

Rick Schrameck CEO, Epic Aircraft

VLJM: Very Light Jet Magazine would like to welcome the Chief of Epic Aircraft Rick Schrameck. Rick welcome to VLJ Magazine interview series. Rick- share with us how you got your start in aviation

RS: Bill, I started flying about 1973, actually started in a sail plane. I came from what I would call the purist side of aviation, purely aerodynamic. I got my pilots license at Black Forest, Colorado Springs. I soloed over Pikes Peak and then I got my powered airplane rating. I transitioned into powered airplanes in the early 1970s.

VLJM: You are using the feedback from customers in the home built market to contribute to the downline production. That is extremely innovative.

RS: Well it seems to me that having built a few experimental airplanes before I got into the business that the Experimental Aircraft Association would guide us in building very interesting airplanes. We realized that the market would tell us whether they liked it and would buy it and also how they would use it.

The input we get back is dramatically more than we get just doing certification test flying. We actually have customers tell us how the airplane flies.

VLJM: We hear quite a bit about the expense and overhead of certification in the United States and you have found your way to Canada for this process. How did that evolve?

RS: I don't know necessarily that Canada makes it easier in regards to the certification process because the certification rules are identical to the US. There is complete reciprocity between the two. It's really more that Canada has more time and more bandwidth than the FAA. FAA is working very diligently. We were able to meet the executives with Transport Canada and formed a relationship with the Airport Authority in Calgary which is allowing us to help them build a certification test facility for composite aircraft.

VLJM: You realized profitability in the Very Light Jet business. That is a remarkable feat.

RS: Yes, we were profitable in 06 and will be profitable in 07. The experimental market actually does allow you to generate revenue while you are learning about your aircraft as it approaches the expensive certification process.

VLJM: Describe the Epic line for us.

RS: The first aircraft is the Epic LT that was designed from a clean sheet of paper in 2003. LT was introduced in Oshkosh in 04 and the certified version of the LT is called the Dynasty. Some people are turbo-fan guys and some people are turbo-prop guys. The turbo-prop is cheaper to operate and then jet guys are jet guys. We offer Dynasty, LT, and Escape turbo-props, and our Elite twin turbo-jet and Victory single turbo-jet.

VLJM: Is there commonalty of parts across the line?

RS: In the case of the LT to the Dynasty almost 90 percent- 92 to 95 percent with commonality between the Dynasty and LT. The jets are in the 80 percent range.

VLJM: Does that commonality transfers into the certification process?

RS: Oh absolutely! The one thing that we really find advantageous on the economical side is that we could design something, test it, and find out if it is or is not certifiable. If it is not certifiable we can make changes without going through all the documentation. We can make changes until it is certifiable.

VLJM: The NASA/ SATS model suggested two things regarding VLJs- lower the barrier of entry to jet ownership and also produce hardware for the air taxi business. What are your expectations for Epic and the promised air-taxi business?

RS: I think that typically in the air taxi business with a twin turbo-prop or a twin turbo-fan lend themselves more likely to a 135 operation. The single engine turbo-prop or single engine turbo-fan typically lend themselves to the owner/ operator. The owner/ operator is much more concerned about costs than the 135 operator.

VLJM: Thank you Rick. Congratulations on your many successes. How can readers of Very Light Jet Magazine get in touch with you directly for buying an aircraft in your line?

RS: It's extremely easy- contact me directly at rick@epicaircraft.com and if you want to see the line you just go to <http://www.epicaircraft.com> and see our Dynasty, LT, and Escape turbo-props, and our Elite twin turbo-jet and Victory single turbo-jet. Thanks, Bill.