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# POWERFUL VISION

Nothing beats meeting face-to-face for work, so instead of Skype and conference calls, maybe the newly released Cirrus SF50 Vision Jet should be in your sights. WORDS PAUL M SOUTHWICK • IMAGES CIRRUS

**T**en years in the making, the US-made Cirrus SF50 Vision Jet is the most exciting and game-changing aircraft in business and personal aviation for many years. Board this beauty in your hangar and you can do a day's work in far-flung locations and still be home for dinner.

The SF50 is the world's first single-pilot, single-engine, seven-seat personal jet with a parachute, and, in business terms, it's all about competitive advantage. By the time corporate rivals using public airlines reach customers, SF50 owners will have been, secured the deal and gone.

The aircraft personifies class, comfort, convenience and safety, with plenty of space for colleagues or family.

## SALES AND SAFETY

Cirrus has already accepted more than 600 orders for the SF50, which joins other elite high-performing aircraft that are also beautiful to the eye.

In keeping with its smaller sibling, the piston-engine, four/five-seat Cirrus SR22 (the world's bestselling general aviation aircraft for the past 14 years), the SF50 has its own whole-aircraft parachute. The 90-foot diameter parachute can be quickly deployed in an emergency, lowering the plane gently to earth so that everyone simply walks away.

Private aviation is getting safer all the time. In testament to this, in the past 14 years the SR22 parachute has safely returned 146 pilots and passengers to their loved ones.



## NUMBER CRUNCH

The base price, at just under US\$2 million, is about half the cost of other jets. In typical configuration, the cost is US\$2.3 million, putting ownership within reach of both business and individuals.

The aircraft is powered by a reliable and well-proven 1,800 HP Williams FJ33-5A jet engine, which allows it to take off in just 620 metres, and land in less than 500 – allowing direct access to small or regional airports that other jets or turboprops can't manage.

With a top cruise speed of 555 kilometres per hour, the SF50 can cover long distances quickly, and climb in cabin-pressurised and air-conditioned comfort, way above the weather, to 28,000 feet.

A maximum take-off weight of 2,727 kilograms and an unrefuelled economy range of up to 2,222 kilometres means that one-day return trips, like Knoxville to Boston, Brisbane to Adelaide, Munich to Istanbul, or Goa to New Delhi, are a reality.

## WHAT YOU'LL LOVE

The spacious cabin, which was designed for maximum comfort, has the latest Garmin colour touchscreen avionics, large leather seats for up to seven people in multiple configurations and big panoramic windows affording excellent views.

This is an aircraft that pilots in the C-suite will buy because they can relatively easily upgrade their licence to fly it themselves. Many of the orders for the SF50 are from existing Cirrus pilots who have been flying the SR22, while other owners may choose to hire a pilot.

## TEST FLIGHT

Cirrus invited *The CEO Magazine* to fly the SF50 in the third quarter of 2017. The stunning blue-and-white aircraft, registration N52CV, was number 10 off the line, and had just returned from being mobbed at Oshkosh, the world's largest airshow. It had less than 100 hours on the clock.

Under the guidance of Matt Bergwall, head of the SF50 production line, we flew for nine hours, over two days, from the company's Sales and Delivery Centre in Knoxville, Tennessee – and we weren't disappointed.



The SF50 is the S-Class Mercedes of the aviation world. Its trailblazing technology, safety features, and performance-leading characteristics are backed up by good looks, sophistication and creature comforts. This is both a work tool and a pleasure vehicle that people will want to be seen and photographed in. It is also an aircraft that can easily fly in and out of relatively short airfields – a real advantage in regional travel.

Our return trips to Dayton and New York demonstrated the simplicity of flying the jet, and the ease for pilots to upgrade from the SR22. In one day, we easily flew the 2,500-kilometre return trip from Knoxville to New York that included a business lunch and a scenic flight down the Hudson River Corridor, of Captain Sully of *Miracle on the Hudson* fame.

We avoided airline terminal and security check delays, regional aircraft transfers, air traffic control hold-ups, and the need for a car, cutting hours off the trip. We were back by 5pm.

## RETURN ON INVESTMENT

For typical continental trips, the SF50 will often be the perfect, and only, aircraft for the mission. There is simply no competitor in this category or class.

With variable costs of US\$606 per flight hour (or US\$2.23 per nautical mile), CFOs and accounts will be ecstatic. They will quickly calculate a large ROI from flying senior executives where they need to be, when they need to be there.

## ACQUIRING THE VISION

While SF50 production is accounted for until 2023, it is possible to acquire the jet with a lead time of a few months. Some buyers who pre-purchased up to 10 years ago have not yet taken delivery, and may be prepared to sell on due to a change in circumstances.

Included in the investment are extensive, nine-day conversion or training programs for pilots, customisation of the exterior and interior, warranties and optional 'total care' packages covering insurance, maintenance – scheduled and unscheduled – and annual pilot currency training.

The SF50 is the aircraft that pilots, business-owners and executives have been waiting for. ■