

The first Quicksilver Sport 2S has landed in Australia and is stretching its legs in northern NSW.

Its open, sporty cabin has the “out there” feel of your average trike but with one major advantage if you haven’t had your brain retrained for weight-shift aircraft.

The biggest advantage of the Sport 2S over trikes is its 3 axis controls, which makes for safer crosswind landing, and there’s no need to have your brain regrafted and reflexes “reversed” for trike-style controls.

“If you already have GA or recreational aviation experience then you will feel right at home.” At least, that’s what the importer, Bert Moonen, says of them.

“With a set of tundra tyres fitted you could do the occasional beach landing or land in rougher than normal paddocks,” Bert said. “I’m sure there’s also farmers who would like to move around their own property to check stock, pumps and so on and land almost anywhere on their land”. They could also use it as a tax deduction.”

For those of you who like “the wind in your hair” and the feel of “basic flying as she was meant to be experienced” but with 3 axis experience then it’s a way of combining the fun and ease of flying in your next aircraft. The Sport 2S is the latest addition to the Quicksilver range of aircraft which Bert says is basically a strutted and updated version of the long serving MX series of aircraft from Quicksilver.

COULD THIS BE A

3 AXIS

“The main changes from the MX is that it uses the tried and tested GT500 wings and struts and has a wider cabin, if you can call it a cabin, for the fat Americans (hey, those’re Quicksilver’s words not mine) and with easier assembly, a steerable nose wheel and many more improvements.”

There are already more than 200 Sport 2S flying in the USA and the model is currently outselling the MX series. The powerplant is the “ever-reliable Rotax 582” and comes as a 60-hour build kit using basic tools. Bert reckons it’s not an onerous exercise.

“Having been through the exercise I can honestly say it was a pleasurable experience to build your own aircraft and know every last nut and bolt,” he said.

The main tools builders will need are a good set of imperial sockets (remember, the Yanks haven’t discovered the metric system yet), a set of spanners and a few other basic tools.

Bert says the whole project moves a little quicker with a little help.

“If you can get a friend to help you, the job gets done a bit quicker and sometimes a second pair of hands and a second brain helps when you’re reading the manual,” Bert said.

“I found probably the hardest part of the exercise was trying to slide on the skins for the ailerons, which were pretty tight. Other than that it reminded me of my old mechano set when I was six years old!

SOME PERSONAL THOUGHTS ON LIGHT TRAINING AIRCRAFT

Bert Moonen confesses to some bias in liking his Quicksilvers, but claims he has plenty of reasons to back that preference.

“I believe there is a huge shortage in the training market for “Lightie” trainers as I discovered many years ago when I first attained my student license,” he said.

“I hope to help fix this problem over the next few months by bringing the Sport 2S and the GT500-912 on line for training.



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THE SPECIFICATIONS:

Powerplant: Rotax 582 (65hp)
Length – 5.48 metres
Height – 2.43 metres
Wingspan – 9.44 metres
Wing area – 174.1 sq ft
Wing loading – 5.74 lb/sq ft
Power loading – 15.63 lb/hp
Empty weight – 195 kgs
Useful load – 256.7 kgs
Payload w/full fuel – 214.7 kgs
Max takeoff weight – 451.7 kgs
Fuel capacity – 22.7 Litres
Takeoff distance, ground roll – 73 metres
Takeoff distance, 50 ft obstacle – 200 metres
Rate of climb – 500 ft/min
Max level speed – 60 kts
Landing distance, 50 ft obstacle (with brake) – 147 metres
Landing distance, ground roll (with brake) – 67 metres
Glide ratio – 5.5:1
Minimum sink rate – 660 ft/min
Fuel Burn – 13 lph



Always a Reason...

Back in the days when Pan Am existed, this conversation is purported to have taken place in Germany.

A Pan Am jet waiting for start clearance in Munich overheard the following:

Lufthansa (in German): "Ground, what is our start clearance time?"

Ground (in English): "If you want an answer you must speak in English."

Lufthansa (in English): "I am a German, flying a German aeroplane, in Germany.

Why must I speak English?"

Unknown voice from another aeroplane (in a beautiful British accent): "Because you lost the bloody war."



The new Quicksilver after assembly

TRIKE?

As a “long time admirer” of Quicksilver aircraft, his first flight was around 20 years ago in an MX2 from a rough dirt strip in Tuncurry NSW with a scenic flight over the beaches.

“After that flight I knew that recreational flying was something that I wanted to do (eventually), but it took me another 15 years before I finally got around to get my student license,” he said.

“I had reached a stage in my life where Melanie and I had become empty nesters (you know what it’s like, the food, electricity, phone and other bills go down dramatically) and there are some extra dollars – now what can I do with it.”

“After following incident and accident reports in the US over the years I was satisfied that Quicksilvers had a low incident record.

“My training for my student licence was in a Gazelle with Keith McGeachie at Cooranbong, and after 10 hours or so of training I found an advert in the then AUF mag for a Quicksilver GT400 (single seat) that I bought from a farmer in Inverell.

“It was at this stage that I realised the yawning gap in the ultralight training market with a lack of training aircraft for the “lighties”. The Gazelle was more like a Cessna in its flatter landing characteristics compared with the draggier machines, and although Keith did a good job of preparing me for the GT400 with comments like “the Gazelle does this, but the GT will do that”.

“That first solo flight was certainly an adrenaline rush. Taking off in probably 100 metres, climbing out at 45 degrees and getting to 1000 ft in less than a minute and thinking ‘what the hell am I doing up here by myself’. After settling down, my training kicked in pretty quick, checking all the vital signs of this beast I was strapped to the back of, relaxed a bit (not much), and did a couple of circuits before doing a perfect landing (well, I thought so anyway).

“I did many enjoyable hours in that GT400 changing the Rotax 447 to a new 503 and that’s about all I did to it. I reckon it would have to be the easiest recreational aircraft to fly, being very forgiving and with very predictable flight characteristics, yet it takes off like a scalded cat. The GT series was introduced to entice the GA pilots across to the recreational scene; with its yoke steering and flaps.)

“I bought my current GT500-582 from a flier in Mildura and had to endure a 20-hour round trip with my son in law to trailer it back to Newcastle. This is a nice machine with lexan doors, which gives you a warmer ride and a great helicopter-like view.

“After conversing with Quicksilver in the US over a period of time to check various things about the aircraft, and if there were any modifications needed to get my GT500 up to current specs, I was as they say ‘in the right place at the right time’ to pick up the factory dealership for Australia, NZ and South Pacific.

“I am currently halfway through building a GT500-912 which will be my demonstrator /trainer, along with the Sport 2S. I’ve already had calls from Quicksilver owners saying ‘it’s good to see Quicksilver is back’ and I am looking forward to getting many more!”



Trying out the pilots seat