

WORK EXPERIENCE GYORGY PETO

# A very public face at Amira Air

Having been one of the best-known presenters on Hungarian television, Gyorgy Peto now flies Challenger 300s for Amira Air and brings his public-relations experience from life in the media into the cockpit

## You were one of the best-known TV presenters in Hungary and flew as a hobby. What made you move into a career in aviation?

I wanted to be a pilot from a very young age. However, my parents would not let me take flying lessons as my mother thought it was too dangerous a profession. Later I became a presenter and editor on Hungarian national TV but somehow could never forget about aviation. I always covered any aviation-related news but something was still missing. So in 1998 I learnt to fly Cessna 152s and 172s. Afterwards our TV station always had the best aerial footage since I was flying the cameramen!

## How did your career progress once you left the media?

Once I left the media I became the spokesman for the Hungarian civil aviation authority and later for Budapest airport. During this time I got a job offer from a charter airline that was flying a Boeing 737-400. So in the summer of 2001 I found myself in the right-hand seat of a 737 alongside my spokesman "day job". It was fun to see the passengers' faces when they saw me in uniform on the flight deck, they couldn't understand what that guy from the TV was doing in the cockpit.

## Tell us about your job at Amira Air

Amira Air operates mainly Challenger 300s. In fact we are the biggest European operator of this type and I am one of the captains. We are mainly in the charter busi-



Peto: Happy to have realised a childhood dream of becoming a pilot

ness but also do aircraft management for owners. Our clientele is mostly from Russia so we have a very good understanding of the Russian market. Being a Hungarian I love to be in Russia since there is a lot of cultural similarities with this vast country and the food is great.

## What are the differences between flying a commercial airliner and a business jet?

I would say the similarities stop at the fact that you have engines and wings. This is a complete different job. Here you are member of a very small dedicated team and since mostly you are away from home you are on your own. Nobody does your loadsheet. No mechanics are around. There is no station manager. A lot of my

## "Passengers couldn't understand what that guy from the TV was doing in the cockpit"

former airline colleagues can't understand how I can carry somebody's suitcase. This is a very different line of work and one I can confidently say is my cup of tea.

## Is there a typical week?

There is never a typical week. That's really the fun of it. You can be walking in Monaco when you get a phone call that you have to be in the Russian resort of Sochi in four hours. Its a lot of fun. One thing you cannot do is plan your life. You will never know where

you end up the next day.

## What skills from your previous careers do you carry over?

I think typically what pilots lack is the ability to communicate well with passengers. I would call this public relations work. No matter how much somebody flies, at the end of the day it's still a tube with wings. Nobody but pilots really enjoy this much so everybody reacts well to some unexpected pleasant communication. I love to speak to the passengers and they are very appreciative of this. I realise this side of me comes from my years spent in the media.

## Where do you see your career going from here?

That's a hard one. Nowadays I tend to concentrate on developing my flying knowledge and building my personal life. The future is very hard to predict since this segment of the aviation industry is so prone to changes in the economy. It really doesn't make sense planning too far ahead. What I am looking forward to in the next 10 years is to see today's technological advances slowly trickle into the cockpit. ■



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