

Robinson Breaks Sales Record in 2003

Robinson Helicopter Company produced 422 new helicopters in 2003, a record for the company. The total included 219 R44 Raven IIs, 75 R44 Raven Is, and 128 R22s. An additional 46 R22s were overhauled on the Robinson production line.

Sales in 2004 should be even better; with first quarter deliveries reaching 158 and production now being sold out more than six months in advance. Robinson attributes the boom in sales to the excellent market reception for the higher performance Raven II, lower interest rates, improvements in the U.S. economy, and the weak American dollar, which has greatly stimulated the foreign export market.

Robinson employment increased by over 300 employees in 2003 to a total of more than 1,000. Also, an additional building is under construction, which will nearly double the manufacturing floor space and allow production to further increase by late 2004.



Robinson is currently producing 15 helicopters a week.

Merced County Contracts R44 Police Helicopter

Merced County Sheriff's Department and Silver State Helicopters were at Robinson's Heli Expo 2004 booth with their successful new airborne law enforcement service. Using a R44 Raven II Police Helicopter, Silver State designed a unique program to bring helicopter operations to police departments unable to afford their own aircraft or full-time service.

What makes this program unique is the allocation of helicopter time. Based in Las Vegas, the R44 Police Helicopter and pilot fly monthly to Merced, Calif. and work for five

consecutive days, with no maximum limit on flight hours. The aircraft then returns to Las Vegas or moves on to other contracts. This service is offered at a low rate, allowing law enforcement agencies to experience the benefits of airborne support without the capital investment of aircraft purchase. The agencies are free to *(continued on page 2)*



Silver State Helicopters' Police Helicopter starts flying in Merced County, California.

Inside this issue...

2

New Color Selector
Available on RHC Website

3

The Crocodile Hunter
Uses an R44 to Hunt Crocs.

4

Hard Lesson Learned
For British R22 Pilot

Merced Co. Puts Police Helicopter to Work

(continued from page 1) increase their monthly allotment or request a helicopter all month at anytime. Silver State provides both aircraft and pilot.

“We talk to a lot of sheriffs who believe they need a big turbine helicopter, so they go without while they try to raise the funds,” explains Tim Nelson, Silver State law enforcement pilot and sworn police officer. “When we put them in the R44 they go crazy. They can’t believe it has the speed, visibility, and range of a turbine at one-third the price.”

Since the helicopter began operating in November 2003 it has made a large impact on Merced County. The R44 helped police apprehend gang members, find a missing 2-year-old girl, and recover important incriminating evidence.

“The FLIR is an important piece of equipment that makes this program successful,” Nelson says. “We used the helicopter to follow a shooting suspect until he was apprehended, then flew back along his path with the FLIR looking for a weapon. We found the gun in a ditch. It glowed bright on

the FLIR, still hot from being discharged.”

Merced County Sheriff Sergeant Nathan Todd sees the helicopter as a money saver for the agency. “It is working out really well. It’s cost effective for us, but we don’t have to pay the bills to maintain it. In fact, because we have the aircraft we can contain a larger area with less personnel. We’re saving money. I can’t believe we’ve been going so

long without a helicopter and we may now even expand.”

Silver State chose the R44 Police Helicopter for this program due to its cost, equipment, and flexibility. “It has the equipment we need to provide first class service; FLIR, searchlight, video recorder, radios, and scanner. We can go from one department contract to the next and all we have to do is reprogram the police frequencies in the radio,” Nelson explains.



Sheriffs can't believe the R44 has the speed, visibility, and range of a turbine at one third the price, says pilot Silver State Tim Nelson.

Choose Helicopter Color Schemes Online

Customers can now experiment with paint and interior color combinations on the Robinson website.

Due to a great many requests, Robinson designed an online Color Selector to help customers visualize their future helicopter. The company designed one selector each for the R22 Beta II, R44 Raven II, and R44 Raven I models.

To access the Color Selector, direct your browser to the Robinson website at www.robinsonheli.com and click on “Products.” From there select the type

of aircraft. On the aircraft’s page, you will see “Color Selector” as one of the menu choices on the left.

The Color Selector allows customers to experiment with base, trim, and interior color combinations. The current color scheme displayed will always list the color names and codes so should you print the color scheme, the codes are readily available for the dealer to place a correct order.

However, it is very important for customers to remember that the colors will vary between computer screens

and printer inks. This selector is designed to help customers narrow their paint scheme choices, which they can then print and take to their dealer to compare to the paint chip chart, a more accurate representation of final paint color.

For best results, RHC recommends printing using the Print icon on the page, not going to Print under the browser’s File menu. If the page fails to print properly, download the latest driver for your printer, found on the printer manufacturer’s website.

Cape York Helicopters Helps Crocodile Hunter

During a two-week field trip in September on Cape York Peninsula, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS), Australia Zoo, and Cape York Helicopters worked together to trap large crocodiles and fit them with satellite transmitters to track their movements.

Australia Zoo's Steve Irwin, known in many parts of the world as Animal Planet's Crocodile Hunter, lent his croc capturing expertise to the expedition, accompanied by Dr. Mark Read of QPWS. Due to his knowledge

of the area, Cape York Helicopters' own Dennis "Brazakka" Wallas was asked to participate. He flew an R44 helicopter to spot crocodiles, locate trap sites, search for bait, ferry people and equipment from site to site, and even relocate a crocodile.

Brazakka returned to the office complaining that whenever a large crocodile had to be immobilized, he was asked to lie across the croc's

tail, possibly because of his superior weight.

"You know in the cartoons when characters get flicked through the air? Well, I got flicked through the air by a big guy like I was a piece of paper," he relates.

Four male crocs were tagged during the exercise. The tracking research, pioneered by QPWS and the University of Queensland, allows researchers to



Brazakka and Crocodile Hunter Steve Irwin prepare a sedated croc for sling load.

watch the movement of the crocodiles from their computers and will provide information critical to better understanding and managing of these magnificent animals.

Since the trip, Dr. Read reported one crocodile was moved 50 km from his waterhole but found his way home.

He spent two weeks moving up and down the coast before making a beeline for his waterhole and eventually traveled more than 3.5 km over land to get there.



Mark Reed, Brazakka, and Croc Hunter Steve Irwin (L-R)

R44 Rescue in Poland Saves Mountaineer's Life

Polinar, a Robinson dealer near Kraków, Poland, was involved in an extraordinary rescue in the Polish Tatra mountains with a 2003 R44 Raven II.

Shortly before the rescue, the Tatra Voluntary Rescue Service (TOPR) requested the Raven II and an R44 Astro to be on-call as both of the agency's aircraft were in maintenance.

When the weather is good several mountain expeditions are underway in the Tatra mountains.

It was during this busy season that Polinar provided service for TOPR. The Raven II transported a handful of tourists off the mountain with minor injuries before receiving a call for a life-saving mission.

A young mountaineer had fallen and received a head injury that rendered him unconscious. He was reported hanging from a lifeline at 2,200 meters (6,500 feet).

The R44 immediately took the TOPR lifeguard, a doctor, and medical equipment to the site of the accident which undoubtedly saved the young man's life. After he regained consciousness, he was transported in the Raven II's back seats to the nearest hospital.

The rescue was publicized on all the local television and radio stations in addition to the newspapers, with multiple comments

about the extraordinary R44's maneuverability, reliability, and operational efficiency at altitude and in high wind conditions

Shortly after the rescue, Polinar received a Diploma of Appreciation from TOPR for their R44 Raven II's involvement in the life-saving mission.



The injured mountaineer receives treatment before air evacuation to a local hospital via R44.

New R22 Pilot Shares a Hard Lesson Learned

“I qualified as a UK based PPL(H) in September 2003 on the R22 and now have 96 hrs on type.

I was unfortunate enough to cause a Robinson R22 Beta (G-BSXN) to be involved in a heavy landing on 11 February 2004 at Newcastle Airport.

The reason I am writing is to express my sincere thanks to Frank Robinson for his excellent design which undoubtedly minimized my injuries. The ship behaved exactly as published – the skids buckled out to cushion the impact, the seats crumpled to cushion the impact and the mainframe allowed the engine to rise safely.

The result was that the only injuries to both me and my passenger were that we suffered minor back pain – nothing long-lasting.

Many other helicopter designs (e.g. if the engine had been mounted high) might have caused further substantial injuries to us.

I apologize for adding adversely to the safety record of the R22 but I am very grateful for being able to walk away from the incident. It certainly has not put me off further R22 flying.

For interest, here is a summary of my accident report:



The scene after the hard landing in Newcastle, England.

After a flight of about 45 minutes in the local area I returned to Newcastle Airport which was fairly busy. Air Traffic routed me to land in the hover square. After waiting there a minute or so, they then instructed me to cross the main runway ahead of an aircraft waiting to take off from Runway 25 and route to Hold Echo.

I crossed at approximately 40-45 knots IAS and, because I did not wish to execute an aggressive quick-stop, I allowed then aircraft to slow and climb into a high hover above Hold Echo.

Although there was virtually no wind, I turned into wind direction (ca

290 degrees) and began my descent to Hold Echo. Because of the aircraft waiting to take off, I erroneously allowed the rate of descent to increase to such an extent that I entered a vortex ring state (settling with power). Due to the low altitude of the aircraft I was unable to recover and had to make a (very) heavy landing after which I shut off the engine, switched off the master switch and isolated the fuel. The landing had caused considerable damage to the aircraft. My passenger and I suffered minor injuries to our lower backs.”

Harry Lowe, February 2004



2901 Airport Drive
Torrance, CA 90505 USA
Phone: 310/539-0508
Fax: 310/539-5198
www.robinsonheli.com