

## Pilot Report on the Silent-IN

By Roger Buchanan

### Background

I first flew my new Silent-IN last October and made my seventh flight yesterday. I now have a total of 20 hours on the airframe and a little over one hour on the engine. The Silent-IN is my eighth sailplane and my fourth with an engine. The other auxiliary-powered machines were a Ventus CT, a Ventus CM, and a Stemme S10-VT.

### In-Flight

I have to admit that I initially regarded the Silent-IN merely as an interim machine while I waited for a Ventus 2CM, but it has slowly won me over, first in the air and later on the ground. This sailplane is very easy to fly. Think turn and it turns. Ever have a day when all thermals were minuscule? This is a day for the Silent. It is a slow-flight, small-circle specialist. As long as you don't expect it to run like an 18meter ship, you'll love it.

### Ground Handling

I'm sure the 30meter Eta would be fun to fly too, but I bet there would be days when it seemed like too much trouble to get it out of the hangar, and definitely too much trouble if some assembly were required. In contrast, the Silent minimizes pre and post-flight work. Although the assembly of my Silent was a little "snug" initially, it is easy to get out of the trailer and to assemble. With an empty weight of 440lbs and a span of 12 meters this is expected. But there are innovative features too, such as a wing dolly that doubles as a wing stand for assembly, and as a wing wheel to keep the ship level as it is wheeled around. If you are fortunate, as I am, and keep it assembled in a hangar then all you need to do is wheel this 440 lb beauty out the door, do your preflight, and start the engine. My Silent has the steerable tail wheel option, which provides surprisingly responsive steering. I was so impressed the first time that I could not resist taxiing around in circles in front of the hangar. So taxiing it out to the runway is a piece of cake.

### Engine Operation

Amazingly, the Silent has a FADEC, fuel-injected one-cylinder engine. Turn on the master, press the engine-up switch, look in the mirror for engine extension, pull out the ignition, press the start button and it starts. No priming, choking or fussing is required. To retract the engine, turn off the ignition, look in the mirror, wait for the prop to stop, extend the prop stop, tap the starter until the propeller is centered, press the engine-down switch. After the engine and prop are down they are locked in place by pushing a lever forward.

### Propeller

The Silent-IN has a unique single-blade propeller that halves the length of the bay for engine and propeller. It runs smoothly, and the only disadvantage that I can see is that everyone who sees it seems compelled to tell you that "you need at least one more blade on that propeller".

### Takeoff

I keep my Silent-IN on its tail wheel until I have enough airspeed to steer with the rudder, at which point I adopt a level attitude. I stay off the nose wheel on a paved runway, but on grass I find that it goes onto the nose wheel if I add power too abruptly. Heavy pilots will probably make more use of the nose wheel.

### Landing

With a touchdown speed of about 35 knots, the Silent is ideal for landing in a short field. Winter Haven does not require such short-landing capabilities, but it is often busy so prompt clearing of the runway is essential. The steerable tail wheel makes it very easy to exit at the desired spot and coast over to the hangar.

### Support

The Silent-IN is marketed and supported by Alisport's North American representative, Leo Benetti-Longhini who can be contacted at [info15@alisport.com](mailto:info15@alisport.com). For detailed information and pictures, see the website [www.alisport.com](http://www.alisport.com). The support I have received from Mr. Benetti-Longhini has been truly exceptional. He has a thorough understanding of the Silent-IN. He gave me detailed training on its systems, checks in periodically by phone to see how I am enjoying it, has visited me twice at Winter Haven to look over the ship, and is very prompt and thorough in answering questions.

### Overall

My Silent-IN can often be seen in the air around central Florida, trailing a pack of 18meter ships that share the same hangar. If you want a self-launcher that is easy to get in the air and back in the hangar, and is fun to fly, the Silent-IN is hard to beat.

*Roger Buchanan has over 2000 hours in gliders, most of it in the late 70s and early 80s, but hopes to start getting in the air more often. Below: Roger soars his IN over southern Florida.*

