

Cessna's new "push-pull" twin is in the air but details of the revolutionary-designed business airplane are being kept under wraps.

The new twin, with an engine at each end of the cabin section and twin cantilever tail cones, was test flown at Wichita, Kan., recently. Announcement of its successful tests and photographs of the *Skymaster*—as it has been named—were released to the press. Performance of the aircraft on its first flight and details of its power plants were withheld. Delbert L. Roskam, Cessna vice president, aircraft divisions, indicated that the company was pleased with the *Skymaster's* showing on its maiden flights. He previously had claimed that the new model "would out-perform anything in the low-price twin-engine field." He also said it would operate with a substantial margin of safety on either or both engines.

First word that the emergence of a new twin of unique design was passed out last November at Cessna's annual meeting of its distributors and dealers. The December issue of *The PILOT* reported the brief announcement made at the meeting and carried a drawing giving the magazine's interpretation of the configuration of the new plane. The drawing, current photographs reveal, was fairly accurate.

The design is clearly recognizable as being a unit in the Cessna line of aircraft. It has the traditional Cessna "high-stability" wing. This wing was selected, Cessna's announcement of the new aircraft said, "because, whenever possible, the center of lift belongs above the center of gravity for maximum stability and smoothest ride, plus the additional benefits of better visibility, less weight and less cost."

The cabin will carry four persons. It is centered under the wing with the rear propeller centered between the cantilever tail cones. The two tail cones extend back from each wing. They support individual rudders and a stabilizer. The cabin will accommodate four persons, with the two front passengers seated well in front of the wing for unlimited visibility.

"The *Skymaster* provides the performance and safety of twin-engine airplanes combined with the flying simplicity of a single-engine airplane," Roskam said. "Although its performance will exceed that of competition, the *Skymaster's* price is expected to be most competitive.

"Because of its low-cost transportation, we expect the *Skymaster* to achieve an all time unit volume for twin-engine airplanes in the general aviation industry," he said. "I be-



Here is the Cessna Skymaster as it took off at Wichita on its first flight. Note engines at front and rear of cabin section, which Cessna says will assure greater safety for single-engine operation

Cessna Skymaster, with engines fore and aft, makes its first flight test. Performance details withheld but manufacturer highly pleased; expects it to get big share of light-twin market

lieve the *Skymaster* will find a ready market."

Roskam explained the unique arrangement of the two engines resulted for several reasons but chiefly to assure greater safety in single-engine operation. One engine is in normal position ahead of the cabin area, exerting a pulling force, and the second engine is located behind the cabin.

"If for any reason one-engine operation is necessary, the *Skymaster* stays on the center of thrust, making it safe and simple for any pilot to fly, eliminating special single-engine procedures necessary in conventional twin-engine aircraft," Roskam said.

The new twin is powered by two Continental engines, but the power and design were not revealed. The plane features the "down and locked" Cessna Land-O-Matic gear. Roskam said the new *Skymaster* design permits higher cruising speeds with fixed gear than other low-cost twins with retractable gear. Its low-to-the-ground design facilitates easy entrance. Cessna's announcement said a large outside baggage door permits simplified loading. Luggage is accessible in flight or on the ground.

Time Magazine gave the *Skymaster* prominent play in a recent issue and came up with some figures of its own on the new airplane. Cessna told *The PILOT* that the specifications and performance figures re-

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ported in the nationally circulated magazine were Time's own figures and had not been supplied by the manufacturer. Here are some of the figures Time gave its readers: Power plant, two 180 h.p. Continental engines; cruising speed, about 180 m.p.h.; "will take off and land in less than 800 feet of runway"; ceiling 22,000 feet, and climb, 1,500 f.p.m. Time estimated that the plane would be priced at about \$40,000.

The public will not get a look at Cessna's new model until late this year. Production of the *Skymaster* will be at Cessna's Commercial Division and first deliveries will begin in 1962, Cessna officials said. **END**