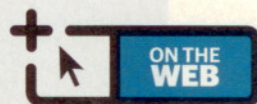




AOPA

The Debonair Sweepstakes



http://blog.aopa.org/sweepstakes_logbook/ for more news about the Debonair Sweepstakes project.

Let the show season begin

Your airplane enters the home stretch

BY THOMAS A. HORNE

THE DEBONAIR made a great showing at this year's Sun 'n Fun International Fly-In and Expo, drawing hundreds of hopeful winners to AOPA's new, expanded tent location. Since the Debonair Sweepstakes is a two-year project, this event kicked off the airplane's final show season. Yours truly and other AOPA staffers manned the Debonair during the six-day show, fielding questions and comments and, of course, doing no small amount of hangar flying.

Next stop for the Debonair was Santa Fe Aero Services at Santa Fe Municipal Airport in New Mexico. One year ago, that's where the airplane had its panel reconstructed and

modernized. Now it's back for its annual inspection and some attention to a few avionics and other squawks. Of course, the trip to Santa Fe was the big highlight. My route took me north from Sun 'n Fun's Lakeland Linder Regional Airport location, then along a path that hugged the Gulf Coast. I made a stop for fuel at Baton Rouge Metropolitan Airport-Ryan Field to check on the airplane's fuel consumption—and confirm the accuracy of the airplane's Electronics International MVP-50P engine and systems analyzer. Sure enough, the MVP fuel flow readout affirmed my calculations from the fill-up—I was burning an average of 14.7 gph.

That's good to know, because the Debonair's overhauled and converted, 260-horsepower IO-470-N engine is being run hard for its break-in period. I knew that the engine was burning more fuel than it would at "normal" power settings—but how much more? Turns out I could have gone nonstop from Lakeland to Waco, Texas, in six hours, but initial calculations gave me fuel reserves of just 10 gallons. Could I trust the MVP and go for it—or play it conservative and see exactly how the engine's fuel flows added up? Now we know that the airplane's fuel management instruments are A-OK in the fuel-burn department.

The final leg of the trip, from Waco to Santa Fe, took 3.7 hours, making the whole

trip's duration a healthy 9.7 hours. At 6,000 feet with an OAT of 9 degrees Celsius, the Debonair turned in 170 KTAS at 100 degrees rich of peak EGT (resulting in an 18.3-gph fuel burn), and 165 KTAS when leaned to 50 degrees rich (the 14.7-gph burn). I varied power from time to time, but stayed at the 14.7-gph setting for most of the trips.

After the annual inspection, the Debonair was off to the AOPA Regional Fly-In at San Marcos Municipal Airport (HYI) in Texas April 26. Then it was back to the paint shop at KD Aviation's facility at the Stewart International Airport in Newburgh, New York. There, the airplane gets its striping—just in time for AOPA's Regional Fly-Ins at Indianapolis Regional Airport (MQJ) in Indiana May 31 and Plymouth Municipal Airport (PYM) in Massachusetts July 12. Then it's off to the EAA AirVenture in Oshkosh from July 28 through August 3. The sweepstakes closes July 31. If your AOPA membership is current, you are automatically entered to win.

EMAIL tom.horne@aopa.org