

PROPWASH VIDEO PRODUCTION'S
La Ferte 2003
Extreme Giant Scale from France



When the RC pilots at Europe's largest model aviation show say "extreme giant scale," they really mean it. All model aviation in France is managed by the Civil Aeronautics Agency, the same organization that manages full-size French civilian aircraft. There is a group of models known as Class III. Class III model aircraft have a *minimum* weight that is the same as our Academy of Model Aeronautic's (AMA) *maximum* weight – 55 pounds.

In the US, models weighing over 55 pounds require special AMA issued registrations if they are to be covered by AMA liability insurance. Insurance is both usually required to fly at most model airports and a good thing to have with aircraft this large. But there is no government regulation as to model size at this time.

In France there is. No model over 55 pounds can fly without a government issued airworthiness certificate. Each Class III model must also pass an annual inspection just like full-size aircraft. But once certificated and inspected, these behemoths can fly anywhere, at any time.

It is these giants that are the subject of Propwash Video Production's newest video: La Ferte 2003. The La Ferte Airshow is known all over the globe as having the most interesting and largest scale models on display. The 2003 La Ferte show had the most models ever, over 240 RC aircraft showed up to fly. Scales ranged from one-quarter size through almost full size (1 to 1.1).



Photo 1



Photo 2

Werner Kopp is your host and guide through this stunning modeling event hosted by the French division of the International Miniature Aircraft Association (IMAA). Some of these aircraft are amazing and fly very well. The Me-109E pictured in photo 2 is 50% scale. That means it is *half the size* of the full-size fighter.



Photo 3



Photo 4

This video also has some unique viewing perspectives. Carrying a video camera, or even carrying several cameras, is not a problem for models of this size. This video has many unique in-flight perspectives like the straight ahead shot in photos 3. But there are also in-flight shots from a wingtip or from the rear. Some of the rear shots look forward while others focus on where the model has just been. The sheer size, and great flight performance, of these models is incredible. We sometimes joke about our 30% scale models carrying a child. But these aircraft can. Just look at photo 4. This 80% scale Caudron Adelante Racer can do just that (only on the ground we hope).



Photo 5



Photo 6

Some of these larger models are almost as tall as their pilot's (photo 5). Others are so complex that they require an entire crew to manage and three pilots to fly like the 17% (1/6) scale Constellation in photo 6.



Photo 7



Photo 8

In addition to all the great flying action, this 110-minute video covers the entire Airshow action. How about a strafing run from a giant F-4U Corsair (photo 7)? A lot of bombs are dropped during the “Warbird” part of the Airshow (photo 8). During the attack, the ground defenses are shooting back and the sky is filled with flak and anti-aircraft fire (photos 9 and 10). These monitor photos do not do justice to the excellent quality of this video. Everything is always in focus and there are so many close-ups that it is easy to feel that you are there.



Photo 9



Photo 10

This video has detailed close-ups, pilot interviews (in English) flying shots and technical information on 28 of the very best aircraft that were at La Ferte. There are also a few aircraft covered from the 2002 Airshow that were so impressive that they just had to be included. We will not spoil the fun by showing all 28 aircraft, but you might be interested in looking at a few before ordering this great video.



Photo 11



Photo 12

This 20-foot wingspan Junkers JU-52 transport from WW II is a great place to start. Taking over 3,000 hours to build, this 200-pound plus monster flies like pushing a baby carriage. The two outboard engines are 80 cc (4.9 cu. in.) while the nose engine is 100 cc (6.1 cu. in.). The flight, and the sound, is impressive.



Photo 13

When model aircraft of this size land, they kick up dirt just like the full-size ones. Look closely at the Ju-52's tires in photo 13. Remember that half-size Me-109? This 231-pound aircraft has a wingspan over 17 ft. It has a 521 cc (31.8 cu. in) engine and took just ten months to build. At Florida's Sun and Fun Airshow a few years ago, I saw a 65% scale P-51 Mustang and it had a human pilot sitting in it. That gives an idea just how large this fighter was.



Photo 14



Photo 15

Yet this aircraft was so well designed that it flew a great aerobatic routine (photo 14). It rolled, looped and chandelled with the best of them. I don't know the engine's horsepower but it had to be over 25 hp judging by the way it pulled this fighter through the sky. When it landed, the video had you flinching the action was so close to the camera (photo 15).



Photo 16



Photo 17

The Me-109's main nemesis was also present at La Ferte in the form of this Spitfire Mk IX T. This 40% model is a scale replica of a fully restored, and flying, Mk IX T originally sold to the Irish Air Force in 1945. The model flew as well as did the original aircraft, maybe a little better.



Photo 18



Photo 19

Civilian aircraft models were also out in force. This beautiful yellow Beechcraft Stagger Wing biplane from the late 1930's had every rivet, trim tab, spring and access panel just right. It flew well too. But something happened and there was an in-flight fire (gasoline motors remember?). Although the pilot managed an emergency landing, the aircraft was destroyed by the fire before it could be extinguished.



Photo 20

A 40% scale Gee Bee Racer from the same 1930's period was also lost at La Ferte. Something happened to the aircraft's pitch control system. From nearly level flight, the Gee Bee just nosed toward the ground. Even though it hit in a nearly level attitude, the impact was too great and the aircraft was destroyed (photo 20). The sad fates of the Staggerwing and the Racer point out the importance of a complete pre-flight inspection before every flight when flying aircraft of this size and complexity.



Photo 21



Photo 22

Turbine powered jets were out in force in all variations. There were jet fighters like the Mirage 2000 Delta (photo 21) and the WWII German turbine flying wing (photo 22) which flew surprisingly well. The full-size prototype only made one flight of less than 2 hours before hitting a tree. Therefore the model has far more actual flight time than the full-size aircraft. That doesn't happen all that often. There was even turbine powered jet bomber.



Photo 23



Photo 24

The Al Italia three-turbine powered DC-10 made an awesome sound on the flybys and was a great compliment to the 4-piston engine Constellation. The “Connie” weighed in at 356 pounds with a wingspan over 22 ft. I thought this was one of the most impressive model aircraft I had seen (photos 25 and 26) until the big one made its video debut.



Photo 25



Photo 26



Photo 27



Photo 28

It is hard to describe the world’s heaviest model aircraft. The B-29 weighs in at over 451 *pounds* and has a 29 ft. wingspan. It is powered by four 10 cu. in. engines and is in the Guinness World Record Book as the heaviest model airplane. It is not the largest however as there was a 39 ft. wingspan glider at La Ferte as well. Yes, it is also in the video, being towed aloft by a giant Pilatus model.



Photo 29



Photo 30

The B-29 was amazing to watch. It seemed positive on the controls and m not the least underpowered. In fact, it climbed better than the full-size Super Fortress, FiFi, that I have seen fly.



Photo 31



Photo 32



Photo 33



Photo 34



Photo 35

The video has great shots of a giant C-130 Hercules and amazing aerobatics by a half-size Challenger II. Then there is the giant water bomber that drops 2.5 gallons of water. A 40% Stearman complete with a “wing walker” flies in this video and of course, the model that is nearly as large as the full size aircraft, the Flying Bumble Bee. With just a 6 ft. wingspan this model aircraft flies better than the full-size one. The full-size Bee is currently the world’s smallest man-carrying aircraft.

These are just a few of the many aircraft covered in detail in this video. Each aircraft spans 4-6 minutes video time, some even longer. There is also coverage of the many vendors, meetings and food shops. You will even learn a new way to eat hotdogs!

You will probably never see these aircraft fly in person. Nothing at your flying field will probably even come close to weighing 451 pounds. But you can experience these works of art in their natural habitat, the sky, in this video. This one is worth taking to your next club meeting and showing it there. Most of us just don’t know these things exist and all of us would love to watch them perform here.

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