

LSA AMPHIBIAN COMPARISONS

Caveat: Most of the negatives listed below are more in the line of observations rather than “deal breakers”. All of these aircraft have pluses and minuses and like all planes each is a compromise in one form or the other.....and of course, these are just my opinions.

SUPER PETREL

Pros:

quiet cabin, simple systems/Johnson bar, won’t flip, easy to fly, gear warning system, auto pilot is standard

Cons:

doors - need to be open for ventilation on the ground but in windy conditions the doors can slam shut - for single pilot operations the right side door would need to be kept shut to avoid slamming thus reducing ventilation while on the ground;
no parking brake, water ballast, fuel system overly complicated, need to balance fuel, differential brakes for steering

Additional thoughts:

Factory in business for 15 or so years with 350 flying world wide gives the Super Petrel a viable track record.

As a CFI with over a thousand hours in light sport amphibians I found the Super Petrel a delight to fly having simple systems, light well balanced controls with no bad habits on either land or water.

SEAMAX

Pros:

easy to fly, very easy to get in and out of, won't flip, center stick is not in the way for either pilot

Cons:

must remove cowling to check oil, no gear warning system, need to balance fuel, differential brakes for steering, when canopy is left open for ventilation on the ground it can slam shut in high winds

Additional thoughts:

The factory has been in and out of business over the last 10 years or so and the US dealerships have been equally unstable.

Even though the airplane flies very well my negative experience with the poorly built fuel tanks and a delamination of the fiberglass hull makes me uncomfortable recommending this airplane until these issues are resolved.

SEAREY

Pros:

sliding windows for ventilation that can't slam shut in high winds, tail wheel steering, easy to check oil, gear warning system, no need for balancing fuel

Cons:

will flip, more critical on energy management making it slightly harder to land on land or water, older less esthetically appealing design

Additional thoughts:

The factory has been in business over 25 years and is an American company. They have hundreds flying. This aircraft is over built and despite it being a little harder to fly I find the plane one of the best of the group.

ICON

Pros:

easy folding wing system, great looking, won't flip

Cons:

much too expensive, under powered, sports car instrument panel, no gear warning system, differential braking for steering, doors aren't conducive to good ventilation while taxiing, no parking brake

Additional thoughts:

The aircraft flies ok but nothing stands out as particularly special about it.

I think the price of this aircraft is ridiculous compared to its competition especially in light of the lack of a factory track record and the overly restrictive contractual covenants that are required to even purchase it. I don't consider the Icon a serious contender in the LSA amphib category.



Jay Cutler