

December 2008

Dominik's S6 flight:

The S6 test fly meeting last Friday was great success. All participants, especially our shareholders were absolutely stunned about the S6 performance. We did a whole day of flying with moderate weather, had the chance to modify and discuss some contractual things with the customers who joined us and did play with the biggest piece of art, the retractable gear. It was mounted to a test frame and with an actuator one could retract and lower it.

For me the best thing was that this time there was a slot for me to try and fly the S6. So now, I have my own picture of it and, well, I can now understand all these smiling faces which I saw after the test flights. It indeed is a simple and easy to handle but precise and comfortable rocket!

Taxiing is easy and save like driving a modern car, the brakes like from a high performance motorcycle and the view a lot better as in the S10 because of the tricycle arrangement. A kid without experience could taxi it to the holding point.

Takeoff: Well the take off run is very stable and you almost don't need to take care about the aileron at all. Just keep it strait with the rudder. With 42 knots you have to rotate it slightly and it lifts off smooth. You can go into climb directly without using the ground effect for acceleration as with the S10 and from the first positive climb on it shoots in the air with 4,5 to 5,5 m/s.

At altitude it accelerates pretty fast to about 130 knots cruise speed IAS in 2000ft (with fixed gear!!) and could do slightly more. I did not try it as I wanted to keep on climbing to reach sufficient altitude for a short engine stop and some stalling and spinning.

With my body weight in front, it does not spin by itself. It just goes into a well controllable deep stall, well announced by a little rudder shaking, and as soon as you let the elevator go, it starts flying again. But, and that was most fun, as soon as you step into the rudder a little more, it flips around, almost upside down and starts spinning. What a fun! To exit spinning, just move elevator to neutral position and rudder as well; probably a bit against turn. It immediately stops with spinning and accelerate pretty fast, with the nose, more or less facing directly down to mother earth. But with the margin in Vne you will never come close to a dangerous speed, I was always able to recover within the green area on my ASI. In general everything is a 100% predictable no surprises and the aircraft responds to your inputs without any delay. No critical behaviors, so also perfect for spin recovery training.

In gliding, because of poor weather, all I could find out was that min sink was around 1m at about 60 knots, of course not S10 performance but still good for a 18m wing, a feathered prop in the air and fixed gear. It rolls very well and controls are easy to handle, quite a difference if you are used to the S10. The engine can easily be started by wind milling and starts as soon as you pass 82 knots. Also feathering the prop works perfect even if it takes a little time to get positioned - about 30-40sec. But when transferring back to powered flight, the engine will start even when feathered and you will get some propulsion while the whole way back into its normal position.

Landing is almost not worth to speak about. About 60knots approach speed with power on idle and controlling your glide path with the air brakes it is like approaching with a club class glider, easy. Touch down I almost did not feel because of the well buffered gear and did not know 100% if I were really back on the ground. I was.

While the whole flight I enjoyed the very low cockpit noise and a lot less vibrations as in the S10. This will definitely bring a lot extra comfort while on longer tours.

However, the only two disadvantages I found were that the cockpit of number 2 still did not offer enough space for very tall persons. This will be corrected with number 3 as we still have about 5cm behind the seats to get them more backwards and a little more room for the pedals. This should be enough to get even 2m persons in the aircraft. Seat arrangement in general and adjustability on the other hand are great and a lot easier than in the S10.

Another thing I was thinking about is, that for me and for all those who have fallen in love with soaring and flying this big beauty S10, the S6 might be a bit too easy and simple to fly – it probably gets a bit boring after a while...;-) . But it is perfect as trainer, very fast tourer, for airwork, and for those soaring just from time to time and mainly want to enjoy themselves up in the air with a minimum of effort.

In general it was a great experience and it will be hard to wait until we have the next one ready for some rides...Ups, sorry, that was a little long story, but it shares my enthusiasm after that flight.

Have a good day and with best regards,

Dominik