PARIS REPORT

Porsche takes off
Two general-aviation manu-
facturers have flown aircraft
powered by the new Porsche
PFM3200, another has fitted
the engine to an aircraft, and
one more began talks with the
West German company at the
Paris Show. Mooney reports
that it has flown some 120hr
with a PFM3200-powered 231
"in the 30 days before the
show", while Pierre Robin
installed an engine in a
DR400 and flew it to Le
Bourget within eight weeks of
having reached an agreement
with Porsche.

Another French light-
aircraft builder, Aerospatiale
subsidiary Socata, has fitted a
PFM3200 to one of its aircraft
on show at Le Bourget (albeit
a dummy unit sans pistons—a
large concrete block anchor-
ing the nosewheel). Lake
Aircraft has begun talks with
Porsche about installing the
engine on its amphibians.
Porsche owns the PFM-
3200-powered Mooney, and is
to fly it round the world soon.
The company tells Flight that
this "durability exercise" will
last three months, and will
take in Europe, the USA,
South America, Africa, the
Middle East, Japan,
Indonesia, a second visit
to the USA, and finally
Europe.
Porsche will then decide
whether to go ahead with the
engine and at what price it
will be offered to manu-
facturers. The major claims
made for the PFM3200 are
good fuel economy, single-
power lever operation, low
noise, and an ability to run on
avgas or mogas.
FAA certification is
expected in August or
September, Porsche aircraft-
engines development super-
visor Klaus Menzner tells
Flight. Approval of the engine
in West Germany was granted
last September following
work done with a Cessna 182
testbed. Unusually for an
aircraft engine, it will have a
cooling fan to control engine
temperature (drawing very
much on experience gained
with the 911 sports car, whose
engine provides the basis for
the new power unit). Menzner
concedes that this is one item
at which the FAA has raised
its eyebrows. The FAA takes

-, FLIGHT International, 8 June 1985

Socata has fitted (but not flown) a Porsche PFM3200 in its TB16

the view that the system is a
high-energy rotor system.
Tests of the 20,000 r.p.m. unit
with a blade cut through some
75 per cent at the root have
apparently been conducted
satisfactorily, with contain-
ment of all pieces at failure.
Mooney was approached by
Porsche "because they wanted
a quality aircraft for their
quality engine," according to
Armand Rivard, one of
Mooney's joint owners. The
first of two engines was deliv-
ered to Kerrville, Texas, in
December. If an agreement
can be reached with Porsche,
Rivard says that Mooney will
consider a limited run of
some 50 aircraft. Porsche is
thinking of laying down a
similar number for initial
production.

Agreement is very much the
operative word: Pierre
Gautier, president/director
general of Socata, says that
the TB16 "is not launched
until Porsche has decided and
we know at what level of cost
we can proceed. Socata will fly
the aircraft within six months
of a Porsche decision. "We
know enough to see that we
have a good match". The
aircraft will be flown "only for
certification, which we know
will be costly".
Robin first flew its Porsche-
engined DR.400/180RP on
May 24, just a few days before
the show. Later this month it
will be taken to West

Germany for a sales tour to
determine the market. The
French company sees a large
market for glider tugs in West
Germany (a strong Robin
sales area), which has
important environmental
noise considerations.
Each of the manufacturers
is interested in turbocharged
versions. The present 200 h.p.
unit gives "201-like perfor-
mance to the Mooney 231",
says Rivard. He attributes
this to the clipped-tip Hoff-
mann propeller that has been
used on the initial aircraft. An
alternative Hoffmann prop is
expected to be more satis-
factory.

Socata says that it does not
know "if the Mooney is as well
adapted to the new engine as
the Trinidad". Porsche
engineers appear well pleased
with the Robin cowling, and
this is perhaps one reason why
the engine has remained
covered during the early part
of the Show: the lines are
indeed very clean. (Wraps
covering Socata's aircraft
were not removed until press
day.)
Socata's Pierre Gautier
feels that if Porsche can
match Lycoming's power,
then the specific fuel
consumption, single-level
operation, and low noise are
worth perhaps 15 per cent
more cost than existing
aircraft powered by current
engines.

Saab-

Fairchild

moves into

Asia
Saab-Fairchild is to join the
regional airliner manu-
facturers trying to grab a slice
of the Asian cake, with the
opening of a Singapore office
in October.
President and chief execu-
tive George Cudahy said in
Paris that he saw "great
potential in the long term
in the Asia/Pacific region"
for the SF.340 35-seat
turboprop.
A variety of potential
customers have been targeted.
Chinese CAAC teams have
visited the Saab-Fairchild
factory in Linkoping, Sweden,
and talks have been under
way for almost a year. But it is
not only China, everyone's
current favourite customer,
which is being wooed by the
Swedish-American joint

company. Saab-Fairchild
looks close to winning orders
in Thailand, and is hopeful of
edging into the important
Philippine market, where UK
products are unpopular
because of the long-standing
dispute over international
scheduled services between
London and Manila.

Saab-Fairchild will be
offering these potential
clients a more powerful
SF. 340 which received its
Swedish certification two
days before the opening of the
Le Bourget Salon. With only
minor changes to the General
Electric CT7-5A2 engines,
power has been uprated from
1,630 s.h.p. to 1,753 s.h.p. The
new configuration also has
larger Dowty Rotol propellers
(a diameter of 132in compared
with the earlier 126in). The
new combination pushes
cruise speed to 280kt at
15,000ft and increases climb
rate by 10 per cent.
The aircraft is now certifi-
cated with a gross weight of
27,2751b instead of 27,0001b.
Cudahy said that the
company is looking for a
27,8001b MTOW in the near
future which would give a 200
n.m. increase in range. He
added that Saab-Fairchild
was particularly keen to boost
hot-and-high performance at
maximum payload.

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