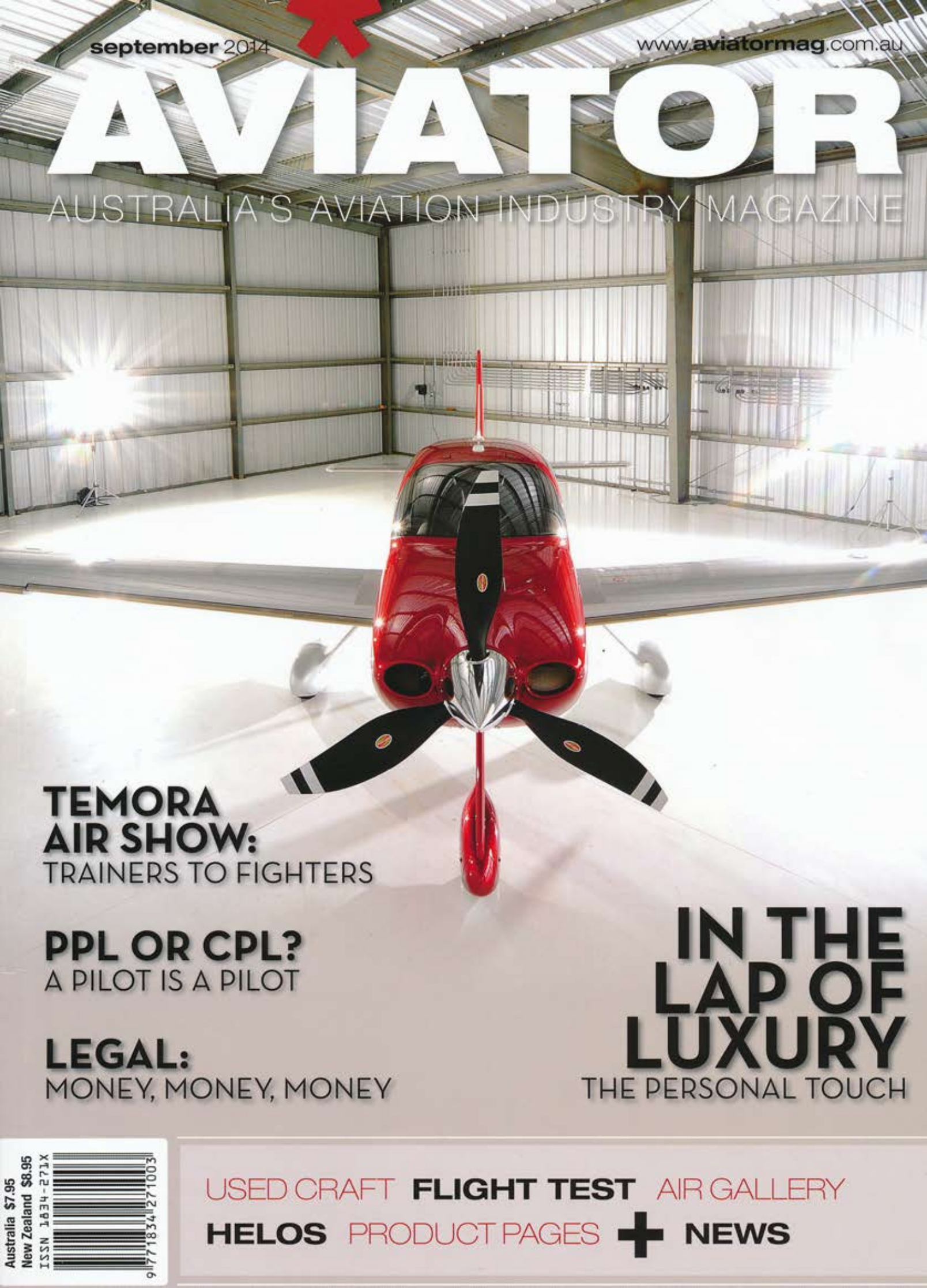


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# AVIATOR

AUSTRALIA'S AVIATION INDUSTRY MAGAZINE



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BRM BRISTELL

**Recreational aviation has come a long way in the past 30 years. From being a disorganised group of enthusiasts who not only made their own rules and regulations, but also suffered an inordinate amount of tragedy along the way, the organisation has emerged as one that many consider to be the equal of its General Aviation counterpart.**

# FLYING FOR FUN



Compared to what it was 20-25 years ago, recreational aviation has come a long, long way," explains Bert Moonen of Quicksilver Aircraft Australia. "Back then ultralights were unsafe," pilots were getting killed and there was no regulation.

Founded in 1983, the Australian Ultralight Federation (AUF) changed all that, introducing structure and standards, and bringing this niche part of the industry into line.

"Back then it was so disorganised, but the AUF (to be renamed RA-Aus in 2004) brought structure to recreational aviation, improving things dramatically," Moonen says. "There's a lot more regulation but unlike GA, it's not over-regulation. That's a good thing."

RA may currently be humming a winning tune but according to Moonen, there is one area that needs to be changed - the lack of unity among different groups within the recreational umbrella. "The biggest issue in our industry is the number of different organisations that have their own rules," he says. "You've got RA-Aus, the Gyros, microlights, sport planes and unfortunately, they all have their own rules and regulations. What we need is standardisation across the industry - one body for everyone."

recreational flying is cheaper

LUXURY  
INTERIOR  
SPECIAL

CUSTOM  
DESIGN



BRM BRISTELL

SO YOU'VE GOT SOME SERIOUS CASH TO SPEND ON A NEW AIRCRAFT, AND NOT ONLY HAVE YOU ALWAYS DREAMED OF OWNING YOUR OWN AIRCRAFT; YOU'VE ALWAYS DREAMED OF CUSTOMISING YOUR NEW PRIDE AND JOY. SO WHAT ARE THE OPTIONS OFFERED BY MANUFACTURERS WHEN IT COMES TO CUSTOM-DESIGN? ANDERSON AVIATION'S BRETT ANDERSON; NEXTANT AIRCRAFT PACIFIC MD JOHN OPPENHEIM AND CIRRUS XI DESIGNER, ALEX ALEQUIN PROVIDED SOME ANSWERS.

66 all requests are considered

# CUSTOM DESIGN

APART FROM PERFORMANCE, WHAT DO MOST CUSTOMERS LOOK FOR IN AN AIRCRAFT? AND WHAT ARE THE MOST COMMON REQUESTS WHEN IT COMES TO INTERIOR DESIGN AND FLIGHT DECK SOPHISTICATION?

**BRETT ANDERSON:** Currently it is almost 50/50 whether the customer goes with Glass or Analogue. Regardless, most request auto pilot and a good GPS. The most common GPS installed is the Garmin 695 and 795. If they go with Glass it is dominantly the Dynon Skyview, in which case the auto pilot will be Dynon and if they go with analogue then the Trutrak is the most selected. Depending on the height of the customer and the style of instrumentation they require, the height of the dash may be a consideration.

The Bristell has the option of three dash heights, low, medium and high and unless you go with full 10" Dynon with lots of extras the medium would be the most requested as it does not restrict the view outside but allows a good selection of instruments.



The comfort of the Bristell never comes into question, regardless whether leather or velour is chosen. It has the widest cockpit in its class and room is not an issue.

Recently with Oshkosh on I received requests from customers to ask BRM manufacturer Milan Bristela to check out various styles of instrumentation whilst he was displaying the Bristell there. This led Milan to make some new contacts and trial some of the latest instrumentation on the market. One such request was a Flight Safety Angle of Attack meter. Milan was very impressed with the meter and took one back to the Czech Republic for trial in one of his own aircraft, prior to supplying it to customers.

The Bristells are custom made for the customers and all requests are considered but the factory will let the customer know if their request is outside the parameters of the aircraft. The biggest problem that faces nearly all customers is their paint scheme. The factory will paint the aircraft, inside and out, to the specifications of the customer. That usually sounds easier then it turns out to be. The paint used is Glasurit and has a range of about 62,000 colours.

The latest order to the factory requested the latest Holden SS Red Hot. I dealt with Glasurit here in Australia and sent over a coded sample for the factory to match. The whole plane needs to be considered, taking care to match upholstery and paint job.

**JOHN OPPENHEIM:** Customers are looking for a place where they can work, think and relax. That means space, comfort and quiet. Among many seating options the most popular is the three-place divan + four-place club seat, perfect for creating spacious surroundings on the longer

stage-lengths now available. Seats are the stylish European-style sports buckets. Just as welcome in minimising fatigue is the 9db noise reduction made possible by the cabin's new acoustic insulation package which makes the Nextant 400XTi by far the quietest in its class.

Most of the common requests are incorporated into our standard interior options. Customers are looking for the latest in integrated digital productivity, Wi-Fi and entertainment technologies. Whichever interior is chosen, there's still room for a full-service galley with space for dual hot cup containers (MAPCO), dual ice containers, a waste container and plenty of stowage for wine and sodas. Caffeine fans have the option of an espresso machine for authentic barista-style refreshment on the fly.

**ALEX ALEQUIN:** There are a vast array aircraft benefits that our customers are interested in. Particularly inside the aircraft, they look for comfort, premium material selections and personalisation. The high-end auto industry provides much inspiration for our custom aircraft designs and we pay special attention to the trending materials and finishes used. For example carbon fibre, nickel plating, Alcantara and Italian sourced leather are just some of the things that can be found in our Cirrus SR22 CARBON interior.

In terms of our customisation program, we receive many requests from customers for carbon fibre and leather wrapped panels. The carbon material looks sleek paired up with the avionics and really gives the cockpit that iconic "Italian sports car" look.

#### WHAT ARE SOME OF THE MORE UNUSUAL REQUESTS?

**JOHN OPPENHEIM:** One customer only wanted five seats to maximise cabin space. Another wanted 16 throw pillows using a specific fabric from Italy. Another customer wanted a picture of their founder painted on the tail of the aircraft.

**ALEX ALEQUIN:** At Cirrus we have a customisation program called Xi that invites customers to sit with our designers and engineers to design their aircraft both inside and out. As you can imagine that leaves the door wide open for all conversations. Requests ranging from painting your plane in arctic camouflage to having every seat match a different flavour of Italian Gelato, it's already been asked! A more common request is for us to match their Cirrus to a car they already own. In that instance we go as far as to source that actual leather colour and match the stitching pattern to the aircraft seat.

#### HAS INCREASED COMPETITION FORCED A NEED FOR MANUFACTURERS TO PROVIDE MORE VALUE FOR CUSTOMERS THAN EVER BEFORE?

**BRETT ANDERSON:** BRM has always raised the bar on its own accord. As a company their desire is to manufacture the best aircraft in the world in their category and they are constantly trying to improve their aircraft to achieve this goal. Customers are requested to give feedback to the factory for improvement of the aircraft and over the last five years that I have been involved with Milan and BRM, the aircraft has made many improvements and advancements.

**JOHN OPPENHEIM:** Absolutely. When Kenn Ricci started Nextant, he wanted to take everything good about buying a new aircraft – superb performance, modern technology, immaculate interiors and the backing of a global support network – and offer it for a fundamentally different value proposition. Nextant is the absolute best value without sacrificing on other important things.

**ALEX ALEQUIN:** Absolutely, we're always looking for ways to innovate and provide more value. At Cirrus it's in our DNA

**LUXURY  
INTERIOR  
SPECIAL**

**CUSTOM  
DESIGN**



NEXTANT 400 XT1

and culture to look ahead and more importantly, be able to choose what works and what doesn't for our customers. More recently we announced our latest SR22T - Accelero™, which is the first all-digital Cirrus. Inspired by the advancements in our Vision SF50 Jet program, we've taken extra steps to align our Jet and SR products and recognise features that create real value in each.

#### WHAT EXTRAS AND UPGRADES HAVE BEEN ADDED TO AEROPLANES TO CHALLENGE IN WHAT IS AN INCREASINGLY COMPETITIVE MARKET?

**BRETT ANDERSON:** Some Customers are usually looking for the latest whizz bang but experience has indicated that this might not be the best thing to do. Tried and proven is a great place to start and the BRM factory have refused to install certain latest mods as they knew they were going to be problematic. Time has proven the factory to be correct in many situations.

The Bristell comes in fixed gear and there are many requests for the Retractable Gear but registering the RG in some categories can potentially be difficult or just not allowed and then there is the tail dragger, which was dominantly requested for the United States and Africa, where they have proven very popular. Bristells can be registered RAA or GA, a point many don't realise.

**JOHN OPPENHEIM:** Each 400XTi is delivered with a refined, handcrafted bespoke interior and striking custom exterior paint design. With years of experience, Nextant's professional design team and craftsmen create every jet to each customer's precise specification. Luxury brands – such as White House carpet suppliers Scott Group – are naturally at home aboard the 400XTi, as are the finest hardwoods and laminates, leathers, and fabrics.

Nextant is always looking for ways to improve the cabin environment. The introduction of the 400XTi in 2013 included

a revolutionary composite shell cabin interior which added an extra 3 inches (7 cm) at shoulder level and additional 2.5 inches (6 cm) headroom. At the same time a new acoustic dampening blanket was installed to reduce ambient noise levels by 9dB.

**ALEX ALEQUIN:** Through the years we've made a lot of advancements in not only products but also in ownership and training, to name a few. It's a combination of all these initiatives and our ability to respond quickly to market conditions that make us unique and the preferred choice in general aviation.

#### HOW MUCH DO CUSTOMERS SPEND ON THEIR AEROPLANES?

**BRETT ANDERSON:** The Bristell is definitely in the upper end of the category that it's in and the average customers have spent on their aircraft is around the range of \$140,000 plus GST fully optioned. This is average only.

**JOHN OPPENHEIM:** The 400XTi comes with a wide range of interior options for the base price and there are many more options than the usual cookie-cutter approach of some OEMs. Nextant's standard options are of a much higher quality are estimated to cost at least 50 per cent more than most new build aircraft.

However, some customers want to go the extra mile to personalise their aircraft. Some have their own interior designers and specify specific materials from specific regions. These materials often require safety testing which can increase costs. As long as it's safe and can be legal, we will do what we can to accommodate unusual requests.

**ALEX ALEQUIN:** Our aircraft range from \$350,000 on up. With the numerous custom options available through our Xi program, the cost can vary significantly. Each Xi aircraft is tailored uniquely to the customer, resulting in a unique price. ✱