Pilatus PC-12:

A used PC-12 could be one of the most versatile step-up turboprop singles, but don't skimp on training.

The PC-12 turboprop single turned out to be more versatile than perhaps even Pilatus envisioned. That's because it works just as well hauling dirt bikes (we're talking motorcycles, by the way) as it does corporate executives and charter passengers, thanks to a posh rear cabin that's configurable in several seating arrangements. Formed in 1939, Pilatus is hardly a newcomer to the aircraft market and the PC-12 has been to market since 1995. That means there is a healthy selection of used PC-12s to choose from.

But since the capable PC-12 has earned so much respect among a wide variety of operators, don't look for bargain pricing. This airplane—from the early PC-12s to the later-model PC-12NG—has notoriously maintained high resale values, especially well-cared-for owner-flown ones. Here's a look at the current market.

HISTORY LESSON

Pilatus Aircraft rolled out its first aircraft in 1945 and enjoyed much success with training and utility aircraft, including the P-2, P-3, PC-7, PC-9 and the PC-21. Before the PC-12, however, Pilatus was well known for the PC-6 Porter, a STOL-equipped utilitarian turboprop single that is popular for hauling skydivers, among filling other unique missions. But the Pratt PT6A-powered PC-12 is different, combining impressive amounts of utility with high-end styling and performance, including a nearly cross-continental range and a cruise speed that flirts with 280 knots in newer PC-12NG models.

The PC-12 has notoriously been marketed as an alternative to the King Air 200 series.

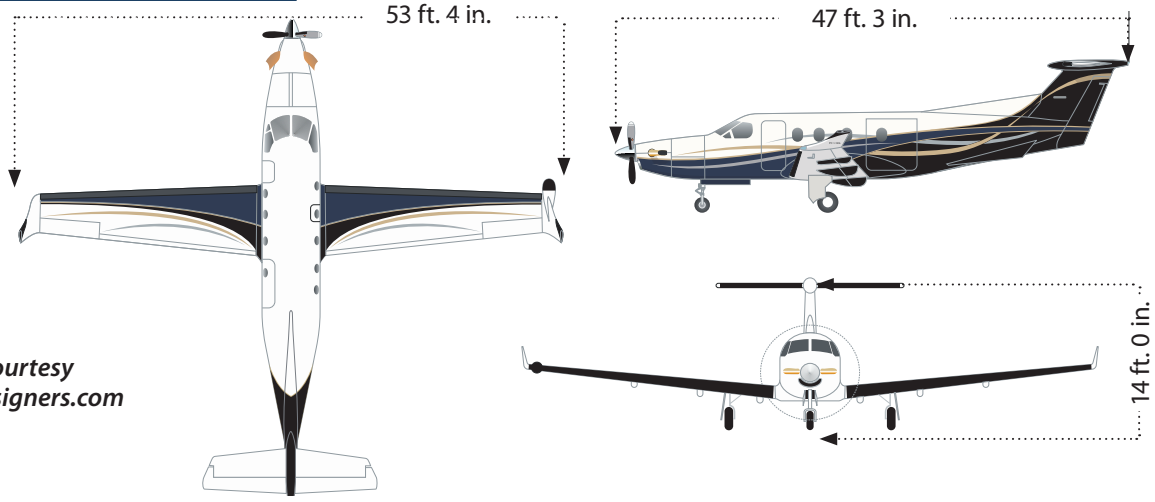
DECIPHERING THE MODELS

Surfing the PC-12 market can be tricky because of the different, yet similar, model designations. Look all the way back to when Pilatus delivered the first PC-12s in 1994, starting with the model PC-12-41, which had a 9040-pound maximum takeoff weight. If you're searching the used market for an early one, you'll be hard pressed to find a PC12-41 that hasn't be modded (via landing gear mod and a paperwork change) for a 9920-pound maximum takeoff weight, essentially making it a PC-12-45 designation—the second series of PC-12s introduced around 1996.

Up until the current PC-12NG model, Pilatus incrementally bundled modifications and improvements into 11 groups of airframe serial numbers. This means if you were to buy a 2014 PC-12 (an example for the sake of shopping the used market), it would incorporate all of the improvements made to

The PC-12 series, main image, is pressurized and powered by a Pratt & Whitney PT6A-67 engine. The typical overhaul cost is around $500,000.

PILATUS PC-12

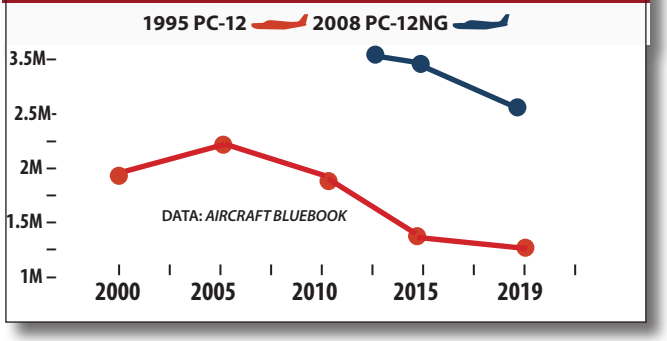


Drawings courtesy www.schemedesigners.com

SELECT MODEL HISTORY

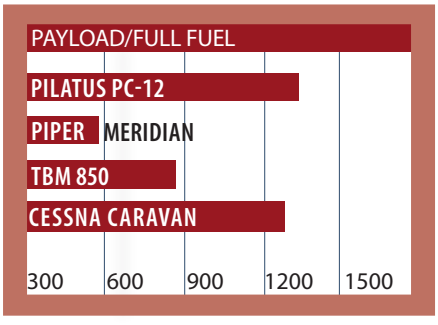
MODEL YEAR	ENGINE	TBO	OVERHAUL	FUEL (LBS)	USEFUL LOAD	CRUISE	TYPICAL RETAIL
1995 PC12-41	P&W 1200 SHP PT6A-67B	3500	$400,000	2704	4020 LBS	270 KTS	±$1,400,000
1996-1997 PC12-41	P&W 1200 SHP PT6A-67B	3500	$400,000	2704	4020 LBS	270 KTS	±$1,500,000
1997 PC12-45	P&W 1200 SHP PT6A-67B	3500	$400,000	2704	4020 LBS	270 KTS	±$1,600,000
1998-1999 PC12-45	P&W 1200 SHP PT6A-67B	3500	$400,000	2704	4020 LBS	270 KTS	±$1,700,000
2000-2003 PC12-45	P&W 1200 SHP PT6A-67B	3500	$400,000	2704	4020 LBS	270 KTS	±$2,000,000
2002-2003 PC12-45	P&W 1200 SHP PT6A-67B	3500	$400,000	2704	4020 LBS	270 KTS	±$2,100,000
2004-2005 PC12-45	P&W 1200 SHP PT6A-67B	3500	$400,000	2704	4020 LBS	270 KTS	±$2,300,000
2006-2007 PC12-47	P&W 1200 SHP PT6A-67B	3500	$400,000	2704	4020 LBS	270 KTS	±$2,500,000
2008-2009 PC12-47E NG	P&W 1200 SHP PT6A-67P	3500	$400,000	2704	4020 LBS	280 KTS	±$3,000,000
2010-2011 PC12-47E NG	P&W 1200 SHP PT6A-67P	3500	$400,000	2704	4020 LBS	280 KTS	±$3,300,000
2012-2013 PC12-47E NG	P&W 1200 SHP PT6A-67P	3500	$400,000	2704	4020 LBS	280 KTS	±$3,500,000
2014-2017 PC12-47E NG	P&W 1200 SHP PT6A-67P	3500	$400,000	2704	4020 LBS	280 KTS	±$4,200,000

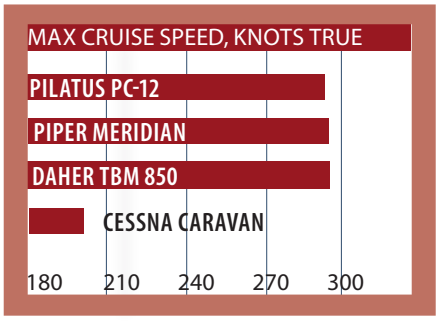
RESALE VALUES

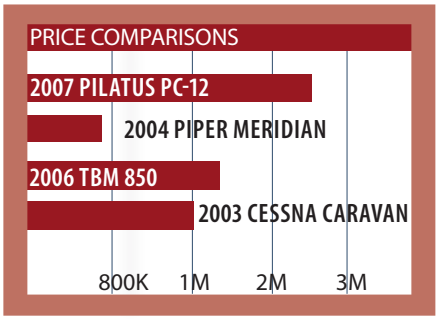


SELECT RECENT ADs

AD 2009-05-07	REAR STICK PUSHER CABLE
AD 2005-04-16	WINDSHIELD DEICE WIRING
AD 2003-20-15	FUEL BOOSTER PUMP REPLACEMENT
AD 2001-22-15	CARGO DOOR LIGHTNING HOLES
AD 99-17-01	REPLACE WING FLAP DRIVE SHAFTS







A PC-12NG's flight deck is all business. Pilatus got the ergonomics right, but we think the Honeywell Apex suite, top photo, can benefit from a modern refresh. Look for the Cursor Control Device (CCD in used models—it was a pricey option on early NG airplanes). The center power console houses the flap lever and keypad for the Apex, bottom.

the aircraft over time. But if you're shopping the used market, you'll focus on the more significant changes associated with a given series. Some upgrades (through service bulletins) were more substantial than others.

For example, the series three (serial numbers 141-160) brought the previously mentioned gross weight increase from 9040 pounds to 9920 pounds (which ultimately became standard beginning with serial number 181). Series four (serial numbers 161-180) brought new pilot and copilot seating with improved adjustment mechanisms, plus passenger seats certified for the increased gross weight. Series five (serial numbers 181-200) included new heat ducting in the cabin, a new oxygen shutoff lever in the cockpit, a 60-second engine start relay, plus head impact modifications to the passenger seating. More major modifications were incorporated in series 10 aircraft, starting with serial number 401 through 888 (later serial numbers upgraded the aircraft to the PC-12-47). This included a new EIS, which incorporated an engine condition monitoring system (ECMS), allowing the EIS to capture all critical engine parameters for download to a laptop computer for engine trend analysis. There were also some avionics upgrades, including the addition of the BendixKing KLN90B approach-approved GPS, the KMD850 multifunction display, EGPWS, weather radar and TCAS.

But the used market shows that many of these early-gen airplanes have major avionics upgrades. You'll find that the BendixKing avionics were replaced with Garmin GNS 530 and GNS 430 navigators (and newer GTN navigators), plus Garmin G600 PFD (and now the TXi displays) to replace BendixKing EFIS displays. The early models even had the Universal EFIS.

On the exterior of the PC-12, the dash 47 model brought new winglets, a new empennage dorsal fin, new ailerons for better roll handling and new LED lighting. The later series 11 is the dash 47E model PC-12NG, which begins with serial number 1001. More on this model in a minute.

SYSTEMS AND LOADING

Except for the pushrods on some sections of the ailerons, the flight controls on the PC-12 are cable driven. And unlike other turboprop singles like the Daher TBM and Cessna Caravan, the PC-12 doesn't have spoilers for roll control and that's thanks to the smaller aileron size. After some complaints about heavy ailerons, Pilatus installed servo tabs on the ailerons, which, combined with the third generation of winglet design, delivered acceptable roll forces and response, nicely harmonized with pitch and rudder forces and an aileron/rudder interconnect. Max flap travel of the big semi-Fowler flaps is 40 degrees. In flight, that allows for a dramatically steep rate of descent at 85 KIAS.

There are angle-of-attack vanes on each wing, providing data to dual AOA systems that drive a stick shaker and pusher. Stalls are prohibited, as the airplane could not meet the certification requirements regarding maximum roll-off at the stall break with full flaps and full power. AoA data is displayed on the flight director (and on the PFD in the later NG model), which makes

The PC-12's huge cargo door provides access to the rear cabin for loading and unloading almost as much as you can fit inside, top. And once inside, occupants are treated to a dwelling that follows the lead of high-end bizjets, bottom.

holding the right speed for a given landing weight easy. At max takeoff weight, stall speed is 67 knots.

Up front, a 1605-SHP Pratt & Whitney PT6A-67B spins a four-blade, full-feathering Hartzell prop. On pre-NG models, the engine is derated to 1200 SHP for five minutes on takeoff and 1000 SHP for continuous operation.

Max gross weight for the PC-12 is 10,495 pounds, with max takeoff at 10,450 pounds. The early-gen PC-12 *Aviation Consumer* flew back in 2007 for a review weighed 6474 pounds empty, giving it a useful load of 4021 pounds. With all 2704 pounds of fuel aboard, 1317 pounds may be carried in the cabin, or six 200 pounders and more than 100 pounds of baggage. For the pilot-plus-four range question used for evaluating VLJs and single-engine turboprops at the time, the answer for the older PC-12 is that a pilot plus five can still carry full fuel and go 1500 nautical miles at max speed cruise with NBAA reserves, meaning it can miss the approach and go to an alternate 100 miles away.

The zero-fuel weight is 9040 pounds, which allows a hefty 2566 pounds in the cabin. In sample loading problems, we found that with just two people up front, the airplane was near the forward CG limit. Keeping just the pilot aboard and then loading the maximum 400 pounds in the aft baggage area (behind the rear seats) and then 500 pounds in the back end of the cabin moved the CG to near the aft limit, indicating a satisfactory CG range in service. Max landing weight is 9920 pounds, so 575 pounds of fuel have to be burned off following a max gross launch.

We like that for occupant protection in an accident, no hydraulic or fuel lines penetrate the pressure vessel and the 406 gallons of fuel (402 gallons usable) in the wings (53-foot 4-inch span) is as far outboard as possible. Fuel balancing is automated, so the pilot doesn't have to mess with tank selection or take any action unless the system should fail or a line person fills one tank much more than the other.

The upside is that it was done in a fashion that fuel burn doesn't affect the aircraft's center of gravity; the downside is that there's fuel all the way to the leading edge, so it's only protected by a deicer boot and the leading edge aluminum in the event of a crash. Pilatus pointed out that the wing skin is made of stiffened clad aluminum alloy, riveted to the spar and ribs. The PC-12 does not have easily punctured fuel tanks and, to our knowledge, has never experienced a fuel leak as a result of minor wing damage or a fire due to major wing damage.

A big plus on the PC-12 is that virtually all of the systems, as well as the engine, can be accessed via doors or hatches that unlatch and swing open easily—only one access port has to be unscrewed during a 100-hour inspection. Lubrication oil quantity is checked via a sight gauge after landing, reducing the chance of engine failure because someone forgot to replace the dipstick correctly. The oil filler cap has a vertical stripe of paint on it to quickly indicate if it's correctly screwed on.

CABIN, JET-LIKE COCKPIT

Pilatus has notoriously tried to sell the PC-12 as an alternative airplane

PC-12 PRANGS: IMC LOSS OF CONTROL

There have been about 1600 PC-12s built—yet our search only revealed 28 accidents. We were encouraged by the low rate of serious accidents for the fleet—an indication that operators take training and maintenance seriously.

Nevertheless, six crashes involving loss of control in IMC got our attention. That seems high to us for turboprops, even owner-flown ones. In one accident, the investigators could not determine if the autopilot disengaged or would not engage; however, it appears that the pilot was distracted by an autopilot issue and did not focus on flying the airplane after entering clouds shortly following takeoff.

One pilot was cruising in IMC with the autopilot engaged. He commanded a course change and had the autopilot disengage during the turn. As the bank steepened and the nose dropped into a diving spiral, the pilot made the decision to conduct an autopilot test. The autopilot tested appropriately while the bank increased to 75 degrees and the speed climbed to more than 150 knots above Va. The pilot than pulled hard on the yoke and the airplane came apart. The pilot had been through PC-12 training, but he had never flown a turboprop before buying the PC-12 five weeks earlier, and he had not flown in IMC in over seven years.

A pilot took his PC-12 to FL300, slightly above the maximum operating altitude. While in cruise, he reported to ATC that he had a "panel failure." He did not give more details before entering a diving spiral that continued to ground impact.

A tragic and well-publicized accident involved a professionally flown PC-12 in which the decision-maker apparently never used the anti-icing additive Prist in the fuel. Loaded 600 pounds over gross, with four passengers more than there were seats, the pilot launched from Oroville, California, for Bozeman, Montana. At FL250 the moisture in the fuel turned to slush leading to both the left and right boost pumps running to try and get fuel to the engine at the needed rate. The boost pumps normally only activate to balance the fuel between the wing tanks.

The result was an increasing fuel imbalance—left wing heavy. Approaching the destination, the imbalance became so bad control of the airplane became questionable and the pilot diverted to a nearer airport. By then, the left tank was nearly full of fuel and the right tank empty. On slowing down in the pattern the airplane rolled left and crashed; all 14 aboard perished.

A PC-12 carries an impressive load, but it has its limitations. A pilot for an on-demand charter company that did not get passenger and baggage weights found that his airplane was uncontrollable shortly after leaving the ground. It began oscillations of increasing magnitude until it hit the ground and collapsed the gear. The airplane was several hundred pounds over gross and loaded well aft of the aft CG limit.

A PC-12 pilot made his last mistake when he failed to deice his airplane after pulling it from a heated hangar and fueling it while snow was falling. Witnesses said all of the upper surfaces were covered in slush. Shortly after takeoff the aircraft started a left turn and descended into the ground.

There were two accidents involving engine power losses. One PC-12 was damaged when the pilot hit the tail on the runway while making a go-around from a flaps-up landing approach. A pilot shot a second ILS to a wet runway, touched down with 1000 feet left and was unable to get stopped.

We found only two runway loss of control accidents, an indication of good ground handling.

One PC-12 hit an elk on landing, another hit a deer. While it may seem insignificant, that's a high rate and a risk worth considering when going into smaller airports.

to the King Air 200 series—a workhorse of general aviation. One look at the PC-12 and it's obvious that it was designed as a workhorse, too. Moreover, it's similar in size and performance, but with a substantial operational cost savings with one engine.

At 5 feet wide with nearly 5 feet of headroom, the PC-12's cabin is slightly larger than a King Air 200, with the extra width noticeable once inside. The seats recline and swivel and have three-point restraints. There's also a potty opposite the airstair door, with its own solid door for privacy. Removing and reinstalling the interior in this aircraft—like many higher-end cabins—is a lot of work that you'll pay for during avionics upgrades.

Need to transport your small motorcycle or power equipment? No problem in a Pilatus thanks to its 53- by 52-inch aft cargo door. It's hinged to open vertically hydraulically, although it closes via an electric motor and can also be operated manually. The latching mechanism for it and the main cabin door is easy to operate and the telltales showing the position of the latching pins were obvious and easy to read. A forklift can approach the fuselage at a 90-degree angle. The cockpit is comfortable for virtually any size pilot. The step past the console is not particularly difficult and while we would prefer a side stick from a crashworthiness perspective, the control yoke slides out of the panel so there's no column to take up floor space. The crew seats adjust vertically and horizontally, tilt, have lumbar support and four-point restraints. One unusual feature in an airplane this size is adjustable rudder pedals, which allow the pilot to obtain the eye position recommended by lining up two small balls on top of the magnetic compass.

The PC-12 has an all-electric trim system, controlled via a toggle on each control yoke. Power control is single-lever, just like a jet, with no manual RPM control. Starting a PC-12 is conventional for a turboprop. Hit the starter button, then introduce fuel at about 14 percent RPM and monitor to assure the start stays within temperature parameters. Once the Pratt is running, the

two generators and avionics master switches are turned on and it's time to taxi.

Once off the runway (with a 2650-foot takeoff distance at max weight), the PC-12 can climb at 1920 FPM. With the prop in beta, landing distance over a 50-foot obstacle is 1830 feet.

PC-12NG

Clearly the more desirable of the used PC-12 models, the PC-12NG (for next-gen) was certified back in 2008 and it has the Honeywell Primus Apex glass cockpit. This is a well-integrated suite with engine monitoring, aircraft configuration, pressurization and environmental controls. While it's quite capable, the Apex might seem dated to some since it doesn't have touchscreen displays or synthetic vision—something Garmin has as standard in the G3000 suite standard on current competing turboprops. The G3000 will be front and center in Textron's Cessna Denali turboprop single, which will compete directly with the PC-12NG.

The Apex does have a cursor control device (CCD), but it was an option on many PC-12NGs. It has a trackball, scroll wheel and buttons for making selections on the two large multifunction displays. The CCD is perfectly mounted in the center pedestal area, aft of the power lever. Every time we fly an Apex-equipped PC-12NG, we walk away certain that pilots either transitioning from older PC-12s or from other aircraft will require healthy amounts of transition training to nail the Apex feature set. It's an integral part of transition training at Flight Safety International.

As one owner put it, "You need to be able to operate the Apex suite in preprogram mode—that is, without really thinking about what you're doing. It's not difficult, it's just different."

But saying that, the NG simplifies cockpit chores and includes a digital dual-zone Environmental Control System (ECS) for increased cockpit and cabin comfort, a fully automatic digital Cabin Pressurization Control System that requires no input from the pilot and a redundant Power Generation and Distribution System. The integrated nature of the Apex means lots of small conveniences, too.

For instance, prior to engine start, the backup battery powers one MFD so you can input a flight plan, look at weather graphics from the XMWX satellite system and get a clearance from the secondary comm radio, to name a few chores. But the PC-12NG offers more than new avionics. There's a dual electrical bus and a big upgrade on the powerplant.

That increased performance comes from the PT6A-67P, which delivers 15 percent more thermodynamic power for faster climbs (the full 1200 SHP can be maintained to a much higher altitude) and better cruise speeds by utilizing single-crystal CT blades and a new compressor configuration. This boosts the max cruise speed to 280 knots from 270 knots, which is reflected in a slightly higher fuel burn, although range is minimally affected.

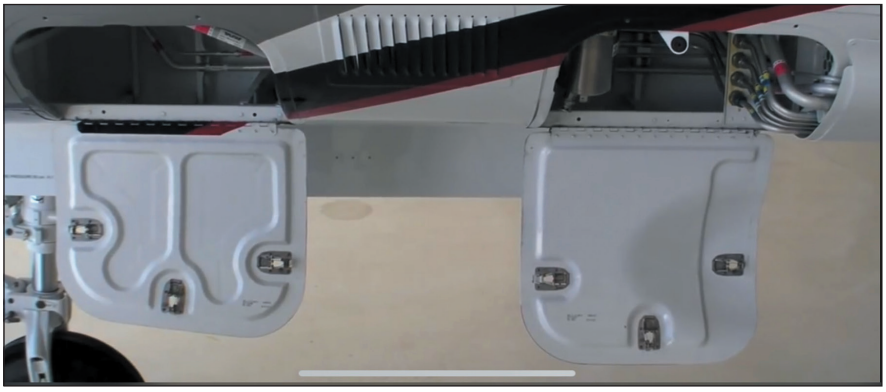
Maximum operating altitude is 30,000 feet, although owners tell us that going above FL280 is rarely worthwhile from a fuel burn perspective. Plan on burning 360 pounds, or 54 GPH on average.

FEEDING IT

Several operators we spoke with estimate hourly operating costs at around $800, depending on fuel and ancillary costs. When operated under FAR Part 91, annual inspections are required, but Pilatus shops suggest 100-hour inspections for heavy usage. We're told that a typical annual inspection could easily run $15,000 on a low-time model. As for the PT6A-67B engine on the PC-12, it has a 3500-hour TBO and *Aircraft Bluebook* says the average overhaul cost is $350,000, but we think that's on the low side. As we have found, there are too many variables to nail across-the-board prices.

A hot section inspection (plan on $50,000) is generally recommended at 1750 hours, and 2000 hours maximum. The propeller has a 4000-hour or six-year TBO. Buy a newer PC-12 and the airframe could still be under the seven-year, 5000-hour transferrable warranty, while the engine is covered for five years or 2500 hours. In our view, if you have to ask what

A tech at Prostar Aviation in New Hampshire tends to the Pratt PT6A in a Pilatus on the maintenance floor. The Pilatus service center network is vast and owners we talked with are happy with a high level of service. Two forward access compartments outside the pressure bulkhead, bottom, provide easy access to systems during preflight. Trailing link landing gear, bottom, has 14 inches of travel for off-airport landings.



stuff costs to maintain on a PC-12—or any turbine-powered aircraft—you'll be shocked when the invoices roll in. Don't forget the cost and effort for training.

As owner-flown PC-12NG pilots reported—especially in a hardened insurance market—underwriters will require solid PC-12 initial and recurrent training before issuing a policy, which could likely include flying with a mentor pilot highly experienced in the PC-12. This isn't uncommon in the turboprop and jet world. Even then, insurance rates will be all over the board.

Aviation Consumer's insurance editor Jonathan Doolittle from Hartford, Connecticut-based Sutton James Insurance told us underwriters look favorably at PC-12 pilots stepping up from faster and more complex aircraft. That makes sense.

"Underwriters in general are looking for prior experience in anything that will make the pilot more suited to the airplane. I wouldn't recommend to someone that they go out and buy a Beech Baron twin, for example, to build some time before getting a Pilatus PC-12, but an underwriter looking at someone with time in a heavier, busier airplane will probably give him or her a little better deal on a premium," Doolittle said. He also noted that while underwriters each have their own ways of weighting different types of experience, in general anything that will make the pilot more suited to flying the PC-12—or any other step-up turboprop or jet—will help with higher limits and lower premiums.

A good place to start when considering stepping up to a Pilatus is POPA, for the Pilatus Owners and Pilot's Association. POPA holds an annual convention, offers training courses and is a solid source of knowledge when it comes to owning and operating a Pilatus.

Our go-to (and the one who offered his tech advice to this review) is Pilatus instructor John Braun. He's at john@westernaerogroup.com. He can help with training and advice

on the step-up decision.

FEEDBACK

Our shop, Prostar Aviation in Londonderry, New Hampshire, has been a factory-authorized Pilatus center since 2009 and we see a lot of PC-12s of all vintages. I think the PC-12 is one of the finest business aircraft ever produced. The aircraft continues to evolve and the company utilizes the latest in advanced technologies. In essence this turboprop offers class-leading capability with incredible reliability and safety.

The Pilatus Aircraft company in Switzerland enjoys a reputation for employing the most modern design techniques, precision engineering and cutting-edge manufacturing processes to produce its aircraft. The PC-12NG integrates a single turboprop engine into an aerodynamically advanced airframe.

It's become the world's best-selling business turboprop mainly because it combines excellent economy, reliability and versatility with inherent safety proven over the last 20 years. Today the fleet is over 1600 aircraft in global operation.

We see that transitions from smaller piston airplanes are common and the PC-12 has proven to be a viable route for many owners of Cirrus, Bonanza and Malibu airplanes.

In fact, a sizable percentage of new buyers come from Cirrus ownership. The PC-12 is a relatively simple airplane to fly despite its size and complexity.

Although the Pilatus is significantly bigger and more capable than a Cirrus SR22, it is still a single-engine aircraft governed by the same Part 23 certification. Think about the following: The PC-12 has similar approach speeds to the SR22, and to clear a 50-foot obstacle, the PC-12 at max weight requires an 1830-foot landing distance versus 2344 feet for the SR22.

The PC-12 can fly from Aspen, Colorado, to Teterboro, New Jersey, nonstop, and Boston, Massachusetts to the Bahamas nonstop. That's over 1570 NM range.

That's the angle-of-attack vane on the wing's leading edge of a PC-12NG.

Michael Kenny
Prostar Aviation

I have been piloting PC-12s for over 20 years—both early-gen and later PC-12NG models. My advice to potential buyers is simple: Keep with the recurrent (and get initial) training. These can be relatively east step-up airplanes, but only with the right approach. Even with my experience I frequent Flight Safety because it's a must to maintain proficiency.

Steve Hanschel
via email

I have been flying the PC-12 for over 15 years, from legacy PC-12s as early as the second PC-12 ever built all the way through to the latest NGs being delivered today. While there have been continual incremental improvements each model year, the core PC-12 remains the same; from the first to the newest models, they all deliver unmatched efficiency, performance and mission capabilities, bulletproof reliability, system redundancy and a level of safety by design that make this the ultimate owner-flown airplane.

I have mentored many pilots of all experience levels over the years in the PC-12 and the transition for all is typically seamless after the usual familiarization and practice. It is one of the best single-pilot

Used PC-12

(continued from page 31)

platforms for sure, and with the abundance of power, the ability to climb quickly above weather and no mixture/engine management to worry about, pilots quickly realize that it is a lot easier to fly than the light recip singles that they have been flying.

Controllers love the PC-12's ability to operate at speeds in the approach and airport environments from 80 knots to 180 knots. This makes it versatile in busier airspaces, like JFK for example, where we often arrive VFR and are able to fit into the arrival flows at whatever speed is required all the way to the FAF.

One of the most important things to note about the PC-12 is that is develops its best true airspeed at relatively low altitudes as compared to other turboprops. We often fly the northeast corridor and beyond 17,500 feet, which gives us a 265-knot speed and saves a lot of extra time by avoiding circuitous IFR routing and ATC delays.

The PC-12's runway performance is unmatched. In Nantucket, Massachusetts (KACK), for example, we often land on taxiway/runway 30 to hold short of runway 6/24 when there is heavy traffic going in and out of KACK. It also allows for takeoffs with plenty of margin on other runways that may not be the preferred runway for winds.

I recently departed KACK on a busy weekend with new owners in the airplane. The lineup for runway 24 was planes deep on the taxiway on a CAVU day. The winds were a quartering crosswind for runway 15, and was not being used, but not noted as closed on the ATIS. I simply requested it and we were airborne within a minute and landed on the mainland 10 minutes later, dropping the pax off, while many holding short in the line were likely still in the cue. I relayed to the owner that this was exactly why he bought the PC-12.

While there is no one perfect plane for every mission, the PC-12 would be the plane I would choose if I had to pick only one. It doesn't do jet speeds, but the comfortable cabin, the low operating costs and low fuel burn make the extra hour or so to Florida from the Northeast worth it. The ability to land on unimproved strips as short as 2000 feet make it the ultimate touring platform and opens up so many more airports.

The range at altitude is remarkable and it will easily stay aloft 6-plus hours without pulling the power back. I have flown 8-plus-hour legs on several occasions on deliveries abroad with ample reserves at the landing.

Nonstops from the mountain states to the East Coast have always been nonstop for me and typically take about 5 to 5.5 hours.

Westbound typically requires a fuel stop. If the winds are very strong at altitude, we will often fly at lower VFR altitudes to get out of the wind and make far better time. Though we burn a bit more fuel, (maybe 500 to 550 PPH, versus 380 to 400 pounds or so) the net gain in speed and time savings makes it worth it.

The Honeywell Apex avionics system in the NG with synthetic vision is one of the best platforms to fly low approaches and the redundant situational awareness is helpful, but you need to be proficient with it all.

Many pilots who are transitioning from Garmin panels (especially the G1000) have hesitations about learning a new system—including the different FMS— but that usually disappears pretty quickly once they learn the keystrokes and system logic.

You get the idea why Pilatus has enjoyed such success with the PC-12.

Peter Simpson
via email

PIPER SENECA

It's time to take a look at the used Piper Seneca market for the *Aviation Consumer* Used Aircraft Guide. We want to know what it's like to own these twins, how much they cost to operate, maintain and insure and what they're like to fly. If you'd like your Seneca to appear in the magazine, send us any photographs (full-size, **high-resolution**) you'd like to share to the email below. We welcome information on mods, support organizations or any other comments. Send correspondence on the Seneca by October 10, 2019, to:

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