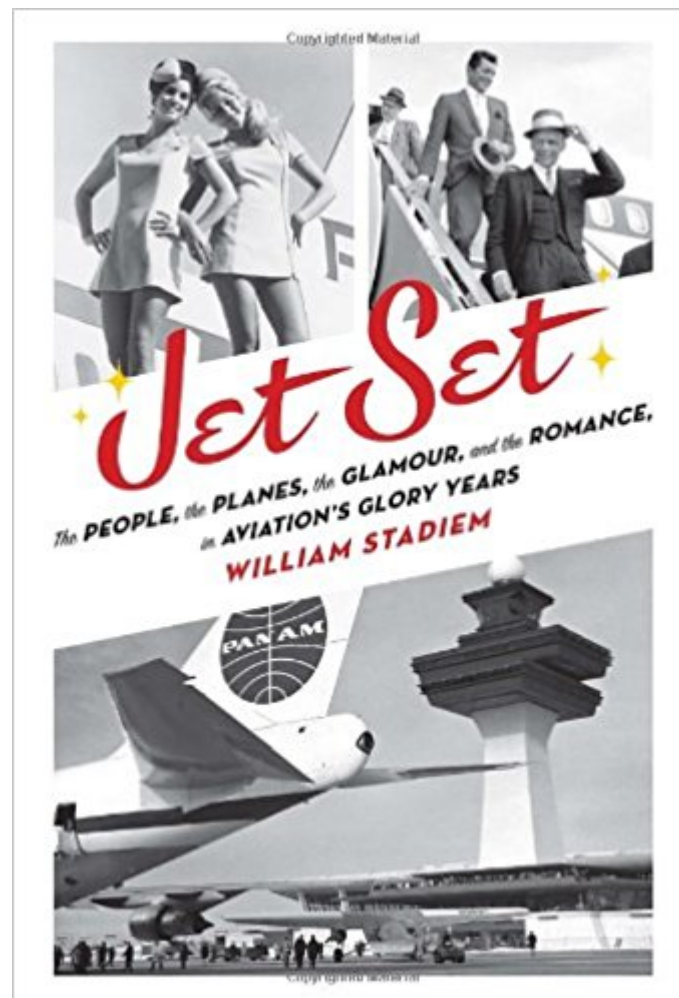




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# Jet Set: The People, The Planes, The Glamour, And The Romance In Aviation's Glory Years



## Synopsis

In October 1958, Pan American World Airways began making regularly scheduled flights between New York and Paris, courtesy of its newly minted wonder jet, the Boeing 707. Almost overnight, the moneyed celebrities of the era made Europe their playground. At the same time, the dream of international travel came true for thousands of ordinary Americans who longed to emulate the “jet set” lifestyle. Bestselling author and Vanity Fair contributor William Stadium brings that Jet Age dream to life again in the first-ever book about the glamorous decade when Americans took to the skies in massive numbers as never before, with the rich and famous elbowing their way to the front of the line. Dishy anecdotes and finely rendered character sketches re-create the world of luxurious airplanes, exclusive destinations, and beautiful, wealthy trendsetters who turned transatlantic travel into an inalienable right. It was the age of Camelot and “Come Fly with Me,” Grace Kelly at the Prince’s Palace in Monaco, and Mary Quant miniskirts on the streets of Swinging London. Men still wore hats, stewardesses showed plenty of leg, and the beach at Saint-Tropez was just a seven-hour flight away. Jet Set reads like a who’s who of the fabulous and well connected, from the swashbuckling “skycoons” who launched the jet fleet to the playboys, moguls, and financiers who kept it flying. Among the bold-face names on the passenger manifest: Juan Trippe, the Yale-educated WASP with the Spanish-sounding name who parlayed his fraternity contacts into a tiny airmail route that became the world’s largest airline, Pan Am; couturier to the stars Oleg Cassini, the Kennedy administration’s “Secretary of Style” and his social climbing brother Igor, who became the most powerful gossip columnist in America then lost it all in one of the juiciest scandals of the century; Temple Fielding, the high-rolling high priest of travel guides, and his budget-conscious rival Arthur Frommer; Conrad Hilton, the New Mexico cowboy who built the most powerful luxury hotel chain on earth; and Mary Wells Lawrence, the queen bee of Madison Avenue whose suggestive ads for Braniff and other airlines brought sex appeal to the skies. Like a superfueled episode of *Mad Men*, Jet Set evokes a time long gone but still vibrant in American memory. This is a rollicking, sexy romp through the ring-a-ding glory years of air travel, when escape was the ultimate aphrodisiac and the smiles were as wide as the aisles. Praise for Jet Set “Aeronautics history, high times from the 1950s and ‘60s, incredibly versatile name-dropping (from Mrs. John Jacob Astor to Christine Keeler of the Profumo scandal) and Sinatra’s ‘Come Fly With Me’ as a kind of theme song [all] connected to the glamorous days of air travel.” Janet Maslin, *The New York Times* “What a book William Stadium has written. . . . The Kennedys, the Rat Pack, Frank

Sinatra, and early financiers like Eddie Gilbert are dealt with in depth. . . . I lived intimately through it all in the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s and I am yet to find a mistake in author Stadium's amazing book. Order it now. All the players are here.

• Liz Smith, syndicated columnist

• "William Stadium sexes up the glory days of aviation in Jet Set. Fly me!

• Vanity Fair

• "William Stadium's Jet Set takes you where no modern airliner can: to a time . . . when the means of travel was as exotic as the destination, and sometimes more so.

• Town & Country

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

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• Janet Maslin, The New York Times

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Stadium's Jet Set takes you where no modern airliner can: to a time . . . when the means of travel was as exotic as the destination, and sometimes more so. The aerodynamic Kennedys were in the White House, Braniff stewardesses wore uniforms designed by Emilio Pucci . . . and no tourist made a move without consulting Fielding's Travel Guide to Europe, a 900-page compendium of the continent's finest restaurants and most companionable hostesses.

• Town & Country "An interesting, entertaining read, full of colorful characters and the author's thoughtful contemplation of the world of aviation.

• Publishers Weekly "An intoxicating spin through an era of supreme elegance and dazzling innovation, Jet Set more than lives up to its turbocharged title. With a sharp eye for detail and a knack for sparkling prose, William Stadium re-creates the heady days when artists, tycoons, and viscounts sipped Canadian Club and dined on lobster thermidor while zooming across a new frontier. In doing so, he pays homage to the true American visionaries who made that luxurious travel possible

• the engineers and entrepreneurs who understood just how much the long-range airplane could transform our world.

• Brendan I. Koerner, author of *The Skies Belong to Us* "The only thing more delicious than the idea for this book is William Stadium's execution. Rich in incident, set among the glitterati of America's most glamorous era, Jet Set is first-rate history that reads like a novel.

• Karen Abbott, author of *Sin in the Second City* and *American Rose* "Jet Set is a fast-paced, jauntily written excursion back to a more glamorous era, when people dressed up for airplane flights and onboard meals might include foie gras and champagne

• the historical moment when Americans first began to think of themselves as citizen-travelers. William Stadium provides a knowing account of the pioneering airline executives who built the planes that made luxury affordable, and high-flying gossip-column staples like Frank Sinatra, Ian Fleming, and Jackie Kennedy. You'll never look at air travel the same way again.

• Matthew Goodman, author of *Eighty Days* "Jet Set is a fascinating social history of the glory days of the boldface-names crowd in Europe and the United States since World War II. William Stadium's engrossing story is elegantly propelled by the engines of an equally interesting parallel account of how the innovations of modern aviation forever changed the tone and texture of tourism (think mass over class). Political intrigue, spy stories, Hollywood hijinks, and wryly chronicled bed-hopping make this the rare page-turner that's also witty and very well written.

• Alexander Lobrano, author of *Hungry for Paris* and *Hungry for France*

William Stadium is the author of such bestsellers as *Mr. S: My Life with Frank Sinatra*, *Marilyn*

Monroe Confidential, and Dear Senator: A Memoir by the Daughter of Strom Thurmond, as well as such acclaimed works of social history as Too Rich: The High Life and Tragic Death of King Farouk. He writes for Vanity Fair and has been the Hollywood columnist for Andy Warhol's Interview and the restaurant critic for Los Angeles Magazine. A Harvard JD-MBA and former Wall Street-based international lawyer, Stadiem is also a screenwriter whose credits include Elizabeth Taylor's last starring vehicle, Franco Zeffirelli's Young Toscanini, and the television series L.A. Law.

it is a very engaging and entertaining book. Some may find it very gossipy, Or that it lacks details on the history and development of the airplanes that are in use today. However, Stadiem makes it more readable by making a correlation on the development of the airplanes with the rise of the jet setters who took advantage of the rise of jet-powered airplanes and the airlines that bought the jets, the companies that made them, the tycoons behind them and the high society passengers that flew on them. With glamour, it enticed millions of Americans to travel to foreign lands. If you are looking for pure history of the airplanes and the airlines, skip this. If you are looking for the history of the airplanes, the airlines, the glamour, the jet setters that flew them and their life, then this is one delicious gossipy yarn that is engaging and readable.

Great social history, paralleling story of jet travel with ups and downs of British and American upper crust. It's a lot about social and high in the sky mobility in post WWII US. Well developed history of the jet and of big names in aviation and hotel business. Explains what happened to the glory days of jet travel.

Interesting cultural exposé with a lot of hard hitting facts worth knowing about those who brought about the commercial jet age, and those who gave it glamour and pizzazz. Especially intriguing are the intertwining relationships of the wide array of substantive personages appearing in the book. Well written to a high brow standard - entertaining, substantive, informative.

Excellent publication; very factual; so much so that I have ordered several of the publications listed at the end of the book. I first began flying in 1958 and my first jet flight on a Delta DC-8 was in August 1960; I first traveled to Europe in August 1965; also began investing in airline stocks about this time so I was able to follow and recall most of the events in this book. My experiences verify the

facts in this book.

The book was bought as a gift. I just glanced through the book. It was perfect for my friends that are new to the jet set life!!! Lots of interesting pictures and history of flying.

This could have been a fantastic book, as there is a great story to tell. But it fell badly, badly short. To read the book you would think only the Americans had jet aircraft. I cannot recollect any reference to Air France, Sabina, BEA, or all those other operators who were operating jet aircraft in those early days, or the aircraft they operated. There is too much emphasis on the manufacturers and how the aircraft came to be developed. There was next to no reference to the air crew, how they were recruited, how they were trained, or the many many stories they have to tell. Illustrations in black and white are poor to bad with no colour. The early years of the passenger 'Jet Age' was a great time, with great characters, loads of glamour, and probably romance - both genuine and illicit. This book does not do that era justice. It could have been so much better.

A gift for a long time flight attendant.. she loves!

A fun read esp if you have pilots in the family!

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