

Winter Flyers: Part 2

Our second look at a selection of indoor flying models for the winter period from Silverlit



Last month we looked at a small selection of Silverlit indoor models, and again we take the opportunity to expand on these popular models with three more in the latest range from this manufacturer, distributed in the UK by Flying Toys Ltd.

Recent technical improvements by Belgian engineer and designer Alexander van de Rostyne to the style and materials have made these models tougher and more resilient to knocks and bumps that they will inevitably suffer when flying indoors, and the improved technology controlling them makes them even more desirable now for beginners and experts alike; for my money the range of Silverlit models are up there amongst some of the most reliable and best value-for-money R/C model aircraft in the shops today.

R/C Fortress

The futuristic-looking 'R/C Fortress' helicopter is the latest addition to Silverlit's collection of larger helicopters for 2010, and is considered particularly suitable for operation inside a sports hall or similar size space, or outdoors in calm conditions.



This great-looking model features the latest range of mechanical and electronic specifications from Silverlit for a much-improved performance, being more stable with the 3-channel controls. Again a flashing red power indicator is fitted, and switchable blue LED searchlight is operated individually from a switch on the front of the transmitter. To aid stability an electronic 'heading-lock' Piezo gyro system has been included that holds the machine on course during both forwards or backwards flight.

For those who require a choice of colour schemes or operating radio band, there are two distinctive colour schemes available on 27 MHz bands A and B, allowing both styles to be flown together



The R/C Fortress comes with spare rotors and accessories include training undercarriage and a DVD

if so desired - ideal for those multiple indoor flying sessions!

For the novice pilot an informative demonstration DVD, a useful training undercarriage, and a well-illustrated and detailed instruction book have thoughtfully been included by Silverlit to assist first time flyers - a nice

addition I thought for a model of this size.

The transmitter incorporates replaceable control stick caps to restrict the movement of the two pitch controls for beginners whilst learning how to manoeuvre the helicopter. These can be interchanged to suit the level of ability of the pilot. Individual flight trimming controls are included on the transmitter also.

The lightweight 2S 300 mAh LiPo battery supplied with this model can provide up to 10-minutes of flying, whilst the helicopter can be ready for take - off again in less than half an hour, using the UK mains charger supplied.

Flying

We test flew this model in less than ideal conditions outdoors and found it to be quite stable even though it is very light at just 130 g with the 7.4 V 300 mAh LiPo flight battery fitted. The training 'rings' on the right stick were soon removed to assist a more controllable flight, but for a novice these are an ideal solution to over-controlling the model.

Whilst restricted by the 3-channels, we found the R/C Fortress to be an enjoyable flight, but interrupted sometimes by a light breeze that did make it more demanding, but overall in control.



The 7.4 V 300 mAh LiPo is secured in the battery compartment



A mains battery charger is supplied for the 7.4 V 300 mAh LiPo



The transmitter features a belt clip on the rear battery cover



Flying Hugo in a lounge or office will expand your skills



I would suggest strongly that it be flown indoors in these conditions, and initially for a novice pilot also. A large hall would be ideal as a small room in the house is very restrictive (as we found out!).

Specs

- Main rotor diameter:** 335 mm (13.25")
 - Length:** 335 mm (13.25") excluding rotors
 - Rear rotor diameter:** 115 mm (4.5")
 - Product weight:** 130 g (including battery)
 - Flight battery:** 7.4 V 300 mAh 20 g LiPo
 - Charger:** UK mains charger supplied with LED indicator/auto shut off facility
 - Charging time:** 20-45 minutes for full charge
 - Flight duration:** 5-10 minutes between charges
 - Batteries required:** Four 1.5 V AA alkaline Tx batteries
 - Range:** Up to 25 m (75 ft)
 - Ages:** 15+ Adult supervision advised for safe operation
- Suggested retail price is £69.99

Hugo Micro Heli

The Hugo micro helicopter has recently been recognised by The Guinness Book of Records as 'The smallest remote controlled model helicopter in the world'.

Supplied completely ready to fly with a 2-channel proportional wide-beam infrared control system, Hugo will fly for up to 10 minutes, and can be back in the air in less than half an hour when using the integral 'three-in-one' charger. The basic transmitter incorporates a useful flight trim control to correct a spin in either direction, and Hugo features a sliding balance adjuster to allow it to proceed forward faster or slower.

The body of Hugo is made of tough injection moulded plastic and will withstand the knocks from gentle flying around the home and office, as we found out!

This is a true RTF model than can be taken anywhere indoors and flown without having to carry boxes and chargers with you. Why? Well it has been cleverly designed to be stowed inside its own transmitter for charging and safe storage between flights. The transmitter can then be conveniently clipped onto a belt for hands free transportation. Hugo is literally 10 cm long (excluding rotors) and weighs just 9 g.

A red LED strobe light facilitates flights in a darkened room, whilst an auto stability system makes this tiny helicopter easy to operate indoors, and outside in very calm conditions!

To aid the novice an informative instruction manual provides helpful hints and tips for any new helicopter pilot.



This tiny 9 g helicopter fits inside the transmitter and is used as a protective carry case

Flying Hugo

Hugo is capable of an outstanding indoor performance for its size, and will simply amaze onlookers wherever flown. We test flew this model indoors in a 3 x 3.5 metre conservatory and found it easily capable of flying circuits and figure-eights with no effort. In a larger room, like a lounge, it has the freedom of more space, which permits more testing times whilst attempting to land on small coffee tables or arms of chairs. It can also be flown at work in your office, and offers fantastic desktop fun in the smallest of places.

Sliding the balance adjuster forwards enables the little helicopter to fly faster, so treat this gently; sliding it further back slows the model down considerably, even to the point of no forwards motion at all, but brilliant backwards!

Even though the transmitter is restricted to 2-channels, it is soon mastered and flights can be achieved of up to 10 minutes. Being linked by infrared Hugo is susceptible to flash lighting, low sun, or solid objects and therefore is at risk of loss of control resulting in the model crashing to the ground. Being so light, draughts from open doors and windows can also affect the flying, so be warned!

Specs

- Main rotor diameter:** 95 mm (3¾")
 - Length:** 100 mm (4") excluding rotors
 - Rear rotor diameter:** 22 mm (7/8")
 - Product weight:** 9 g (including 1S LiPo)
 - Flight battery:** 3.7 V 50 mAh 2.1 g LiPo (built-in)
 - Charger:** Integral Tx/charger with LED indicator/auto shut-off
 - Charging time:** 20-30 minutes for full charge
 - Flight duration:** 5-10 minutes between charges
 - Tx Batteries required:** Six 1.5 V AA alkaline
 - Range:** Up to 10 m (30 ft)
 - Frequency:** Infrared control system
- Bands A, B & C allow up to three Silverlit models to be flown together.
- Available in 3 colour schemes: blue/white; red/white; yellow/black
- Ages:** 10+ Adult supervision advised for safe operation
- Suggested retail price** £24.99

Skywave Rider

The 3-channel Skywave Rider is something completely different; a cross between a car and a helicopter.

Like all Silverlit helicopters, it comes in a highly decorated box and is supplied completely ready-to-run and fly. The three body colours to choose from (red, blue, or yellow), indicating infrared bands A, B and C, allows the full set of three Silverlit helicopters to be flown together. The informative instruction manual provides helpful hints and tips for beginners and enthusiasts alike.

This advanced model represents a futuristic flying machine that's





Unmistakeable presentation box shows off the model

remarkably robust, again featuring a tough composite moulded body made of durable rigid plastic and lightweight foam. The model also features a rear stabilising fin that assists in a more precise control of the model. An internal flashing red indicates the power is on while a switchable bright blue LED headlight has again been incorporated to add to your night time flying fun.

The lightweight onboard 70 mAh 3.7 V rechargeable LiPo battery is capable of providing up to ten minutes of operation, and drives two powerful micro motors that operate the two-speed system and, as others in this range, can be recharged in less than half an hour using the convenient charger built into the transmitter.

Looking at the transmitter closer we see a speed selector switch mounted on the top that, when selected, will provide extra speed to the 'car' to provide sufficient power to the rotor head to result in a super little helicopter flying under full control from the 3-channel transmitter.

Flying

When you first switch on the transmitter the power setting is low; the model is a car at this time with the main and tail rotors turning to give forward motion and limited turning ability. It can be driven around a smooth floor or tabletop, steering left and right using the two transmitter control sticks providing proportional throttle control and limited left/right steering determined by the tail rotor motor speed. Whilst driving around simply switch to helicopter mode by pressing the set top button to take-off, and it transforms into a super little helicopter, typical of this manufacturer's designs and model flying envelopes.

The transformation is rapid and requires quick reactions by the pilot; it is no slouch when in flight. When flown indoors it was found to be quite quick around the lounge, but you soon get the hang of it flying from room to room.

By using the right-hand stick, the model will spin in either direction, and a left/right yaw flight trim control is situated under the right-hand stick to adjust the centre trim. Careful use of the left stick will enable you to hover and descend with three modes of forward movement.

The Skywave Rider is super stable as a model helicopter and



Is it a car or is it a helicopter? Well both actually!



The Skywave Rider is fast around a small lounge, but the precise controls make it easy to manoeuvre

easy to operate indoors in fairly restricted spaces. It can also be flown outdoors in really calm conditions.

As with many of the models in this range from Silverlit it is noticeable that when the battery power starts to drop off then so does the tail rotor trim, and you find yourself fighting the controls to maintain straight-line flight. Adjusting the trim will require continual attention, so it is best to land and recharge the battery at this time.

For most model pilots the Skywave Rider will be great fun especially in the less confined spaces of a large hall.

Specs

Main rotor diameter:	130 mm (5¼")
Length:	187 mm (7½") excluding rotors
Rear rotor diameter:	30 mm (1¼")
Product weight:	18 g including LiPo battery
Flight battery:	3.7 V 70 mAh 2.8 g LiPo pack
Charger:	Integral transmitter/charger with LED indicator/auto shut off
Charging time:	20-30 minutes for full charge
Flight duration:	5-10 minutes between charges
Batteries required:	Six 1.5 V AA alkaline Tx batteries
Range:	Up to 10 m (30 ft)
Frequency:	Infrared control system
Ages:	10+ Adult supervision advised for safe operation
Suggested retail price	£29.99

We are grateful to Flying Toys Ltd (UK main distributors of Silverlit products) for supplying this range of helicopters for testing. **RCMW**

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