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Tips 4 - The Cessna 310 - A Market Review

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When an airplane is manufactured from 1955 through 1981, there must be something right. Nothing survives in a free market system for that long unless it has a lot going for it. That's the answer I often give a caller that simply asks, "What do you think of 310s?"

As a twenty-year Cessna Piston Twin Marketing and Sales Specialist, and active Twin Cessna Broker, I speak to just about every type of Twin Cessna Buyer and daily address every imaginable question.

When discussing 310s, it is necessary to group the aircraft into age or model groups due to the wide price range. There are many, but I generally group the 310s into the '50s, the pre '65s, the '65J, '66K, '67L, the '68N, the '69P, the '70 - '74 Qs and the '75 - 81 Rs. I seldom get involved with the pre 1965 aircraft.

It, of course, must be said that when discussing used aircraft, each is truly a "fingerprint", that is one of a kind. No two are alike. One must look at the hours and equipment on each in order to determine value. I often urge the prospective Buyer of a 1970 or '71 310Q to also consider a '68N or a '69P. The aircraft are very similar.

Many callers desire the long nose 310R, but have 310Q budgets. I urge them to remember that the Qs are basically as fast as the Rs. All the Turbo 310s 1969 - 1981 have the same engines and all of the normally aspirated Qs have the very popular Continental IO-470VO engines with its very reliable 260 horsepower. All factory Turbo 310s have 285 horsepower.

The time between overhaul (TBO) varies but is normally 1,500 hours for the 470 series, 1,400 hours for the TSIO-520B series and up to 1,700 hours for the normally aspirated 10-520 series.

A few 310s were modified in the '70s and '80s with 300 horsepower engines and a few Turbo Qs were modified in the '70s to accommodate TSIO-520-N engines of 310 horsepower as used on the 340 and 414. They are fast! A word on Mod shops. Stop and ask, review and evaluate how many the shop has completed, not proposed. Obtain its true out the door costs and what you get for the price. Mod shops greatly benefit from the free lance journalist system that many aviation publications use.

A few mid '60s aircraft, like the 1964 310I I recently sold, have the Rayjay manual Turbo system. It's a nice system but there are few of them and they require pilot attention. RAM modifies the T310R and Colemill modifies the original 260 horsepower 310s and produces the 310R Bearcat.

Frequent questions focus on the concern with the fuel system. Okay, one time. Ready? It is not a problem! On any one cross country, I can show the pilot, with ease, the "complexities" of the fuel system. I have had a hundred pilots ask, "Is that it? Is that all there is to it?" That's it! Some older aircraft have 130 gallons. Most late '60s and later 310s have either 140, 163, 183 or 203 gallons. Most Qs and Rs will likely have the 163 gallon fuel system. The 203 gallon factory system is not common and aftermarket additional fuel tanks are expensive.

Cessna 310s were made with several different De-Ice systems. Many, especially older ones, have no De-Ice of any kind, some have Alcohol or Hot Props, some have Hot Props and an Alcohol Windshield, some are Full De-Ice meaning Hot Props, Alcohol Windshield and Boots. There are relatively few '77 and newer 310s Certified for Flight into Known Icing and you pay for it.

Important paragraph. About six times each year I get into debates with pilots, FAA types, A&Ps, Owners and sales types. Ready? If the 310 did not leave the factory as a Certified for Flight into Known Icing aircraft, you will never make it one! If you say you know of one, give me the N number, FAA STC documents, insurance verification, etc. I could write a book. I will not. Do not let anyone sell you a Full De-Ice 310 with the assurance that it is no big deal to get the thing Certified for Known Ice. Forget it! And, if you are told that the aircraft is Certified Known Ice, here is your next two questions. Is the Heated Windshield Plate on the aircraft and is it operational? Two questions that better be answered yes, or make it a condition of the sale in writing. Remember, on the aircraft and working. You will be shocked at all the "no buts."

I am immune to ARC comments. After twenty-years, I had heard it all. I hear good and bad ARC, King, Narco and Collins stories. Most 310s will have a Cessna Autopilot. It is just too expensive to change Autopilots. A few will have the Century III and a few will have the Bendix 810 Flight Director. A rare few will have the King Autopilot Systems. A great number of 310s will have the 400 ADF and 400 Transponders. They are pretty good and rarely cause much grief. Often you see a specifications list that has the Cessna 400 ADF and TXP with King Navcoms and DME.

Very few are air-conditioned. The few with Cessna Air have parts problems. Remember, Cessna has not purchased air-conditioners or parts for a long time. Keith Environmental Systems in Addison, Texas manufactures what most refer to the JB Air System. It is an all electric system which allows precooling and parts are available.

If the aircraft is not equipped with Vortex Generators, get them. I vote for Micro Aerodynamics. They might just save your experienced pilot's life. The VMC demonstration I have given to several pilots including FAA types is very eye opening. One time, you will be sold!

And now, very regrettably, I must report as in my last article, that there is an epidemic of bad guys out there. It is at an all time high. Like con artists, that prey on the elderly, they are out there. They are ready to take advantage of honest and somewhat naive Buyers and Sellers. They are smarter than you. It is what they do seven days a week. If anyone insists on being sent a cash deposit, run, do not walk. Remember, send money only to an approved escrow, no exceptions.

So you have now learned a lot about 310s. You want one. Do you qualify? Before getting excited about the 310 performance and specifications, you had better call your insurance agent to see if you qualify. Give him your ratings, hours, etc. You may be disappointed or the premium amount may be a shock. If you are under 300 hours with only a few hours in a high performance single, call the insurance agent before calling about an aircraft offered for sale.

Training requirements will vary from a local Dual Check-Out to attendance at simulator equipped schools. Training is a must!

I will address Buyer and Seller support. In the jet marketplace, the employment of experienced consultants (experts) is commonplace. I know that major corporations routinely employ consultants to keep them from making costly mistakes. Working for the Buyer is very common. It pays to have an expert on your side of the table. It makes so much sense, maybe too much.

Regrettably, we American pilots all think that buying a Twin ("it's just another airplane") is just like buying a used Camaro out of the Sunday paper. "What'll ya take for it?" and a trip around the block. It is too embarrassing to say you had some help in the buying or selling process. Real smart. And you thought product liability was our only problem? For years I have observed the physician, lawyer, factory owner, business man, airline pilot, etc., that would not spend a dime on a \$100,000 office system without direct expert support. That same person will just "wing it" when it comes to an airplane. You figure it out.

The Cessna 310. There will be no more. They are fast, fun to fly, fuel efficient, and life is short. If the years are passing by, the nights are dark, the hills are high, the water is deep, your bed sounds good, and it is just the right time, then **ACT**. It is a one way trip. No known second chances. Enjoy!

If you are a Cessna 310 or 340 Owner now wishing to sell you airplane, then one call to Jerry Temple Aviation will easily convince you that you have found the easiest, most hassle free and absolutely most profitable way to sell your aircraft. We maintain a current database of Buyers now seeking, or planning to soon purchase a 310 or 340. Qualified Buyers are added to this list daily. See for yourself why a growing number of Cessna Owners and Pilots are saying it is the most professional buying/selling experience they have had in general aviation.

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