

Reviews by Alex Hall and Adam Harry

Totally Terrific Toys!

We look at three of the latest RC additions to the Silverlit range...



The Skybots are a good innovative product and ideal if you fancy having a go of something a bit different. The foam mouldings are excellent and the menacing Skybots really look the part.

This little rear rotor adds manoeuvrability to the Skybots and allows them to turn fast in mid-air.



The foam Skybots are very lightweight and only suitable for flying indoors.



Skybot Attack!

These are the sort of toys that we could only have dreamt of 20 or 30 years ago when we were motioning Optimus Prime (Transformers) through the air with the appropriate keeeooooorr noise of the imaginary rocket boosters.

But finally the time has come to save the strain on your voicebox and nurse your aching arm, for the Skybots are here. Yes that's right, actual RC controlled flying robots!

Based on a similar idea to the Helicopter Sky Challengers (reviewed a few issues back in our sister publication, Rotorworld), but in the shape of robots. If you missed that review, then the idea is basically you get two flying vehicles - in this case Skybots - and two transmitters in the box, one for you and one for a friend (or enemy). Each of you attempts to fly your 'bot around the room whilst trying to knock your opponent's to the ground. This is done either by a head on-crash directly into the other, or as designed, by a unique feature which enables you to press a button on the top of the transmitter sending an infrared beam which blocks the signal to your opponent's Skybot sending it whirling to the ground in unmeasurable shame (there is a shooting noise which should satisfy your nostalgic Transformer memories).

Trickier to master

The Skybots are fantastically light and surprisingly robust given my rigorous testing, sometimes rudely confused with a lack of skill. That said, the Skybots are quite a bit trickier to master than the Sky Challengers (SCs), probably I guess as helis are more of a proven formula. The 'Bots have more of a forward momentum than the SCs, which is good if you want to chase the cat, but means that you've got to think quickly if you're in a small area and approaching a wall at speed. They are however, a lot more manoeuvrable and you can turn them around mid-air in a flash.

Each transmitter takes six AA batteries and the Skybots themselves are charged via a small connector lead that is hidden behind a panel on the transmitter. This plugs into a socket on the chest plate. Charging takes between 20 and 30 minutes and gives you about six to seven minutes of flight time.

As they stand taller than they are long or wide, I have yet to land them with any degree of dignity, but for this reason - and probably the addition of a second rotor - they don't seem to need trimming, even with multiple crashes.

One small gripe is to do with the rotors. Due to the proximity of the rotors to each other, one

must operate a 90° turn ahead of the other, which is fine until you do crash, as this tends to knock the timing out. This can be easily rectified though, by holding one of the rotors, then manually turning the other gently until a 90° difference is achieved.

Robots in disguise

Most importantly, they look the part. Menacing, gadget-laden, with lots of bits in the moulding that look like guns might eject out of cavities in the legs and a flashing light in the chest (the on/off switch), which could act as some sort of life cell. If these were life-size, I'd need counselling for my nightmares!



Pilot's verdict

All in all, a very innovative and thrilling product, if you fancy a bit of a change. I'd say a great favourite for Christmas, but then Silverlit will probably have released another dozen exciting products to choose from by then!



1...The truck in drive mode, with flashing lights and the top doors firmly shut.

2 Hit the top right button on the Tx and the doors start to open...



What's in the box?

- Two flying vehicles
- Two transmitters in the box
- Four replacement stabilising rotors
- Set of decals



Eye-catching Skybot box work!



4...the pad then rises so that the heli is level with the top of the truck...

3... revealing a helicopter waiting on the pad...



5...flick the Tx switch to heli and you can fly the Picoo Z off the truck pad and carry out its covert mission!



Heli Mission

Wow, a chance to drive a vehicle AND fly a heli around the office! I love the concept of combining both surface and air vehicles together and I can see it appealing to a lot of car-minded kids and it just might get them hooked on the thrills of RC flight, too. I've flown the Picoo Z heli a bit before, and know how much fun they are, but the mission truck with its working hydraulic launch pad is just great! The truck needs 4 x AA batteries, as does the Tx. There is a 3-position switch on the front of the Tx: top position is for heli, bottom position is for truck, with the centre position for power off. Switch to truck on the Tx and switch the truck on (the truck switch is under the radiator at the front) and you can drive the truck controlled via the Tx two sticks, the left stick giving forward and reverse drive, the right stick steers via the front wheels. There is also a three position light button switch on the Tx which gives a combination of flashing lights on the truck roof, blue strips and alternating orange. There are two buttons on the top of the Tx, one on the left and one on the right. Press the right one and there is a mechanical warning sound and the truck top doors open,

swinging fully back, revealing a Picoo Z helicopter waiting on a heli pad. When the doors have fully opened, the noise changes to a hydraulic type 'whoosh' sound and the heli pad starts to rise, stopping when the heli has been raised above the truck top! Switch the heli on and move the Tx switch to the top position and you can fly the heli off the truck pad and fly the Picoo in the normal way. It's virtually impossible to land back on the truck heli pad (I haven't been able to do it yet) with the heli blades properly aligned for retraction



back into the truck, but after your flight, return the heli to the pad and switch back to truck on the Tx, then press the top button on the left and the noise is repeated as the pad retracts down and the swing doors close again - you can then drive off!



Pilot's verdict

We've seen most of the Silverlit range in the office over the last couple of years and I have to say, this one got the most ooohs and aaahs of appreciation. A real hit with everyone! I can see this being the hit flying toy for this Christmas, definitely!



What's in the box?

- Vehicle and heli
- Transmitter
- Mains operated charger
- Full operating instructions



The box art gives a graphic imaginary action shot, plus a glimpse of the real thing.

What's in the box?

- Heli
- Transmitter
- Mains operated charger
- Training set
- Instruction book and DVD
- Plastic Tx caps for training



You can't fault the Silverlit marketing department, their box art presentation is superb!

Contacts

Flying Toys
www.flyingtoys.com
Silverlit
www.silverlit.com

Prices:
Skybot Attack: £59.99
Heli Mission: £59.99
PicooZ-XL Vortex: £69.99

The size of the Vortex is obvious compared to the Silverlit Tx.



✿ Vortex PicooZ-XL

I've been looking forward to trying this one for some time, since I was shown the Silverlit 'coming soon' bumf a while ago. The Vortex XL is considerably bigger - and heavier than the Picoo Z helis and really looks the part with an attractive colour scheme - we had the blue/silver one for review, whilst the box art shows a red/yellow scheme. The original Picoo Z helis weigh 12g and the Vortex 114g - 10 times heavier, but the finish and detailing is superb. The Vortex set comes with a 3-channel Tx, a 7.4v 300mAh Lipo flight pack which fits under the heli, a mains operated charger, a training uc set comprising carbon rods and four plastic balls.

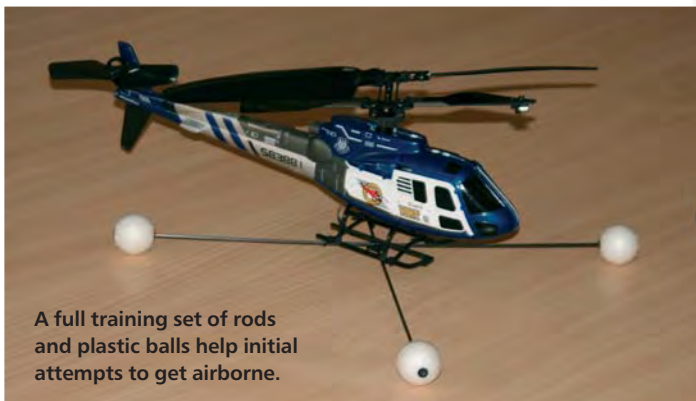
As well as an instruction book, a DVD is supplied and this gives instructions, as well as several videos of the Vortex in action - the performance looked great,

especially the demo over the swimming pool, which I thought was particularly daring! Silverlit also include three plastic caps that fit over the right hand stick on the Tx. These restrict stick movement, so that you start with cap 1, progressing through cap 2 to cap 3 as you become comfortable with the stick movements and the heli responses - a neat training idea!

The Lipo didn't take very long to charge, so I guess it is supplied partially charged and so we were soon ready to get it into the air. Take off, hover and steering is very impressive, requiring very little trim to get it to hover steadily, power was terrific and needed delicate use of the throttle stick to adjust the height - bang on the power and she will go through the roof! The size increase really gives it presence and the level of finish is great!



Hovering and looking good! Very stable and the Tx stick caps certainly give confidence as you gain the necessary skills.



A full training set of rods and plastic balls help initial attempts to get airborne.



FLIGHT TEST
Pilot: *x Alex Hall*

Pilot's verdict

The PicooZ - XL Vortex is particularly smooth to fly and looks great in the air. There are definite skills to master to get it to perform the various manoeuvres it is capable of and you get a great deal of satisfaction when these have been mastered. The larger size certainly makes it feel less that a toy and more of a proper heli.