

The Cricket's 160-pound empty weight makes it easy to move on the ground and load into its trailer. The wings are detachable.

type" flaps increase wing area and reduce wing loading from 11.2 to eight pounds/sq.ft., producing a stall speed of only 42 mph.

A compact "hangar-trailer" is part of the Cricket package. Both display aircraft were shipped to Oshkosh aboard a French 747, safely encased in their 5 x 13½-foot hangar-trailers. The loaded trailer weighs less than 500 pounds and is completely towable. The trailers were used each night at Oshkosh to secure the tiny aircraft.

Lelaie's and Legrand's work with the French Flight Test Center includes supersonic testing of many aircraft, even the Mirage jets. When the Cricket came along, the pilots asked designer Colomban if they could fly the first two models of the tiny homebuilt in demonstrations. Actually, the pair had only 10 hours to practice their seven-minute routine before arriving at Oshkosh. A smoke system was planned, but the pyrotechnics could not be air-shipped along with the aircraft.

Claude Lelaie is 34 and has 5000 hours of flight time, while Denis Legrand is four years younger and has a total of 3500 hours in 135 different aircraft. Both pilots are relatively lightweight, tipping the scales at 160 and 170 pounds, respectively, with parachute attached. Top allowable weight to pilot the Cricket is 200 pounds.

"We have to be very careful during our demonstrations because we are flying very close to redline of 160 mph," explained Legrand. "The aircraft are stressed for 9 G's positive and 4.5 G's

negative, but that's the point at which the airframe will break. No permanent deformation takes place below 6 G's, so we make every effort not to exceed 5 G's in our shows."

Their airshow routine includes takeoff at 65-70 mph with a climb of 80 mph. They do all flights with full fuel — four to six gallons! Usually "Les Porthos" take off during a lull in the preceding act and climbs to altitude away from the airport. When it is their turn to come "on stage," they enter at 1300 feet, dive to 155 mph indicated

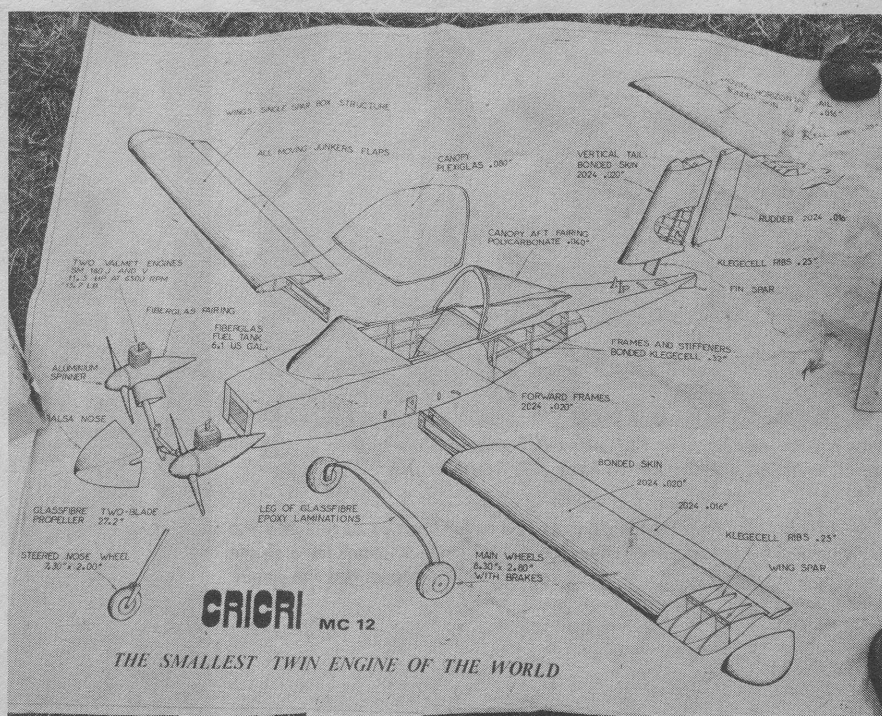
and then pull up into a wide 3½- to 4-G loop. This leads into a second tighter loop with G's just above 5. Then follows a close crossing pass, a half Cuban eight with the second ship flying inverted, a Cuban eight together with an inverted crossover, an inverted roll, slow roll in formation, flight toward the crowd with a crossover and a double roll by both aircraft. Then the team does a right-side-up/inverted close formation where the tiny wingtip of the second Cricket is from three to five feet from the T-tail of the lead aircraft.

"We don't recommend this for beginners," explained Lelaie. "Low-speed, inverted flight is difficult because of the limited power. We would like a little more forward stick to handle the vortex from the lead aircraft. Our teamwork differs from the 'French Connection' team that flies almost canopy-to-canopy — we give ourselves a little more room!"

The CriCris will fly inverted indefinitely because of the two-cycle engines that combine fuel and oil through a membrane carburetor in a ratio of 40:1. "You can fly along inverted just as long as you want — until you get tired of it," explained "Les Porthos."

The two demonstration Crickets were built in France by homebuilders under approval of the French EAA, the Réseau du Sport de L'Air (RSA).

The first Cricket to be built in North



Plans show the components of the Cricket (CriCri in French). The landing gear are fiberglass/epoxy laminations, and the wings are bonded.