

Start-Up Airline Takes Classic Approach With DC-3

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NEW YORK — Old airplanes don't die, they just keep on flying until they come back into fashion. This much is true for the Douglas DC-3 that is the start of Classic Air, a one-plane airline flying out of Spokane, Wash.

The route network is modest for now. Classic Air flies daily to the Silverwood theme park in nearby northern Idaho, dropping off passengers in the early afternoon and picking them up in the evening. The

other flight is a sightseeing loop over Spokane, then eastward to Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, and back.

"We just take a nice sweep around the area," said Terri Ross, director of in-flight services. The scenic flight takes about 40 minutes.

Classic Air is a subsidiary of SalAir, a family-owned air freight company based in Spokane that operates DC-3s and Convair 440s.

The particular DC-3 now used by Classic Air will be 50 years old next January, Ross said. With 17,600 hours logged in flight time, the plane has traveled about 2.8



CLASSIC AIR HAS STARTED SERVICE USING A DOUGLAS DC-3.

million miles so far, she said, which is light for a DC-3.

Christened *Miss Spokane*, Classic Air's DC-3 is a veteran in the purest sense of the word, having

dropped paratroops for the D-Day invasion of Normandy in 1944, Ross said.

In its presentation the plane also flies back to the 1940s, as

flight attendants in period clothing serve the 19-seat cabin.

Classic Air hopes to expand its passenger DC-3 fleet to three planes some time in the near future, Ross said. A second plane in the hangar was to join the airline this month.

As for *Miss Spokane*, "we're hoping to take the airplane down to Long Beach [Calif.] during the winter to do gambling junkets," said Ross. The probable destination would be Laughlin, Nev.

The fare for the air tour is \$39, while the Silverwood flight costs \$59 per person, roundtrip.