



A simple plan



“Our brands are based on the philosophy of simplicity and value as our foundation.” – Erik Venter, joint CEO of Comair PHOTO: COMAIR DESIGN STUDIO

South Africa’s Comair has had a remarkable run of success—and a long relationship with Boeing **By Adam Morgan**

For one South African airline, a simple philosophy has been the cornerstone of its success.

Comair Limited, South Africa’s longest-operating airline after the national carrier, believes in keeping things simple and consistent. And with 65-plus years of operating with a profit, the airline’s record speaks for itself.

“Our brands are based on the philosophy of simplicity and value as our foundation,” said Erik Venter, joint CEO of Comair. “It should come as no surprise we operate Boeing 737 airplanes—the most efficient airplane in its class. The 737 is cheaper to

operate and uses less fuel than anything else out there, which makes the economics simple—these airplanes add value.”

Comair’s current fleet consists of seven 737-400s and two Next-Generation 737-800s. The airline recently announced an order for eight more 737-800s, nearly doubling its fleet.

“These new airplanes also seat approximately 20 more passengers than our current fleet, which means they will help us accommodate more passengers during the busy summer months—and help us achieve our growth targets throughout the year,” Venter said.

Most notably recognized for the airplane liveries under its kulula.com brand, the airline has made its name for its funky paint schemes, easy booking process, and the lighthearted, matter-of-fact experience it offers on the airplane. Simplicity is at the core of its brand—down to the name *kulula*, which means “easily” in Zulu. Its website, kulula.com, has been operating since 2001 and has become one of Africa’s largest online retailers, generating nearly \$365 million (more than 2.5 billion South African rand) per year.

“By creating one of the simplest airline experiences in the market—from booking to paying to affordability—we have opened the skies to so many people that wouldn’t

otherwise have the opportunity to travel,” said Venter, noting that kulula.com is Africa’s first low-fare airline.

Comair Limited also operates as a franchise partner with British Airways in the region as a premium, full-service airline to routes in Southern Africa. Comair has been operating these local and regional flights for British Airways for the past 12 years.

The airline started in 1946 as Commercial Air Services with a charter flight from Rand Airport in Germiston, in the northern interior of South Africa, to Durban, on the nation’s east coast. In 1992, the airline introduced the Boeing 737-200 and a Fokker aircraft to its fleet and carried nearly 100,000 passengers that year. Today, it averages 1.8 million passengers a year.

“The success of our brand has been built on consistently providing products and services of value, which makes Comair and Boeing similar in many ways,” Venter said. “What has grown from a small charter service into carrying nearly 2 million passengers was done in part with Boeing products—Boeing products and services that also consistently provide value.” ■

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PHOTO: Comair’s kulula.com is known for its funky liveries, such as the one on this Next-Generation 737-800. **G.A.S. MEDIA**