Tom Campbell, VP Business Development at AerFin. Image: AerFin

A high-value harvest

Aircraft teardown, especially of surprisingly youthful jets, yields a harvest of valuable cabin and cockpit components, as Paul Eden discovered.

In October 2025, AerFin announced that it had completed teardown of four A320neo airframes in France. Another was dismantled in the Philippines and then, in December, AerFin revealed that it was acquiring three more.

The process of tearing down airframes, harvesting usable parts and recycling materials is familiar, but perhaps one more readily associated with older aircraft, not machines built in 2017.

The neos released large volumes of valuable spare parts and other components, including cabin items and avionics, at a time when A320 operators are struggling with supply chain delays.

AerFin is not alone in realising the value of purchasing relatively new airframes for parts, and it is worth considering how value is extracted from the cabin and cockpit and asking why young aircraft, including the A320neo and Boeing 787, are proving attractive to companies like AerFin.

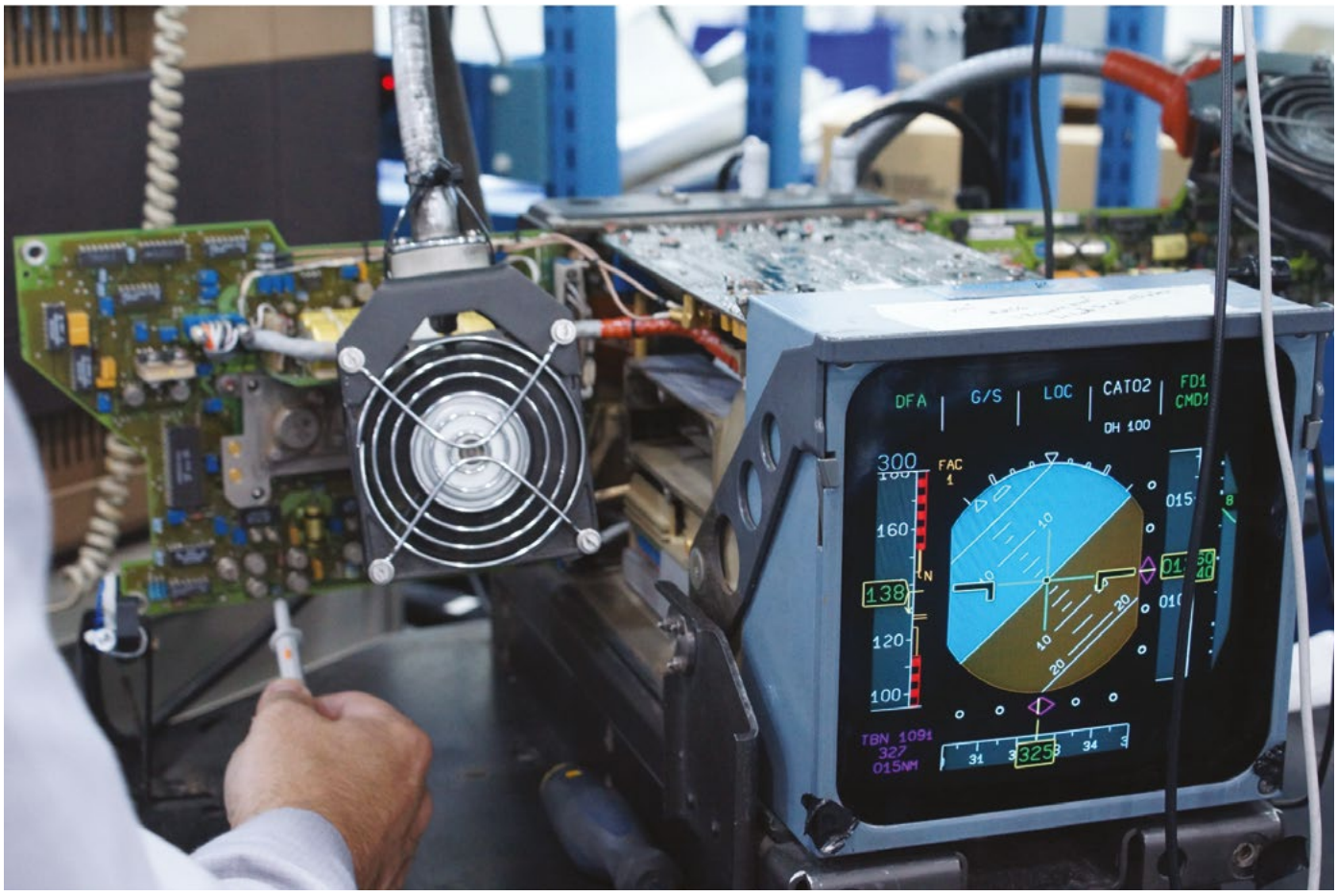
USED SERVICEABLE MATERIAL

Tom Campbell, VP Business Development at AerFin, says teardown means its customers gain value from cost, availability and sustainability.

He tells *Inflight*: "Recovering and recertifying galley and avionics equipment as used serviceable material (USM) offers a lower-cost alternative to new OEM parts, with no compromise on certification or traceability. That helps airlines control maintenance costs and extend the life of in-service fleets.

"Availability matters just as much. Supply chains remain tight for many fleets, particularly for newer platforms, including the A320neo. Our teardown programmes are designed to put the right material into the right region quickly, supported by global warehousing in the UK, Europe, the US and Asia-Pacific. That means operators can access galley and cockpit material with shorter lead times, keeping aircraft flying.

"Reuse and recycling also support



A reclaimed avionics unit under test with AJW Technique. Image: AJW Group

sustainability goals. By maximising recovery of serviceable components and recyclable material, and minimising waste, we help customers reduce the environmental impact of their maintenance activity. We complement all this through partnerships.

"The sale of four A320neo cabin interior shipsets, alongside a forward purchase of three more, was completed with a specialist cabin modification and refurbishment provider. It's a relatively new product dimension for us and a strong complement to our existing service parts distribution on narrowbody and widebody fleets."

GROWING MARKET

Lindsay Cooper, Head of Asset Management at AJW Group, reports that the reclaimed cabin and cockpit components market is not only strong but steadily growing.

She says: "Operators and MROs are under constant pressure to reduce costs and minimise downtime, and high-quality used material plays a crucial role in achieving that.

"AJW routinely recovers, certifies and stocks a wide range of cabin and flight deck items as part of its full-aircraft teardown programmes.

"While not every item is suitable for recirculation, many parts – from overhead bins to galley inserts, panels and selected cockpit equipment – are viable, in demand, and fully supported through our global supply chain."

Avionics are high-value attractive items that require considerably more work beyond removal before they are ready for sale, as Cooper explains.

"Avionics and other high-value cockpit systems coming into our MRO facility, AJW Technique, undergo a rigorous, industry-standard inspection and recertification process before they are released to the market.

"Our engineers and technicians process each unit using automated test equipment. Here the components/parts undergo a full functional test, which tends to highlight specific areas of failure in the component.

"Once we narrow down the failure to a specific circuit card, we perform a manual test. We use an oscilloscope to verify the integrity of the circuit card assembly and to assess individual devices on the card to identify the cause of failure.

"The workshop environment in which we test is obviously more stable than the actual aircraft environment so, if necessary, we adopt stress testing techniques, where we heat and/or cool the component while also subjecting it to vibration.

"This helps identify any latent failures, including cold solder joints, which do not show up in regular testing."

TEST AND REPAIR

AerFin also resells avionics, with Campbell telling *Inflight*: "All avionics units are inspected, tagged and processed through approved repair and test facilities, then returned with full certification, including modification status and applicable directives.

A cabin receives attention at Vallair's Montpellier site. Image: Vallair

"We supply fully traceable hardware, compliant with mandatory requirements or clearly tagged. Beyond that, operators are responsible for final software loads, but we can support specific requests through our MRO partners where required."

Careful harvesting is key to ensuring the best quality components are available to customers, making the term "teardown" something of a misnomer.

Campbell says: "After the aircraft is made safe, technicians work through a planned list using OEM tooling and maintenance procedures. Galleys and monuments are disconnected, wiring and plumbing separated cleanly, and avionics removed via standard access points. Protective covers, careful handling and immediate packaging help avoid damage and corrosion, ensuring components are ready for repair, certification and sale."

Pascal Parant, Group Chief Commercial & Marketing Officer at Vallair, has experience of tearing down even younger aircraft.

He says: "The youngest aircraft I've seen torn down were A318s in the US that were two years old. There was also a 'famous' 787-8 that remained on an apron awaiting VVIP conversion for a very long time. It was eventually torn down with less than 80 flying hours."

Conceding that tearing down aircraft several years older is generally the norm, Parant quips: "There are 737-200s still flying, and Douglas DC-3s, not yet ready to be torn down at 80 years or more old. Legend has it that when the last 747 is flown in for dismantling, the crew will fly out on a DC-3!"

MODERN ASSETS

Considering the demand for components harvested from newer airframes, Cooper says: "AJW Group has been investing heavily in inventory and while we continue to tear down older aircraft to support operators looking to extend the lives of their fleets, we are concentrating on more modern assets where we see value, including the [A320] neo and B787.

"The overlap between neo and ceo platforms means those teardowns are helping boost our global inventory of much needed A320 family spare parts.

"Acquiring and tearing down whole airframes is a core part of AJW's business model and with more than 90 years of trading experience, we know precisely how to extract maximum value from an aircraft's remaining life.

"By purchasing airframes strategically, at the right time in their operational cycle and depending on market demand trends, we can boost our inventory pools with high demand rotables, structures, cabin components and cockpit systems.

"We have a robust pooling strategy for 450,000 line items of inventory and by strategically placing this inventory across our global hubs, we can deploy components

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> **Lindsay Cooper, Head of Asset Management, AJW Group**

when and where they are needed."

Customers can view AJW's global inventory through AJW eventory, its online platform, with expert human support also available.

Flight deck equipment, galley inserts, monuments and structural cabin parts chosen from inventory are shipped as serviceable material from AJW's strategically positioned hubs.

Cooper adds: "Many customers rely on our exchange and leasing options to keep aircraft flying while maintaining cost efficiency."

Acquiring aircraft and engines is also central to AerFin's business model, as Tom Campbell explains.

He says: "Many teardowns involve late-life aircraft in their mid-20s, where harvesting supports remaining fleets. But younger aircraft also make sense when supply chains are tight or when fleet and financial strategies change.

"Recent A320neo teardowns involved aircraft in the eight-year range and generated more than 6,000 components across multiple global sites. Each asset is assessed on its merits, and a strategy is built to maximise value.

"We build stock pools of engine, airframe, galley and avionics material for airlines, lessors and MROs. Operators can source anything from full shipsets to individual parts, while our integrated systems track every item from removal to warehousing, keeping stock lists accurate in real time and giving customers clear visibility of availability and lead time."

STRONG DEMAND

AerFin's A320neo work has been grabbing headlines recently, but the company also has a significant interest in Embraer E-Jets and widebodies from Airbus and Boeing.

The harvest of cabin and cockpit items varies between types, as Campbell reveals.

"The narrowbody A320 and 737 generate strong demand for galley equipment and cockpit avionics, while the widebody 777 and A330 offer a broader mix, including monuments and high-value structural items, which we position regionally through hubs such as Miami.

"The E-Jets sit between the two, with a focus on cost-effective components that keep aircraft in service. Data on fleet profiles and demand ensures each teardown targets the most valuable material."

Parant describes an additional factor affecting the value of newer airframes over old. Airliner cabins have changed considerably over the past decade or so, with slimmer seats, the use of new, recyclable materials, and a switch from traditional to LED lighting.

Noting that Vallair seldom sees cabins older than 10 years, Parant says: "Older lighting might not be worth reclaiming and if the seats and cabin in a 20-year-old narrowbody are the same age, they might also be deemed beyond economic repair."

Vallair's operation is a little different to those at AJW and AerFin and it does not maintain a catalogue or online inventory.

Parant tells *Inflight*: "We tear aircraft down to harvest parts for our customers and our own MRO. We also have a parts trading division. Engines, APUs, landing gear and nacelles are the most valuable components, followed by avionics, hydraulics, electrical equipment and flight computers.

"Every major asset Vallair dismantles has a pre-determined target customer and we endeavour to align stock with suitable buyers, making it a streamlined and effective process.

"Traditionally, a cabin teardown might focus on between 300 and 500 high-demand part numbers – rarely including ovens or coffee makers, which are a headache.

"Because of the relatively low demand for other cabin components compared to the considerable space needed to store them and expensive shipping owing to their volume, they are often scrapped."

Components harvested by AJW, AerFin, Vallair and similar companies play a significant part in keeping even modern airliner fleets flying. Teardown also has a crucial role to play in aviation sustainability.

Cooper says: "Only components that meet the highest standards are added to our inventory, while items like soft furnishings or low-value materials rarely justify refurbishment and are typically responsibly recycled instead."

Campbell adds: "Rates vary, but the majority of galley and cockpit material from a 20-year-old A320 or 737 is reused or recycled. Working with specialist partners, overall recovery can reach around 90 to 92% by weight. Serviceable components are sold for reuse, metals and other materials are recycled, and only a small proportion becomes residual waste." ■

Dersenish Aresandiran says Malaysia Airlines aims to be ranked as one of the world's top 10 airlines by 2030. Image: Malaysia Aviation Group

Roll out the red carpet

Dersenish Aresandiran, Chief Commercial Officer of Airline Business at Malaysia Aviation Group, speaks with *Inflight* about Malaysia Airlines' new A330neo cabins, its latest collaborations, Malaysian Hospitality and more.

Malaysia Airlines is progressing well with its target to become one of the top 10 airlines in the world. In this Q&A, Dersenish Aresandiran, Chief Commercial Officer of Airline Business, Malaysia Aviation Group (MAG), provides more insight into the group's work to achieve this.

Can you share the latest developments for Malaysia Airlines' fleet?

Malaysia Airlines' ambition to be among the world's top 10 global airlines by 2030 remains clear. To achieve this, we are modernising our fleet with new-generation aircraft that elevate passenger comfort while also ensuring efficiency.

To date we have taken delivery of eight A330neo and 14 Boeing 737-8 aircraft. These aircraft ensure a consistently superior travel experience, strengthening our competitive edge in the region.

By 2035, we aim to operate a modernised mainline fleet of 116 aircraft with an average age of just seven years, reduced from today's 10 years. This rejuvenated fleet, supported by sister airline Firefly's continued growth, will enable a group network of 106 destinations across Asia, the Middle East, Europe and beyond.

This scale and renewal will position Malaysia Airlines as one of the region's leading premium carriers, with the versatility to serve both high-demand regional markets and long-haul corridors with greater reliability and world-class operational performance.

How has the customer feedback been for Malaysia Airlines' A330neo cabins?

Overall, customer feedback has been very positive, particularly regarding the enhanced cabin comfort on our A330neo, with a refreshed Business Class product.

Business Class passengers enjoy all-aisle seats with privacy doors, while those in Economy Class benefit from enhanced seating with award-winning RECARO R3 seats, ergonomically designed for comfort, and complimentary high-speed Wi-Fi with unlimited data.

In addition, travellers appreciate the calm, contemporary ambience created by improved lighting and spacious overhead compartments, which align with our premium service promise.

At the same time, we acknowledge there is always room for improvement, and we take every comment on board as an opportunity to refine and enhance our cabins.

Each feedback helps us fine-tune the experience and ensure that our service consistently reflects the warmth and generosity of Malaysian Hospitality.

MAG has announced a major digital collaboration with Adobe, Google, Skyscanner and Visa. How did this collaboration come together?

Malaysia Aviation Group has been accelerating its commercial and digital transformation to enhance connectivity, elevate customer experience, and position Malaysia as a gateway to Asia and beyond.

This collaboration brings together four global leaders with complementary strengths and is the result of a deliberate strategy to unify the entire travel journey – from inspiration and planning to booking, payment, and post-travel engagement – into a seamless, data-driven ecosystem.

This wider strategy positions Malaysia Airlines at the forefront of aviation innovation while staying true to our service DNA anchored in Malaysian Hospitality.

We recently became the first airline in Southeast Asia to roll out the TravelReady feature, integrating digital passport and visa verification directly into our online and mobile check-in.

We have also introduced Apple Pay for our one-click Express Booking service, enabled real-time mobile notifications via our app, and launched Mavis – Malaysia Airlines Virtual Interactive Service – to support customers more efficiently across multiple touchpoints.

Pilot Parker Activity Packs have proved popular with younger travellers. Image: Malaysia Airlines

Malaysian Hospitality plays a big part in MAG's passenger experience. Can you name some the key touches?

Malaysian Hospitality is at the heart of everything we do. It is expressed through thoughtfully designed micro-moments that define a warm, seamless and memorable journey. These include our Pilot Parker Activity Packs for young travellers, on-demand entertainment with MHstudio, a diverse Best of Asia menu, generous baggage allowances, and unlimited in-flight Wi-Fi across our A350-900, A330neo, Boeing 737-8, and selected A330 aircraft.

Our Business Class offering elevates this even further – from priority check-in, boarding and access to our award-winning lounges, to premium amenity kits and our personalised Chef-on-Call service on board.

In Kuala Lumpur, our private terminal transfer service adds another layer of convenience, reflecting our commitment to delivering a truly seamless premium travel experience rooted in Malaysian Hospitality.

What are the emerging hotspot regions for MAG when it comes to route development?

Australia, ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), South Asia and China continue to be among the strongest growth regions for Malaysia Airlines, driven by robust leisure and business demand and our network expansion strategy.

We have also seen encouraging momentum in Europe, particularly with the launch of our Paris (CDG) service in early 2025.

Malaysia Airlines has also made its highly anticipated return to Brisbane, reinstating direct flights between Kuala Lumpur and Queensland from 29 November 2025.

This complements the introduction of our third daily services to Sydney and Melbourne, alongside the deployment of our new A330neo on selected Australia and New Zealand routes.

Subject to aircraft delivery, we are on track to operate one of the youngest fleets into Australia by the second half of 2026 – further strengthening our competitiveness in the ANZ (Australia and New Zealand) market.

To boost our ASEAN connectivity, we have also launched three new routes for Firefly – Krabi, Siem Reap, and Cebu – supporting greater intra-regional connectivity and encouraging multi-destination travel and creating synergy within our network.

These destinations have also been added to our Bonus Side Trip programme for a limited time, reflecting our commitment to making travel across Southeast Asia more accessible and enriching.

South Asia remains a critical region within our footprint, with sustained demand across key gateways and strong Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR), corporate, and student travel segments continuing to drive growth.

Meanwhile, China remains a steadily expanding market for us. The addition of Chengdu (TFU), which will commence operations on 9 January 2026, underscores our continued confidence in the region and our intention to capture renewed demand from key secondary Chinese cities.

Looking ahead, these expansions reflect Malaysia Airlines' strategy to strengthen connectivity across key growth markets, offering passengers more options and convenience while positioning Malaysia Airlines and Firefly for sustainable long-term growth across Asia-Pacific and beyond. ■