

Bay Flight Aviation take delivery of Tecnam P2006T

FROM humble beginnings in 1996 when Phill Hooker began the school with one leased aircraft, Bay Flight Aviation has grown to a fleet of 10 aircraft and an international reputation for quality of flight training operations. Late last year, Bay Flight was purchased by Steve and Sandra Rowe. Aviation enthusiasts themselves, they were attracted by Bay Flight's reputation and by the potential they see within the New Zealand aviation training industry.

Having settled into the business, Steve and Sandra are now undertaking substantial new investments in plant and aircraft to add an extra edge to Bay Flight's training offer. The first sign of this is the arrival of a new Tecnam P2006T Twin which will operate alongside the school's existing Piper Seneca and fleet of Cessnas. With this purchase, Bay Flight can fairly claim to be leading the way for others to follow, this being the first P2006T to operate under a full time training role in

New Zealand. The investment will be closely followed by the arrival of a Redbird Flight Simulator at the school, due in early April. Part of the NMIT Aviation Training Network, the company has also recently begun to offer aviation business courses in collaboration with NMIT and Bay of Plenty Polytechnic.

Bay Flight Aviation CEO Laurence Barnett says that they selected the new Tecnam after evaluating all options including Seneca, Seminole, and Diamond. He says, "The Tecnam stood out as a confident first choice and we decided to lead the market rather than waiting for others to purchase first." He also commends Giovanni Nustrini and Tecnam New Zealand for "Great support and a seamless process from start to finish."

Laurence says that the company plans more investment in

infrastructure and is working with the Airport Board on the development of a new "Training Centre of Excellence". Bay Flight's Management are planning for the company to play a significant role in "a vibrant training industry" and believe that the future for pilot training in New Zealand is excellent.

There are 20 Instructors at Bay Flight (a mix of about 1/3 B-Cat and 2/3 C-Cat) who are currently training more than 50 pilots per annum. Steve and Sandra are keen to grow this number

in a manner that maintains quality and also that fits in well with Tauranga Airport and the requirements of its other users. Although the company is focused on New Zealand, they expect to attract more international students who Laurence says they already have a reputation for looking after, as "a part of the family". This 'family' approach to the business has included the



Tauranga MP Simon Bridges (centre) accepted the new aircraft from Giovanni Nustrini on behalf of Bay Flight Aviation and Tauranga City. Speaking to the Bay Flight team and guests, he emphasised how good it is to see such substantial commitments being made by New Zealanders reinvesting in New Zealand.



Phill Hooker (pictured nearest with Simon Bridges) says he is very impressed with twin and single engine operation, the aircraft comfortably out performing Bay Flight's Seneca. Excellent short field behaviour means they can comfortably use the grass runway at Tauranga and also operate from nearby Motiti Island. Phill says the aircraft is easily within reach of a brand new PPL with C172 experience; "Where the Seneca can be a handful in crosswinds on seal, the Tecnam is just like landing a 172. As well, single engine climbouts are easy, airborne restarts are instant, liquid cooling allows that power can be brought back to idle, and the aircraft behaves beautifully under IMC." The only difficulty for Bay Flight's students will be getting Phill out of the plane so they can have a go themselves.

company giving every Instructor and student a demonstration flight in the new aircraft.

Laurence is looking forward to commencing operations with their new Tecnam, saying that everyone who has seen it so far has been very impressed. In particular, he is looking forward to the aircraft coming on line for night flying. It has a very low noise footprint which will be a marked contrast to the Seneca (Laurence says that far too many people know his cellphone number and call to tell him when it is out flying at night). He says that excitement of the aircraft's arrival from both staff and students is palpable and that they have already had a lot of enquiries for instrument ratings.

For more information, phone Laurence Barnett on 07 575 2747 or visit www.bayflight.co.nz

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