



Foxbat Australia

Newsletter – March 2011

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Cleaning polycarbonate screens

I am often asked about the best way to clean the Foxbat polycarbonate windshield and doors.



First things first:

- polycarbonate sheet is about 250 times stronger than glass and about half the weight. The drawback is that it is much more easily damaged
- polycarbonate sheets are scratch *resistant* not scratch *proof*
- similarly they are UV *resistant* not UV *proof*
- polycarbonate expands in heat far more than metals, glass and wood. Therefore allow plenty of space for expansion with at least 25-30% oversize drill holes when riveting sheets to other materials

Here are some definite DON'Ts:

- Do not allow petrol/gasoline or any common solvent (MEK, acetone, toluene etc) to contact the surface, as they will permanently damage not only the clarity but also the strength of the sheet.
- Do not use household cleaners like Windex, Mr Sheen etc. They contain chemicals which even in small quantities can damage the plastic, accelerating browning, milkiness and even crazing.
- Do not use automotive cleaning compounds on the polycarbonate as they often contain ammonia-based compounds, which will damage the material.
- If you need to seal any leaky areas do not use any silicon with an acetic (vinegar-smell) cure, only use neutral-cure silicon.

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- Do not use a weather cover if the screen is dirty/dusty. The inside of the cover (lined or not) will absorb the grit and slowly but surely grind away at your screen, particularly if the aircraft is parked outside in the wind. If you can't clean it first, it's better to do without the cover if the screen is dirty!

Washing & cleaning

- Do not wash in direct sunlight!
- Use plenty of clean water to rinse off any dust and grit. Some people advocate using a tiny amount of soft-soap or even dishwasher liquid but limit it to a couple of drops in a full bucket.
- Use only a soft and sopping wet cloth to spread the water and do not use a circular motion – only up and down or side to side; try to use the same direction every wash.
- Allow the surface to dry before polishing.
- Polish with a very soft clean cloth using Plexus or Vuplex or other proprietary polycarbonate cleaner. These products help to remove small scratches in the surface and frequent use definitely prolongs the life of the screen. Again, use side-to-side or up-and-down movements, not circular polishing.
- If your screen becomes badly scratched there are a number of renovating kits available on the market. The one I have found to be most effective so far (although I have tried only 2-3 types) is the Optica 4 Deluxe Scratch Off Kit. It is not cheap and you need to put some effort into it but the kit is complete and works well.

Foxbat wins top award at Avalon 2011



March 2011 saw the latest Australian International Airshow at Avalon Airport near Melbourne.

The show is held every two years and is a celebration of everything aviation from ear-splitting military jets to simple rag & tube aircraft, and everything in between.

I wasn't aware of it but the Avalon organising committee scrutinise aircraft at the show and make awards for all sorts of things, including the best commercial displays and aircraft types.

I am very pleased to say that my demonstrator Aeroprakt A22LS Foxbat, 24-7676, won the 'Civil Concourse D'Elegance' award for the Best Overall Recreational Aircraft. Considering some of the aircraft I saw on display myself – which were of superb quality and presentation – I was very honoured to receive the plaque, shown at left.

It was a huge surprise to me when Zane Tully of RA-Aus approached me on the Sunday morning and handed me the award – many thanks, Zane, for making my day, and also to all the workers at Aeroprakt, who manufacture this excellent little aircraft!

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Foxbat for disabled pilots (2)

Testing is now almost complete on the A22LS Foxbat control system for disabled pilots – see the photos below.

One of the clever aspects of the Aeroprakt control design is that it can easily be converted between normal rudder control and disabled pilot hand controls. This means a flying club/school does not have to double up on aircraft and can use the same aircraft for both types of training and hire.



Combined throttle, brakes and rudder control

I was fortunate enough to be invited to a gathering at Deniliquin earlier this month of around 12-15 disabled pilots. I arrived around midday – just in time for an excellent lunch provided by Deniliquin Flying Club.

It was interesting to hear the comments and questions about the Foxbat and other aircraft suitability for disabled piloting. During the day, several presentations were made, including one in the afternoon from a senior CASA doctor who covered many aspects of medicals. This really opened my eyes to some of the issues faced by disabled pilots.

Due to some technical gremlins, I could not show the group the video of the factory testing the special combined hand control in the Foxbat, although it has subsequently been released along with some still photos, to a number of people who attended.

I could not stay for the Saturday night dinner for business reasons – I had to return to Tyabb for a couple of customer demonstrations – but it was clear from the meeting that there are many disabled people who would either like to learn to fly or improve their current flying experiences. The Foxbat should, I hope both in theory and practice, make an excellent trainer with its modified controls. It is an easy aircraft to fly and should help to create confidence in new students who are disabled. Having gained a basic flying training in a relatively inexpensive aircraft it should then be easier to move on to bigger aircraft.

I have one firm order for the controls-modified Foxbat from a flying school in New South Wales with another school seriously interested.

The first aircraft should be here in May 2011. Watch this space for the arrival and launch information!

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Dynon releases long-awaited v3.0 for SkyView



Promised for quite a few months, at last Dynon has released version 3.0 of the firmware for its SkyView System – the big difference being that you can now use the system for GPS navigation on the SkyView screen(s) instead of needing a separate GPS.

Downloading the firmware from Dynon is simplicity itself – they even supply a Dynon USB drive with the SkyView so (unlike the D180/D100 series) you do not even need to take a laptop to the aircraft. The navigation firmware is installed on a trial basis and will work for 30 flying hours, after which time you are presumably hooked and will pay the hefty US\$500 license fee so you can continue using at the end of the free trial.

Downloading the Jeppesen Pacific Database was not so simple, involving phone registration with Jeppesen for a user name & password, then downloading their download manager, then downloading the database itself. The database is not yet properly set up for simple online purchase and download.

Was it all worth the wait and the hassle? At this stage, I'd give a definite 'Yes'. The detail on my 10" screen is good and some flights around the area showed it to be quick and accurate. I have yet to download the Southern Pacific Terrain hi-res database, which I assume will operate the Synthetic Vision aspect of the screen but this is a large file of almost 2 Gb so it will have to wait a bit...more in future Newsletters.

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Foxbat cruise speeds



I regularly receive enquiries and questions about the cruise speed of the A22LS Foxbat.

All cruise speeds quoted by the factory and in our website are True Air Speeds (TAS). These can be quite different from Indicated Air Speeds (IAS) and Calibrated Air Speeds (CAS). For example, an IAS of 90 knots at 3,000 feet on a QNH of 1015 and Outside Air Temperature (OAT) of 20 celsius equates to a TAS of close to 97 knots.

It's also worth remembering that an aircraft loaded with two people and full fuel will cruise more slowly than a single occupant, half-fuel aircraft.

However.....the Foxbat is not really about fast cruise speeds – it's about enjoying your flying in many different ways: being able to take off and land in some very small places, often inaccessible to faster aircraft; it's about having space, air and comfort in the cabin and a fantastic view out. Most of all, it's about flying an aircraft with easy and safe handling characteristics, which gives you confidence and sheer flying pleasure.

Like life – flying is more about enjoying the journey than reaching the final destination as quickly as possible!

NATFLY 2011



Yet another year has gone by and we are coming up to Easter – and RA-Aus's great fly-in event – Natfly – at Temora Aerodrome in NSW. If you haven't been to Temora, or a recent Natfly, make an effort and come along. Temora is well known for its warbirds – all kept in regular flying condition and the viewing areas will be open over the Natfly event.

There are usually hundreds of light and recreational aircraft which have flown in and are on display – Foxbat Australia will have aircraft there to view and test fly on display areas 7 & 8 alongside the main taxi-way.

Put it in your diary now – Easter Friday and Easter Saturday 22 & 23 April. Hope to see you there!

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