

For Immediate Release
March 22, 2010

Media Contact:
Kaya Morgan 702.242.3247



FASTEST ROUND-THE-WORLD RECORD SET BY SWISS AVIATOR

New Record Time: 57 Hours, 54 Minutes

Historic Landing - March 21, Geneva, Switzerland: No one has been able to beat legendary pilot, Steve Fossett's circumnavigation flight record of 2005.....until now. The 360° World Record team of Swiss-Italian aviator, Captain Riccardo Mortara (62), and co-pilots (and eldest son) Gabriel Mortara (28), and Flavien Guderzo (26) succeeded in setting a new record for the fastest flight around-the-world in a 30-year old mainstream business jet. This is the first time for a new record in this weight class with refueling stops.

Captain Mortara and his crew took on one of the toughest challenges in aviation – and won. This flight is indisputably the aviation event of the decade, and one of the most incredible underdog stories ever written. It was a dramatic example of skilled pilotage, exacting logistics and navigation – with a little luck thrown in for good measure – all done in a 1980 Sabreliner 65 aircraft they flew straight into the history books.

This historic adventure departed Geneva (Switzerland) on Friday, March 19 at 6:12 UTC (formerly known as GMT) and took the crew and passengers over 33 countries. Originally the flight was scheduled to stop in 10 cities to refuel after take-off from Geneva (Switzerland), including Abu Dhabi (UAE), Colombo (Sri Lanka), Macau (China), Osaka (Japan), Petropavlovsk (Russia), Anchorage (Alaska), Las Vegas (Nevada), and Montreal (Canada) until a twist of fate almost cost them the mission.

No one could have predicted that halfway across the Atlantic, a volcanic eruption in Iceland (the first one in 176 years) would cancel their landing, forcing them to turn around and head back to Canada's Goose Bay, Labrador for refueling. From there, they ditched their original flight plan and recalculated a new one based on keeping within the limits of the world record.

The next unscheduled fuel stop took them to Shannon (Ireland) before getting back on track with their original plan to land in Marrakesh (Morocco) then returning to Geneva. This diversion on the flight plan created some tense moments in the cockpit and effectively cost the mission four hours of lost time.

- More -

Just as Fossett's flight was enabled by Sir Richard Branson's Virgin Air, the 360° World Record was made possible by Nicolae Buzaianu, mission director and chairman of Swiss energy company, Selectra. "Ricardo is my friend, as well as my pilot. He's a great man, and I don't think there is any pilot more skilled or as cool under pressure. I was thrilled to be a part of this mission," said Buzaianu.

Captain Mortara's 1980 Rockwell Sabreliner 65 was the first purpose-built business jet ever produced. Keeping to a maximum take-off weight of 10,886 kg put it in the same weight class as Fossett's GlobalFlyer. "Steve Fossett was a great man and a remarkable pilot. His record time was a fantastic achievement for flying and engineering," says Mortara. "I elected to take my *Sabre* on this trip because it's fast, strong and reliable. The wings are built from a single piece of steel, so when you encounter turbulence, you feel nothing," Mortara went on to say. As the owner of Sonnig SA, a Swiss-based private jet charter company, his standards for aircraft are the highest.

"To complete this circumnavigation and establish a new record is a tremendous honor and the proudest moment of my career. In fact, we set our target a little higher and aimed to beat Arnold Palmer's record in a lighter weight class. We came so close to achieving this and would have done so by four hours were it not for the eruption in Iceland. Although the volcano was not in the script, it made the mission just that more thrilling.

We only learned of this halfway to Keflavik, where we had only two options available – return to Canada or divert to Shannon. The later would have been risky, fuel-wise, and I was not prepared to take that risk with my crew and passengers with nothing below us but ocean. Another bad scenario would have been landing in Iceland and not being able to take off again. So, I made the decision to land in Goose Bay," said Captain Riccardo Mortara. Fortunately, it was the right one for the mission.

World record administrators, the Federation Aeronautique Internationale with observer Janez Erjavec on-board, dictated that a plane must achieve a minimum distance of 36,700 km, passing through all of the meridians. The total distance traveled was 36,900 km with the planned refueling stops ranging from 28 minutes in Columbo to 55 minutes in Petropavlovsk, and the unplanned stop in Goose Bay taking 64 minutes.

Media information was sent live from the aircraft during the flight, with blog posts, Twitter feeds at 360WorldRecord, and through telephone interviews with the crew and passengers. A cameraman and photographer were on board providing footage for an upcoming documentary. A 30-second early film clip footage can be downloaded at <http://www.sendspace.com/file/8u8ote>; landing footage is available at <http://rcpt.yousendit.com/840508777/7270a8796f4616c24c3a732d2cb64936> Exclusive access and one-on-one interviews can be arranged at the contact below. Additional images are available upon request.

- More -

About Selectra: Engineering services and complex solutions for efficient energy management, integrated systems and maintenance. Its turnkey solutions and software packages guarantee results that boost operational efficiency and are centered on high availability, flexibility and compatibility. These synergies are shared with Sonnig, Riccardo Mortara's jet charter operation, and the demands made of it by its clients.

About Sonnig: Based in Geneva, Torino and Moscow, the company provides private jet charter services to an elite clientele. With flexibility, availability, a sense of duty, and 35 years' aeronautical experience, they custom tailor flights to every customer offering the highest standards of hospitality and transportation service. The fleet currently comprises six jets, including the Sabreliner 65.

U.S. Media Contact:

Kaya Morgan
IMAGINE MediaWorks
702.242.3247
MediaLasVegas@aol.com



- End -