

# AVIATION WEEK BCASHOWNEWS

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ON THE RECORD— Ben Shirazi, Director of Sales and COO, Aero Toy Store

## Aero Toy Store Sells High-End Fun

"I'd kiss to have yesterday's retail as today's wholesale," says Aero Toy Store COO and worldwide aircraft sales chief Ben Shirazi. In a business where business is good, it's especially good at the store. "I would gladly pay a percentage above and beyond what I sold a Bombardier XRS for last December. I'd buy it back, with a profit for that customer, and still be able to sell it again straight away. And that jet hasn't even been delivered yet."

Aero Toy Store, founded by Ben's father Morris, has cornered the market for several prestige bizjet types that customers just can't get from the manufacturers because demand has outstripped supplies.

Shirazi tells *Show News*, "We are the only place you can get a brand new Challenger 605. Go to Bombardier and they don't have one for three or four years." Now, the Toy Store will charge you a premium to take that aircraft, but as Shirazi points out, "If the factory delivery date is 2012, then you put down a deposit now and in 10 months you make another payment, then another, then another. But add up all the interest on that money sitting there and the cost differential at the end means the dollar value is going to be pretty close to what you pay us. I may be charging you for it—but you get it today."

Shirazi gives other examples. "Take the Global XRS. They are sold out to 2012-13 but I can give you one in January, brand new. We have several 605s, Global 5000s and XRSs, new Learjet 60XRs and over 20 helicopters."

Aero Toy Store provides turnkey solutions for purchasing, financing, modifying and enhancing new and nearly new aircraft—with an increasing emphasis on large-cabin, long-range jets. What makes the Toy Store different, explains Shirazi, is that "we put our own money on the line. We don't buy options and sell slots—we have real aircraft to give to customers." The company prides itself on its attention to detail



Aero Toy Store's Ben Shirazi.

overnight. Says Shirazi, "In 2005 the split was 80/20 U.S.-Europe, in 2006 it was 40/60 U.S.-Europe and this year, so far, it's about 20/80 U.S.-Europe. In just two year's time everything has flipped around. It used to be that the U.S. market drove sales, and other markets were a bit of an afterthought. Now it's the complete opposite."

"In fact, we are concerned about the U.S. over the next 12 months as we go into an election year with the market already underperforming. It's good that international sales are doing so well." Beyond the U.S.,

market. Plus, as demand exceeds supply, there's no room for any more outrageous customer requests. You have to play ball, the way it's played."

### India

"We've done a couple of deals in India over the last few years, but regulations and restrictions make life very difficult there. Airports don't have the capacity to support the traffic—so helicopters are becoming more and more important. Doing anything is a long process, and you have to hold the customer's hand and be patient. The problem is that aircraft don't last long enough to survive that process. In a country where the government has to approve a deposit before it's paid into a U.S. escrow account, someone else with a few \$100,000 more will just walk up, pay now and take the aircraft."

### China

China is still just starting out. Everything they do, they do with caution so they are learning how this business works, with all the due diligence—but they will be the next big thing."  
—Robert Hewson

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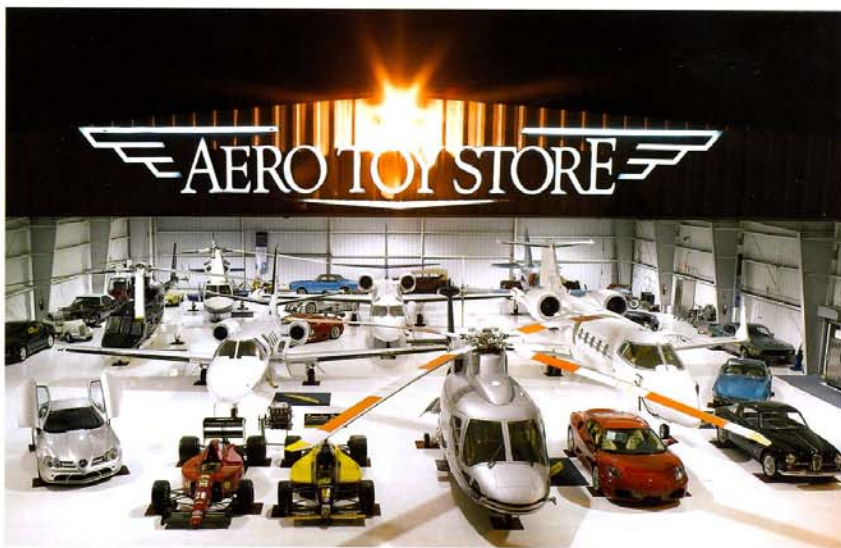
and is the only supplier to work with Italian design house Pininfarina for interior completions.

One extraordinary aspect of Aero Toy Store's business is how its customer bases have switched from being led by the U.S. to being dominated by Europe almost

Shirazi notes three countries that are becoming more important for Aero Toy Store: Russia, India and China.

### Russia

"Russian customers used to be difficult to handle, but now it's become a much more sophisticated



The Shirazi family, father and son, takes the old saw, "big toys for big boys" to new lengths entirely.

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