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**Test Flying For Fun – RC Aircraft and Helicopters**

**By Rod Shoveller**

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Contrary to popular belief, people who work in model shops don't spend all day every day playing with their own models!!!

However, on Friday afternoon Dale and myself decided we were going flying. We closed the shop dead on 6 o'clock (usually we don't leave till gone 7). We were cashed up, loaded up and off to our own secret flying site in Kent by 6.30.

We arrived at the flying field around 6.45, all models still intact after a mad dash along the A2 and some rather bendy country lanes.

First out of the cars were a pair of Weston Cougars, one of my favourite planks (sorry for the term plank but I class myself as a heli flyer). Once started and both airborne there was a really noticeable difference in performance between the two. Dale's is fitted with a OS46LA, whilst mine has a West Eurotech 36 fitted. We both decided to go for height, (when I say height I mean the clouds were getting in the way) Dale's climb rate was respectable but mine climbed like a homesick angel. After a few attempts at getting it to flatspin & some low inverted circuits I was out of fuel, so was forced to land and get the next model out.

The next candidate was a Century Predator Gasser which has had one previous flight. The beauty of petrol powered models is that they are cheap to run & there is no starting equipment required. The previous flight was used to set the model and engine up correctly. After a few tweaks to the engine I was happy with the way she was running I thought we would do a few gentle circuits with a couple of stall turns thrown in for good measure. I must say this is probably the most stable model in the hover I have ever flown. I landed, then passed the controls to Dale for a quick play. He also loved how stably it flew.

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The amount of fun you can have with an electric Zagi is amazing. This model is so much fun and so unbreakable, I found myself doing the silliest of things with it. Like skimming across the strip with the prop clipping the grass on its way through, stalling it from up high and seeing who could get the highest bounce when it hit the deck!

Who cares, the chances of breaking it are near nil.

That's how it continued for the rest of the evening.... until we remembered that to fly in the dark – which I used to do on a regular basis – you need 'glow sticks'.

So, back to the shop to unload all the models – we both commented on what a great evening's flying it was, probably one of the best this year – we are not trying to tempt fate or anything, but are now charging everything in sight ready for another evening of fun.

One of the best things you can invest in is a fast charger – perfect for those last minute decisions to go

flying, we have all put a lot of miles on my poor old ripmax fast charger.

Rod

Rod Shoveller is a serious radio controlled models addict. He refers to himself as a heli flyer, though he has experience across a wide range of types of RC models. Not only does he fly, drive and steer them, he also builds and repairs them. He can be found at

or at the Elite Model

Shop in Canterbury, Kent, UK.

### **How To Pick A Helicopter School For Training**

**By Barney Garcia**

A career in flying helicopters or airplanes is a dream of many youngsters. Learning to fly is an expensive affair. It is very important to choose the best training school that trains you in flying. Visit the school; meet with the owner/president, look the facilities and aircraft over. Make a note of the pertinent information and compare it with their information brochure. The following aspects should be checked out before arriving at a decision:

- Does the school have single or multiple helicopters? A single helicopter facility will have a difficult time schedule and mechanical problems may cause lesson cancellations, where as with multiple helicopters another helicopter can be substituted.
- Talk to a couple of instructors. Ask questions, such as if the instructor is happy with his job and the management, maintenance and general shape of helicopters. Observe the instructor's body language

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as answers.

- How is time charged for training? Is it when you start helicopter or when you enter school portals? Rate sheet is broken down by dual Instruction, solo and rental rates.
- Find out the pass/fail ratio of the school.
- The school should have a syllabus showing lesson plans, number of flying hours etc. It should be FAA Part 141 approved. Find the cost and number of hours to get the rating.
- Check if the school's insurance company does not waive subrogation; you could be held responsible for entire cost of the helicopter if there is an accident during training. Keep the price of renter's insurance when you determine cost of flying in the particular school.
- Determine the maintenance of the fleet. It is very important safety factor. Ask for conducted test ride.
- Does the school have a regular ground school? Who will be responsible for its cost and cost of materials like textbooks, plotters etc. Does the school supply headsets or do you have to buy them? They range from \$300 to \$1000 – a significant cost.
- Find out the payment process, whether it is advance or in part; also the bonus if any, for down payment.
- A private pilot certificate normally takes 55 hours flying time for an airplane pilot and 65 hours for non-pilot. If the school is taking 90 to 100 hours, then it must be 'overtraining' them in order to get additional revenue.
- Get references from at least two current and two ex-students for checking on school's training program.

Talk to students who have already soloed/passed from the same school for honest and reliable information of the school before signing in.

Barney Garcia writes about many different topics. He is a proud contributing author and invites you to his websites.

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