

# RARE 72 YEAR OLD BIRD

Kevin Bailey has just spent well over two years restoring this gull winged 1935 Stinson. Immaculate, it is a privilege to see a machine so well re-built and flying again. The restoration completed, Kevin, his wife Vicki (originally from Tasmania) and daughter Sarah took off on a family holiday. UXL was bought as a family plane, and while Sarah is interested in traveling with her parents they want to do as many trips as they can. The fresh restoration

has also restored. The Stinson is an executive transport aircraft, first brought into Australia in 1936 by the Vacuum oil company which was taken over by Mobil Oil. It was impressed into the airforce during WWII as a communications plane after the war it went back to the oil company going into a string of private owners from 1948.



**B: More like a car, interior wood grain and leather trim**



**L: Vicki, daughter Sarah and Kevin Bailey touring Australia in vintage style and comfort**

It has had a Tasmanian owner, Findlay from Launceston with the call sign KAF. There is a photo in the TAC Clubrooms. "UXL has a seating capacity for five, travels along at 110knots, burning 60 litres fuel per hour, with an oil consumption nearly the same!" joked Vicki.



Prior to the restoration there wasn't a straight panel on the Aircraft. It has taken Kevin over four thousand hours to bring this machine back to better condition than it was in the 1930's. "I worked a fulltime job and put in another 30 to 40 hours a week minimum for two and a half years to get UXL completed, absolutely knackered I was!" laughed Kevin

meant it won at the Avalon Airshow, Best Vintage and Champion of Champions, then on to tour Australia. A visit to Tasmania to see Vicki's mum, sister and brother, then off to Victoria and NSW before returning to W.A.

"We're taking six weeks off to come and see as much of Australia as we can, I'm also a Pilot having been flying for over 20 years. That's where I met Kevin flying a Tigermoth, got hooked and got

"When I took it out for the first flight it was great satisfaction, just satisfaction to have achieved it, and satisfaction to have it back in the sky you know, I get a kick out of restoring planes and bringing them back to life basically." Kevin said.

"The challenge of doing it was pretty massive, cause it was a big job. You know the challenge of making that new engine cowl, it took me a month just to psych myself up to attack it, cause I really couldn't see how I was going to achieve it. But finally I rolled my sleeves up and into it. My brother in law was helping me, we worked out a scheme, made a mould and blow me down there it is." smiled Kevin.



**You need a step ladder VH-UXL stands pretty tall powered by a 300HP Lycoming R680 which still has a half life to run.**



**A: Kevin building a new engine cowling B: stripped to the bare metal, this was a big job.**

my licence then." "We've been able to share a bit of the workload Navigation and so on, I fly the Stinson, it is heavy to control you really have to trim it as best as you can, I don't land it, it's too heavy for me." said Vicki.

They own other vintage planes, a Tigermoth and a Chipmunk which Kevin



This model gull winged Stinson is the only one in Australia, there are only three restored in the USA. It is a fairly rare aircraft and a pleasure to have it drop into Cambridge to be able to see a wonderful piece of aviation history, meticulously restored and flying again after sitting for 24 years in a museum.