

ARIZONAFLYER

THE ENTHUSIAST'S GUIDE TO LIFE ON THE WING

TERRAFUGIA "FLYING CAR"

Company moves into initial low-volume production facility

Terrafugia, Inc. is gearing up for low-volume production of the Transition® Roadable Aircraft or "Flying Car" to begin as early as late 2001, in Woburn, Massachusetts. They unveiled a model of the next-generation design to aviation press and aircraft enthusiasts at EAA AirVenture in Oshkosh last July, and two prototypes are currently under construction. One will undergo extensive drive testing, while the other will be used to complete Light Sport Aircraft (LSA) certification flight testing. This experience will also help finalize the initial price point of the vehicle, which is expected to be \$200,000-250,000.

Founded by five pilots and award-winning engineers, graduates of MIT, and supported by a network of advisors and private investors, Terrafugia's mission is the innovative expansion of personal mobility.

Improvements in this generation were based on drive and flight testing of the Proof of Concept Transition, completed in 2009, plus computer-aided optimization. A recent 110-pound granting by the FAA for the Transition within the LSA category allows for modern automotive-style safety features unavailable in other light aircraft. Simulated dynamic crash testing—complete with airbags and digital crash test dummies—has been used to help the vehicle meet stringent Federal safety standards—the only Light Sport Aircraft to simulate crash testing in this manner. The Terrafugia team expects the Transition, equipped with a full-vehicle ballistic parachute system and the ability to drive in bad weather, to prove itself one of the safest LSAs in the world.



Features include an energy-absorbing crush structure in the nose and a rigid safety cage for the occupants; a customized, intuitive touch-screen interface in the cockpit; a wing with optimized airfoil and folding mechanism that operates smoothly from inside the cockpit; a pusher propeller with an open empennage that makes efficient use of the 100-hp Rotax 912S mid-mounted engine in flight and is locked in place when driving; and rear-wheel drive with continuously variable transmission (CVT) and tuned independent suspension for responsive road handling.

Reservations have already been placed for aircraft to be built in the first two to three years of production and are being accepted with a \$10,000 refundable deposit. Deliveries of the Transition are scheduled to begin in late 2011. More info: terrafugia.com. ■

Photos courtesy of Terrafugia, Inc.

