

Extra 300S

AFTER YEARS OF DOING ITS OWN THING MULTIPLEX HAS FINALLY COPIED A DESIGN – AND ABOUT TIME TOO, SAYS GRAHAM ASHBY

Intermediate pilots will find this model a real joy to fly and will surely revel in the abundance of power that's available.

It has to be said, I'm not a 3D flyer in any way, shape or form. In fact, if I were given an ultimatum and had to choose a flying style that I most enjoyed, then scale would be where I'd settle, although if I were allowed to diversify very slightly, graceful scale aerobatics would feature high on my wish list. It's fair to say that if I'd wanted to fly 3D at any time in the past, little (save, perhaps, a natural ability) would have stood in my way. Thus far, however, I've chosen not to do it, and so one can only conclude that the will hasn't been there... And one would be right! Oddly, however, there's been a marked shift in my thinking just recently, to the point that I've found myself looking a little more favourably on 'bridge aerobats', i.e. those that span the two camps and offer the chance to fly both conventional aerobatics and 3D.

Why the sudden desire to embrace all this three dimensional cavorting about? Hmm, that's not so easy to answer, although after a bit of soul searching I'll confide that it has more than a little to do with a wish to improve my flying. Mind you, this is not, as you might think, a realisation of deteriorating standards following a period of inactivity on the sticks. Far from it. In fact, this year, my personal view is that my flying may even have improved very slightly. You see, courtesy of my ARTF Acro Wot, which I've been using as a foul weather hack (we've had lots of foul weather!) I've been making a concerted effort to practice new manoeuvres and step beyond my comfort zone. It's clearly been working for not only has my humble repertoire expanded, my enthusiasm for aerobatics has been awakened and I now find myself wanting more! In an attempt, then, to defend that hard-fought ground this coming winter, I'm keen to keep pushing my personal envelope and, darn it, to have a tentative stab at some 3D in the hope that my general levels of confidence and ability will continue to improve. Sound feasible? Well, I hope so because that's precisely the reason for



snatching this capable-looking new aerobat from the outstretched arms of Messrs J. Perkins, the new UK Multiplex distributor.

PIPING HOT

My affiliation with Multiplex foam models goes right back to 1997 when the company took its first very tentative step into the world of EPS foam with the introduction of the aptly-named Smiley (Google it and you'll do just that), a half foam / half

ABS, pseudo Action Man microlight that, to all intents and purposes, tested the water (and the wing) for the hugely popular TwinStar, which followed shortly after. Anyway, things have clearly moved on but, significantly, in all the years that followed, Multiplex never once ventured to produce a semi-scale foamie. That is, until now! So, its Extra 300 is a bit of a radical step for the company albeit, in my opinion, a welcome one. You see,



good as some of the recent Multiplex models have been, not all have hit the mark, either in terms of performance or, indeed, appearance. An Extra 300S is an altogether different kettle of fish, especially when presented with the crisp attention to detail that we've come to expect from the German manufacturer. Sure enough, a careful browse of this model confirms that it's not a cheap Chinese take-away but a quality one, delivered piping

hot, in perfect condition and, get this, complete with complementary prawn crackers in the form of rivets, exhausts and other scale details! Yummy... Actually, I'm not joking, I was genuinely impressed with the overall quality of this model and noted, with some glee, the following desirable features:

- Scale 3-blade prop and spinner.
- Tough (thick) plastic wheel spats.
- Rigid dural undercarriage

The three blade prop is great but I'm afraid the spinner is cheap and unbalanced.

- complete with moulded scale fairing detail.
- Symmetrical wing section.
- A neat paint job with crisp lines and detailing.
- A crystal clear canopy that's cleanly fitted with a neat cockpit interior and instrument panel.
- Shrouded leading edges on all control surfaces.
- Steerable tail wheel.
- Convenient battery access via a large top hatch.

From the beautifully contoured cowl at the front, to the balanced elevator and rudder at the back, this is every bit an Extra 300S that, save a few minor details, is a pleasingly passable copy of a German registered full-size 300L. We won't split hairs or dwell on the deviations from scale for there's little point. The model looks the part, is undeniably pretty and, to be honest, that's all that really matters for a foamie in this category.

It's odd how Multiplex has gone to all the trouble of providing an instrument panel, seat back and tasteful grey interior, then left the most important bit out – the pilot!

What do we get for our money? Well, everything except a receiver and Li-Po, a package that Multiplex long ago designated 'RR' (Ready to Run).



PRE-FLIGHT

Having paid a modest premium for our pre-installed motor, speed controller and servos, putting the RR Extra together is not a process you'll find tricky. Give yourself an hour with a screwdriver and a tube of threadlock

There's nothing flimsy about these spats. If they break it'll be from abuse.



(no glue necessary) and before you know it you'll have built the thing and will be sizing up suitable battery packs. Now, given that I'd already got four or five 4s 4200mAh Li-Pos lying around, I genuinely thought I'd got it made, but no. The Extra is designed around a 4s 2600mAh pack and anything larger is unlikely to fit – that is, without some intrusive hackery of the battery bay. I wasn't about to dirty my hands with such modifications and so popped out and bought myself a pair of 4-Max 2600mAh chaps, which fit the slot very comfortably. Mind you, changing the accursed battery connections to my adopted 4mm gold 'standard' wasn't a quick job by any stretch of the imagination and by the time I'd fiddled and fuffed with soldering irons, flux, helping-hands and heat-shrink tubing, a good hour or two had passed. Sorry, but I really do detest soldering!

So, having assembled the airframe, installed the receiver, fitted the battery and set the whole thing up according to the typically precise and unambiguous instruction manual, there were just two details that stood out as a small blot on this latest Multiplex' landscape. The first was that the cheap plastic spinner doesn't spin concentrically about the motor shaft and is, therefore, quite noticeably out of balance. Trouble is, what to do? I mused over this issue for a good few minutes before deciding that in the interests of testing the supplied package, my best course of action would be to pretend I hadn't noticed it, but definitely not to stand in front of the model with the motor powered up! The second issue centres around a slightly warped rudder which, when viewed from behind, curves in a gentle left-hand arc from top to bottom. Only a keen eye will spot this, but warped it most definitely is. The cure? Not sure, since it has more to do with an out of kilter hinge fixing than simply a bent control surface. Again, I chose to suck it and see.

For the first flight I set the control throws, exponential settings and C of G to that recommended for 'classic

aerobatics' (my favourite). I also had a crafty look at the power output and recorded 650 watts (drawing 42 amps peak), which equates to a sparkling 200 watts per lb. That really is a healthy dose of power and one that suggested I may yet get the semi-scale crossover aerobat I've been looking for.

EXTRA SPARKLE!

Off to the patch I went, then, Extra 300 and two fully charged packs in tow.

As I've said numerous times in the past, for me a flight starts not when the model leaves the ground but during the taxiing phase. Ground handling is important and if the Extra was to remain in my fleet it would have to pass this crucial part of the test. Fortunately, it did and although the small wheels and spats dictate the need for a relatively decent surface, you'll find the model responsive and easy to manoeuvre. There's no tendency to nose over either so you can confidently stand in the pilot box and taxi to the holding point, safe in the knowledge that she'll get there without tripping up.

When the time comes to get airborne, such is the power available I can only describe the acceleration as brisk, to the point that you'll probably want to regulate your use of throttle, especially if you wish to perform anything like a scale take-off. Similarly, once airborne an abundance of power is a wonderfully refreshing characteristic but one that requires a deft throttle thumb if a flight is to appear unhurried and controlled. This being the case, three-quarter throttle seemed to get her away in a dignified full-size fashion and helped set the pace for the flight. To be honest I felt at ease with this model the moment the wheels left the ground for at no point does it give the impression of being heavy, sluggish or ready to bite.

Delightfully light on the sticks the controls feel nicely harmonised and provide a crisp, precise response. I found that I needed a small amount of down elevator to arrest an excessive climb rate under power, indeed having now flown the model a number of times, I'll be introducing a modicum of down thrust to compensate. That aside, she's a peach in the circuit and pretty forgiving, although if you push hard enough you can encourage her to stall and drop a wing. Recovery, given height, is swift and trouble free.

Now, although one of my favourite manoeuvres is a sizable warbird-style loop, I'm afraid I have very few aircraft



Last time I looked the full-size Extra 300L that carries this colour scheme and registration was, in fact, embellished with large Multiplex wing stickers!



that can effortlessly reach the altitude I desire. The Extra, however, will! To me its power seems almost limitless and I don't mind telling you I genuinely smiled when I realised how unrestricted my aerobatics could now become. This excess of power delights in other ways, too. Knife-edge, for example, seems equally effortless and rather than having to use full power

and full rudder to hold the line, I now find myself backing off a bit. That's a first for me. As I explore the Extra's characteristics further I'm convinced that this new-found power-to-weight will spoil me but, significantly, it's clearly what's needed before any attempt is made at practicing 3D.

Rolling manoeuvres on the 'classic aerobat' settings are just what you'd

I bought a pair of 2600mAh 4s Purple Power packs from 4-Max and they're absolutely ideal.

Four pre-fitted Multiplex MS-13020 servos do the pushing and pulling. They're new and details are pretty scarce but I reckon they're analogue units. Mind you, there's nowt wrong with that, and besides, there's absolutely no 'play' in them.

Is it worth the money? Certainly, but only if you're confident (and competent) enough to treat it properly and not bounce it down the runway.



expect, responsive yet not at all twitchy. In fact, if anything, I'll be increasing the aileron travel very slightly to make her a little snappier.

If you've got 'previous' on an aileron low winger, you'll have no trouble with the Extra 300.

Inverted flight is what you'd expect; as easy as flying the right way up, save a small amount of down elevator. Spins, flicks and tumbles can all be nicely executed and anything conventional, such as bunts,



Small details make a big difference when you're paying the best part of £200 for a foam aerobat.

Cubans and stall turns seem, somehow, much easier to fly than with my faithful old AcroWot. One manoeuvre I've been practicing of late is a slow single roll from one end of the patch to the other. The AcroWot does this rather nicely but the workload (for me at least) is definitely greater than it is with the Extra, leading me to conclude that this model is guaranteed to make you look good. I'll not argue with that!

Landing is a non event although do bear in mind that you'll need to use power all the way in. Due to the low weight and, thus, inertia, the Extra not a cut and glide machine, particularly in a breeze. Fly her all the way to the deck remembering that she does have teeth, albeit a small set, and will give you a nip if you provide enough provocation. Overconfidence encouraged me to dragged her in on a later flight and stall she did, but only at the very last minute as the wheels

hovered just inches above the patch – arguably a perfect landing!

By the way, for what amounts to relatively gentle aerobatics I've been achieving flight times of seven or eight minutes and landing with power to spare. To my mind that's very respectable for a humble 2600mAh pack, although, clearly, I'll need to adjust my thinking when I start to investigate the model's 3D ability.

HAPPY FUTURE

I'd like to think that me and my Extra are destined to have a long and happy future together. With the exception of the pilotless office, the warped rudder and the unbalanced spinner I like pretty much everything about this aeroplane and I just adore the power that's on tap. With my penchant for scale aerobatics coupled with my desire to practice some 3D flying, this, to all intents and purposes, is my ideal 'bridge aerobat'. Stay tuned and I'll let you know how I get on as and when I start hanging about on the prop.

DATAFILE

Name:	Extra 300S
Model type:	Semi-scale aerobat
Manufactured by:	Multiplex GmbH
UK distributor:	J. Perkins Distribution Tel. 01622 854300 www.jperkinsdistribution.co.uk
RRP:	£189.99
Wingspan:	1200mm (47")
Fuselage length:	1086mm (43")
Wing area:	2.7sq. ft.
All-up weight:	3 lb 4oz (1450g)
Wing loading:	19oz / sq. ft.
Functions (servos):	Aileron (2); elevator (1); rudder (1); throttle (via ESC)
Powertrain:	Permax BL-O 3720-0630 brushless outrunner; MULTicont BL-50 (50A) speed controller; 12 x 8" three-blade propeller
Rec'd battery:	4s 2600mAh Li-Po
Quality:	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Acceptable <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent
Assembly:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Easy <input type="checkbox"/> Intermediate <input type="checkbox"/> Difficult
Flying:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Novice <input type="checkbox"/> Improver <input type="checkbox"/> Experienced

...the controls feel nicely harmonised and provide a crisp, precise response

