

CRICRI

America will come from the Zenair facility in Richmond Hill, Ontario, Canada. John Pickard, Zenair production manager for kits, was at the airshow, closely inspecting the twins. When Pickard, 6-feet-four-inches tall and weighing 210 pounds, found that he was just a little too tall and too hefty to close the canopy, he commented, "You can bet that I'll build one for myself that's big enough!" At six-feet-two and 190 pounds — and relatively short-waisted — I was able to shoe-horn into the cockpit without a 'chute and get the canopy closed, so when one is available, I want to fly it!

The French designer and both airshow pilots report little or no adverse yaw when one engine is shut down. This phenomenon is caused by the close-in mounting of the engines to the aircraft centerline and the propeller slipstream as it is deflected by the large canopy. Colombar explains: "This automatically creates an incidence on the vertical tail that compensates for the asymmetric thrust on one engine.

Single-engine rate of climb is reported at 180 fpm. At the time of the Oshkosh demonstrations, the new homebuilts had not yet been stalled inverted. Pilots estimate an inverted stall speed with flaps retracted of about 65 mph.

The French air show pilots reported that the CriCri is very easy to fly. "Any normal pilot can fly it easily. There are no bad habits," they explained. "Aerobatics should be approached cautiously so as not to exceed the redline speed."

During the first flights of the Cricket in this country, there was some question of whether or not the FAA would require a multi-engine rating to fly this tiny homebuilt. The French pilots felt that this additional rating would probably not be necessary, but they were not sure. Zenair will have this minor piece of paper work resolved before the first kits are shipped.

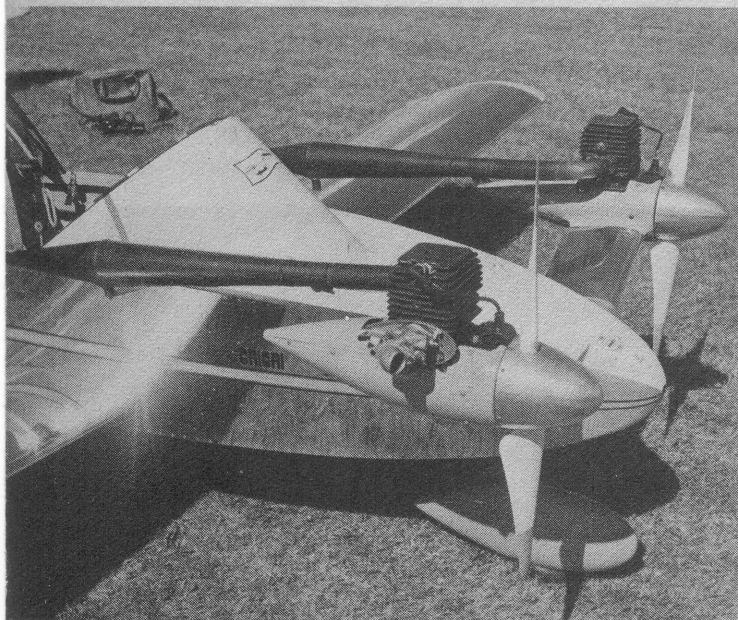
Designer Colombar, an ex-model airplane fan, designed the Cricket as a simple, easy-to-build single-seater that would carry 180 pounds of pilot and 35

pounds of fuel with efficiency. His original prototype was designed for wood and fabric, but he soon found that sheet metal was more satisfactory. When he was unable to find a suitable 24-hp engine, he settled for the two chainsaw powerplants.

The fuselage is a simple "square box" made from sheet metal and doublers. The cross-section is rectangular with four single-curved panels with rigid foam stiffeners that are blind-riveted to four angle members. Loads from the wing, pilot, gear and engines are carried through bent metal bulkheads. The rear section of the fuselage has two straight sides blind-riveted to two sheets with bent edges. Original construction was with Abdon aluminum blind rivets.

The T-tail has two hinged bearings at the tip of the fin spar. Construction is out of a single piece of aluminum and no trim tab. The T-tail was selected to avoid damage in ground handling, for ease in construction and to make the aircraft easier to fit into its hangar-trailer.

The wing has a newly developed airfoil with constant chord. There is dihedral of 4 degrees and twist of 1.5



Power is provided by twin 12-hp Swedish snowmobile Valmet engines, enabling the Cricket to have a 127-mph cruise.

Inside the Cricket cockpit, note the twin throttles at left and the molded fuel tank under the pilot's legs. There is room for a single radio under the panel.

