

DON'T SELL YOUR AIRTOURER STAN TILLEY

Following my little 'Dizzy' spell last November and despite a 100% medical check early this year I was shocked when CASA put a rider on the medical certificate requiring a safety pilot for a period of 12 months. Basically this meant that I could only fly a VH registered aeroplane if I had another pilot in the right-hand seat.

Having booked and paid for the trip to Narromine and beyond, something had to be done. Such a restriction does not apply to my RAA certificate to fly so the Ultralight scene was investigated.

The result was that I arranged to hire a very attractive little 'plastic fantastic'. Two seats, 105 knot cruise, 17 litres per hour, five hour endurance, full instrumentation including A/H, DG and an Autopilot, plus a moving map EFIS 'glass' box, together with three bladed prop and electric trim and flaps. I also arranged for a Transponder to be fitted.

The gadget arrived after a three and a half hour trip at 9500ft, from Victoria. Things were looking really good.

After a few hours of local flying I decided that the worst feature about the aircraft was the flap limiting speed of 60 knots. Sure the aircraft was very light and bounced around excessively and with a maximum luggage capacity of 12 kg and limited space, it was going to be either 'turn undies inside out every second day or wash daily'.

Bonnie and I did a trial flight of about an hour and a half to Tasman Peninsula. The aircraft was 'lively' in even minor air currents which made it very difficult to achieve and maintain the 105 cruising speed. Her comment "Isn't it slow and bumpy". Best to plan at 100. Vision was great but internal space was decidedly limited.

Another session the next day was used to set up the aeroplane for longer distance travel. My clear perspex 'boxes' that velcro on to the dash were placed in position for the ERSA and maps, life jackets were worn, everything was reduced to the minima.

What about the raft? It would fit behind the seat but could we ever get it if required?

Luggage bags were tried and discarded but finally a couple of sloppy sports bags and plastic bags seemed the 'best bet'. Even so we seemed already overweight and what about the Airtourer Co-op files of 'bits and pieces'?

Then the weather took charge. Our departure day forecast 35 knot winds 'on the nose' at 2000ft. Even with a five hour endurance it was a "NO NO", so it was back to the normal daily routine.

About lunchtime the wind appeared to drop. I rushed home, collected Bonnie and the gear, and we set off. At least we would get started on the trip with a stop at Launceston to refuel and re-examine the conditions.

The wind was returning. The takeoff was very slow. Just how heavy were we? Then just above the ground, "WHAM" the turbulence struck. Up on one wing, down and over, up and around, like an autumn leaf we tossed around. Eventually we settled down a bit and at 2500 ft battled our way around the mountain over Hobart and headed for Launceston.

Then we sat and tossed and sat and bounced some more. It was 86 miles to L'ton and it took us one and a half hours. The average ground speed was under 60knots. I asked Bonnie if she wanted to cross Bass Strait at that speed and she said "No". (Actually we could not have continued anyway as the aircraft is not certified for night flight and daylight would have beaten us.)

So we spent two very pleasant days with my brother Ray and his wife Yvonne. This was great as Ray is struggling a bit health-wise and had just come out of hospital. I had thought that a



VH-MTL Port Philip



Aerobatic Fun



Ray and Stan