



Ian Newhart

New side curtains on the Prowler trike

Cooney sells the Prowler as a kit. And getting one can take anywhere from a few weeks to 12 months. Don refuses to ramp up production since he's observed that's a great way to go out of business. He typically takes orders in the summer, builds in the fall and winter, and delivers in the spring.

Cooney's Prowler wings are known for their light control pressures. They are 100 percent double surface. At 10 square meters, they look freakishly small compared to other trike wings. At 72 pounds, they are amazingly light. He sells the wings for \$4,800. You can also go with a 103 wing from Gibbo, the 12.5-meter Manta Ray that Raven uses, or one from North Wing.

The Prowler chassis kit is \$3,900. The frame is pre-cut, drilled, welded, and anodized and includes a Hooker seat and shoulder harness. Constructing the machine is basically a matter of fitting the fiberglass parts and then procuring and installing instruments, engine, fuel system, and whatever else you want. Cooney estimated it takes under a month to put a Prowler together. He said the typical buyer will spend \$15,000 to \$16,000 depending on instruments.

New for the Prowler this year are finned wheelpants, which help offset the torque of a big prop with a heavy motor. Also available are optional Mylar-stiffened fabric side curtains that cover the fuel tank and provide some extra storage. An optional fabric side skirt also adds storage pockets on either side of the seat and keeps the wind off you.

More Light-Sport Aircraft

We continue our review of new LSA introduced at AirVenture 2008. Next month, we'll wrap up our coverage with a review of what's new in the world of powered parachutes.

ECOFLYER

The LSA two-seat limit says nothing about a cozy bed in back. That's standard in every **Ecoflyer**, which grabbed the title of the roomiest LSA.

A third door accesses a 150-cubic-foot cabin, where a folding camp table sits between the bed and the reversible seats. Bernard LaFerriere, president of **Explorer Aeronautique** (www.ExplorerAero.com) of Shawinigan, Quebec, said there's minimal trade-off of aerodynamics for the notice-

Outdoor enjoyment is the main reason for the aircraft. Bush tires are an option, and floats are coming. "It's stressed and designed to be a float airplane," LaFerriere said, adding that amphibious floats will come later.

After landing at their destination, pilots can flip their backrest over and stretch out. "The backrest, instead of facing forward, will face the back of the airplane. The fuselage tapers down around the bed, which can sleep two." The bed is elevated off the floor, providing storage underneath.



Jim Raeder

Eco Flyer

able girth. "The wings stay the same, as well as the empennage and the wheels; it's only the half of the fuselage that is much bigger."

Fuel burn with this all-composite aircraft is 5 gallons per hour from two tanks totaling 30 gallons, providing six hours of flight with either a Rotax or Jabiru in front. "I have a Jabiru 2300 with six cylinders," LaFerriere explained. "I was turning at 2800 rpm, and the manufacturer told us that we have to run the airplane between 2950 and 3150. I'm not even there yet, and I see 115 knots airspeed, so I don't think we'll have a big penalty on the aerodynamics."

The introductory price set at AirVenture was \$100,000, which will hold until January. "After that we'll have to re-evaluate the instrumentation," said LaFerriere. Extras include avionics from Advanced Flight Systems. First demo flights were set for September. "We're going to be in production in the next 12 months," he added.

The Ecoflyer will be built in Canada and sold there as an advanced ultralight. The weight limit for the Canadian version of LSA is lower, and the Ecoflyer weighs 1,230 pounds. Previously Explorer Aeronautique produced the Private



Jim Raeder

EcoFlyer—The LSA rules did not specify no bed in the back.

Explorer. “That’s the aircraft that we founded the company to build,” LaFerriere explained. “We did five, all by hand, and learned a lot, but we don’t want to get involved in a commercial venture with it,” he said. “It’s too big, too complicated.” So all the focus is on the Ecoflyer.

AEROSTAR FESTIVAL

The **Festival R40S** is set for a comeback in the U.S. market with a list of upgrades and design tweaks, said Cristian Dragoi of AeroStar SA of Romania.

Essex Sport Aviation (www.Festival.aero) of Baltimore and **Belle Aire Aviation** (www.BelleAireAviation.com) of Memphis are its new distributors. A delivery fee of \$1,900 will bring the \$99,900 low-wing to the West Coast. “We intend to sell around eight to 14 aircraft in 2009 in the U.S.,” Dragoi said, adding that the target for 2010 is for 16 to 22 aircraft. A warranty of one year or 100 flight hours begins upon delivery, which can come as quickly as four months after making the first deposit.

The latest model features a simplified fuel system, updated flaps, and a new electric trim. “The control stick is improved,” added Dragoi, as is the flaps control. It still comes with a cockpit roll bar and is strong enough to tow gliders.

The aircraft is packaged in three configurations. The Basic model is configured to serve as an LSA with visual flight rules (VFR) day capabilities only. The Trainer is good for VFR day and night, and the Sporter is instrument flight rules (IFR) capable. Extra avionics range from the Bendix/King digital maps, to a selection of Garmin radios and glass panels, topping at the GNS 430. A chute from BRS is installed for \$5,500. Other aircraft options include an EFIS and engine information system from Dynon and an S-Tec or DigiFlight autopilot.

The Festival’s Rotax 912 taps into 22 gallons of fuel to fly up to 500 miles. It can also carry a useful load of 473 pounds. AeroStar has made its name by producing the Yak-52, Yak-52W, and Yak-52TW aerobatic trainer aircraft.



Jim Koepnick

AeroStar Festival

FA-04 PEREGRINE

Hansen Air Group (www.HansenAirGroup.com) is combining two German-manufactured aircraft to get the one it wants, the **FA-04 Peregrine**, and it’ll carry on that specialization for each customer in the United States. The interior and the panel may be customized for each person’s needs.

The FA-04 will be available either as a tricycle gear or taildragger, but it’s not yet flying. Presently the wing of this carbon-fiber aircraft is finishing development. Jon Hansen and his brother, Ron, are working with Flaeming Air of Germany to combine the best of that company’s FA02 very light aircraft and FA01 micro-

light. The FA01 was on display at AirVenture. “We took the fuselage from the very light experimental and initially were using the wings off the microlight aircraft, but we decided they were a little too light and didn’t give us the strength needed. The original wings were a blend of carbon fiber and a composite glass. The new wings will be a carbon fiber spar and Kevlar composite, lighter and stronger to meet the 600 kilo weight limits in Germany,” said Ron.

“It has a unique winglet system on the wingtips. We now have a 21-to-1 glide ratio, which is one reason for the double slotted Fowler flaps to get some drag out of it,” he continued. “We’re shooting for the basic airplane at around \$115,000 with a radio and a transponder and an ELT. With any kind of extras and stuff we’re going to try to hold the total price below \$125,000.” ASTM compliance is expected by January.

Like the Sky Arrow, which Hansen Air sells, optional hand controls will be available for the disabled. “We’re designing a baggage drawer, you might say,” Jon added. “A disabled pilot could put his wheelchair in, and it’ll fold and slide back in on top of the luggage compartment.”

“Later this year we expect to pick up two more lines of aircraft,” Ron said, “an aerobatic biplane in light sport and an acrobatic low-wing. And we’re looking at another trainer aircraft, because we want to have a good trainer in both the low- and high-wing models.”

CHEETAH

Rainbow Aircraft’s Cheetah (www.AeroTrike.co.za), which has been flying for seven years in South Africa and boasts 102 owners across the Atlantic, made its U.S. debut at AirVenture 2008.

“Primarily our aircraft is aimed at an adventurer, a person who wants