

Yesterday's Wings

The Paramount Cabinaire

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■ ■ The Paramount Cabinaire was one of the unique developments that appeared near the end of the biplane era. It followed the lead of several others in combining the well-proven features of the traditional three-four place, open-cockpit biplane with the increasing demand for passenger comfort, in the form of an enclosed cabin—one of the strong points of the new crop of monoplanes that was beginning to push the biplane out of the picture.

The Cabinaire, named for its most prominent feature, was designed by Walter J. Carr for the Paramount Aircraft Corp., which had been formed in Saginaw, Mich., late in 1928. This was near the height of the Lindbergh boom, and prospects were bright for a relatively low-cost, conservative design for the private owner and small business.

Unfortunately, the new model was handicapped by too much tradition in the overall design. With the exception of the Boeing Model 80, a trimotor airliner, and the Buhl Airedan, all the American biplanes then in production had the upper wing well above the fuselage. The Cabinaire retained this feature. As a result, it shared with the earlier Stinson Detroiter biplane the handicap of a cabin that was notably short on head-

room, because the plane was essentially an open-cockpit biplane with a roof over the cockpits.

The upper longerons were placed exactly as they would be on an open-cockpit model. The wing-to-wing cabin Boeings and Buhls soon passed, and it remained for the 1931 Waco C and its developments, and the immortal 1932 Beech Model 17, to keep cabin biplanes in the picture until World War II.

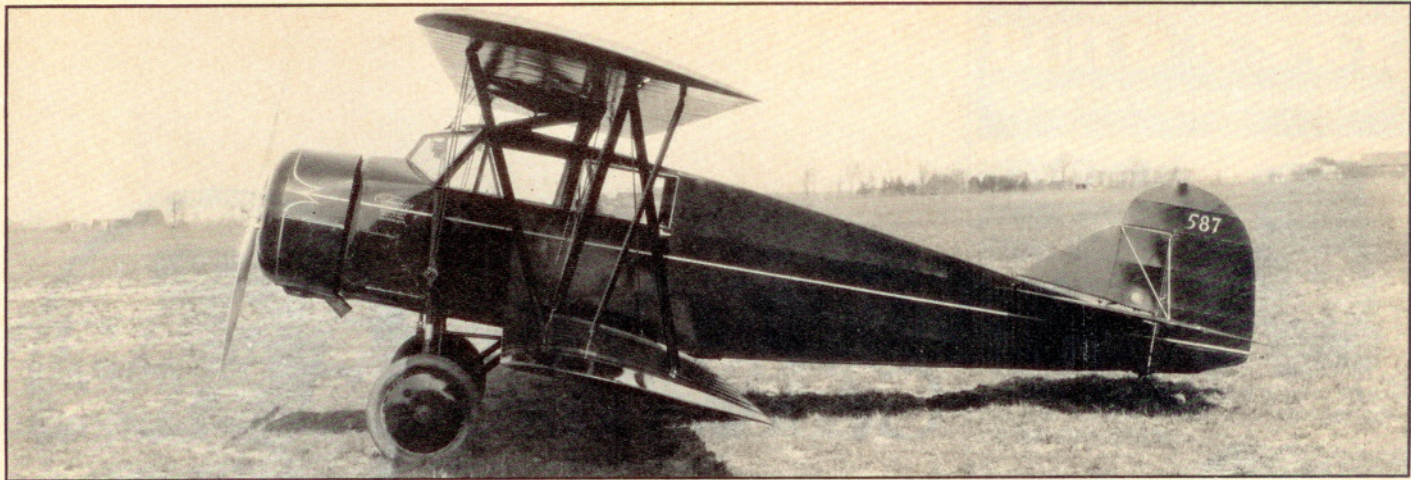
If the Cabinaire can be said to resemble any previous biplane, it would have to be the Travel Air 4000 series. This resemblance can hardly be accidental; Mr. Carr had owned a Travel Air prior to designing the Cabinaire.

Construction was conventional for the time, with welded-steel-tube fuselage and tail, wood frame wings, and fabric covering. The cabin was three or four place, depending on the powerplant, and was entered by two doors—one on the left, for the rear bench-type seat, and one on the right for the two front seats.

Only nine Cabinaires are known to have been built; production got under way just as the depression hit. Four different models were certificated. The first five aircraft built were three-seaters, powered by the 110-hp Warner Scarab engine, and they flew under Category 2 approval certificate 2-165. There was one four-seater licensed under Certificate 2-164 with the Warner, and another

The only Paramount Cabinaire to receive a full ATC was the example powered by the 165-hp Wright J-6-5 Whirlwind engine. With the upper wing well above the fuselage, it is not hard to visualize this as a stock open-cockpit biplane with covered cockpits.





The smaller diameter of the 110-hp Warner Scarab engine lent itself readily to a neat NACA cowling installation. This is the only four-seater powered with the Warner; the other five were three-seaters.

PARAMOUNT CABINAIRE

Specifications and Performance

Span (upper)	33 ft 0 in
Span (lower)	29 ft 0 in
Length	24 ft 7 in
Wing area	309 sq ft
Powerplant (ATC 265)	Wright J-6-5, 165 hp
Empty weight	1,620 lb
Gross weight	2,630 lb
High speed	120 mph
Cruising speed	102 mph
Initial climb	780 fpm
Ceiling	12,000 ft
Range (50 gal)	500 mi
Price (1929)	\$7,500

four-seater licensed under Certificate 2-233 with the new 165-hp Continental A-70 engine. The only Cabinaire to receive a full Approved Type Certificate was a four-seater powered by the Wright J-6-5 Whirlwind engine. This received ATC No. 265 in November 1929. Details of the ninth airframe are unknown.

Paramount could not justify continued production of the Cabinaire in the face of the depression and went out of business early in 1932. In light of this, it is interesting to ponder the mystique

of success. While the depression wiped out many old, established aircraft companies, as well as small newcomers like Paramount, the new designs introduced early in the depression, such as the Waco and Beech cabin biplanes, thrived in spite of being anachronisms from an era that was clearly over.

One of the Cabinaires survived until very recently. It was in process of restoration by a dedicated antiquer when vandals started a fire in the garage where the work was being done. □