

*The*

# BUBINGA BONANZA



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Beech A36 Bonanza has always been a classy airplane, but now there's one particular A36 that clearly stands head and shoulders above the rest of the pack. It's the 3,000th A36, built as a commemorative tribute to the airplane's stellar sales performance since its introduction in 1968. Done up in a swoopy paint job and fitted out with a top-of-the-line panel and snazzy interior appointments, this Bonanza is a real piece of work. ■ You look at the paint job and think, "Well, that's nice," what with the "3,000th A36" scrawled across the wing and the catchy N number. It's N363KB—for Model 36, 3,000th Bonanza, get it? ■ Then you pop

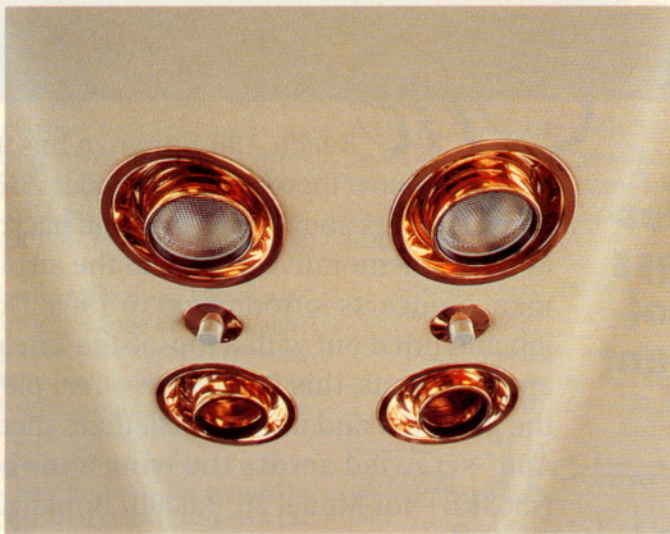
**Beech celebrates  
the A36's success  
with a way-cool  
interior treatment**

**BY THOMAS A. HORNE**



## The 3,000th A36 is loaded with options, and the swankiest interior of any piston single.

*Copper plate abounds, covering everything from door sills to reading light fixtures.*



open the door and the words "rich, Corinthian leather" spring to mind in a Ricardo Montalbanesque ode to the glory inside. This thing is tricked out to the max. Sure, the seats are leather—malt leather, the handout says, and the roster of opulence rolls on in a parade of catchy argot usually reserved for car ads and brochures. Here goes:

- Doe pebble suede headliner and vertical trim;
- Malt leather cabin and cockpit chairs, armrests, sidewalls, and cabin door gimp (whatever that is);
- Color-coordinated interior escutcheons, door frames, and moldings;
- Color-coordinated lap and shoulder belts and baggage webbing;
- Executive writing desk made of waterfall bubinga with a satin finish (it's a kind of rare wood from Brazil, we're told);
- Garnet luminescence (your guess) horizontal trim panels;
- Kasper carpet (it's a light purple, with silk inserts);

- Special black control wheels (replacing the white variety);
- Black anodized seat tracks;
- Redesigned aluminum cabin entry step (it's got a scored aluminum surface that offers surer footing than the non-skid coating on lesser Bonanzas);
- Improved interior courtesy light installation (in addition to the light aimed at the cabin step, the interior light in the front door comes on when the rear door is opened);
- Interior hardware plated with High Tech 301 copper finish.

It's this last feature that really catches the eye. It seems that every piece of hardware, right down to the screws in the storm window hinges, is plated with that bronze glow. That goes for the front door stop, door sills, and every latch, handle, grip, or just about any other fixture you can lay eyes on.

The panel is no slouch, either. The 3,000th A36 comes with a full load of AlliedSignal avionics, including a Ben-



dix/King KFC150 autopilot with yaw damper, a KAS297B altitude/vertical speed preselect, a KCS55A slaved HSI, and a KLN90B IFR-approved GPS, to name just a few of the boxes that come as part of the standard equipment list. Propeller anti-ice is also included.

With its dolled-up looks and heavy-duty hardware, this baby adds up to a pretty spectacular package. Trouble is, Raytheon hasn't quite figured out where to go with the concept of a commemorative edition. Right now, N363KB exists as a one-off airplane, intended for six months' worth of promotional touring and demonstration rides. Will this particular airplane remain a solitary showpiece, or will Raytheon make a limited production run of similarly equipped A36s? The company hasn't decided yet.

Base price of a new, unembellished A36 is \$322,000 or so. That would be with a day VFR panel and a stock interior. The 3,000th A36, on the other hand, would go for a cool \$527,785 (air conditioning included).

That's a ton of money for a 170-knot piston single, but if you must be surrounded by doe pebble, malt, bubinga, the

## Step into the cabin and treat yourself to the smell and luxury of rich Corinthian—er, malt leather.

Beech—er, Raytheon—mystique and all the rest, then this unit's for you. My guess is that a select few will succumb to this idol and belly up, price be damned. Sometimes, you just gotta have copper plate. There's also the satisfaction of knowing that when the Joneses get a load of this, they'll despair of ever keeping up. □

