

The intersection of speed and style

By MIKE TAYLOR

General aviation in Europe flourishes at the intersection of speed and style. That was clearly evident at AERO 2019, held April 10-13 in Friedrichsafen, Germany.

This year's show was dominated by light aircraft. Ultralight aircraft, in particular, as it is the most popular segment of GA in Europe.

However, it's easy to confuse the many two-seat aircraft, which include Ultralight (UL), Very Light Aircraft (VLA), the U.S. standard Light-Sport Aircraft (LSA), and a large number of EASA CS-23/FAR Part 23 certified offerings.

With regards to sheer numbers of aircraft at an indoor exhibition, AERO makes its mark with a healthy dose of European flair. Some of the aircraft that caught the eye included the Blackwing Shark from Sweden, the Fly Synthesis Syncro from Italy, the TL 3000 Sirius by TL Ultralight, and the VL-3 Evolution by JMB Aircraft.

Also catching the eye while walking through the displays were the Tomark Viper SD4 from the Slovak Republic, and the colorful Belmont Patino from Latvia.

When old and new technology meet, the results are some interesting aircraft that seem to exist without any particular reference to time and place. Those at AERO include the Bücker Bü 133 Jungmeister "Liesel Bach" and the FK12 Comet tandem folding-wing biplane.

Two unusual-looking aircraft featured at AERO were the "flying wing" from Horten Aircraft and the VTOL e-flyer AutoflightX.

Europe also loves its gliders, and in 2019 they were placed in Hall A1 at the main entrance.

The most crowded areas at AERO, namely the corridors along Halls A3 to A6, were filled with general aviation services, equipment, engines, pilot supplies, and avionics manufacturers, including Garmin, which is gaining its foothold in Europe.

Twelve large hangar-halls were complemented by an outdoor static display area. Here, pre-owned aircraft were offered for sale, a small collection of military and historic aircraft was on display, with the Europa-Park Zeppelin tethered on the adjacent airfield

Two sides of the Atlantic

Having just arrived from a week at SUN 'n FUN, a number of exhibitors at AERO admitted to being travel-worn. Back-to-back shows this year put a strain on participants.

Curiously, but perhaps favorably, the two shows will occur at the same time in 2020, making it imperative that show duties be divided up. The next AERO will be held April 1-4, 2020.

AERO-expo.com/AERO-en



Photos by Mike Taylor

The Bücker Bü 133 Jungmeister named for Liesel Bach, the woman to fly over Mount Everest.



The Tomark Viper SD4 all metal two seater.



The Blackwing Sweden Shark.



AutoflightX plans to elevate transport with electric vertical takeoff and landing vehicles.



The Fly Synthesis Syncro LSA and UL from Italy.