



# Flight Files - Aeroprakt A22 Foxbat

BY CASPER HOLLOWAY

**T**he Aeroprakt A22 Foxbat is a rugged go-anywhere aircraft. Very short take-off and landing (VSTOL) performance is nothing short of breathtaking! The plane is superbly manoeuvrable - it will turn on a cent in the air or on the ground. It's very light on the nose-wheel, enabling it to land and take off like a tail-dragger without all the fancy footwork. Cross-wind capability is 17kts. Cruise is a genuine 85-90kts, top speed is 105kts. And when you experience the space inside, you'll realise just how cramped the competitors are. The view out of the A22 Foxbat makes even a helicopter seem claustrophobic.

## Features

1. All metal anodised aluminium riveted airframe with 'Ceconote' doped fabric covered control surfaces and part wing. Cowls and wingtips are composite. All fabric is UV-proofed when sealed and painted, giving a projected 20-year life.

2. Rotax 912ULS (100hp) 4-stroke, liquid cooled power. These engines have achieved an enviable reputation for reliability, with a 1,500 time-before-overhaul - about 10-15 years for the average flyer!

3. A spacious and comfortable cockpit - 128cm (50+ inches) wide, 2-seats side-by-side. Doors are glazed down to the floor, giving a truly 'helicopter-like' view out! Glazed panels behind the cockpit give an almost 360 degree view.

4. Stall speed with flap is a genuine 27kts - as tested by both the PFA in the UK and the DAeC in Germany. Stall characteristics are completely safe: no tendency at all for wing-drop. This means you can safely cruise at 40-45kts close to the ground without worrying about 'tucking' under.

5. Dual controls - single handled centre stick (optional 'Y' double handle), hydraulic brakes, dual rudder pedals and throttles, flap lever centrally placed in the roof.

6. Full span ailerons with 10 and 20 degree 'droop' positions, for ultra-short take offs and even shorter landings.

7. High-lift aerofoil section with forward swept wings to give excellent stall and slow speed handling characteristics.

8. Wide tyres on wide undercarriage are good for rough and/or soft strips. Centre of gravity is close to the main wheels, so the nose can be kept clear of the ground very easily - there's even a small tail wheel!

9. Finally, the Aeroprakt A22 Foxbat is big fun to fly - it turns on a cent both in the air and on the ground, take-off is breathtaking and the good cruise speed means you can take it places. The VSTOL and relaxed flying characteristics of the A22 Foxbat make it the right alternative for pilots moving on from rag and tube ultralight aircraft but who still wish to carry

on using their small airstrips with confidence. This aircraft will also surprise and delight pilots switching to the Sport/Recreational aircraft category from a more 'formal' background in GA aircraft.

There are now 17 Foxbats flying in Australia, four more on order for customers and three flying in New Zealand. Recently, the Foxbat has been re-certified in Australia based on a new German certificate, which includes the optional ballistic rescue system. A \$4,500 option, the rescue system has now been ordered by four customers, including John Gardon, current RA-Aus President. The Foxbat has an extremely low (and safe) stall speed, a great reputation for reliability, and no airframe problems, so in the past I have questioned the need for a rescue parachute. I would rather control my landing into wind if I had to go into the trees or water, than drift under a chute at the mercy of the wind. After all, it's not landing in the trees which is likely to do the damage but falling down through the branches to the ground.

However, John Gardon gave me one of the most powerful reasons I have heard for a parachute - what if the pilot becomes incapacitated (heart, brain, etc) and their passenger is not a pilot? Pulling the red rescue system handle would save at least one life! So think about that rescue system when you order your aircraft: it may be a relatively small price to pay for your passenger's (and maybe your own) life.