

New P-51 Mustang Look-alike Takes Off

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SW51 Mustang

The North American P-51 Mustang is possibly the most highly revered airplane ever created, and several companies have released look-alikes of the classic warbird. The most recent addition to the Mustang stable comes from FK-Lightplanes — a Polish company that produces LSAs and aerobatic airplanes. Its SW51 recently took to the skies for the first time and serial number three, which will be flying under an experimental exhibition airworthiness certificate, is expected to land in the U.S. by the year-end.

According to Ron Hansen, the vice president of Hansen Air Group — the North American dealer for FK-Lightplanes, the SW51 is a 70-percent scale imitation of the North American P-51 made of a proprietary material that is both lighter and stronger than carbon fiber. The material is stained to look like aluminum.

Unlike the original warbird, which has nearly 1,500 horsepower and flies at about 435 knots, the SW51 is powered by a 100-hp Rotax 912 ULS engine driving a fixed-pitch carbon fiber three-blade DUC propeller and is expected to cruise at around 150 knots. The new airplane will be able to withstand aerobatic maneuvers within +8 and -4 G.

Hansen said FK-Lightplanes can produce the airplane in one week and his company expects to receive its SW51 in mid-December. FK-Lightplanes plans to certify the SW51 under the light sport aircraft category.

The SW designation is due to FK-Lightplanes' partnership with ScaleWings, which helped design the airplane. The SW51 took more than 40,000 man-hours to develop.