

A blue and white microlight aircraft is shown from a high-angle, top-down perspective, flying over a landscape of green fields and brown earth. The aircraft has a high-wing configuration and a tricycle landing gear. The name 'Savannah' is visible on the fuselage. The magazine title 'MFE' is overlaid in a large, stylized, outlined font at the top left.

# MFE

MicroLight Flying

Mar-Apr 2008 n Published by the BMAA

## Sticky Air

Vortex generators  
give Savannah a lift

## Also inside

Paramotoring  
in Bolivia

Touring in a  
Quik GT450

Learning to  
instruct



# GRAND TOURER

Well, is it?

The Journeyman Balladeer answers his own question

The Journeyman (JO) part of me flies with his head, so he was thrilled with Geoff Hall's review of the P&M Quik GT450 in last May's issue: indeed, fairly salivating at 'lateral stability and yaw/roll harmonization'. But the Balladeer (BA) flies with his heart, so he wanted to know 'What does GT stand for?' Andy Oliver was on hand to record the ensuing conversation.

JO: 'GT450 means that it is a Grand Tourer, with a 450kg MTOW.'

BA: 'Well, is it? Is it grand for touring? Or is it just go-faster stickers. Geoff Hall only flew it round Enstone, so how can he tell if it does what it says on the fibreglass? Indeed, there is a little too much in the decals department to my mind. It's a thoroughbred for grown-ups, not a ride pimped up for boy racers.'

JO: 'We need to set assessment criteria before we can add to Geoff Hall's article. For example, "Is the workspace well ventilated?" and "is heating adequate?"'

BA: 'That will be 100% Yes and 100% No then.'

I interrupt this technical exchange to point out that it was a Pegasus GT450 that Brian Milton and Miles Hilton-Barber flew to Athens earlier in the year, en route for Sydney. Brian's single reference to this fact, in his website write-up, is to state that he had never flown one before. The Journeyman Balladeer feels able to provide a more detailed judgement, based on the experience of flying GT450 G-JOBA to Warsaw and back in August 2006. A quick comparison offers his credentials to an opinion.

The Balladeer (BA): 'For touring you need an aircraft that is a combination of a Duracell Bunny, a Volvo Estate and Olga Korbut, the diminutive soviet multi-Olympic gold-winning gymnast of the 1970s.'

The Journeyman (JO): 'My criteria would firstly be Reliability. When you are 1000 miles from home you need an aircraft that just keeps going.'

Above: Reliability? Always starts, and never stops. Need an average of 69mph and under 12 l/h for over 2500 miles? The GT450 just keeps going

Below: Swagability? Need the capacity and weight limit for 8 days independence? The GT450 has it



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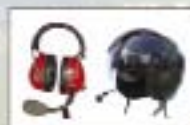
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Bonus points. The bigger screen reduces the wind chill but not the view

▷ BA: 'Like a Duracell Bunny.'

JO: 'My second criterion is Swagability. To be totally self-contained, with all your personal and flying swag, with food, camping kit, oil, parts, maps food, reserve fuel, and a double malted nightly sun-downer means complete autonomy and independence.'

BA: 'OK, so it's a flying Volvo Estate.'

JO: 'If you have read of the plane-eating weather encountered by MB and RM-H you will note that it was a GT450 that handled landings where the crosswind was reported at 40mph. So my final criteria is Flexibility.'

BA: 'Which Olga had. So we are agreed?'

JO: 'OK. Reliability first. The Rotax 912 is proven as a quality engine, with over 10,000 of the 80bhp version sold.'

BA: 'My simple maths tells me that the 912S has a horse pulling every 4.5kg of weight. This is more than enough to get you out of recently harvested stubble fields, or out of trouble. I just do not understand why there is a note of dissatisfaction creeping into MF about the dominance of the Rotax 912 engines.'

'Having flown close to 700h in front of both the 912 and 912S in the past six years, I have yet to have the engine fail to start or miss a beat. Park it outside in rain for 31h, it starts. Over the Channel at 11,000ft or hopping hedgerows at considerably less, it doesn't stop. Its reliability inspires confidence. It never overheated, even with the side panniers, over the August Polish plains in over 90°F.

'The 65 litre tank and a constant average of under 12 l/h is good for 350 miles if you have the nerve. All this, and good route planning with options, means that you can keep pressing on, and keep on impressing.'

JO: 'Perhaps we need to suggest areas of improvement.'

BA: 'A drain plug at the bottom of the cockpit, after 31h in the rain.'

JO: 'You don't need it if you use the covers, as supplied.'

BA: 'Agreed, but, since they are rather bulky, I tour with an Army cape, which keeps me dry on the ground and makes a pretty effective cockpit cover with some bungees.'

BA: 'I do have a concern about these Warp Drive propeller blades. We have had to replace three due to chips in only 75h. The standard Quantum gave us 500h with only one replacement. We might be rather cavalier about where we land, but once you're in, then you have to get out.'

▷



Above: Flexibility? If your destination airstrip has been returned to agricultural use, and the light is going, you need to be sure the plane can handle forced landings, and rough departures. The GT450 can

Would you let a horizontal windsock and intermittent rain be a reason to abandon a day out in Bad Langensalza? The GT450 wouldn't



The Polish love flying and fliers, and flexwings are a novelty. The JB and G-JOBA had many occasions to thank both club members and officials for advice and assistance

▷ 'Also, is there a trike that has not had the trim on top of the fibreglass edges come loose?'

JO: 'Minor details. The trike is... the trike. However, this is where the swagability comes from. The new-style side panniers allow you to arrange your stuff as if on a shelf, rather than in a kitbag. You just look in to locate and pull out the cooker and brew kit, or the oil, or the Polish sausage. You don't have to pack and unpack, which makes for shorter stops and faster scrambles.'

'The map pockets inside the canvas sides held more than 12 maps and the right map was quickly available. Under the

engine there is room for tent, sleeping bag and clothes. It even dries out damp stuff. Really, the solo pilot can be totally self-sufficient for camping and cooking at deserted strips, for as much as 10 days. You just need to pick up fuel and water at major stops.

'Lashing a rucksack into the back seat means you can carry a 20 litre container as back-up, and allows you to walk to a petrol station without stretching your arms on the walk back.'

BA: 'Why not land in a field by the garage?'

JO: 'As we did. So what's it with Olga Korbut?'

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BA: 'Don't ask. I was only 16 for the 1972 Munich Olympics.

JO: 'Moving right along then, as you do in a GT450. Flexibility. Here the wonder of the wing makes its mark. The leading edge APS is designed to maintain the profile of the wing at all speeds.'

BA: 'You are just repeating a chunk of text plagiarised from Geoff Hall. What does it mean?'

JO: 'You move the bar in any direction, at any speed, and the plane follows immediately and smoothly. This, and the trim system, makes you feel absolutely in control, and it requires no effort to fly hour after hour: for 7h if you wish. As we did! The bigger screen transforms the pilot's comfort, and reduces fatigue.'

BA: 'For me the smaller wing means you can handle more wind. Returning from Kortrijk, Belgium, into Lydd, G-JOBA saw me safe in a 25kt-er, with added rain. Just whack the rear wheels down first and fast and the suspension takes it. Can I add that we registered 117mph over the Moselle? That's a burst of 47mph above the average cruise speed for the whole trip.'

JO: 'That's just showing off, and anyway Gerry Snodden told me at Spamfield that he clocked over 120mph when he and the Newtonards boys did their German tour this June.'

BA: 'He's a professional, and we are just amateurs. However, note that the professionals are buying them. So it's a Grand Tourer then?'

JO: 'It certainly is, Olly, it certainly is. And we don't mind conceding that it deserves 50% of the credit for any big adventure.'

BA: 'Why didn't Brian Milton mention it on his website?'

JO: 'Well, I guess he was speechless with rage while we are just blinded with admiration.'

BA: 'I have another question: "When will we see Billy Brooks in the Civil Honours list?"' MF

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