar gates, 18 metres high, have to be installed to accommodate the height of the A310 tail fin.

An extensive training programme for engineering personnel is also under way. This is carried out by Airbus Industrie and supplier firms for Swissair instructors, engineering executives and specialists, and by Swissair for its own engineering workforce.

At Zurich airport a new pier is under construction in front of Terminal A, together with more apron space to cater for the introduction of the new wide-body jet.

Because of its low noise characteristics Swissair is calling the A310 "the whispering European". Operating from a small, densely populated country, the airline is very conscious of its obligations to the airport communities and is convinced the A310 will be a good neighbour.