

Watts Under The Roof

John Stennard keeps abreast of the latest models for the indoor flyer

Another exciting parcel arrived at the hanger containing more of the new 2008 models courtesy of Flying Toys. Amongst others these included the new version of the Palm-Z called the Micro Jet and the DIY kits. In the DIY range there are ten models ranging from the single engine 'Easy' version to the four engine 'Advanced'. I built an example of the four-engine kit some while ago and it flies well outdoors in calm weather. Last month I gave some information about the Vamp ornithopter, this is still amazing onlookers, and the equally amazing Tandem helicopter. To keep you up to date I'm taking a look at the MX-1 helicopters and the Palm-Z Micro Jet in this issue. It's taking a while to get all these models test flown and photographed!

Following my usual habit of straying outdoors with some small field models, I am also time travelling back to WWI with the BMI Fokker DVII. Anyway let's go very small first and take a look at the Palm-Z Micro Jet followed by the MX-1 micro helicopters.

Jetting Around the Room

Silverlit amazed everyone last year when they introduced the Palm-Z and have developed this excellent little aircraft to produce the Micro Jet. Gone is the biplane format and the Micro Jet is a sleek and futuristic twin boom monoplane. The Micro Jet weighs just 7 g and, like the Palm-Z, has a pusher motor and magnetic actuator rudder. A difference here is that the rudder can be activated without the motor running.

The aerodynamic design of this model is quite fascinating and the way the mouldings have been formed and fit together are very clever.

The Micro Jet design makes it much easier to trim this model, as the trailing edges of the tailplane and fin are easy to bend.

The Tx is virtually the same as the one used with the Palm-Z and uses the same sliding controls. The Micro Jet plugs onto a similar charging connector positioned on the front of the Tx.

Initially I found the Micro Jet a touch tail heavy and this resulted in a 'porpoising' flight pattern. Carefully bending the rear edges of the tailplane and eventually adding a little Blu-tack to the nose improved this considerably. The Micro Jet flies faster than the Palm-Z and I found that the turning circle was bigger. As with the Palm-Z the



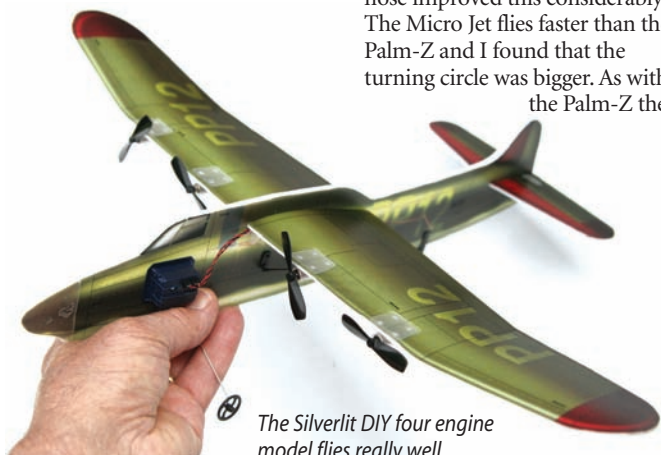
The whole model is a delight to the eye



Just look at the shape of the Micro Jet!



The flight pattern is different to the Palm-Z and certainly more 'jet like'



The Silverlit DIY four engine model flies really well

turns to the left are smoother and more easily controlled. Over controlling when turning to the right can result in a very tight turn and a speedy loss of height, however if a minimal control input is used (just a blip is usually enough) the right turns can be successfully flown without loss of height.

The range is quoted as 5 m (16 ft) but in practice, depending on the overhead light conditions, this can be exceeded. If the model flies out of range the motor cuts and the Micro Jet just glides to the ground. I note from the Flying Toys catalogue that a range booster will be available for the transmitter. The 'I-R Booster' will extend the range to 15 m (50 ft). As the Micro Jet flies faster than the original Palm-Z the booster is a very good idea and will allow the model to be taken further away and flown to a higher altitude.

As the photo of the airborne Micro Jet shows it is an attractive little model that flies well.

Micro-Micro, the MX-1s

Silverlit have done a quite amazing job with their smallest helicopter to date, just 7 g in weight, based on the Picco Z mechanics but with smaller rotors. The MX-1 Extreme and MX-1 Supreme are basically the same very colourful and attractive helicopters wearing different colour schemes, the real difference comes with the Tx/charging system.

Looking at the MX-1 Supreme first this helicopter uses a charger base and a separate and very small Tx. The tiny Tx requires 2 x AAA batteries while the charger



The MX-1 Supreme features a separate charging base and Tx

The diminutive size can be seen in this photo



The MX-1 Supreme helicopter is surprisingly lively

The flight performance is the same as the Supreme version



uses the usual 4 x AA. Once the charging lead has been plugged into the helicopter it can be located on a stand on base and if required stored in that position.

The MX-1 Extreme has a unique system whereby the Tx is also the charger and carrying case. A sliding panel on the front of the Tx reveals the helicopter and it can be charged while inside the Tx storage area.

Both the helicopters' transmitters use sliding control inputs like the Palm-Z aircraft rather than sticks like the Picco Z. The sliders on my version have rather strong springs and I thought this reduced the amount of 'feel' that is required when flying helicopters, particularly very small ones. I understand that this will be altered on the production versions. The MX-1 helicopters fly in a similar manner to the standard Picco Zs but I do not think the slider controls are as easy to handle as sticks. The use of the slider control system of course allows very small and compact transmitters to be made.

The MX-1 Extreme and Supreme helicopters have an amazing performance for their size and fly well. They are a fascinating development of the original micro helicopter concept and make you wonder where do we go from here!

My fingers show just how small the MX-1 Extreme is



Right: The Extreme nestles inside its hanger in the Tx, it can be charged in this position

