PRIVATE FLIGHT

Interceptor turboprop single returns
SAN ANTONIO

A pressurised single-engined
turboprop originally certifi-
cated in 1971 should soon be
in production in the USA. The
Interceptor 400 evolved from
the Meyers 200 low-wing four-
seater, which in turn was pro-
duced as the Aero Com-
mander 200. Now the design
has been taken over by Texas-
based Prop-Jets, which plans
a limited production run in
San Antonio. The Interceptor
was the first FAA-certificated
pressurised turboprop single,
and is being brought back to
the market in response to the
new interest in turboprop
singles, exemplified by the
Beech Lightning, Smith
Prop-Jet and the Cessna
Caravan I.

The four-seat Interceptor
was originally engined with a
Garrett TPE 331-1-101J, flat-
rated to 400 s.h.p. The new
aircraft will be in two
versions —the 400A with a
current production Garrett
TPE331-6, and the 400B with
a 1,000 s.h.p.Garrett TPE 331.
An original Interceptor has
logged several thousand
hours, and is capable of more
than 240kt at 16,000ft.
Several refinements have
been made to the design and
Prop-Jets now claims a capa-
bility of 280kt for the 400A,
and 320kt for the 400B, with
ranges greater than 1,000
miles.

Latest state-of-the-art elec-
tronics, avionics, and other
systems are to be installed,
plus air conditioning as stan-
dard, and de-icing equipment.
Prop-Jets says that the Inter-
ceptor will be "custom-built"
to order, and that 20 deposits
are necessary to start pro-
duction. Although not finally
decided, the 400A is expected
to have an initial price of
$500,000, and the 400B
$600,000. Basic IFR avionics
will be included.

Prop-Jets is planning a new
production facility at Stinson
Field, San Antonio, and has
all the tooling necessary.
Originally designed to build
several hundred Aero Com-
mander 200s per year, the rigs
and fixtures have been under-
going modifications for
several months. Unlike Beech
and, more particularly, Mike
Smith with his own turboprop
design, the new company is

INTERCEPTOR 400A
Max cruise
Max range
Certified ceiling
Rate of climb
Take-off ground roll
Landing ground roll
Stall speed
Engine
Gross weight
Cabin pressure
Fuel capacity
Baggage
Seats

280kt
1,1 50 miles
24,000ft
1,500ft/min
860ft
1.410ft
60kt
Garrett TPE-331-6

4,0301b
3-0lb/in2
145 US gal
2001b
4

not faced with massive certifi-
cation costs, since it already
has production tooling and
the basic type certificate.
Development costs do not
have to be built into the initial
purchase price, and a break-
even point is quoted at six
aircraft a year.
Prop-Jets is at 1168, 99th
Avenue, San Antonio, Texas
78214, telephone (512) 924-
3535.

Design of the Lotus microlight was by Burt Rutan, and clearly owes a lot to his VariEze concept

Lotus enters

microlight
business

NORWICH

Firm orders worth $4-8
million for more than 500
composite microlight aircraft
have been received from the
USA by UK sports car manu-
facturer Lotus. Complete
aircraft will be delivered over
the next three years to US
distributor Eipper Aircraft, of
California.
Lotus entered the micro-
light business early in 1982,
when its late chief Colin
Chapman (who was a pilot)
identified the need for a

microlight with better
reliability and performance
than current types. The
design, according to project
leader Patrick Peal, had to
exhibit "exemplary flight
characteristics and be enjoy-
able for both novice and
experienced pilots — basically
a 'real' aircraft, meeting the
microlight regulations".
Design of the all-composite
airframe was carried out
under contract by Burt Rutan
in Reno, while the four-stroke
engine is being built in-house
by Lotus (see page 946). Pro-
duction airframes will be
UK-manufactured. Although
the long-term supplier has
yet to be chosen, prototype
and initial aircraft will be
built by Huntingdon-based
Specialised Mouldings. The
first aircraft will be ready
early next year. Price of a
complete aircraft will be
$14,700.

0-200 kit

launched
ALABAMA

Teledyne Continental has
introduced a kit version of the
O-200, some 25,000 of which
have been produced since the
engine's introduction 24 years
ago. Price is $6,890 in the
USA, to include all com-
ponents except alternator or
generator.
The crankcase is machined
to accommodate a fuel pump
and vacuum pump, and cylin-
ders will be complete assem-
blies with valves, guides, and
seats installed by the manu-
facturer. The specific type will
be the O-200A tractor version,
and new accessories will
include magnetoes, harness,
plugs, carburettor, airbox, and
starter.

The kit is designed to be
assembled and signed-off by
an FAA-licensed mechanic or
foreign equivalent.

BRIEFING

In the USA, the US National
Aircraft Association has
increased its grant to AM.
Weather by $5,000, bringing
it to $50,000. The daily TV
programme provides weather
information through more
than 250 US TV stations.

942 FLIGHT International, 8 October 19