

Picture This

Air-to-air photography provides breathtaking visuals of new aircraft and makes up a dominant portion of an airline’s marketing materials. We speak to two individuals who make in-flight photography a reality.

BY HOWARD SLUTSKEN

Brian Losito might just have one of the best airline jobs ever. For the past 28 years, Losito has been Air Canada’s corporate photographer. He’s traveled throughout the airline’s network, taking photos of people, places and planes in support of Air Canada’s publicity, marketing and advertising efforts.

Without a doubt, Losito’s favorite assignment is being airborne, getting amazing air-to-air photos and video of the company’s newest airliners. “We’ve done shoots of the Airbus A340 and the Boeing 777. In 2014, Air Canada took delivery of its first Boeing 787-8 [Dreamliner],” says Losito.

The airline’s Dreamliners were being used for training and revenue flights, so Losito couldn’t get access to an aircraft until the fall. “You need at least two days, because it’s very weather dependent. We planned the shoot for the west coast to get the great scenery, with mountains and oceans,” he says. Losito chose Hawthorne, California-based Wolfe Air Aviation to provide the camera aircraft and air-to-air expertise. Wolfe Air has been providing aerial imagery services to the film, television and aviation industries for decades.

Losito might have the best airline job, but Kevin LaRosa Jr. has an equally remarkable role in aviation. As Wolfe Air’s aerial coordinator and lead captain, LaRosa flies the specially outfitted Learjet 25-camera airplane. A third-generation pilot, he learned the skills of air-to-air photography from his father. “It’s all about the light, and camera angles. You’re less of a Learjet captain and

more of a cameraman flying the airplane,” says LaRosa. The Learjet is equipped with Nettmann Systems International’s VectorVision, with lens ports on the top and bottom of the fuselage, and a still-camera pod under the wing.

LaRosa explains that the performance and maneuverability of the over 40-year-old Learjet makes it an ideal camera aircraft. “It’s a pure

turbojet airplane with no engine spool up time, and with its shortened wing, it’s a very snappy aircraft,” he says. “The airliners are big, so to get the nose and tail framed in the shot, we usually fly about 50 to 75 feet away.”

The mission was extremely successful, says LaRosa, thanks to Losito’s creative direction and the flying skills of the 787’s crew, Captains Mark Watt and Chris Pulley.

PHOTOS: BRIAN LOSITO / AIR CANADA



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The shadow of Wolfe Air’s Learjet 25-camera airplane on Air Canada’s Boeing 787-8 during a photo shoot in the Pacific Northwest.

“Captain Watt is one of the best formation pilots I’ve ever flown with. He put that airplane exactly where we needed it, every time,” LaRosa says. Losito adds, “This air-to-air shoot was one of the highlights of my career.”

Air Canada has already made wide use of the stills and video from the air-to-air shoot, enticing passengers to fly on this latest addition to its fleet. Images of the beautifully

photogenic 787 have appeared both in Canada and internationally on billboards, in print ads, at the airline’s offices and in its *enRoute* in-flight magazine, among other places. Video of the Dreamliner has been used in television commercials and on Air Canada’s website, and has been seen by hundreds of thousands of viewers through social media. ■