

FK-Lightplanes now available in NZ

TWO NEW bright yellow Light Sport Aircraft at the recent Tauranga City Airshow attracted a good deal of attention. Ron Donaldson imported them a year ago after acquiring the Australasian distributorship for FK Lightplanes in Germany. No stranger to sport aviation, Ron was previously the local distributor for Storm kitsets. Ron says that he has followed the development of FK Lightplanes for a good ten years and was delighted to obtain his distributorship for the aircraft.

Ron and wife Robin well remember the day their new aircraft arrived. They not only watched the ship enter Tauranga harbour, but also saw it unloaded and their container placed on the truck for delivery to the airport. The aircraft were easily unloaded and assembled and when local identity and pilot of all things that fly, Phill Hooker noticed them a short time later he phoned Ron immediately to enquire what he would have to do to be the first person to fly "two of the most beautiful microlights I've ever seen". That was duly arranged with Phill pronouncing the aircraft a delight to fly.

The FK-9 and FK-14 exhibit a lot of style and a very high build quality which Ron says is evidence of the professionalism he encountered when he visited the finishing and distribution facility in Speyer, Germany and met with their designer Peter Funk. Most of the manufacturing is in fact completed in Poland, from where the aircraft are transported to Germany for fit-out, testing and final delivery inspections.

A history of FK-Lightplanes

The evolution of FK-Lightplanes can be followed back to 1959 when Otto Funk designed an all metal glider. The metal-bonding construction method he used remains to this day as one of the special design features of FK aircraft. Much further glider development followed. In 1989 the FK-9 Mark I became Funk's first commercial design in collaboration with his son Peter. This aircraft has evolved to the Mark IV version, available since 2003. The FK-12 Comet biplane first appeared in 1997 and

the FK-14 Polaris in 1999.

The high wing FK-9 in particular is a very popular aircraft in Europe and current production is running at one per week. Its sleeker sibling, the FK-14 is being produced at the rate of one every five weeks. Ron has both the FK-9 and FK-14 available for demonstration and sale at Tauranga.

The FK-9 Mark IV

The premise of the FK-9 is versatility. The composite fuselage has an additional tubular steel cockpit frame for crash protection. Wings are of carbon fibre construction and the tailplane is aluminium. The FK-9 offers up to 800km of range and cruise speeds of over 200km/h. Stall begins at 64km/h. Power is from the Rotax 912 or 912-S. Ron's aircraft is fitted with the 100hp 912-S option.

It is also fitted with optional folding wings. These require no special tools and just one person is able to fold the wings flush against the fuselage in barely 5 minutes. This provides for very economical storage if required and also the ability for the aircraft to be easily towed behind a car.

Cockpit doors are large and operated by gas struts and the cabin is roomy at 42" wide. Seat backs are adjustable and there is good luggage room available which is accessible from an external door.

The FK-9 is available in either nose or tail wheel configurations. Ron's FK-9 is also fitted with a factory tow hook which Ron says is ideal for towing gliders or banners. The FK-9 has performed well when used for glider towing in Germany, including for larger two place gliders.

The FK-14 Polaris

The FK-14 Polaris is marketed as a fast cruiser without compromise. It has a one piece canopy lifted by gas struts. Also

powered by the Rotax 912 or 912-S (Ron's has the 912-S), the FK-14 cruises at up to 250km/h and climbs at up to 1500fpm. As with the FK-9, stall begins at 64km/h.

The high cruise speed is facilitated in part by an electric Fowler



The FK-9 is available in either nose or tail wheel configurations.



Doors lift upwards for easy access. The tubular steel cockpit frame can be seen. Note also the access door to the luggage area and the towhook under the tail.



The FK-14 Polaris has electric Fowler flaps which allow wing extension of up to 20%. Powered by a Rotax 912-S, it will cruise at up to 250km/h



At left: The Rotax 912-S engine installation in the FK-14. At right: Both aircraft have basic instrument panels with plenty of room for expansion.

flap system which allows wing extension of up to 20%. This wing and flap system was developed by Otto Funk in cooperation with the University of Stuttgart using its laminar wind tunnel

As with the FK-9, construction is of composite materials with a tubular steel cockpit frame for crash protection. The wing structure is a carbon/nomex sandwich. The fuel tank is situated outside of designed crumple zones and again there is plenty of storage space for luggage. Some of this space on Ron's FK-14 though has been taken with a ballistic recovery chute. This is a factory option for both the FK-9 and FK-14. Ron says the system has been used in Europe when a pilot became disoriented in cloud and realised he had lost control. He landed uninjured. The FK-14 is also available in either of nose or tail wheel configurations.

Practical beauty

Ron's FK-9 Mark IV and FK-14 Polaris are both laden with interesting features and are undeniably attractive aircraft. They also exude quality with everything fitting and looking as it should. Ron describes them as "The aristocrats of light sport aircraft". Very practical for private use and touring, they are also capable of glider and banner towing and should easily find a place in the New Zealand training arena. Both aircraft can be registered in either of the microlight or LSA categories. Ron welcomes all enquiries and says that test flights can easily be arranged.

For more information

Ron Donaldson can be contacted on 07 574 5667 or 027 333 3831, or email: donro@kinect.co.nz



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