Easy does it



Most forms of flying have international competitions devoted to them, but paraplanes, as yet, have failed to attract much sporting interest. There is a sound reason for this, for they appeal more to the romantic than the competitive; the average paraplane pilot is more likely to celebrate the scenery than demonstrate his daring.

o aircraft is foolproof, but a paraplane must be the next best thing. The wing is virtually impossible to stall and there are really only two controls: the throttle which determines whether you climb or descend, and the brakes, one in each hand (or foot, depending on the arrangement of the controls), which slow down one side or the other to turn, or both sides to

Fun time in a Fresh Breeze XCitor.

flare for landing. Indeed, paraplanes are so simple to fly that in some countries the hours required to get a license have been reduced.

Invented in the US in the early '80s, the paraplane's natural home is the open skies and light winds of the American continent. Strong tubular chassis lifted by big square wings and powerful engines became the norm, safety and simplicity the selling points. Speed came a poor third.

In this edition there remain plenty of paraplanes answering this description, but numbers are down on a year ago, as the Light Sport Aircraft regulations force US manufacturers down one of three roads: 'professionalize' and make two-seaters, remain a cottage industry but make only single-seat ultralight-legal designs, or stop trading,

Instead, the focus of development has moved across the Atlantic. Five years ago, the paraplane was a rare sight in Europe except as an ultra lightweight bolt-on trike unit, basically just a set of wheels to attach to your paramotor. These continue to gain popularity, and most paramotor makers now offer a means of converting their product to a paraplane.

Increasingly, however, manufacturers such as Airges and Fresh Breeze, to name but two, are mating elliptical wings to chassis which borrow from flexwing trike design to create bespoke paraplanes with a useful turn of speed. A maximum of 90kph (56mph) is nothing special in the microlight world but offers a genuine go-places ability denied to the pilot of a traditional square-winged American design.

Does a market exist for these speedier machines? Or is 'low and slow' the whole raison d'etre of the breed? The next few years will give us the answer, but in the meantime, enjoy the view!

Norman Burr

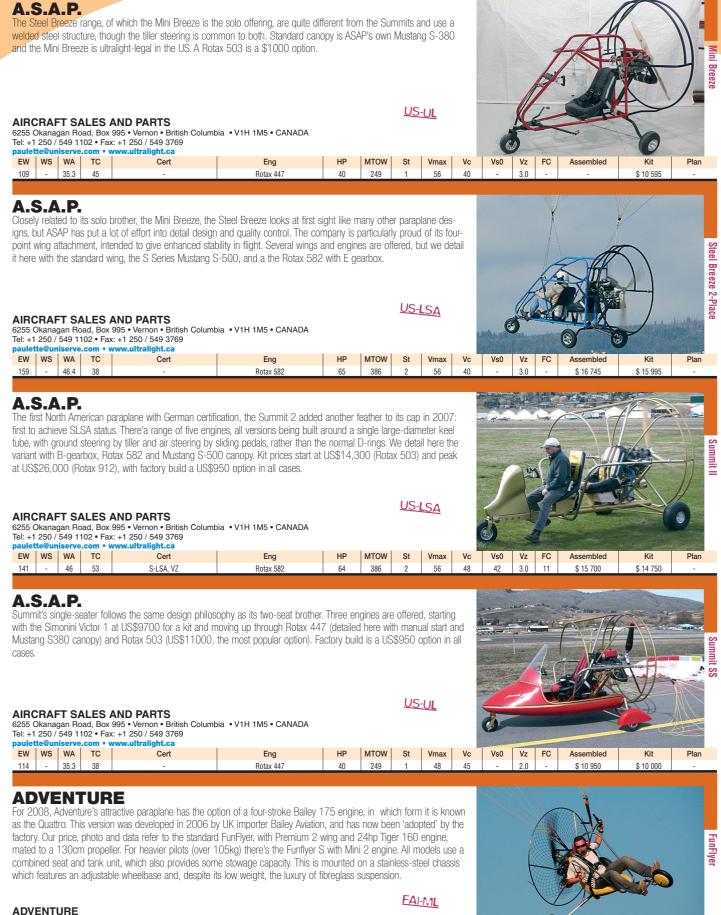
CLASS OF REGULATION

Shows the lightest class of airworthiness regulation for which the aircraft is eligible. Does not necessarily indicate that certification has been achieved. See introduction to fixed-wing section for full explanation.

For a full list of abbreviations and metric/imperial conversions, see p.6

ABBH	REVIATIONS
EW	Empty weight,
	kilograms (1kg = 2.20 lb)
WS	Wing span, metres
	(1m = 3.28ft)
WA	Wing area, square metres
	$(1m^2 = 10.8ft^2)$
тс	Tank capacity, litres
(1 litre = 0.	264gal(US), 0.220gal(Imp))
Cert	Certification
Eng	Engine
HP	Horsepower (hp)
MTOW	Maximum all-up weight,
	kilograms (1kg = 2.20 lb)
St	Number of seats
Vmax	Maximum speed,
	r hour (1km/h = 0.622mph)
Vc	Cruising speed,
	r hour (1km/h = 0.622mph)
VsO	Stalling speed,
	r hour (1km/h = 0.622mph)
Vz	Climb rate
	second (1m/s = 197ft/min)
FC	Fuel consumption,
litres per h	nour (1 $l/h = 0.264gph(US)$,
	0.220gph(Imp))
Assembled	Assembled price
Kit	Kit price
Plan	Plan price

Remember! This is an international publication, so all prices exclude local and national taxes, eg VAT and sales tax.



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EW	WS	WA	TC	Cert	Eng	HP	MTOW	St	Vmax	Vc	Vs0	Vz	FC	Assembled	Kit	Plan
50	11.9	29.9	25	-	Tiger 160	24	160	1	53	45	25	2.1	4.5	7 590 €	-	-

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