

Australian Air-Ferry

March Newsletter

Babies Flying Airplanes

During the past few months' two pilots making the Pacific crossing without previous experience have approached me in the US, seeking assistance.

On the last occasion I fitted a HF radio, routed the very young pilot and organized fuel at appropriate intervals.

A very old US based ferry pilot accepted the job and allocated it to this very inexperienced junior pilot, without offering much in the way of assistance.

It amazes me that someone would buy a low time aircraft worth a significant amount of money and then throw the keys at just about anyone, and say do fifty hours in this.

I have friends with Porches, NSX Hondas and Harley Davidson motorbikes, they will not allow anyone else to ride or drive their precious toys. And yet here are aircraft worth substantially more and their owners think that just about anyone can do the Pacific crossing.

Think about this, if the wing spar was compromised because an inexperienced pilot, taking incredible risks to build hours. Overloads or overstresses the aircraft causing a small undetectable hairline crack to begin in the wing spar. It makes the trip back to Australia and continues to be missed in routine checks (while increasing in size) until it fails several years later when you are flying your family to the Gold Coast for a holiday. Or maybe when you leant it to your friend to do the same.



Your very cheap ferry pilot at the controls

A pilot who's never made the crossing might over lean the engine and cause internal damage that will not be discovered for years – will you happy if you are forced into a premature top overhaul or will it take an engine failure years later to convince yourself that the cheap ferry flight just was not worth it.

Cause and effect – remember the cause was saving a few dollars early in the aircrafts service.

Don't think that we're anti-young (inexperienced) pilots, we're not – we have taken several pilots along on trips in the past, at our own expense. We regularly make Pacific crossings with enthusiastic young pilots, but we do not allow them to fly alone, they are supervised.

They are guided through the process, and all the fuel decisions are made for them. We would never allow someone to do the trip without having done several trips under supervision, and having deemed them competent. That is after they were considered suitably experienced, time and type rated.

There might be several explanations as to why the new owner lets an inexperienced pilot do the trip, I think the most probable is price.

Be very careful – the inexperienced pilot will do the trip for nothing but the insurance company will charge an enormous fee.

Take a look at the bigger picture, is saving a very small amount of money initially worth any ongoing problems.

Even if you don't want Australian Air-Ferry to do the trip, ring us and ask us who our reputable competitors are. We'll tell you rather than see an aircraft in an accident or damaged during a ferry. And besides it will save us having to equip and explain to an unknown how to do it.

Cirrus handles all Climates

Two more Cirrus aircraft crossed the pond from North America to Australia this month.

During the acceptance stage the aircraft had to be kept in a heated hangar for two hours before we could go flying. (As recommended by TCM Motors)

Outside the snow is falling relentlessly and there's already three foot of snow covering everything.

All the small lakes and dams are frozen over and the Cirrus representative says they're all acceptable runways in an emergency.

So we braved the conditions and took to the sky, the Cirrus (company) pilot isn't impressed with the weather, just another miserable day in this part of the world.

Snow itself isn't a real problem, it's when the cold aircraft encounters moisture that we're cautious.

So we climb as quickly as possible through the cloud to find blue sky above.

In this part of the world you've got to be watching the weather continuously, as it will change quickly and without notification.

We headed to Idaho Falls for a quick refuel and then onto Boise Idaho for an overnight.

There's nothing but blue sky and nil wind in Boise, so we decided that we'd finish the trip to California the next day.



Idaho Falls getting fuel in the Cirrus SR22

We woke the next morning to find snow falling and we later decide that we'll have to wait at least a day before flying again.

We're certainly not going to travel in inclement weather in an aircraft straight out of the factory.

After loosing a day in Boise we departed for California.

After tanking the aircraft we headed for Hawaii and the conditions are almost perfect during the first half of the crossing.

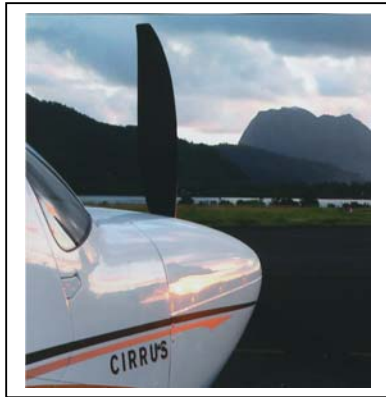
We encountered 20-knot head winds from the half way mark as forecast, but the weather is good despite the wind. We've followed a ridge of high pressure again, they do exist you just have to pick your days.



Sun setting over the Pacific

Mere pictures will never capture the majestic feeling associated with the sunsets in this part of the world, there's a real sense of serenity.

So we've gone from freezing conditions in North America to the humid sultry days in Samoa. Now the ice and snow are quickly forgotten, as the pilot considers runway lengths and reduced engine performance during take off rather than ice and snow.



Samoa at daybreak

The SR22 handles it all. It has encountered some of the coldest conditions in the world and finds itself in one of the hottest climates (humid) in the world. But there was never a doubt that it would not have handled the 7000nm journey.

The Cirrus attracts a lot of attention wherever you go, it is new and some believe unproven. But it is an option worth considering if you're in the market for an aircraft this size. It's loaded with sophisticated avionics and navigation equipment and its airframe is sleek and smooth, fast and maneuverable. Consider New or if required we can place our hands on many pre-owned aircraft at considerable savings over the new price.

Searching for suitable Aircraft

Australian Air-Ferry recently headed for Portland, Maine (North America) to conduct a thorough inspection of a Cessna 404 (Titan).

Our customer wanted to acquire an aircraft suitable for operations in the harsh Australian desert and a few pictures and a brief description just isn't good enough.

We'd planned to thoroughly inspect the aircraft, examine the documentation and then we'd fly.

We arrived early and the office staff were not on deck yet. After trying the office door we headed to the hangar. And yes there were people pretending to work in there.

When we explained who we were and what we wanted, we were pointed towards the aircraft. To our surprise the aircraft had both engines missing, all the seats were removed and several outer panels were off as they were attending to some corrosion.

"I guess we won't be flying today," we said to the head of staff. Yes again the description of the aircraft and its current state varied drastically from the truth.

Later we looked at the lowest time Twin Comanche in the world – this aircraft had been flown down from Canada for us. And again you definitely do not want to believe everything you read. It looked like it had traveled around the world several hundred times, 1,400 hours more like 14,000 hours.

We proceeded down to Detroit and then Florida, Inspecting and reporting on other aircraft that also fit the needs of the customer.

Australian Air-Ferry offers a pre-buy inspection team consisting of a very experienced engineer (Darren Gibson) and pilot Garry Mitchell. We're able to fly anywhere in the world and provide a very comprehensive appraisal of any aircraft.

This is a service that is not associated with our ferry flying, we'll provide a pre-buy inspection no matter who's doing the ferry.

Obviously we would be very thorough, we cannot afford to miss something if the aircraft was going to be ferried.



Pre-buy inspection time – Darren knee deep in Alligators

Surplus Equipment

We have a colour Lowrance 2000C GPS available for \$1,450 Aust. They're equipped with a pacific international database, and have seen very little service. We've also got a six-man life raft that has all sorts of inclusions, never used. Talk to Darren Gibson about these items.

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