

230SE/STOL FLIGHT REVIEW

BY TODD PETERSON

After having just purchased a 1979 Cessna 182Q with a low-time engine, I decided it was time to build up a 230SE/STOL and publish a brief flight report for those of you who have not had an opportunity to fly one. The savings I realized by not upgrading the engine to the IO-470 I would use to upgrade the avionics instead.

With the high-lift Canard installed, I taxied out for takeoff. My first flight was great in that the 230SE/STOL flew off comfortably at 38 knots, and I was immediately able to roll into a steep turn with only 50 knots showing on the airspeed indicator, being very careful to not snag a wingtip on the ground. Even while making the turn, the airplane was accelerating, and when I rolled out, the climb was brisk and it had that good solid feel. In looking back, the ground roll was about 400 feet, and I had rolled into the turn within 100 feet on the lift-off spot.

In cruise I saw a true airspeed of 140 knots with a fuel burn around 13.5 gph. The engine/Canard combination was very smooth, and there is just no substitute for a large comfortable cabin. It will be easy to fly 1,000 miles in a day in this airplane.

I decided to explore the 230SE/STOL's slow-flight and stall characteristics. Slowed up to 55 knots with 20 degrees of flaps, the flight attitude of the airplane was relatively flat, the power requirement barely above idle, and the maneuverability superb. I ended up flying around at 55 knots with the pilot's window open enjoying the scenery. Steep turns could be made hands off at 45 knots, and the ailerons were crisp and responsive. Because the flight attitude was flat, inadvertent stalls were never a concern, even while maneuvering. Normally, cross-controlling an airplane during slow flight is an invitation to disaster, as they stall and spin quickly, usually with little warning. The 230SE/STOL simply refused to stall while cross-controlling the airplane with full rudder and opposite aileron. This is one of the many advantages of the level flight attitude. You can fly slowly without compromising safety. When I finally stalled the 230SE/STOL, it simply settled in a 700 fpm rate of descent, and when power was applied, it flew out of the stall without even lowering the nose. It is really hard to appreciate just how safe the 230SE/STOL is until you see it for yourself.

Back in the pattern I was slowing up for a touch and go. On downwind the flaps were lowered, and I slowed the airplane to 60 knots. On short final I slowed to 55 knots and still had too much speed going into the flare with touch down at 35 knots. Thinking one more takeoff was in order, the power wet back in, and before I had reached full power I was off the ground and heading into a quick turn out. The next approach was set up much tighter with an approach and 90 degree turn at 50 knots just prior to the touchdown. As I rolled out of the turn, I was set up with 100 feet of altitude, 50 knots and about 900 feet of runway ahead of me. Slowing to 45 knots, I continued the approach and touched down with about 600 feet of runway ahead of me. I still had 200 feet of runway left when I turned off.

What a remarkable airplane! It just makes you smile, and what's even better is that you can upgrade to the 260SE/STOL with a simple engine change at any time. There is no need to sell your airplane to upgrade.

Give us a call for a demonstration flight and experience the 230SE/STOL for yourself. You'll be glad you did!



The Great American Dream

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