

First Flight: Dennis Douglas' N9103D

I am really happy to report that on July 18th, after 8.25 years and about 3800 building hours, I finally flew N9103D on its Maiden Flight. I was nervous about the “unknowns” but as soon as I fire-walled the throttle, all that nervousness went away and I just concentrated on flying the plane. About 10 minutes into the flight, I think I broke out into a grin that I am having a hard time getting off my face. The landing was as good as I've ever made.

I probably would have been more nervous about the first flight, but Mike Harfst had flown over from near Portland on the 16th and I got about 1.5 hours with him in his 'Star (N9TZ) so I had a sense of what to expect. I owe Mike a big “thank you” because there is nothing like recent experience to help overcome the first-flight heebi-jeebies.



N9103D has an AeroSport Power O-320-D1A and a Hartzell C/S prop and LASAR ignition. (I can't tell you enough good things about AeroSport Power, they are great folks—see my write up elsewhere.) Inside, N9103D has the Blue Mountain Avionics E1 EFIS (awesome!), the UPSAT (now Garmin) SL-15, SL-30, SL-40 and SL-70 stack with the MD-200 (UPSAT) LOC/GS Indicator. I also have the Vision 1000 engine monitoring system, and the Control Vision EXP-II Buss.

I am indebted to Zach Chase for his help on two occasions—without him I would probably still simply be looking at my top deck, strakes, and windows wondering how to install them. I am also indebted to Jim Stone and Gerald Holmes for their help riveting the top skins, Mike Custard for his guidance in composite matters, our local EAA Chapter 1345 members for helping me safety-inspect the plane, Mike Robertson from the FAA's Hillboro (OR) FSDO for his tips, and, of course, to my wife, Patricia, for her general support and help riveting awkward places. When I first decided to build the GlaStar, Patricia wanted a new kitchen. In honor of that request, I am having some “nose art” prepared proclaiming N9103D “Patti's Kitchen”. Look for it at an airshow near you. (Oh, come on folks, don't be hard on me; I bought her a new house.)