



Bell 505 Testimonial Captain Rodrigo Duarte





TELL US ABOUT YOUR BACKGROUND?

“WE BOTH WANTED TO OWN ONE AND NOW WE’VE REALIZED THAT DREAM”

I started flying in 1999 and went on to get my commercial license in 2002. I fly both fixed wing and rotary wing for VIP and private operations. I started to fly professionally in Sao Paulo, Brazil and flew for many companies, eventually becoming chief pilot for a bank. I am very experienced in the Bell fleet, from the Jet Ranger and Long Ranger to the 407. My uncle actually owns a 407, that I fly for him.

I co-own the Bell 505 with my friend of more than 25 years. He opened a grocery store behind the building I lived in and, since the very first day he opened the store, we became very good friends. We’re not in business together, but we flew together a lot in the past. I knew his dream was to own and fly a helicopter. We both wanted to own one and now we’ve made that dream a reality.

WHY ARE HELICOPTERS THE RIGHT TOOL FOR THE JOB?

“A HELICOPTER IS THE BEST ASSET IF YOU HAVE TO FLY UP TO TWO HOURS DURATION...YOU’RE ABLE TO LAND A LOT CLOSER TO YOUR LOCATION, IT JUST MAKES MORE SENSE”

We fly for fun and some business. Here in Brazil, we like to meet to have some coffee and discuss business in person instead of over the phone or video call. A helicopter, for me, is the best asset if you’re flying two hours duration. This is especially true in Sao Paulo, which is the heart of Brazil. From Sao Paulo you are close to a lot of places that really matter for business; Rio de Janeiro, Belo Horizonte, Ribeirao Preto, Florianopolis, and San Jose do Rio Preto for example. At two hours, a helicopter may be a slightly more expensive solution, but after going to the airport to get your plane, board, taxi, do all your procedures, land, taxi, shut down, get a car, and get to your meeting, a helicopter is much faster because you’re able to land a lot closer to your location. It just makes more sense. In Sao Paulo, we have over 180 helipads in the city that we can use. We’re also allowed to land in open fields much like in the United States.





WHAT FEATURES ATTRACTED YOU TO THE BELL 505?

“MY INITIAL CONCERN WAS THAT I’M A PROFESSIONAL PILOT, BUT MY OWNERSHIP PARTNER FLIES RECREATIONALLY...WITH THE 505 THOUGH, I DON’T NEED TO BE CONCERNED BECAUSE ITS POWERFUL, EASY TO MANAGE, IMPOSSIBLE TO BURN UP THE ENGINE. WE ALSO HAVE A LOT OF FEATURES IN THE GARMIN G1000H THAT HELP HIM FLY SAFE”

Our Bell 505 has almost 200 hours since we received it in 2018. I was one of the first, if not the first person to sign a PA for the 505 and the first corporate operator to take delivery of the aircraft. At HAI 2014 in Anaheim, during the 505 unveiling, I knew I needed the aircraft. As soon as I saw the helicopter and saw the Garmin G1000H, the Long Ranger transmission, and the great offering from Safran I called my partner and said “We’re going to buy this helicopter.” He agreed right away and we signed a LOI there at the show. I made my decision very fast because the helicopter made sense. I had Long Ranger experience and knew how reliable the transmission and blades were carrying the weight of a Bell 206L4. With the same blades carrying the lighter 505, and a new engine delivering more power than the Jet Ranger, I knew I wanted it.

We made our first flight in 2017, at HAI in Dallas, and felt how powerful the helicopter was. The Garmin G1000H took a little while to learn. I was a little lost at first, but the main thing I remember is the power departing with full passengers and fuel was very good. There’s an urban legend that the helicopter is weak or that it doesn’t fly with a lot of weight. When I’ve demoed people in the aircraft, I make sure to put full gross weight in and pull the collective up to the green line and take off vertically. I’ll ask people if they’re happy with that and they’ll say “Oh yes its very powerful”. Then, I’ll put the power into the yellow and start climbing at 1500 ft/min they always react by saying “This is insane!”

Trying to compare to a manually controlled engine, there’s really nothing to compare. My initial concern was that I’m a professional pilot, but my ownership partner flies recreationally. Of course he wants to fly it alone. With the 505 though, I don’t need to be concerned because its powerful, easy to manage, and nearly impossible to burn up the engine. We also have a lot of features in the Garmin G1000H that help him fly safe. The FADEC gives us a lot of good functionality to help pilots pay attention to flying the aircraft and not worry about operations inside the cockpit.



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WHAT'S IT LIKE WORKING WITH BELL?

“WORKING WITH BELL HAS BEEN A VERY GOOD EXPERIENCE. IN THE END, WE TRUST BELL”

Working with Bell has been a very good experience. We have plenty of service centers, training opportunities, tech reps, and service reps. We've had Bell aircraft in our family for a long time, from the Jet Ranger and the Long Ranger, to the 407. We trust Bell, we always bring our problems directly to the Bell representatives. Sometimes we get answers we like and sometimes we don't, but in the end we trust Bell.

