



Philip Queffelec,
Edward Queffelec's Father



Edward Queffelec,
CEO of SPARFELL

3 GENERATIONS OF AVIATION

Edward Queffelec, CEO of SPARFELL, on the company's 2019 acquisition of LaudaMotion Executive, and its recent acquisition of Speedwings' air operator activities

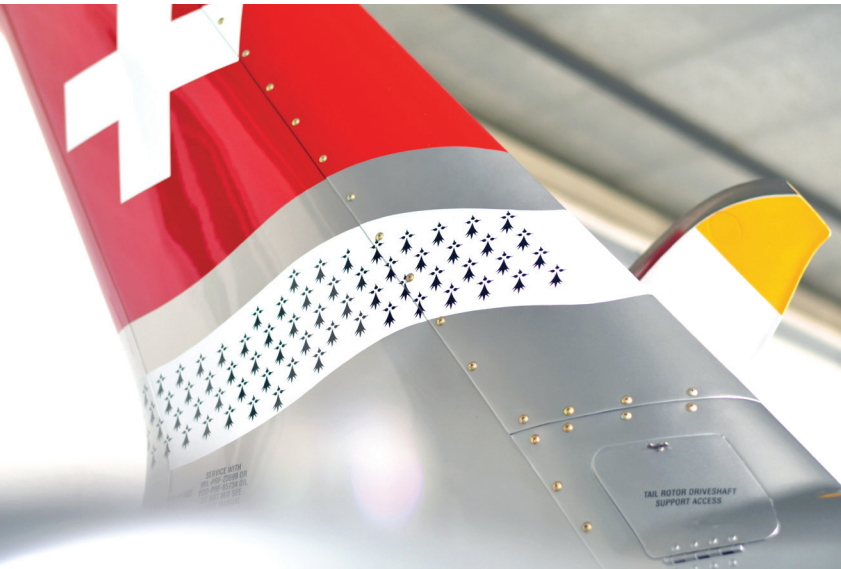
Q : So, Edward, can you take us through the history of SPARFELL?
EQ: SPARFELL is a family company. As a family, we have been involved in aviation since the 1950s when my grandfather was a corporate pilot. My father created the group in the late 1980s, initially as an aircraft finance group. Then he branched out into aircraft trading and finally added aircraft operations in the late 1990s. Today, the company is owned and run by my father and myself.

Bernard Queffelec,
Philip's Father & Edward's Grandfather

In the early days, we had a company called Masterjet, which had an AOC, and SPARFELL was the overall group company. Masterjet handled all the aircraft operations and charter sales for the group. We sold it in 2014 to Luxaviation, which was growing their aircraft management and charter portfolio.

At the time, Masterjet had some 12 aircraft under management, ranging from a Falcon 2000 to an ACJ 320. I went with Masterjet to oversee the transition and stayed with the company for four years before returning home to SPARFELL.





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Edward Queffelec, on the acquisition of LaudaMotion Executive



Once the sale of Masterjet had been concluded, SPARFELL returned to having aircraft sales and acquisitions as its main business. Sparfell & Partners was set up in 2015 as a SPARFELL subsidiary, in order to buy and sell a whole range of aircraft and helicopters. The transactions were global in nature and covered everything from airliners to business jets and helicopters. We were doing some 15 to 20 transactions a year.

I returned to SPARFELL in June 2019, as its CEO and decided to go back into aircraft operations, in addition to our transaction work. We provide a whole range of services, from aircraft trading to charter services and aircraft management. We outsource all our MRO (maintenance, repair & operations) requirements, and that was a deliberate decision.

Shortly after I took over, in the third quarter of 2019, we acquired LaudaMotion Executive. It was the company that held the AOC for the Formula 1 racing driver, Niki Lauda. We had begun talks with Niki Lauda and the company in 2018 and the original idea was to develop a partnership. However, unfortunately and very sadly, Niki Lauda passed away in May 2019, so the deal turned into an acquisition.

The acquisition gave us an AOC in Austria and a company with more than 15 years of experience, plus a strong staff base to support new aircraft owners. The aircraft were all registered on the Austrian registry, which gave us a great opening for future aircraft registrations.



They had a great team already in place in the company, with about 65 people, all of whom joined SPARFELL. They were doing charter sales and were very specialised in Bombardier aircraft. They had just received the first Global 7500 at the time. The acquisition was completed in July 2019 and we rebranded everything to SPARFELL as far as communications and marketing was concerned.

In 2020, we restructured our aircraft trading operations by opening an aircraft trading facility in Washington, with two experienced staff members based there. For many years, we have worked with the Boyle family, who have three generations worth of experience in aircraft trading. They are running the 100 percent SPARFELL-owned operation in Washington.

In addition, we have our regular sales team in Geneva and a partnership in Singapore.

Q: How much has COVID slowed down aircraft transactions?

EQ: It has had an impact of course. Switzerland was not hit so hard by the pandemic back in Spring. But aircraft trading is international and we are involved in deals in Europe, the US and the Middle East. We are basically buying and selling aircraft all around the world.

In the first phase of the pandemic, we saw some owners withdrawing their aircraft from sale because they saw that they would continue to need their aircraft to travel. That would allow them to avoid having to run the risks associated with travelling First Class on commercial airlines. However, by the end of 2021, we expect to have completed 15 transactions, which I regard as very good, given the challenges that 2020 has thrown up.

Q: How much synergy is there between buying and selling aircraft, and running a whole range of aircraft operations services?

EQ: There is a very important synergy which directly benefits the customer: having the flight operations in house

allows our trading department to technically, operationally and financially advise the best aircraft model for the client. Furthermore, throughout the process, our flight ops department and CAMO can help assess the different aircraft. Finally, with flight operations being involved in the project from day one, if a customer decides to entrust its aircraft to SPARFELL for management, it shortens the aircraft entry in service leadtime and simplifies communication. Overall, that is a much more efficient and streamlined process for the customer.

Q: Can you tell us about your latest acquisition?

EQ: We acquired Speedwings' air operator activities in Switzerland, Austria and France in December 2020. This brought with it AOC operations in both Austria and France.

Since 1988, Speedwings has been the operator of choice for the Swiss light and mid-size charter market, and it expanded its offering through a new French AOC in 2020. We had been using them for some four years prior to the acquisition, when our customers wanted to make short trips more suited to light jets, so we know the company well.

“Speedwings was managing 10 aircraft, so now, SPARFELL’s total fleet is some 27 aircraft through its four AOCs.”

Speedwings was managing 10 aircraft, so now, SPARFELL's total fleet is some 27 aircraft through its four AOCs: two Austrian AOCs (SPARFELL Luftfahrt GmbH, formerly LaudaMotion Executive GmbH, and Speedwings Executive Jet GmbH), one French AOC (SPARFELL France SAS) and one AOC in San Marino (Sparfell Luftfahrt S.R.L.). That is a large portfolio of managed aircraft, but we think it is the right balance of scale and maintains our tradition of a family-led, personal service at the highest level. **BAM**

