Private aircraft

buyers' guide

"This year, while Americans go to France to celebrate the bicentennial of the French Revolution, the French will be [in the USA], selling their handsome lightplanes harder than ever," says Aerospatiale General Aviation (AGA). The FVench manufacturer's US marketing arm has 13 dealerships in place and plans a further seven, about 25 service stations will have Aerospatiale-trained mechanics by the end of this year, and the Tampico trainer is being introduced. Thus is the European general-aviation company taking on the might of the US industry, whose fortunes have declined so severely in the past ten years.
Former marketing director Christophe Duplay has been appointed president of AGA and his strategy will be to address both ends of the pilot spectrum. "We are inter-ested in the new pilot who is looking for multiple levels of performance in one family of aircraft [and] in the veteran pilot who wants a light plane that has not come out of the same old cookie-cutter." AGA's TB range of four- and five-seaters gives from 121kt to 187kt cruise speeds over 400-800 n.m. ranges.
Of the historic "big three" US manu-facturers, Piper (under its latest owner M. Stuart Millar) is putting on perhaps the bravest face. Earlier designs of varying

FLIGHT DATA

vintage have been reintroduced, notably the venerable Cub and piston-twin Seminole. The Cadet, a stripped-down Warrior has been successful in generating a huge number of sales as the latest extension of Cherokee technology.
Unfortunately, Millar regards the initial examples as being no more than "give-aways", so it remains to be seen if money can be made from the new trainer (see feature on page 53). The Malibu has been re-engined with the more powerful 350 h.p. Lycoming O-540 and this cabin-class six-seater may continue to provide the backbone of Piper income.

Beech soldiers on in the light-aircraft market with the veteran Baron twin (the Model 58 is 20 years old and was itself a derivative) and the Bonanza (whose origin can be traced back to the Second World War). Possible new products from the liasion
with Scaled Composites have proved still-
born, although former Beech boss James

Piper Malibu Mirage

Walsh has taken Burt Rutan's prototype-producing shop under the wing of Wyman-Gordon.
Nor is there any change in Cessna's piston-single situation. "Nothing will be built in 1989, and none is likely in 1990," the company tells Flight.
Mooney is one of two manufacturers' to add aircraft at the top of their ranges. The M20M was announced last month, with imminent certification and production pre-dicted. An extended M20L airframe is driven by a 270 h.p. Lycoming O-540 in a combina-tion that Mooney claims "eclipses the speed of the Model 252". It has dropped the Model 205 and a sales base has been established in San Antonio.

Sharing the European flag with Aero-spatiale, Robin announces the introduction of Porsche power with its top-of-the-range 212 h.p. DR.400/180. Its 146kt cruise speed offers little advantage over the 138kt claimed for the R. 3000/160, which at Fr580,350, is some Fr350,000 less expensive.
Grob continues its practice of batch pro-
duction. Sixty G.103 Twin III Aero sail-
planes are being built which should be
complete in July. About 30 Grob 115
composite two-seat light aircraft will then be
laid down. A 150/160 h.p. version powered

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