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SPORT PILOT – LIGHT SPORT AIRCRAFT



"Rainbow Aircraft Cheetah XLS"

Jesse Peckham



"Bowers Fly Baby"

Jesse Peckham



"Flight Design CT"



"Pietenpol Air Camper"

ICON Holds First Public Water Flight Demo of A5 At EAA AirVenture

by Jim Biddilli

OSHKOSH, WIS. – The Los Angeles-based ICON Aircraft Company, a startup Light Sport Aircraft (LSA) manufacturer, held its first public water flight demonstration for its A5 amphibian aircraft at the EAA Seaplane Base on Lake Winnebago near Oshkosh, Wisconsin, during EAA AirVenture on July 31. The aircraft performed three flight demonstrations, including takeoffs, landings and water taxi maneuvering. The ICON A5 made its debut at the 2008 EAA AirVenture.

The ICON A5 is a two-seat, amphibian (land and water) LSA that features a high-strength, lightweight carbon



ICON A5

Jim Biddilli

fiber airframe, intuitive automotive-style cockpit, an aircraft parachute system, and folding wings that allow the aircraft to be trailered behind a sports utility vehicle.

The aircraft does not have "outriggers" like most seaplanes, including most of the new LSA designs. Rather, the A5 uses "planing"

wingtips that actually hydroplane on the water.

The design of the aircraft hull was the combined effort of several naval architects. Its design functions as a "wing," as well as a platform to enter and exit the aircraft. The interior looks more like a sports car than an aircraft with the instruments closely resembling those found at the racetrack. However, a "glass" cockpit is optional, along with a ballistic parachute system and custom trailer to use when storing the folding-wing aircraft in the owner's garage.

Kirk Hawkins, ICON Founder & CEO, was present for the demonstration. Jon Karkow is the test pilot and lead aero engineer.

Karkow is not new to the industry. He spent 21 years with Burt Rutan's Scaled Composites in Mojave, Calif., and left Scaled Composites along with three other design engineers and started working at ICON. Karkow had previously worked on most of Rutan's aircraft, including Space Ship One and Two. When the direction of Scaled Composites turned away from new technology GA-type aircraft, Karkow decided it was time to leave and go with a company that still had GA as a primary initiative. The

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idea of a carbon fiber seaplane sounded intriguing and more in line with Karkow's thinking.

Hawkins (a former USAF F-16 pilot and Stanford Business School graduate) makes a strong case that the mainstream aircraft manufacturers have forgotten that most people like to fly, and that the typical GA pilot really cannot justify the cost of an aircraft based solely on business use....at least small, single-engine aircraft. LSAs allow people to enjoy flying for fun and at a significant reduction in cost. The target consumer is the Sport Pilot Certificate holder.

With several locations offering two-week Sport Pilot Certificate courses, and no required medical exam, the Sport Pilot Certificate and Light Sport



Geoff Sobering

Aircraft have not only opened the door to new pilots, but existing pilots who just want to fly for fun. The seaplane aspect of the ICON A5 is intriguing because it not only allows you to fly to your favorite fishing spot, but serves as a boat as well.

Training in the A5 is included as a part of the aircraft's price. It does assume that you already have a Sport Pilot Certificate or higher. For those

who do not, ICON has a two-week Sport Pilot course that is offered at one of their ICON-approved training centers.

ICON's manufacturing plant is located at Tehachapi, Calif., which is not far from the Mohave/Bakersville area.

Aircraft Specifications

- Aircraft Length: 22 feet.
- Aircraft Width Folded: 8.5 feet.
- Aircraft Height: 8.3 feet.
- Wingspan: 34 feet.
- Gross Weight: 1430 lbs.
- Useful Load: 430-530 lbs (depending upon options).
- Baggage: 60 lbs.
- Fuel: 20 gals. (auto or avgas).
- Maximum Speed: 105 kts (120 mph).
- Range: 300 nm (345 sm).
- Engine: Rotax 912 (100 hp).
- Take-off Distance: 750 feet.
- Price: \$139,000 with \$5,000 refundable deposit.
- Expected Delivery: Third Quarter 2011

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SeaMax Competes In Light Sport Aircraft Amphibian Market

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OSHKOSH, WIS. – Not to be outdone by the US-built ICON A5 in the Light Sport Aircraft (LSA) amphibian category, the Brazilian-built SeaMax M-22 was also on display at the EAA Seaplane Base throughout EAA AirVenture-Oshkosh 2009, July 27-August 2. SeaMax is manufactured by Airmax, which is partly owned by the Omni group, a leading Portuguese aviation company.

Designed for both pleasure and mission-specific operations, the M-22 redefines typical concepts of beauty, speed, range, endurance, comfort and versatility.

The SeaMax has a composite fuselage made of carbon fiber and Kevlar, and a fabric-covered wing. A composite wing is also available for the S-LSA market. It has electric landing gear, which takes about 9 seconds to retract, and electric flaps. The brakes, located on the pilot's side, are hydraulic.

There are a number of options available, including dual throttle controls, dual brakes, various

instrumentation upgrades, and avionics and radio packages.

According to SeaMax, the M-22 provides superb handling and flying qualities, and predictable and docile stall characteristics, all designed to help lower pilot workload. Takeoff, both in water and on land, is short and easy thanks to refined aerodynamics and the powerful Rotax 912S 100 hp engine, and a warp-drive three-blade propeller. According to Airmax, the aircraft can takeoff and land in 300 feet on the ground, and 350 feet on water. Cruising speed is 115 mph, and the stall speed is 36 mph. Climb capabilities and endurance are equally impressive.

The 47-inch wide cabin features a central control stick, and dual rudder pedals. The optical-quality one-piece canopy offers excellent visibility, while ensuring superior instrument panel ergonomics.

The SeaMax lists for \$137,000.

For additional information, contact SeaMax USA at 863-557-4457 (www.seamaxusa.com). □