

PRIVATE GOLF CLUBS: FRACTIONAL OWNERSHIP HAS ITS PRIVILEGES

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# Wings sans Strings

*SkyBridge-brokered flights offer on-demand, easy-access luxury travel.*



The international broker service arranged approximately 1,000 flights this past year (about 60 percent are vacation- or personal-oriented) and estimates gross sales for 2004 at \$24 million. Working with 80 charter operators worldwide, SkyBridge matches clients to more than 2,000 aircraft. Light, medium, and heavy jets—including the Lear 35 (six to eight passengers), the King Air 350 (eight to 10), and the Gulfstream IVSP (12 to 16)—are available.

Like its direct competitors, which include Air Royale International and Sentient, SkyBridge has eliminated many of the inconveniences and the commitments involved with reserving a jet. You simply call a SkyBridge private travel manager and indicate

SKYBRIDGE PRIVATE AIR CHAIRMAN Michael E. Napoliello Jr. envisions a day when his company's offering—private luxury air travel without a membership requirement, fractional shares, or other long-term commitments—will be at parity with full-fare, first-class commercial flights. That day will come, Napoliello says, possibly within five years' time. "There's a chance the SkyBridge format [will] become the mode of first-class travel," says Napoliello. "It's not really economical for the commercial airlines to do first class. Their idea is, 'We can fly you there for less,' and there's a time and a place for that: mainstream mass market."

The private air travel market, by contrast, remains the place for ultimate convenience and comfort, but the time is right for less-restrictive options supplying what Napoliello calls "aggressive rates with the white-glove treatment." This is what he and company cofounder Jason Moskowitz discovered in June 2003, when, at SkyBridge's inception, the two sent information on their upstart to some 15,000 frequent jet travelers. They received 1,000 inquiries the first week, assuring them that their approach was in high demand. "Customers were saying, 'If I can pay the same per hour without [prepayment], why wouldn't I want to?'" says Napoliello.

By present indications, the Hermosa Beach, Calif.-based company is cruising comfortably on its chosen flight path.

where you want to go and when. The manager proposes a suitable jet based on your party size and the length of your flight, and then he supplies a price quote in about an hour or in as little as 15 minutes when necessary. After securing the reservation with a credit card, you can board your plane and depart within hours of the initial phone call. Additional services include ground transportation, custom catering, an around-the-clock concierge, and on-request security.

SkyBridge says its average per-flight-hour cost for a light jet is \$1,800, which, the company notes, compares favorably to what it cites as the average per-flight-hour costs for a prepaid flight card program (\$2,100) and for fractional ownership (\$2,800). SkyBridge employs Wyvern Consulting's database of audited charter operators to monitor the jets and pilots in its network.

While across-the-board parity with the airlines' first-class flights may lie ahead, SkyBridge says it can match the airlines' costs for some trips now. "Two adults and four children going Los Angeles to Paris first-class," contends Napoliello, "I believe we can get you on your own private jet for the same as it would cost to fly, for example, Air France first-class." —LORI BRYAN

*SkyBridge Private Air, 888.759.0001, [www.skybridgeprivateair.com](http://www.skybridgeprivateair.com)*

*The Challenger 604, which seats up to 13 passengers, is among the more than 2,000 jets accessible to SkyBridge clients.*