

Defined By Southern Hospitality

An Interview with Nicholas Correnti, Founder and Chief Executive Officer, NICHOLAS AIR

EDITORS' NOTE *Nicholas Correnti is the Founder and Chief Executive Officer of NICHOLAS AIR. His aviation journey began at the age of 11 with his first flying lesson which eventually grew to thousands of flight hours. In 1997, he founded NICHOLAS AIR (nicholasair.com) with the goal of elevating the art of customer service in the private aviation industry and redefining the standards of private aviation. What started as a vision with a single aircraft and one employee has matured into the most exclusive private jet program in the industry based on a belief in quality over quantity. By intentionally limiting its program to 1,500 national members, NICHOLAS AIR ensures that they provide the world-class service that members expect and deserve. For nearly 30 years, NICHOLAS AIR has grown without the influence of private equity or outside investors. This lean approach has led to unparalleled financial stability which has allowed for the purchase of the finest aircraft and to invest in the most elite pilots in the industry. NICHOLAS AIR programs offer a new fleet of Phenom 100, Citation CJ3+, Phenom 300E, Citation Latitude, Challenger 350 & Gulfstream G600 jets with an average aircraft age of five years.*



Nicholas Correnti

Will you provide an overview of NICHOLAS AIR's programs and capabilities?

NICHOLAS AIR operates as a membership-based private aviation provider, offering programs like Jet Cards, Fractional Ownership and Aircraft Management. The company focuses on a Guest-Centric model setting the standards, not following them. Our capabilities have expanded from a regional boutique operator to a global operator serving any

destination where our Members would like to travel.

NICHOLAS AIR's fleet evolution is described through key milestones:

- Early Days: Started with a pressurized Cessna 340.
- The Turbo-Prop Milestone: The addition of the Pilatus PC-12, which elevated the brand's capability.
- The Jet Milestone: The transition into turbojets with the Phenom 100 and eventually the Phenom 300, which made NICHOLAS AIR a major competitor to the largest brands in the industry.

Will you discuss your career journey?

My career in aviation began at age 11 when I told my parents that I wanted to learn to fly. I grew up essentially in the "backyard" of an airport in Arkansas and spent my youth learning from my instructor, Wally. I soloed four different aircraft on my 16th birthday, ranging from a Cessna 150 to a pressurized Cessna 340. Before fully committing to aviation, I briefly explored the steel industry to learn from my father, John Correnti, but soon realized that my true passion was building my own aviation business.

What was your vision for creating NICHOLAS AIR?

The vision was to move beyond a "Mom and Pop" shop and create something substantial and elite. I wanted to own a business where I had control over the quality and detail, turning my hobby into a sustainable professional entity. My early vision was built on the "old school" principles I learned from my father at Nucor – focusing on attention to detail, employee buy-in, and customer relationships.



NICHOLAS AIR's Citation Latitude (above) and Embraer Phenom 300E aircraft (opposite page)



•Current State: The fleet now includes larger aircraft such as the super mid-size Bombardier Challenger and the ultra long-range Gulfstream G600.

How do you describe the NICHOLAS AIR difference?

The difference is defined by Southern hospitality and a maniacal attention to detail. Unlike larger competitors, Members are treated as people rather than numbers – pilots know the names of the Members’ dogs and their favorite on-board snacks. Another differentiator is that I have personally performed almost every job in the company, from pilot to mechanic to accountant.

How critical has it been to build the NICHOLAS AIR team?

Building the team was critical to scaling. NICHOLAS AIR was a “one-man show” for years – I was cleaning planes, doing billing, and flying. I eventually realized that it was necessary to relinquish control to a leadership team to focus on the “bird’s-eye view” of the company. My focus has been on surrounding myself with

people smarter than me and providing them the tools to succeed.

Did you know early on that you had an entrepreneurial spirit and desire to build your own business?

I always knew that I had an entrepreneurial spirit and a desire to build my own business. I credit this largely to watching my father’s story of starting from nothing – hitchhiking to work and busing tables – to become a top executive in the steel industry.

Are you able to take moments to reflect on NICHOLAS AIR’s growth and impact in the industry?

It has been a stressful journey and I admit that I often times obsess over the details and sometimes find things hard to let go. However, I measure success not just through revenue, but through member renewals and hearing feedback about the uniqueness of the service we deliver. I take deep pride in the company’s humble beginnings and its evolution into a nationwide brand while maintaining its roots. ●

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