



# **Bell 505 Testimonial**

## **David Sprague**





**Interview with David Sprague**  
Bell 505 Pilot and Owner

## **TELL US ABOUT YOUR BACKGROUND AND WHY YOU FLY HELICOPTERS?**

One of the things that makes Vancouver such a great place to live is that it is basically on the edge of civilization. In 20 minutes of flight time, we can be in absolute wilderness in largely in-accessible locations. I've lived here all my life and started off adventuring in high school where it was all about four wheeling into the bush. That was a good way to get in, but there is so much you just can't get to. Later on, a friend of mine had a well-equipped turboprop airplane and we spent lots of time exploring for dubious airstrips and interesting places to visit. I learned that to get deeper, into the really good places, you need a helicopter.

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**“LATER ON, A FRIEND OF MINE HAD A WELL-EQUIPPED TURBOPROP AIRPLANE AND WE SPENT LOTS OF TIME EXPLORING FOR DUBIOUS AIRSTRIPS...TO GET DEEPER, INTO THE REALLY GOOD PLACES, YOU NEED A HELICOPTER”**

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I went up for a flight with a workmate and that's when helicopters sunk their hooks in me. This led to enrolling in flight school and that was that. It took just over a year to get my commercial license at Chinook Helicopters. Of course, I then thought “I finished flight school, now what do I do?”

I started off buying a Bell 206, which is what I trained on at Chinook. I gained some hours and experience and was introduced to another pilot who shared a similar story and aspirations. He's a physician, loves flying and is a great companion. We became ownership partners in the Bell 206 and did that for a while, gaining more experience and having lots of fun. We then made the “mistake” of saying yes to a demo flight on the Bell 505. We had learned the limits of the Bell 206, from the standpoint of what our mission was, and what we wanted to do. The flight was amazing. We realized the Bell 505 was the perfect machine for us and we ended up ordering one.

## **WHAT FEATURES ATTRACTED YOU TO THE BELL 505?**

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**“SAFETY IS OUR NUMBER ONE PRIORITY, ESPECIALLY WITH FAMILY OFTEN ALONG FOR THE RIDE. THE 505 HAS AN INCREDIBLY PROVEN ROTOR SYSTEM. ADD A GREAT ENGINE, MODERN AVIATION INSTRUMENTATION AND MODERN ENGINEERING; IT'S AN AIRCRAFT YOU CAN HAVE A LOT OF CONFIDENCE IN”**

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Safety is our number one priority, especially with family often along for the ride. The 505 has an incredibly proven rotor system. Add a great engine, modern aviation instrumentation and modern engineering; it's an aircraft you can have a lot of confidence in. In the air, the Bell 505 is a super stable platform with great power reserves and nice handling characteristics.

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The Power Situation Indicator (PSI) is fantastic because we do lots of confined landings, so you're busy. One of the handiest instruments is the wind indicator. We find that, when we're coming into an area that we're not familiar with, it's always great to know what's going on with the winds at our altitudes before we slow down.

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**“MANY OF THE PLACES WE’RE GOING ARE HARD TO REACH AND, IF THERE IS A BREAKDOWN, WE’RE STUCK FOR A WHILE. WE HAVE CONFIDENCE IN THIS MACHINE TO GET US IN AND OUT OF HELI-FISHING, HELI-HIKING, HELI-SWIMMING ADVENTURES WITH THE KIDS AS WELL AS CAMPING TRIPS AND EXPLORATIONS THROUGHOUT THE COAST MOUNTAINS”**

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Many of the places we're going are hard to reach and, if there is a breakdown, we're stuck for a while. We have confidence in this machine to get us in and out of heli-fishing, heli-hiking, heli-swimming adventures with the kids as well as camping trips and explorations throughout the Coast Mountains. We always have a couple of fishing rods or outdoor gear in the back. It's got lots of room, and lots of flexibility. We live in an amazing place to be able to do this sort of thing. It's a privilege.

The biggest difference is that, in the Bell 206, you're always near the power limits. In the Bell 505, with full fuel and full passengers we can still vertically take off at a thousand feet per minute or more. There's lots of power reserves. And we don't have to worry about Loss of Tail-Rotor Effectiveness

(LTE) as much. We have the ability to keep safe, whereas in a less powerful aircraft, perhaps on a hot day and at high altitude, you're challenged. Inside the 505 is much more friendly than the 206, with the cockpit being one big area without the divider in the middle. In the 206, pilot and passenger interaction isn't that great. In the 505, it's almost like stadium seating, everybody's part of the same thing. It's a much more fun place to be.

The emergencies are not very exciting, which is what you want of course. With hydraulic failures, it's still pretty easy to fly. During autorotation's, it just seems to float down. It's just very flyable.



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We're completely sold on the 505. For what we do it's just a great machine. Even when we're flying at max gross weight, we still have a healthy performance and power margin. We're able to do an out of ground effect hover at gross weight, in the summer, at 6,000 feet over mountain peaks. What other machine in its class can you do that with confidence?

I think the word is getting out now about the 505.

Why would anyone buy another helicopter in this class? For a bit more money, pilots can get a lot more machine with a comfortable cockpit, superior performance and much more solid, reliable flight characteristics.

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## "WHY WOULD ANYONE BUY ANOTHER HELICOPTER IN THIS CLASS?"

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### WHAT'S IT LIKE TO WORK WITH BELL?



The Bell experience has been excellent. You quickly realize you are dealing with pro's. From the sales process to delivery to after sales support. We've had a couple of warranty issues and they have been dealt with without any questions; expedited right away. Bell knows how to do it properly.