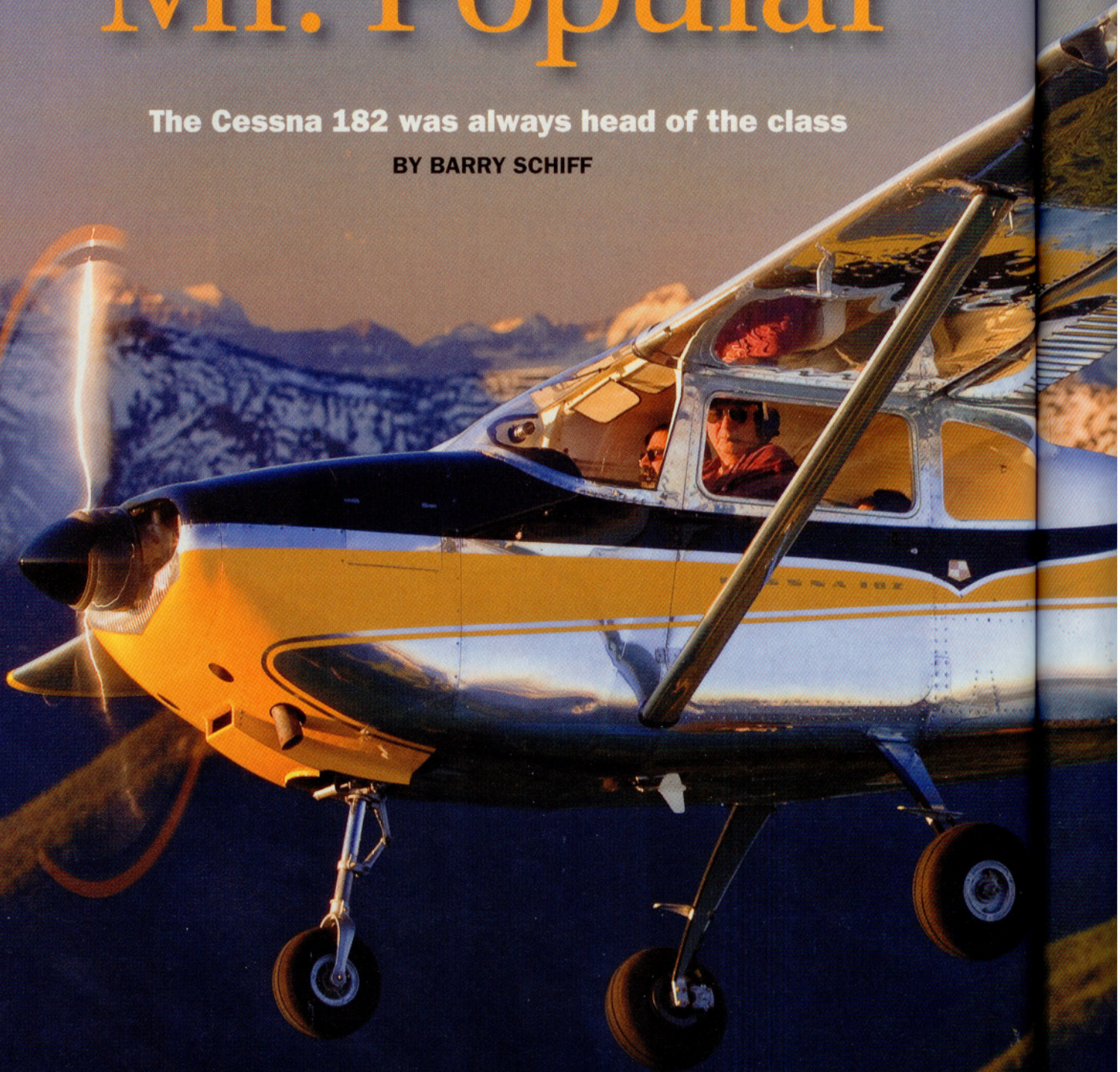


FIRST PRODUCTION CESSNA 182

Mr. Popular

The Cessna 182 was always head of the class

BY BARRY SCHIFF



PHOTOGRAPHY BY MIKE FIZER

ays head of the class

CHIFF



Prior to World War II, almost all general aviation airplanes had conventional landing gear—two main-gear legs, and a tailwheel. The end of the war, though, witnessed the introduction of the Beech Bonanza, the North American Navion, the Piper Tri-Pacer, and many others that reflected the increasing popularity of the nosewheel.

Cessna was late in jumping on the tricycle-gear bandwagon, but when it finally stepped up to the plate in 1955, it hit a grand slam. The Cessna 310 was introduced first, the 172 and 182 in 1956, and the Cessna 150 in 1959, the latter three becoming the most popular GA airplanes in the world.

The prototype Cessna 182 took to wing for the first time in a shroud of secrecy at Kingman, Kansas, on September 10, 1955. It was essentially a Cessna 180 with tricycle landing gear. The cowl was modified to accommodate the nosewheel. This left no room for cowl flaps and explains why early model 182s did not have them, and why those who fly them must be careful about managing oil and cylinder-head temperatures. (Cowl flaps were added to the 182B and subsequent models.)



John Casalegno (left) and his son, Mark, who also is a pilot and participated in the restoration.

The drag of the nosewheel was greater than the tailwheel it replaced and reduced top speed by five mph.

Cessna's original brochure for the 182 reveals the quaint marketing attitude of the day: "It's the 'Land-O-Matic' One Eighty-Two, the airplane you can drive," proclaims the brochure. Another headline boasts, "You drive this

airplane into the air and back down on to the ground." Cessna also touted "Hush-flight cabin quietness and features" and "Para-Lift flaps."

In fairness to Cessna, a large, spanwise exhaust muffler did make the 182 much quieter than its progenitor, the 180, and the 40-degree flaps are both large and highly effective.

The original airplane was called a Cessna 182 Businessliner, but this appellation was quietly dropped.

A deluxe version of the 1958 model 182A was called a Skylane, a name that obviously did stick. It included full paint, wheel pants, and radios as standard equipment.

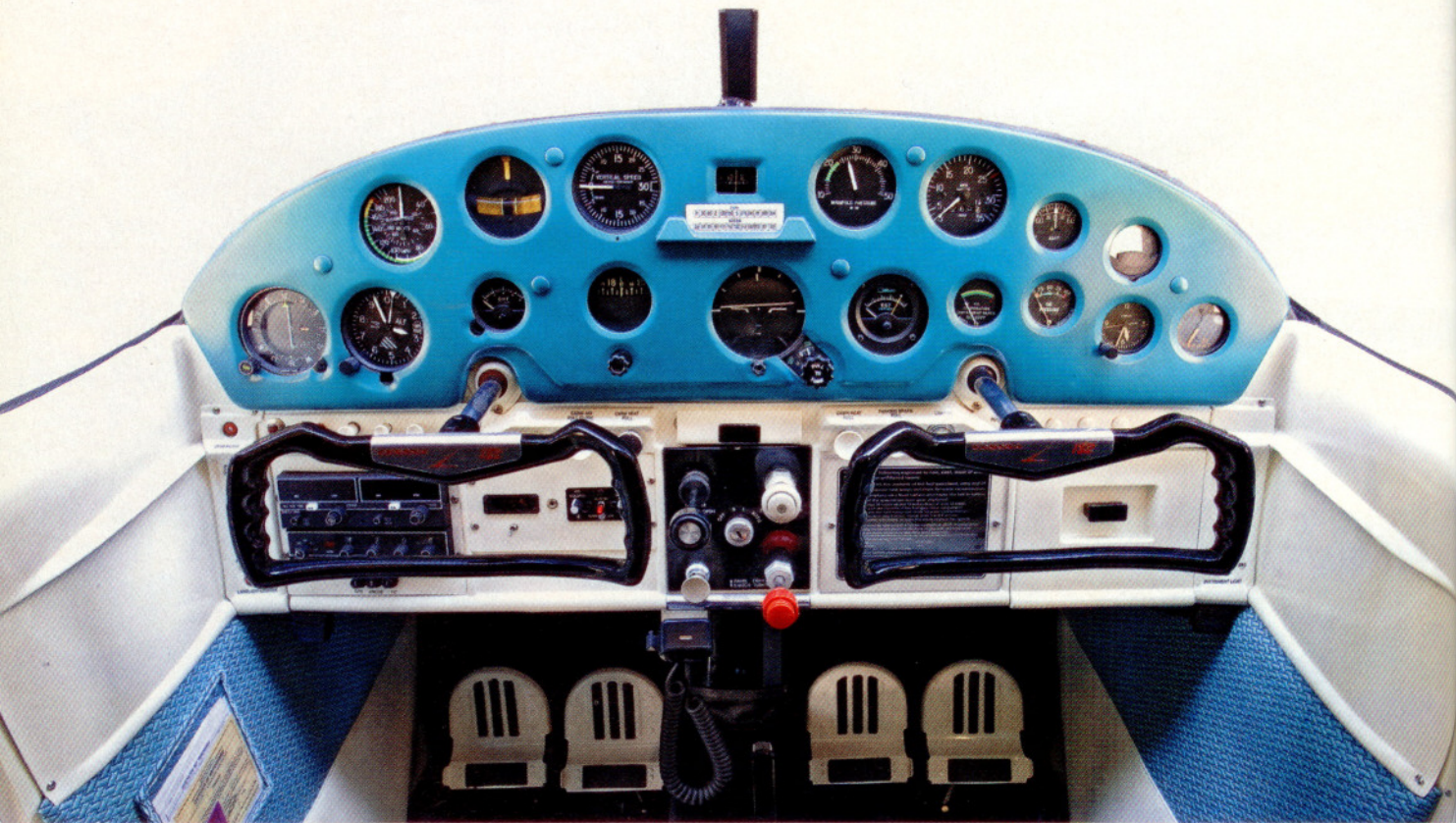
The first one

The very first production Cessna 182 bore serial number 33000 and was sold on November 2, 1956, to Ignacio M.

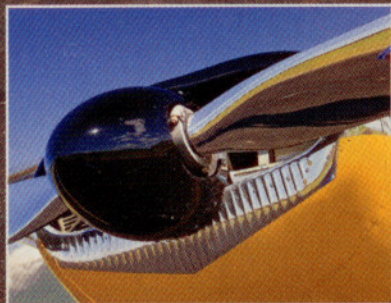
Martinez of Torreon, Mexico, for the retail price of \$13,750. It was registered in Mexico as XB-ZEQ.

Don Steffl purchased the airplane from Martinez in 1961. He flew it to his home in Minnesota. The registration was changed to N4966E, and Steffl flew the airplane for 40 years. The airplane was then purchased from Steffl's estate by Ed Croymans, who flew it to his home in the beautiful Flathead Valley near Glacier National Park in Montana.

In the meantime, John Casalegno, a general contractor in Kalispell, Montana, had been introduced to GA by his friend Michael Jackola, who took Casalegno hither and yon within Montana as business required. One day in August 2001, Casalegno needed a ride to Helena but Jackola was unavailable. He instead chartered Croyman's 182. The pilot was Bill Werner, Croyman's and Jackola's in-



The standard arrangement ("six pack") of flight instruments (above) had yet to be adopted in 1956. Raising the lengthy handle (immediate left) lowers the large and effective flaps in 10-degree increments to a maximum of 40 degrees.



Original Cessna 182s were delivered with bare aluminum and trimmed in black and your choice of Pawnee yellow (above), scarlet, aqua, or Regal red. The baggage compartment (above, center) holds up to 120 pounds. Elevator trim utilizes an adjustable horizontal stabilizer (above).

structor. On the return flight from Helena, Werner gave Casalegno some dual instruction, which was all the incentive that Casalegno needed. He had been bitten by the flying bug and soon began taking lessons in a Cessna 172.

After earning his private pilot certificate, Casalegno discovered that renting aircraft for business trips left much to be desired. This is when he decided to purchase the Cessna 182 in which he had received his first instruction. Casalegno bought the airplane, which had a newly majored engine, in March 2003 for \$69,000. This, he was to discover, was only the down payment.

The restoration

Casalegno knew that N4996E was the first 182 to roll off the Cessna production line, and he purchased the airplane with the intent of restoring it to its original condition. He had no concept, however, how much time, money, effort, determination and grit would be required to accomplish that goal.

The restoration project began in October 2004. Dave Cano of Cano's Custom Specialties in Kalispell led the proj-

ect, and Reed Lamb of Semitool was responsible for the mechanical work.

"Hunting for original parts," Casalegno says, "was especially time-consuming for Cano and Lamb. Were it not for the Internet, it probably would have been impossible to locate needed parts, and we would have had to fabricate new parts."

The project was extensive and included having to completely rebuild all of the flight controls. When all was said and done three years later, Casalegno reckons that mechanical work required 444 hours of labor; skin replacement (on the control surfaces) took another 276 hours; metal work 705 hours; painting and stripping 340 hours; research 165 hours; upholstery work 165 hours; reassembly 932 hours; and hand polishing and sanding 1,635 hours. A total of 4,662 hours of labor had been devoted to the three-year restoration.

Casalegno made the "second" maiden flight of Number 33000 on August 2, 2007, with his instructor riding shotgun. This was exactly five years to the day after he had been issued his private pilot certificate. He does not plan



The first production Cessna 182 shows off over Montana's Glacier National Park. The long and spindly landing gear legs were shortened in subsequent models to make it easier to climb in and out of the cabin.

to obtain any additional certificates or ratings, not even an instrument rating. "I do not relish the thought of flying over the mountains of Montana in IFR conditions," he says.

Casalegno prefers not to think about how much money he has invested in the restoration. He also has no idea what the airplane might be worth, nor does he care. "I have absolutely no intention of selling it," he says. (*Vref's* current retail value of a run-of-the-mill 1956 Cessna 182 with a mid-time engine is \$34,000.)

There are a few differences between the restored airplane and its configuration when new. Casalegno says, for example, that he was unable to locate an original teal-colored, cabin headliner that would not crack because of age, and he was forced to use a substitute.

The airplane also has upgraded Cleveland brakes, an exhaust-gas tem-

perature gauge, and modern avionics to replace the original Narco Superhomer (which had a "coffee-grinder" tuner and vacuum tubes).

"Everything else is the way it was in 1956," Casalegno claims.

"The way it was" means that the airplane has numerous features not found in modern Cessnas. These include: float-operated fuel gauges in the wing roots; a key-operated ignition switch with an independent, remotely located, push-button starter; a pull-out ash tray in the center of the instrument panel supplemented by ash trays on the sidewalls adjacent to the rear seats; and flaps that are manually operated using a long handle situated on the floor between the pilots' seats.

Flying it

Casalegno graciously offered me the airplane for a familiarization flight. Climb-

ing in brought back memories from when I ferried new 182s in the late 1950s from the factory to Air Oasis, the then-Cessna distributor in Long Beach, California. The airplane even smelled new.

The rapid climb rate caught me off guard. The 1956 model is so much lighter than subsequent models, has the same horsepower (230), and easily outperforms them. The owner's manual—there were no pilot's operating handbooks in 1956—claims a climb rate of 220 fpm at 20,000 feet at the maximum-allowable gross weight of 2,550 pounds, outstanding numbers for an airplane without a turbocharger.

I headed toward the Hungry Horse Reservoir, a beautiful, man-made lake nestled in a narrow valley between two parallel mountain ranges capped in snow. The bottoms of the wings are so highly polished and reflective that they created an illusion making it difficult

at times to distinguish up from down. I don't recall any factory fresh airplane looking and feeling this good.

The airplane flies as well as it looks, better, perhaps, than when it was new. The controls are tight yet require only the fingertips for maneuvering. Like all 182s, the airplane is rock solid in turbulence. Someone once said that you could simulate the stability of a Cessna 182 by lying on the ground with your arms and legs outstretched. Little wonder that the airplane is such a popular instrument platform.

At 7,500 feet msl and using full throttle (21 inches of manifold pressure) and 2,300 rpm (66-percent power), the airplane cruises at 156 mph. A nice feature found on early model 182s is the trimmable horizontal stabilizer that reduces trim drag. Later models incorporated a conventional trim tab. After parking in front of Casalegno's hangar at the Glacier Park International Airport, I almost twisted my ankle getting out. I had forgotten how high the original 182 sits because it has the same long and spindly main landing-gear legs as the Cessna 180. Subsequent models of the

182 had much shorter legs (including a shorter nosewheel strut). This made it much easier to climb in and out. It also lowered the center of gravity and made the airplane less susceptible to upset during strong crosswinds.

Cessna built only 843 copies of the original 182 before introducing the 182A in 1957. Every subsequent model saw the airplane evolving and improving. Some 182s were eventually produced with turbochargers and retractable landing gear. Almost 22,000 Cessna 182s had left the Wichita factory when production came to an end after 30 years with the Cessna 182R in 1986. It had become the third most popular GA airplane in the world following only its siblings, the Cessna 172 Skyhawk and the Cessna 150/152.

The General Aviation Revitalization Act passed by Congress in 1994 enabled Cessna to resume Skylane production in 1997, and it continues to evolve and improve in ways that were never anticipated when Number 33000 led the way in 1956.

ACFA

Visit the author's Web site (www.barryschiff.com).

SPEC SHEET

Cessna 182

Base price in 1956: \$13,750

Specifications

Powerplant.....Continental O-470-L, 230 hp
 Recommended TBO1,500 hr
 Propeller.....2-blade, constant-speed,
 82-in diameter
 Length.....26 ft
 Height9 ft 4 in
 Wingspan36 ft 0 in
 Wing area.....175 sq ft
 Wing loading.....14.6 lb/sq ft
 Power loading.....11.1 lb
 Seats4
 Empty weight.....1,545 lb
 Empty weight, as tested1,710 lb
 Maximum gross weight2,550 lb
 Useful load1,005 lb
 Useful load, as tested.....840 lb
 Payload w/full fuel.....675 lb
 Payload w/full fuel, as tested.....510 lb
 Max takeoff weight.....2,550 lb
 Max landing weight2,550 lb
 Fuel capacity, std ...60 gal (55 gal usable)
 360 lb (330 lb usable)
 Oil capacity12 qt
 Baggage capacity120 lb

Performance

Takeoff distance, ground roll.....570 ft
 Takeoff distance over 50-ft obstacle...990 ft
 Rate of climb, sea level.....1,200 fpm
 Max level speed, sea level170+ mph
 Cruise speed/endurance w/45-min rsv, std
 fuel (fuel consumption), 5,000 ft
 @ 78%, best power.....162 mph/3.5 hr
 (81.6 pph/13.6 gph)

@ 66%, best power, 7,500 ft
156 mph/4.4 hr
 (67.2 pph/11.2 gph)
 @ 55%, best power, 10,000 ft.....
148 mph/4.8 hr
 (62.4 pph/10.4 gph)
 Service ceilingabove 19,000 ft
 Absolute ceilingabove 21,000 ft
 Landing distance over 50-ft obstacle
1,075 ft
 Landing distance, ground roll525 ft

Limiting and Recommended Airspeeds

V_x (best angle of climb with flaps 10
 degrees).....60 mph
 V_y (best rate of climb).....89 mph
 V_A (design maneuvering)122 mph
 V_{FE} (max flap extended)100 mph
 V_{NO} (max structural cruising).....160 mph
 V_{NE} (never exceed)184 mph
 V_R (rotation)60 mph
 V_{S1} (stall, clean).....62 mph
 V_{SO} (stall, in landing configuration) ..55 mph

All specifications are based on manufacturer's calculations. All performance figures are based on standard day, standard atmosphere, sea level, gross weight conditions unless otherwise noted.