

Tecnam's new twin takes shape

Rod Simpson reports on the ever-improving P2006T

Since our in-depth flight test of the Tecnam P2006T (*FLYER* April 2008), the Italian company has made rapid progress towards getting its exciting light twin to customers. We predicted that this twin would be inexpensive to run by comparison with other light twins. It is the first production twin to use the ubiquitous 100hp Rotax 912S engine.

The first prototype P2006T (I-TETW), which we flew in Italy, was joined on 9 June by a second aircraft (I-TELT). The two machines have been completing the flight test programme, which has culminated in the award of EASA IFR certification to CS23/FAR23. At this stage the P2006T has type approval with analogue instrumentation (and the second and third aircraft are equipped with 'round dials') but, as we showed in our April article, the prototype was fitted with an OP Technologies' twin-screen panel.

A glass cockpit will undoubtedly become standard on the aircraft, but Tecnam has changed its original specification and taken the decision to fit the Garmin G950 avionics suite, which has two screens and analogue engine instruments. The first Garmin shipset is being fitted to I-TETW and the standard avionics fit for production aircraft will include a GNS430 GPS/Nav/Comm, a GI-105A VOR/LOC/GS/GPS indicator, GTX327 transponder, altitude encoder and a GMA340 audio panel.

In full flow

The Tecnam production line is already in full flow and the company has had to build a major 64,600 sq ft extension to its Capua factory, which has doubled its enclosed floor area. In June, the company completed the acquisition of the Spanish manufacturer CAG (which produces the Toxo two-seater) and this will provide extra production capacity to meet Tecnam's expanding output. In addition to the P2006T, the Tecnam range includes 15 single-engined aircraft based on the P.92 Echo and P2002 Sierra airframes and embracing Ultralight, Light Sport and CS-MLA models. The company



With glass cockpit and diesel engines under development, the newly certified Tecnam P2006 is eagerly awaited

has plans for 600 aircraft to be built annually from the end of 2009.

Currently under wraps is a new Tecnam model, rumoured to be a single-engined four-seater, which will be launched at the Sun 'n Fun and Friedrichshafen shows next April, so the company will have another reason for needing the extra factory capacity.

The first customer delivery of a P2006T, which is imminent, will be the fourth airframe. The example is due to be delivered to a Spanish purchaser. The P2006T has a standard price of €235,000 to which many owners will add some options, particularly an S-TEC autopilot and second GNS430, taking the price to around €280,000. At the latest count, Tecnam has over 60 aircraft on its order book of which four are destined for Britain. In the UK, Nick Marley's Yeoman Light Aircraft has

acquired the distribution rights for the factory-built Tecnam range from Tecnam UK and is now exclusive sales agent for the P2006T

The diesel option

While the standard P2006T is powered by a pair of Rotax 912S piston engines, a diesel alternative is on the horizon. Powerplant Developments (PPD), which is a part of the UK Jade Air Group, is developing its Gemini 100 engine. This rather unusual engine is a 1,600cc opposed-piston, two-stroke geared diesel based on the design of the pre-war Junkers Jumo 205 and it has two crankshafts linked by a gear train, which drives a centrally-mounted propeller. The first pre-production example of the 100 hp Gemini 100 is currently being bench tested and PPD is initially aiming at ASTM approval for the engine to allow its use in

American Light Sport Aircraft. However, PPD has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Tecnam, which would see the Gemini 100 installed as an option in the P.92JS and P2002JF. This agreement also foresees the P2006T being fitted with these engines uprated to 125hp by the addition of turbochargers.

History says that powerplant development is always fraught with challenges, and certification will be a complex issue but, according to PPD, the Gemini 125 should be ready in the spring of 2009, so a certificated P2006T Diesel could be on sale in 2010. With the additional power, the P2006T should be able to produce better cruise performance than high-performance singles such as the Cirrus SR20 with which it competes. www.tecnam.com; www.ylac.com www.ppdgeminini.com