

NÜRNBERG

TOY FAIR

PLENTY OF NEWS FROM EUROPE'S BIGGEST TRADE SHOW, SO MUCH THAT WE HAVE TO SPREAD IT ACROSS TWO ISSUES - THERE WILL BE MORE NEXT MONTH!

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This year my annual pilgrimage to the Nürnberg Toy Fair was with hopes much the same as last year of seeing new and innovative models but with an expectation of seeing many micro helicopters all looking remarkably alike... Despite the economic downturn the helicopter market has continued to be very buoyant throughout 2008, however my expectations of seeing radically new machines were low, but I lived in hope!

The trend of manufacturers only showing products that are very close to production continues and they continue to be protective of their investment against 'copies' or 'rip-offs' for example, Silverlit again had a closed stand whereby only known and invited guests were allowed inside.

Again I only had two days at the Fair so my work was cut out to see the established stands, let alone seek out new ones, so if I missed some, sorry! The last point I should make here is remind readers that despite the above mentioned trend of companies only displaying products that are ready for release, some of what you see here may not appear in shops and 'on-sale' dates are often optimistic projections...

THUNDER TIGER >

My first visit was to the Thunder Tiger stand as the March issue was hot off the press and featured their latest Bell UH-1Y fuselage on the front cover and they were keen to see it! Having seen the display UH-1Y, which was exactly the same as the review model (no surprise there!), I saw that a 'Combo' version of the MD530, which will soon appear will include the required parts of a Raptor 50 Titan, a PRO-50H engine and exhaust. Two new Agusta A109K2 fuselages for the Mini Titan E325 are being developed and the Mini Titan will be packaged with a 2.4 MHz radio.

My attention was next drawn to the new Raptor 50 Titan SE that features $\pm 15^\circ$ collective pitch, nonlinear flapping damper, positive delta angle for sharper response and other improvements all aimed at aggressive 3D. The show model used the Redline 53 engine and new Redline Hi-Flow 3D exhaust (a 'smoothy pipe' is also available aimed at FAI style flying). Also on show was the new Redline 106H engine

that has 90-size dimensions but puts out some 4.0 bhp at 14,600 rpm - a monster!

The Mini Titan E325 has also been upgraded with an interesting swashplate anti-rotation lever along with a full metal rotor assembly. The Innovator MD530 and Expert were on show and being flown creating plenty of interest. Thunder Tiger have also been developing their electronics with new Gyros, servos and radios including a 2.4 GHz set.



Latest fuselage for the Raptor 50 is the UH-1Y as seen in the March issue



LEFT: 50% bigger than a PicooZ the PicooZ XL has a heading hold gyro and flies very well



LEFT: The Skybot with counter rotating rotors just like the K-Max!

RIGHT: Sky Autos look great fun



RIGHT: Drive the truck, switch modes and fly the PicooZ



SILVERLIT

Again Silverlit had a very large 'closed' booth so the only way in was if you had an appointment. I was lucky as I was meeting Alexander Van de Rostyne who is responsible for the PicooZ range of model and before that the Piccolo - in many ways he is the father of micro helicopters.

Silverlit continue to develop their range of helicopters and while they are aimed more at the 'toy' market, they are true helicopters and some are edging towards 'full control' such as the PicooZ XL range that includes a heading hold gyro. The XL range is about 50% bigger than the PicooZ and from what I saw has much improved control and videos show it being flown outdoors. The range will cover a number of styles, but the one I liked was the 'Squirrel'.

More on the toy side are the I-R Gobots that look like robots flying around but their legs fold up in flight! Then there are the Sky Autos that are flying trikes and the Skybot that is another robot but with two counter rotating rotors just like the K-Max! Last of the toys that we hope to see this year is the 'Heli Mission', which is an R/C truck you can drive around, then by a flick of a switch the top opens, a PicooZ rises up and you can fly that around! I was also shown a fascinating project that is 'work in progress', but the prototype flies and is well worth waiting for...



Mini Titan sporting new metal parts



It's a monster claiming 4 bhp!



Raptor 50 Titan SE is optimised for radical 3D



Innovator MD530 on show



New electronics on show including gyros, servos and radio