

Australian Air-Ferry

Ferry company of choice for all the major manufacturers

March Newsletter

Higher, Faster and Further

Australian Air Ferry delivered the first Columbia 400 to Australia, this is the first of its type in the country, and it arrived just in time for its debut appearance at Avalon AirShow.

Columbia claim to have the highest performance, highest quality, most technologically advanced piston-single on the market, and the team at Australian Air Ferry put it to the test.

If you want to fly higher, further and faster than everyone else, this is the aircraft to do it.



Pilot Michael Cooke with the Columbia 400 at Brisbane Airport

Australian Air Ferry pilot, Michael Cooke said, “I arrived at the Columbia reception area to find an impressive, yet, understated showroom. My expectations were high and I was not disappointed, the staff and factory were equally impressive.”

“I think we’re all a little bit apprehensive of the manufacturers “book figures” rarely do you find an aircraft that performs according to the pilot’s manual.” Michael Cooke explained that this aircraft will take off with FULL FLAP. (40 degrees) Speed brakes extended and climb at 1200 feet per minute. At 150 knots indicated the aircraft is still climbing at 600-700 feet per-minute.”

“When I took off from Santa Barbara at 7am the conditions were calm with clear skies. Once the throttle was opened the aircraft pulled hard as it accelerated down the runway. Lifting into the air at about 85 knots, I accelerated to 125 knots. And it managed to maintain an impressive rate of climb up to 12000 feet.”



The aircraft departs Oregon amidst a bitter winter

“The airspeed climbed as we levelled off at our initial cruising altitude, but it was not coming forward onto the plain in cruise,” Michael explains. “I had a true Airspeed of 170 knots but I knew there was more. I started pumping fuel from the rear bladder tank which shifted the weight forward and within 2-3 hours I had a True Airspeed of 188 knots with a fuel burn of 65 litres/hour.”

“Six hours into the journey I inserted the nose cannular for O2 (oxygen) and climbed to 20,000 feet where I witnessed a remarkable 218 knots TAS at the same fuel burn. We’re operating the aircraft “Lean of Peak” at about 70% power. There’s still plenty more if

you wanted to go faster. The rate of climb all the way to 20,000 feet was also impressive.”

It’s approximately 2100 nm from Santa Barbara to Hilo Hawaii, and the 400 completes the journey in a little over 11 hours, that’s an average ground speed of 190 knots. This elapsed time could have been improved except for the slow start, but for a piston powered aircraft this time was extraordinary.



[The aircraft waits in Santa Barbara \(California\) for the right wind conditions](#)

The Columbia 400, 400i, 400SL and 400SLX are intercooled, twin-turbocharged, four-place aircraft certified to FL250 with a potential cruising speed of 235 knots.

Once inside the cabin, luxuriously appointed with two-tone leather and black walnut trim, you’ll notice the additions, including an integral cup holder/approach plate holder, integral headset hanger/flashlight holder and map pocket.

Pilot Michael Cooke says, “The paint finish, doors, door seals (and yes they actually work), leather, cockpit layout, side-stick, climate control, electrical system is far superior to anything in its class. And yes the air conditioner REALLY works above 30 degrees Celsius.”

Columbia takes pride in the fact that the heat tolerance (of the aircraft skin) allows the colour scheme to be painted on rather than a vinyl applicate. For 2007, Columbia changed the 350 and 400 schemes and added a second scheme for the 400.

Columbia already includes wing and horizontal stabilizer leading edge protectant at no charge and for 2007 will add the protectant film to the wheel pants and nose gear strut free of charge. Fees for custom paint have also been eliminated.



The keyboard mounted within the centre console provides a sophisticated airliner style feel to the cockpit, as well as providing an easily accessible method for data input.

Also new for 2007 models is the Remote Keyless Entry System – a clever option and yet another industry first for Columbia. Although the innovative remote system was first seen on the exclusive Columbia 400 LCE (Limited Commemorative Edition) in 2006, popular demand prompted Columbia to offer the feature standard on SL and SLX packages and make it available as an option on other packages.

Once armed the keyless entry system unlocks the pilot's side door and activates interior cabin lighting and exterior step lighting at the press of a key fob button. The system also has an integral timer that will automatically dim the lights to prevent battery drain.

The Columbia 350 and 400 were certified in Australia with the Garmin 1000 package in September 2006. For Columbia this was the first foreign market to certify both Avidyne Entegra – and Garmin 1000 for local registration.

Both the Avidyne and Garmin packages represent state-of-the-art packages in avionics and the choice is largely a matter of personal preference.

The normally aspirated Columbia 350 cruises at 191 knots while the turbocharged Columbia 400 is the reigning speed king of certified, piston powered aircraft with an impressive cruise speed of 235 knots. Each aircraft is capable of making trips in excess of 1000 nautical miles without refueling.

Columbia 350s and 400s are available in Australia and New Zealand through Columbia Down Under, the company's international sales and service office is based on the Sunshine Coast (Queensland, Australia).

The Australian Air Ferry crew were unanimous, the climate control and overall finish of the Columbia is impressive, and so was its performance, we're all looking forward to future deliveries.

Australian Air-Ferry

Kempsey NSW Australia

Darren Gibson

PO Box 495

Kempsey NSW 2440

Ph: +61 2 6563 1406 BH

Ph: +61 2 6562 1861 AH

Fax: +61 2 6562 3064

Mobile: + 61 417 446 521

dgibson@australianairferry.com

Australian Air-Ferry

Brisbane, Qld Australia

Garry Mitchell

Ph: +61 412 457727

Fax: 61 2 6562 3064

US Cell: + 1 562 8815919

gmitchell@australianairferry.com