



A Beta Upgrade

KIWI FLYERS like Robinson's R22 to the extent that it is the most numeric helicopter on the NZ civil register with more than 160 of the model being active.

The 'little helicopter that could' has been in constant production by the Robinson Helicopter Company based in Torrance, California since 1979 and in its 30 year production run has been the recipient of a number of upgrades. The R22 Beta II is the current model

and while a good number of these are in New Zealand, by far the most common is its earlier sibling the R22 Beta. In New Zealand the R22 is found hard at work in all aspects of rotary work whether it be

flight training, aerial work, agricultural operations, game recovery or just private use. Its Achilles heel has been a fall off in performance at altitude and particularly so on high ambient temperature days. Robinson recognised this and so the Beta II was evolved.

An exciting new option is now available to Beta owners who would really rather own a Beta II. HeliSpecs at Taupo, maintainers of all things rotary, will take your R22 Beta and return it to you with a Beta II upgrade.

So what's involved and why would you want a Beta II upgrade anyway? HeliSpecs principal Roger Maisey says the major

component is a change of engine from the Lycoming O-320-B2C to a Lycoming O-360-J2A model. This alone adds a 13 per cent increase in power over the earlier model and also improves performance at altitude, particularly on a hot day. The O-360-J2A is de-rated to 131 horsepower for take-off and 124 hp for cruise giving the engine long life and excellent reliability. This approved modification, where initial development was overseen by Flight

Structures Ltd. in Hamilton, also has a positive benefit in increasing the overall value of the aircraft. Externally nothing else changes as transmission upgrades effected when the R22 Beta was launched are more than capable of handling the increased output from the O-360 engine. Ancillary benefits that come with the engine upgrade include auto induction and carb heat control.



This Beta II started life as an ordinary Beta model. HeliSpecs now offer an upgrade to Beta II specification.

Roger believes the best time to take advantage of the upgrade package is when the existing engine is due for overhaul or at the mandatory 2200 hour /12 year overhaul period for all R22s. If it's just an engine

conversion he suggests to plan on a one to two week workshop visit. The client can either supply their own engine or have HeliSpecs source one for them. HeliSpecs has an O-360J2A in stock at the moment and the aim is to have this engine swap capability continuously available.

Currently the initial upgraded aircraft is hard at work on flight training duties with HeliPro at Taupo. Following its upgrade, the flight test schedule was as per the standard Robinson advisory following a 2200 hour overhaul.

Roger advises that workshop space is available for a further R22 to join the upgrade status. While your R22 is in the shop you might also want to consider some work on the instrument panel for which HeliSpecs are able to supply a refurbished panel complete with new screen printed decals and advisory warnings.

For more information

Contact Roger Maisey at HeliSpecs Taupo on 0274 982 812 or email: heli.specs@hotmail.com



If you have a tired looking instrument panel, HeliSpecs can exchange it for a fully refurbished one.