



Bell 505 Testimonial Mountainflyers





Interview with Christoph Graf

Pilot, Flight Instructor, and CEO of Mountainflyers

TELL US ABOUT YOUR BACKGROUND AND THE COMPANY'S BACKGROUND?

"Mountainflyers has been in the industry for 40 years. We started in 1980 as a small flight school with the Bell 47. We haven't really changed the concept much, training has always been the core of the business and now also sightseeing, film flights, and VIP taxi flights."

WHY ARE HELICOPTERS THE RIGHT TOOL FOR THE JOB?

"ESPECIALLY IN SWITZERLAND, WITH ALL THE MOUNTAINS, A HELICOPTER IS MUCH MORE SPECTACULAR TO FLY FOR A TOUR THAN A PLANE"

"Especially in Switzerland, with all the mountains, a helicopter is much more spectacular to fly for a tour than a plane. You can land anywhere. You have many high-altitude landing zones and, when we do sightseeing flights, we can land at places around 10,000 ft or 13,000 ft, head to a mountain hut, and bring drinks and food to provide much more of an experience than with an airplane. Some of our flights stop for 45 minutes on a glacier. We land either in the snow in the winter or, in the summer, we take off at 30°C and land up in the mountains where it is 5°C and enjoy this high-altitude environment in the middle of the mountains."





WHAT FEATURES ATTRACTED YOU TO THE BELL 505?

“THE 505 IS MUCH MORE HELICOPTER THAN THE COMPETITOR SHORT LIGHT SINGLE WE’RE FLYING. EVERYTHING IS BETTER FOR THE PASSENGERS AND THE TRAINEES ON THE 505 THAN OUR PAST OFFERINGS”

“When we decided to build our second base in Grenchen, we had to decide if we were going to change types. We had some competitor products and were looking at buying a second one of that to keep a common fleet. We had to decide if we were going to buy a 505 and changeover our entire flight because it gets expensive to operate many different types.

The first time we saw the 505 was at a Heli-Expo 2014, before it was certified. We weren’t sure when it would be certified, so we ended up ordering a competitor product. The 505 is much more helicopter than the competitor short light single we’re flying. It’s a much newer cockpit and, with our training operation, you need a simple system that everybody can use without a big risk of going beyond the engine limits during startup. Considering all this information, we decided to get two 505s.

I finished my type rating two weeks ago and I was very surprised by the experience. The aircraft is performing even better than I expected. We did a bunch of landings up to 13,800 feet at ISA+10 and the performance has been incredible. We’re getting exactly what we needed. With other aircraft you have to fly very smoothly and be forward thinking with your landings, as RPM management can be difficult at high altitudes. With the 505, it’s much easier to manage the power and RPM with the dual channel FADEC.





“WITH THE 505, SIGHTSEEING PASSENGERS FIT NICELY AND ENJOY GREAT FRONT AND SIDE VISIBILITY. THE PASSENGERS WILL HAVE MUCH MORE COMFORT AND BETTER VIEWS FOR THE MONEY THEY’RE PAYING”

Everything is better for the passengers and the trainees on the 505 than our past offerings. When you calculate everything, the 505 is a little bit more expensive in operation, but it’s much more helicopter; you can’t exactly compare. The visibility for the passenger is much better; it’s another level of helicopter. With the 505, sightseeing passengers fit nicely and enjoy great front and the side visibility. The passengers will have much more comfort and better views for the money they’re paying. The important thing is we expect to be able to fly more with the stability of the aircraft in wind. When flying lighter aircraft, you must be careful in wind with a two bladed rotor. The rotor system in the 505 is much better in these situations and can perform flights in more wind with the pilots and the passengers feeling comfortable.





“ALL OF OUR FLIGHT INSTRUCTORS, FROM 800 HOURS UP TO 9000 HOURS OF EXPERIENCE, AGREE THAT THE 505 IS A GREAT TRAINING HELICOPTER”

All our flight instructors, from 800 hours up to 9000 hours of experience, agree that 505 is a great training helicopter. It's perfect for sightseeing and gives us the performance like some of the larger single engine helicopters we have experience with, but at a much better cost. The dual channel FADEC reduces the risk and stress with the engine start. With the glass cockpit, while training private pilots with very little experience, I feel the workload will be much easier for all pilots versus an analog system. The ability for the 505 to hold RPM settings and show the power settings using the Power Situation Indicator will make training easier. We currently have 35 pilots that want to do the transition training on the 505 in the next two to three months. It's going to be quite busy. We've made a special ground course for the Garmin G1000 as most of our pilots are not experienced with Garmin yet. We're creating demonstration videos for a distance learning platform where students can download the videos and interactive learning content to become comfortable with the usage of the avionics before the class begins.

We also plan to install a nose mounted camera on the forward hard point soon for film missions.



WHAT'S IT LIKE TO WORK WITH BELL?

“The CAP and 5Star program make it very easy to calculate what we'll be paying for maintenance. We don't have to worry about any surprises so we will know better what we're earning at the end of the day.

We got everything on time, we got all the information we needed, and everyone we've talked to has been very friendly. Whenever we've requested something, we got answers quickly, which isn't always normal in this business. The whole sales process and the integration has been very good and we're very excited to get these helicopters.”