

THE 2018 RSA EUROFLY'IN

Brian Hope discovered that the French GA organisation moving its annual rally to Brienne-le-Château gave the event a welcome boost

P hew what a scorcher! I remember that phrase being used as a tabloid headline one summer, and it came to mind on 3-5 August, when I was at Brienne-le-Château in the Aube département of central-northern France, where the Fédération RSA (Réseau du Sport de l'Air) had moved its annual rally.

The Aéroport Brienne-le-Château is a venue that the RSA's main event has graced in the past – indeed, I enjoyed my first visit to it there, in 1979, riding down on my Moto Guzzi. Although this year's rally was situated farther north than its location over recent years, it was still stiflingly hot, well into the thirties, but I was very pleased to see that attendance was up a little.

The view seemed to be that around 250 aircraft arrived over the weekend, which perhaps isn't a staggering number but is still better than in recent years, when the event was held down in Vichy, at the Aéroport de Vichy-Charmeil. However, numbers aren't the sole measure of success – for me, the principal delight of this, one of the oldest homebuilt events in Europe, is the attendance of unique one-off designs and potential candidates for new kits and plans-built types.

Since the post-WWII boom in amateur-built aircraft, France has produced a continual cadre of light aircraft designers and it was reassuring to see new names being added to that list. Of course, their longevity and success – alongside the likes of Delemondez, Piel and Jurca – is yet to be revealed. Nevertheless, the fact that the enthusiasm and inventiveness of the current and future generation of designers was clearly evident at this annual celebration of homebuilt art certainly proved reassuring.

As ever, I'll let the pictures do the talking... ■

(Right) Something a bit older is the delightful two-seat, tandem Mauboussin M125 Corsaire, a pre-WWII trainer, built by Fouga for the French Armée de l'Air, and to sell to flying clubs post-war. Pierre Mauboussin, a well-established jeweller, designed and built a number of light aircraft prototypes in the early thirties. Fouga, then a manufacturer of railway rolling stock, took over the design in 1936 and built it as the company's entry into aviation. Around 200 of various versions were built but it's thought that only around six or seven survive.

(Photo: Nigel Hitchman)



(Above) The Exia is a new, single-place prototype which will fall into the SDDR category in the UK. It was designed and built by Arnaud Abt (pictured) and first flew on 2 May this year. It's of all-composite construction and is powered by the Aixro XF40 wankel rotary engine, which puts out 35hp at 6,500rpm. Currently, the empty weight is 134kg but Arnaud is confident he can reduce that to 120kg so that it'll be eligible for the German 120kg class. The mauw is 220kg and it cruises at 95kt (175 kph). The plan is to put the design into kit production. *(Photo: Brian Hope)*



This smart two-seater is a Pegaz W100. The primary structure is wood, with composite skins also taking some of the load. However, I believe that the wing is all composite. The engine choice is the Wilsch diesel. *(Photo: Brian Hope)*





This replica Nieuport 28 was built by Thierry Roussel, from an Airdrome Aeroplanes kit from the US, and is powered by a flat-four Lycoming. The type first flew in 1917 and was used by the American Expeditionary Force – famed US pilot Eddie Rickenbacker becoming an ‘ace’ on the type. This aircraft is painted in the colours of the 95th Escadrille, which was based at Château-Thierry. (Photo: Nigel Hitchman)

(Right) Jean-Pierre Marie has several designs under his belt, which he sells as plans and a variety of kits – from materials to complete components. This is his latest design, the JPM 06 Drakkar. Of all-wood construction, it can be built as a 450kg microlight or a 600kg VLA. An engine of 80hp is specified, and this example used a Rotax 912, which provides a 75 per cent cruise speed of 122kt. (Photo: Brian Hope)



(Right) There were three of these Citroën Visa flat-twin car engine-powered EEL ULF 2s at Brienne. Designed in Germany by Dieter Reich, this ultralight motorglider first flew in 1993. It features a catalytic converter and a silencer which is reputed to reduce noise to 55db. The cruise speed is 75mph, its empty weight 210kg, the mauw 323kg and a ballistic chute can be installed behind the seat. The wingspan is eleven metres but they pull out from the fuselage and fold back. The tailplane is removable and, therefore, the ULF 2s can be transported by trailer. It’s of wood-and-fabric construction, and the plans, which include the details of the engine conversion, cost €350 and are available in German or English. www.eel.de/english/about.htm (Photo: Nigel Hitchman)



(Right) This is a nice example of a homebuilt French F1 racer from the seventies. It’s a Max Plan MP205, which is of wood-and-fabric construction and powered by a Continental O-200. (Photo: Nigel Hitchman)



(Right) This two-seat Agrion microlight was badly damaged at last year’s RSA Rally, when it was blown across the airfield during a severe thunderstorm on the Saturday night. It’s an interesting machine as it features carbon-tube construction and weighs only 90kg empty. The mauw is 320kg and power comes courtesy of a 35hp Polini Thor 250. (Photo: Brian Hope)

