



Over a thousand aircraft flew in this year

TANNKOSH

'Oshkosh' in the German pine forests near Munich

By Geoff Jones

Verna and Matthias Dolderer have succeeded in putting their small German grass airfield firmly on the world aeronautical map.

Their annual fly-in at Tannheim airfield in southern Germany (west of Munich) has become almost as famous as its counterpart, Oshkosh.

Experimental Aircraft Association President Tom Poberezny has given Tannkosh his

blessing; just as well, since Tannkosh (20-27 July) and Oshkosh (23-29 July) are theoretically competitors. Tannheim airfield was founded in 1976 by farmer Max Dolderer and the annual Tannkosh fly-ins started in 1995. The 2006 Tannkosh was the biggest to date: 1,300 aircraft attended. Despite poor weather this year, there were 1,044, so this is still Europe's largest sport aviation fly-in.

Tannkosh gave me an opportunity to gauge



P.3 Flyers from Ticino, Switzerland, with four ex-military Pilatus P.3s



Christian Engelen's Peak Aerospace miniature Me 109 is a popular new kitplane

how private flying is faring in Germany, so I asked around while I was there. I was told it has been in the doldrums, thanks to increasing fuel costs, environmental issues, JAR and European regulations and falling pilot numbers, but most people I spoke to were optimistic – the German aviation scene is said to be thriving.

This is a pilot's event, so there are no expensive, crowd pulling, 'big name' airshow acts, just enthusiasts giving world-class airshow performances for their fellow pilots. On the Friday afternoon and during Saturday, inbound arrivals and departures have to hold off for twenty minutes in every hour for flight demonstrations and airshow acts. This year, former world aerobatic champion and current Red Bull race pilot Nicolas Ivanoff, fresh from his racing at Interlaken the weekend before, flew an aerobatic routine in his Cap 232. The P-3 Flyers from Ticino in Switzerland displayed

in their four Pilatus P-3 training aircraft, as did another four-ship act, the Italian Pioneer 300 aerobatic team. Lasse Rungholm from Copenhagen gave a vigorous display in his Twin Beech E18S... to mention just a few.

Tannkosh is not a full-on commercial show like Friedrichshafen or Aero Expo but many of the big aircraft and aviation equipment suppliers are there. Cessna, Cirrus, Diamond and Dornier were all represented, along

“This is a pilot's event, so you get great performances rather than acts to please the crowds”

with smaller fry.

Everything at Tannkosh is modest, well organised and enjoyable. Aircraft arrivals are free, car drivers pay two euros a day to park and the entry fee is just three euros. Queues for food aren't long, there is international variety, but bratwurst, schnitzel and sauerkraut remind you where you are - and it's served not on paper and plastic but on real crockery and cutlery at modest prices. Then there's the beer! Bavarian Ayinger is the local brew, a trifle sweet for my taste, but served in real litre steins for which you pay a three-euro deposit.

Many camp by their aircraft or at the camping site, where I saw a lot of motor-caravans. Buses charge five euros to shuttle those in search of greater comfort to hotels and guesthouses in the nearby towns and villages.

The locals treated Saturday night's awards

ceremony and hangar party as a rehearsal for the Munich Beer Festival: lots of food, lots of beer, lots of jollity.

Red Bull is one of a number of low-key sponsors – this year it provided check-in, information and weather facilities. Seat lent cars to ferry pilots to their aircraft and Cessna and Total Oil provided support in other ways.

With large stands of Black Forest pines on the neighbouring hills and those characteristic southern German onion-domed church towers visible in the distance, you can see you're in Germany. Nonetheless, Tannkosh is one of the most cosmopolitan fly-ins I've been to.

As is customary for fly-ins, some pilots had made heroic flights to attend. Red Bull provided a display board with a map of Europe on which were marked the points of

departure of aircraft attending, the aircraft registration written on a small arrow, so you could tell the nationality. One German had flown in from the North Cape in Norway, and another from Madeira. These pilots had started their flights in Germany, and then flown back home via Tannheim. However, there were

“With Black Forest pines on the hills and onion-dome church towers, you can see you're in south Germany”

plenty of long distance aviators who had made Tannkosh their destination, from Sweden, Hungary, Romania, Poland, the Ukraine, the UK, western France and plenty from closer to home in Switzerland, Italy and Austria.

New kit and ultralight aircraft make their debut at Tannkosh, just as they do at AirVenture. I spotted the new Czech-built Lancair 'clone', the Karel Klenor VL.3 a two-seat, Rotax 912S-powered composite VLA and kit aircraft supplied by German agents Euregio Aircraft. The diminutive Airbike was on display with Ossian Vogel's Germany-based company, which has re-purchased the rights to the Airbike from former US owners. With a 60hp engine, two straddle the Airbike fuselage the same as one mounts a bicycle – you solo from the front seat. Peak Aerospace GmbH



displayed its 80 percent sport scale single-seat Messerschmitt Me109, designed in the late 1980's by Tassilo Bek. Rights to the design were acquired by Peak Aerospace at Pasewalk in Germany, which has sold a dozen kits, with eight now flying, six in Germany, one in Paraguay and one in the Ukraine. The Peak Me109 is mainly composite, has a Rotax 582 engine and three-blade Warp Drive prop and retractable tailwheel undercarriage. The German agent for the Zlin Savage had an encampment around a Red Indian-style tepee, but it was their stylish new Savage Cruiser that held most visitors' attention. A Quad Bike with a wing, described as an all-terrain aircraft, from Hegger-Dynamics, (www.hegger-dynamics.com) and a P&W R-1800 powered tractor (it didn't fly but ploughed well) also



Now built in Germany, the diminutive Tandem Airbike - you mount it like a bicycle



Pratt & Whitney powered tractor



1929 Curtiss Robin J-1 (left) and the Hegger Dynamics all terrain aircraft (less wing)



caught my eye.

Star amongst the Warbirds and classics was Czech Ride a rare Yak-3U owned and flown by Walter P. Maisch, fitted with a 14-cylinder Pratt & Whitney R-2000-7M2 similar that used in the DC-4 and C-54 four-engine transports and based with several other Yaks at Freiburg. It started life as a Yak-11, originally built in 1953 but during the 1990s metamorphosed into its present form. (Original Yak-3s date from 1943.)

The oldest aeroplane at Tannkosh was a Curtiss Robin J-1 flown by Uschi and Gnter Kälber from nearby Immerstaad. It was built in 1929 and imported to Germany from Minnesota in 2005. As this is Germany there were plenty of Dornier Do.27's, Jungmann

biplanes and FW.149s. One rare visitor was a Czechoslovakian-built, 2-seat Orlican Sokol M.1 dating from the late 1940s. With Harvards, Stearman biplanes, Pilatus P.2 and P.3's, a French Broussard, an ex-British-based Stinson L-5C and even a Hungarian-registered Scottish Aviation Bulldog, there was an eclectic mixture of aircraft. And you can add to this the many and various motor-gliders that flew in; Germans and Austrians love them.

Tannkosh is what a fly-in should be like. Even heavy rain on Saturday night failed to dampen enthusiasm and everyone I met praised the seamless organisation. Next year's Tannkosh will be 18-20 July. For more information go to www.tannkosh.com