

# My Other Plane is an Eclip



BY MATTHEW McDANIEL

**M**ost of the pilots I've met over the years have one thing in common; Barry Lerman is a rare exception. He'll be the first to admit that he's in an enviable position and that he was more than a little lucky along the path to this point in his life. It's hard to argue the point when you learn he owns and flies both an SR22 and a personal jet. While good fortune is not particularly unique among the pilots previously profiled in this series, Barry's story is very different in one unusual way. Most pilots can look all the way back to childhood and remember longing to take wing. Like most children, Barry remembers gazing up at passing aircraft in wonderment. Yet, he claims to have never really thought about flying or being a pilot until he was well into adulthood and decided on a whim to look into it. A scant 15 years later, he's owned several aircraft, logged nearly 2,000 hours, and holds an ATP certificate with a multi-engine land, and a jet type-rating (and commercial, ASEL).

## Containing Himself

Lerman is now retired after many years of owning and operating several businesses. He primarily made his

living in the container industry, making bottles that few of us could have avoided when reaching for our shampoo or various other health and beauty aids. He also dabbled in the electrical industry (specifically, in electrical harnesses and wire processing). These were careers of family legacy and Barry bought out a cousin along the way to making these companies into "his babies." For 31 years, Lerman worked long hours and admits it cost him more family time than he would have liked. Thus, when opportunities arose to sell each business off after years of building them up, he didn't hesitate to do so, welcoming the opportunity to spend more time with his family. By the time he was contemplating the sale of the first company with his name in the title, he'd already told himself, "If I get what I think I can for this sale, I'm just going to retire and buy myself a jet." Since he'd become a pilot by this time, the jet that he longed for was not the stereotypical bizjet. He was not looking to hire a crew of professional pilots and aircraft

managers. Instead, it was a personal jet he desired. A plane he could fly himself, solo or with his family, which would not have to exist strictly as a business tool to fit within his

# se Jet



The Lerman's 2005 SR22-G2, which Maura is using for flight training, and their Total Eclipse Plus.

retirement budget. Soon enough, the business deal was done and Barry found himself, well, unemployed as it were! This is where he'll tell you that he found himself in the most enviable position of determining that he could both retire early and buy that jet. For Lerman, the rat-race was over and the grandkids, the airport, and the golf course were calling.

## Stepping Up

As one might imagine, when a pilot has his sights set on flying his own jet, there's probably not going to be much eye-twinkle left over for whirling propellers and banging pistons. Such was the case for Barry, who fully intended for the Eclipse to be his final (and sole) airplane. Not that he had anything against any of the fine airplanes he'd owned previously, he just didn't think he'd have a reason to keep any after he became proficient in the Eclipse.

After learning to fly in a rented Cessna 172, he then flew a Piper Archer through an aero club. In late 2003, he purchased a used 2002 SR22 G1 (six pack). In that machine, he'd earned his instrument rating before selling it and purchasing a new SR22 G2 in



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early 2005. He enjoyed the G2 for several years before selling it just after purchasing the Eclipse 500 in late 2012. Since then, his most frequent missions have been to visit his children and grandchild, earning him and his wife, Maura, the acronym "PBAMJBSS" (Papa Barr and Momo Jet Babysitting Services).

## Success Interrupted

Most *Cirrus Pilot* readers are probably at least somewhat familiar with the story of the Eclipse. At its inception in 1998, it was to be a truly revolutionary airplane; creator of a new category – the Very Light Jet or VLJ, carrier of many new technologies, and a true fuel miser (for a jet), all at an unbelievably low price. Yet, as many feared and predicted, it was all too good to be true. The original engines were inadequate and new ones had to be designed. This necessitated major airframe redesign, including incorporation of more fuel to feed the thirstier engines. A 30-month program delay ensued. In a head-scratching decision by the FAA, the airplane earned a controversial Provisional Type Certificate, allowing initial deliveries to begin in January 2007. Early adopters began taking delivery of their jets without functional ice protection or certified GPS systems aboard and with all manner of other compromises to the promised capabilities of the aircraft. Each Eclipse delivered cost far more to build than its owner had paid for it. By 2009, after 260 aircraft were produced, Eclipse was out of business in the most dramatic general

## Personal Data

**Name:** Barry Lerman

**Age:** 57

**Born:** New Haven, Conn.

**Living:** Pinehurst, N.C.

**Status:** Married to Maura for 14 years

## Education

**Prep School:** The Gunnery, Washington, Conn., Class of 1975

**College:** Bryant College, Smithfield, R.I., BSBA in Finance and Economics, Class of 1979

**Occupation:** Retired

**Employer:** Former owner of Custom Bottle, Inc., Lerman Container Co., and Electronic Connection Corp.

**Hobbies:** Flying, family and grandkids, golfing (isn't that enough?!)

## Aviation Data

**Earliest Aviation Memory:** N/A (see opening paragraph of main article)

**First Flight:** June 29, 1999 – Flight training intro flight

**Aviation Mentors:** Mostly my private pilot CFI, Milt Marshall (RIP); Vince McDonald, a Cirrus early adopter who got me to buy my first Cirrus; my CFII, Chris Baker; plus Luke Lysen and so many other pilot-statesmen from COPA like Myron Garfinkle, Gordon Feingold, Dennis Haber, Mason Holland and Manfred Stolle.

**First solo:** December 13, 1999 at Waterbury-Oxford, Conn. (OXC), before it was tower-controlled in C-172SP, N326SP

**Initial Training:** 1999-2000, all at OXC in the C-172

**Private Certificate:** November 16, 2000

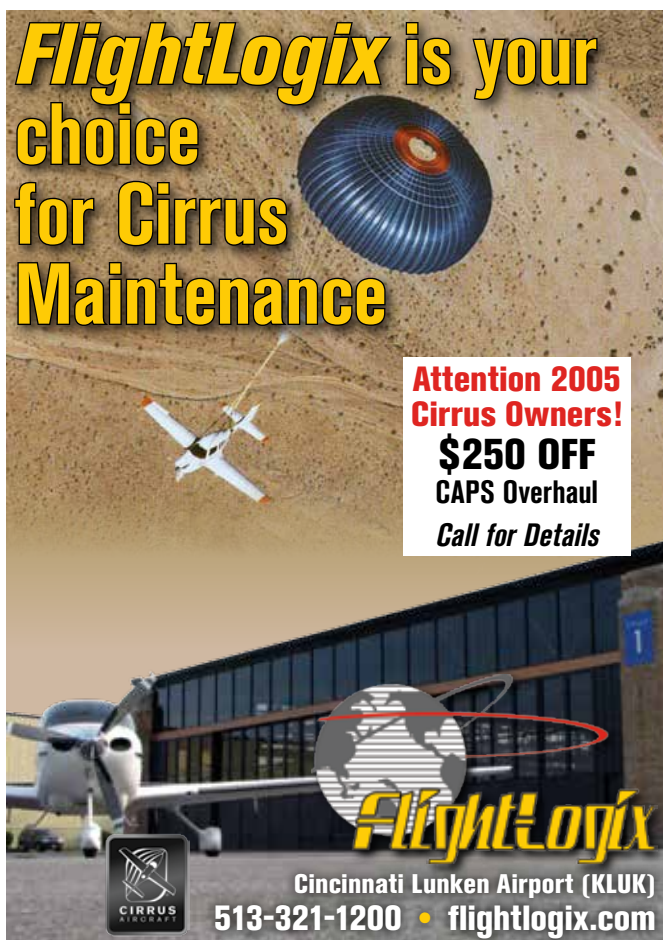
**Instrument Training:** 2004, focused instrument course on the East Coast in my 2002 six-pack SR22

**Aircraft Owned:** 2002 Cirrus SR22 G1, N716DR: December 2003 to January 2005; 2005 Cirrus SR22 G2, N716BL: February 2005 to November 2012 and again June 2014 to present; 2007 Eclipse 500 (now Total Eclipse Plus configuration): October 2012 to present

**Proudest accomplishments in aviation:** Earning my commercial certification in February 2014, and passing my ATP written a month later; earning my ATP certification in conjunction with my Eclipse recurrent in February 2015. But, I'm most proud of earning my Eclipse type rating and the first solo in my own jet!

**All-time favorite flight:** I don't know if I can pick just one, as they are all so wonderful. Night flights to Nantucket with full moon and stars everywhere in both the Cirrus and Eclipse; trips up the East Coast watching thunderstorms to the west; trips to the West Coast; and flying to Alaska in the Cirrus.

**Total time:** ~2,000



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Barry Lerman with his Total Eclipse Plus on a cold winter's day in northwestern Wisconsin.

aviation failure in history – losing an estimated \$1 billion. Owners were left with an underdeveloped and unsupported aircraft, while position-holding depositors grasped nothing but empty promises.

### DATA CHART – Eclipse 500

	<b>Current Configuration</b> IFMS 2.7 (550 Panel), ABS Brakes, Auto-Throttles, etc.
Engine	Pratt & Whitney PW-610F Twin Turboprops 900 lbs. Max Takeoff Thrust Each
Seats	One Pilot plus up to Five Passengers
Fuel Burn	48-59 GPH (Depending on altitude and speed)
Ceiling	41,000 Feet Max, 33,000 – 38,000 Typical
Range	1,125 NM (Max with NBAA IFR Alternate/Reserves and Four Occupants)
Wingspan	37.9 feet
Length	33.5 feet
Height	11.0 feet
Wing Area	144.58 square feet
Max Gross Weight	6,000 pounds
Wing Loading (1g @MGW)	41.5 pounds/square feet
Thrust to Weight Ratio (@MGW and T/O Thrust)	01:03.33
Baggage Capacity	260 pounds
Fuel Capacity (usable)	251 gallons
Wheels/Tires/Brakes	18x5.5/ABS
Landing Gear	Retractable trailing-link
Cockpit Flight Controls	Dual Side Sticks
Stall in Landing Config (V <sub>SO</sub> )	69 KIAS
Stall – Clean (V <sub>S</sub> )	91 KIAS
Rotation (V <sub>r</sub> )	91 KIAS @MGTW
Rate of Climb	3,424 FPM Max 1,500 FPM Typical 705 FPM Single Engine Max
Cruise Climb	1,000 FPM
Economy Cruise	340 KTAS
Max Cruise	375 KTAS
Max Normal Operating (V <sub>no</sub> )	285 KIAS
Never Exceed (V <sub>ne</sub> )	285 KIAS
Flaps Extended (V <sub>fe</sub> )	140 KIAS (Full Flaps)
Landing Gear Operating (V <sub>lo</sub> )	200 KIAS
Maneuvering Speed (V <sub>a</sub> -MGW)	180 KIAS
Final Approach (V <sub>ref</sub> )-Clean	89 KIAS (Varies slightly with weight)


Eventually, COPA member, Cirrus owner, and Eclipse position-holder, Mason Holland, circled some wagons and acquired the assets of Eclipse Aircraft. Holland's Eclipse Aerospace let owners know they intended to support and upgrade existing EA-500s, while working to develop the jet into what it was always promised to be. Eventually, Holland promised the aircraft would even be put back into production in that improved state. He didn't sugar coat the situation, letting owners know it would not happen quickly or cheaply, lest the Eclipse end up orphaned again.

Today, the Eclipse is truly achieving its potential. The vast majority of the original airframes have been dramatically upgraded with improved avionics, FIKI ice-protection, anti-lock brakes, and even auto-throttles. The latter two features being previously unheard of in any aircraft in this weight class (6,000 lbs. GW). The Eclipse has now entered into its own, proving that a small, personal jet is

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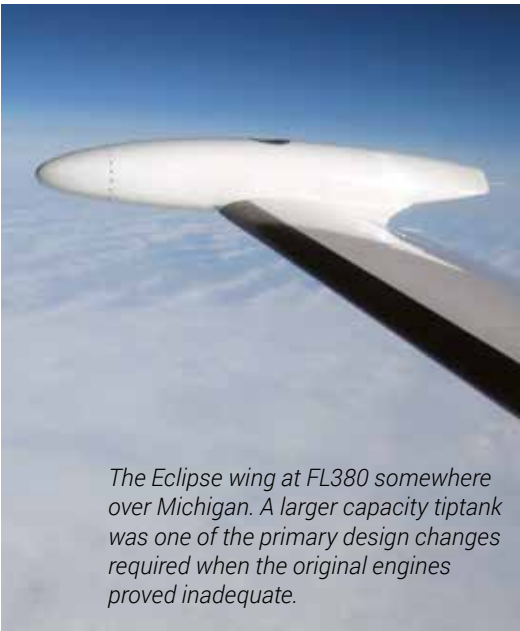
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not only feasible and practical, but quite capable.

Lerman's Eclipse is a 2007 model that was upgraded at the factory into the "Total Eclipse" configuration prior to his purchase. He has since further upgraded its avionics and systems, keeping pace with improvements offered by the factory which allow current owners to have an Eclipse that is essentially the same as a factory new machine. The Eclipse is now back in production as the "Eclipse 550."



*The Eclipse wing at FL380 somewhere over Michigan. A larger capacity tiptank was one of the primary design changes required when the original engines proved inadequate.*

## Flying the Eclipse

As pilot reports go, this hardly qualifies. I didn't want a mini type-rating sort of training flight in the Eclipse. Instead, I simply wanted to experience a typical mission that an average Eclipse owner might fly.

During the pre-flight, one cannot help noticing the diminutive stature of the Eclipse. I had to lean down to peer into the engines, and the wings are closer to the ground than those of a newer Cirrus. In reality, the EA-500 is similar in size and weight to a Beech Baron. Few owners keep the factory-installed, six forward facing seat configuration. Most remove the seat closest to the entry door to ease ingress/egress. Some, like Lerman, remove both center-row seats, providing a truly roomy four-seat configuration with adequate luggage space behind.

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On a cold January morning, Barry flew from his home in North Carolina to meet me in Akron, Ohio. Our mission was to be about a one-and-a-half-hour (550 nm) flight to northwestern Wisconsin, but thanks to a stout headwind of around 75 knots, it ended up being more like 2.3 hours. Just like every other multi-engine jet I've ever flown, I

*The avionics keyboard is one of the many features that was not operating in the early Eclipses. It is now fully functional and controls many avionics functions from FMS inputs to audio panel adjustments.*

centered up on the runway and set the throttles to 50 percent thrust. Jet engines often spool up at different ▶

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One of the author's favorite features of the PFD is that when something is being adjusted by the pilot, it expands to draw the pilots attention. In this photo, the altitude pre-select is being adjusted, thus its momentary large font.

paces, so limiting them to 50 percent until both have stabilized at that speed prevents the aircraft from darting towards the runway's edge if one engine spools faster than the other. Once stabilized, I pushed the throttles to their stops, where max thrust is determined and set by the Full Authority Digital Engine Control (FADEC) system. On this winter day, the takeoff roll was short and initial climb brisk. As has always been my habit in turbine aircraft, I hand-flew to the flight levels. It was obvious early on that the controls are light in pitch, but somewhat heavy in roll. Yaw stability is handled mostly by the yaw-damper and there is little need for any rudder input at all in normal flight parameters. In fact, even with an engine inoperative, the Eclipse is a docile twin – so much so, that it is considered a centerline-thrust twin by the FAA.

Keeping the speed from exceeding the 250-knot limit below 10,000 feet was never a problem in the climb, but it will easily zip up through that range during intermediate level offs if the pilot isn't reasonably proactive with appropriate thrust reductions (auto-throttles off, of course). Cruise flight is as serene as any jet and far quieter than most, allowing normal conversation without headsets. Barry normally cruises in the 33-36,000 feet range, where he averages around 360 KTAS, but we climbed to FL380 where the headwind was a little less. This negated the slight speed loss, while offering lower fuel flows. Crossing Lake Michigan's mostly frozen waters, Barry and I played with various avionics capabilities and I marveled at the low fuel flow numbers presented to me on the MFD (see sidebar). In descent mode, I found the autopilot features to be a little lacking for a jet – no VNAV, for instance – but

I understand that several enhancements are forthcoming. I hand flew the GPS (LNAV+V) approach and found the Eclipse to fly in a totally predictable and stable manner. Testing the sturdy trailing-link landing gear and the anti-lock braking system, we were landed and executing a 180-turn on the runway in just over 2,000 feet – impressive for any jet, even a light one.

Afterwards, Barry flew to a nearby airport that sold Jet-A, so that he could top off for his return flight to North Carolina. Over the course of that single day, he flew nearly 2,000 nm, yet had both breakfast and dinner in his own home!

## Cirrus Re-Ownership

Why return to Cirrus ownership when one has a magic-carpet personal jet at their disposal? Barry blames his wife! After spending 1,200 hours or so in the right seat of the Cirrus and the Eclipse with Barry, Maura developed her own interest in aviation and learning to fly. Around the same time, Barry's previous 2005 SR22-G2 appeared on the market. Knowing the plane's history and having to admit a sentimental attachment to it, there seemed little reason to reacquire it. After only 18 months of separation, they welcomed N716BL back into their hangar. Sporting several avionics upgrades and a freshly overhauled engine, Barry's Cirrus is ready to support many more flight training adventures for Maura and, unsurprisingly, Barry is staying Cirrus current again, as well. ☺

*Matthew McDaniel is a Master and Gold Seal CFI, ATP, MEI, AGI, and IGI and Platinum CSIP. In 25 years of flying, he has logged over 15,000 hours total, over 5,500 hours of instruction-given, and over 5,000 hours in all models of the Cirrus. As owner of Progressive Aviation Services, LLC (www.progaviation.com), he has specialized in Technically Advanced Aircraft and Glass Cockpit instruction since 2001. Currently, he also flies the Airbus A-320 series for an international airline and holds six turbine aircraft type ratings. Matt is one of less than three dozen instructors in the world to have earned the Master CFI designation for six consecutive two-year terms. He can be reached at: matt@progaviation.com or (414) 339-4990.*



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