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Flight

CANADIAN OWNERS AND PILOTS ASSOCIATION

MARCH 2015

Winter-tacular!



C-FAKA taking off on the Ottawa River. It was the 25th Challengers Winter Rendez-Vous at the Château Montebello but obviously there was more than ultralights on the ice as this Antonov An-2 made its first appearance on skis at a fly-in.

Photo courtesy Jean-Pierre Bonin



Quarter century worth of Challenger winter fun

Challengers can be equipped with straight skis, penetration wheelskis or retractable wheelskis. This one has the go-anywhere retracts.

Photo courtesy Bill Fawcett

25th Annual Rendezvous once again held at Challengers' winter home, Montebello

By Bryan Quickmire

A quarter century ago, on a frigid winter weekend, a handful of Challenger owners flew and another handful drove to a small cabin in

the Laurentian Mountains north of Montreal. The agenda called for socializing, spaghetti and sleepover. Thus the Challenger Winter Rendezvous was born!

From that modest beginning in 1991 the Challenger Winter Rendezvous has been held, sunshine or snowstorm, every



At left: Every year the indefatigable husband/wife team of Claude Roy and Joan Armstrong take care of the myriad of logistical details required for such an event.

Photo courtesy Jean-Pierre Bonin



The award for Best Show Plane was won by Mike Prescott's C-11MPP which is aptly named Sea Imp and has the nose art to prove it! Photo courtesy Helene Lavigne

year for 25 years. It quickly outgrew the modest cabin and for many years now the venue has been Chateau Montebello, midway between Ottawa and Montreal. Chateau Montebello is, literally, the world's largest log cabin, and a five-star log cabin at that!

The Challenger Winter Rendezvous has long since evolved from a simple fly-in to a major happening which attracts people from all across Canada and the United States as well as from points as far away as Sri Lanka.

Attendees range from those with tens of thousands of hours logged in everything imaginable to those still in the hopefully someday soon stage. This diversity is part of the appeal of the Challenger community – the common thread tying all these people together is their shared passion.

2015 Synopsis

The 25th Annual Challenger Winter Rendezvous held Jan. 30-Feb. 1, was frigid like the first but fabulous neverthe-

less! Outside the sky was a blue only a winter sky can be. The sun shone strong. Winds were calm. The fresh white snow squeaked underfoot. The cold dense air was like breathing pure oxygen. Merveilleux!

The previous record of a hundred skiplanes remained intact as the -20C daytime and -30C nighttime temperatures incited many attendees to rush directly from their cabins to their cars to the chateau instead of flying! The hardy 40 aircraft which flew in rewarded their pilots with picture perfect conditions!

Inside the Chateau some 150 or so Challenger fans enjoyed the amazing ambiance. Everything worked without a hitch – seminars, exhibits, banquet, fireplace and bar, pool and hot tub.

Rendezvous Report

What sets the Challenger Winter Rendezvous apart from other winter aviation events in northern climes?

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See more photo coverage of the Challenger Winter Rendezvous on pages B-10 and B-11

Airplane art! Turning from base to final.

Photo courtesy Bill Fawcett

25-year Challenger Winter Rendezvous heats up Montebello

For starters it takes place at a world famous five-star resort with everything imaginable – from fine dining to a magnificent three-storey six-sided stone fireplace in the lobby. Indoors there is an Olympic-size pool and a full-service spa. Outdoors there is cross-country skiing, dog sledding and horse drawn sleigh rides.

Another differentiator from fly-ins is that the Challenger Rendezvous is a multi-day event running from Friday to Sunday, not a small feat in the depths of winter!

Overnight stays are possible in Challengers because their engines were designed from the outset for winter operation so they do not require preheating before starting. Typical airplane engines must have the oil preheated before starting which is not practical for recreational aviators away from home base.

Bush pilots in the olden days actually drained the oil from their planes and kept it in the tent overnight!

Yet another distinctive feature of the Challenger Winter Rendezvous is the full slate of activities indoors. There are five seminars on the Saturday. This year topics included digital flight planning and management; the care and feeding of Rotax engines; assembling the new Challenger Light Sport XL-65; documentation requirements for advanced ultralights and tips for survival in the bush.

During the breaks between seminars attendees enjoy coffee and juice on the mezzanine. There an exhibit area allows purveyors of products and services for the Challenger community to showcase their offerings.

The banquet on Saturday evening takes place in a private function room where attendees partake of the Chateau's fabulous buffet fare. During the meal a slideshow plays on the giant screen. This year it was only fitting that the show consisted of images of Montebellos past. After the meal introductions are made, those who flew in are lauded and awards are presented.

The Maurice Vinet Award was presented to John Baker and John Sutherland in recognition of their outstanding passion for flight. The Dave Allan Award was earned by Frank Hofmann for many years of service to the challenger community and to aviation at large.

Randy Shipclark received a special award given to Challenger maintainers who help keep planes in the air and thereby cure pilots of their fear of not flying!

This year the Farthest Flown award was won by Bob Kovacs and the Best Showplane was won by Mike Prescott.

To cap off the evening there is always an entertaining presentation, often of a long distance Challenger adventure. The 2015 piece de resistance was a music video by Kevin Brown, his third, recounting last summer's 3,500-kilometre Challenger Float Tour of the Gaspé Peninsula and the Maritime provinces.

Kevin has become a master of stitching together photos, videos, maps and music to entertain and inspire others to undertake their own aerial adventures. During the showing no one moved except to laugh or gasp!

Riverdrome

Throughout the weekend much aviating takes place on the frozen Ottawa River outside the chateau. On frigid days the faint of heart can watch through the Chateau's large picture windows as those of sturdier stock fly or mingle outside.

Three of the area's finest aviation photographers spent hours out on the river's ice runway capturing the action for posterity. Rendezvous regulars Jean-Pierre Bonin and Bill Fawcett were joined by first timer Helene Lavigne. Where mere mortals would quickly have had their shutter fingers frozen, these three fine photogs captured an amazing number of truly superb images!

Their photos attest to the comings and goings of the attending Challengers as well as the visiting classic aircraft.

Each year there is at least one rare and unusual aircraft. This year it was a huge yellow beast from the east. See if you can spot it in the pictures in these Flickr Photo Albums:

Bill Fawcett:

<http://tinyurl.com/icoa15w-Fawcett>

Jean-Pierre Bonin:

<http://tinyurl.com/icoa15w-Bonin>

Helene Lavigne:

<http://tinyurl.com/icoa15w-Lavigne>

Invitation

With as many as 100 skiplanes parked outside, as many as 200 people attending the banquet, plus countless day trippers, we feel it is fair to say the Challenger Winter Rendezvous has earned its place as the premier aviation event of the Canadian winter! It's not to be missed!

Join us next year at the 26th Annual Challenger Winter Rendezvous to be held January 29 to 31, 2016. Everyone is wel-

come – Challenger owners and fans as well as all aviation enthusiasts. Bring your family and friends too!

In the meantime, during 2015 there is a full slate of Challenger events across Canada. Dates and places of future events as well as reports, pictures and videos from past events can be found on the Challenger Canada website at <http://www.challenger.ca>.

The website also contains complete details on the Challenger Canada line of aircraft. National Ultralight Inc., the exclusive Canadian distributor, can be reached by email at challenger@challenger.ca or the old-fashioned way by phone: 705-721-9811.

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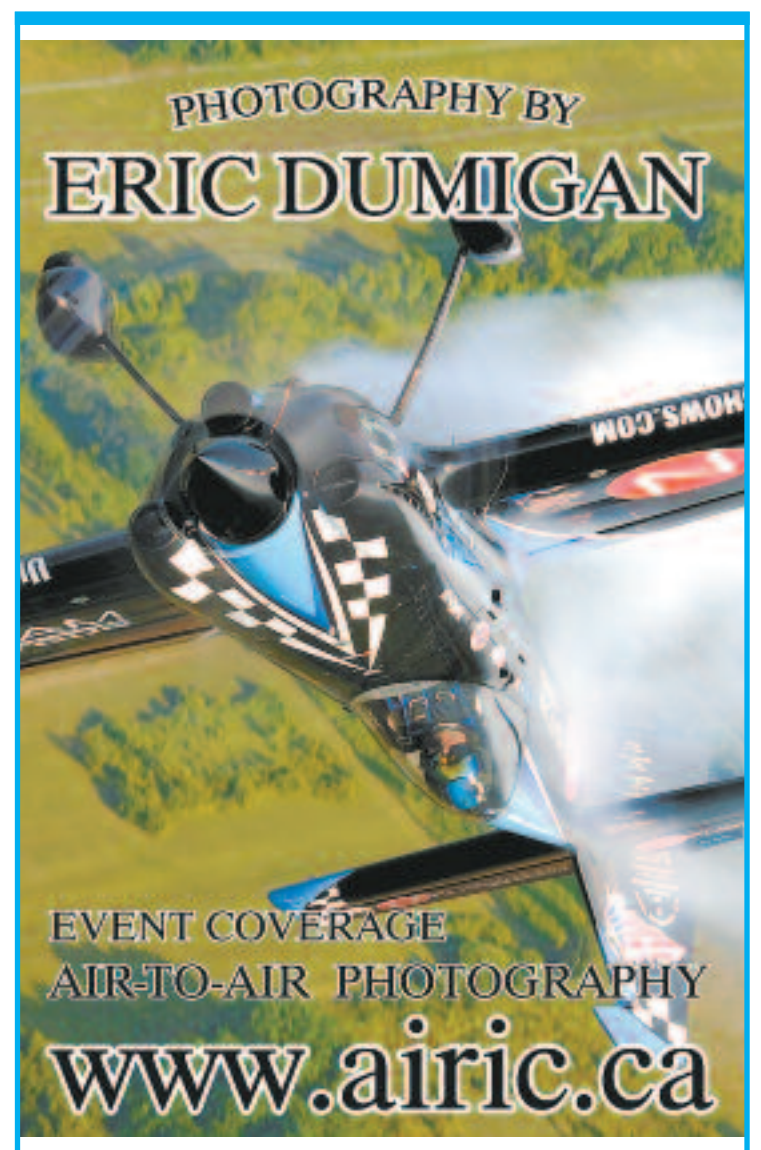
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Challengers park in the sheltered marina at the foot of the chateau. The finger docks make perfect tie-downs! Photo courtesy Jean-Pierre Bonin

Rendezvous: Picture-perfect winter wonderland



COPA V-P of Operations Patrick Gilligan arrives in his RV-8. Good thing his is a very rare ski-equipped RV-8 because there was way too much snow for wheel planes. Photo courtesy Jean-Pierre Bonin



Mike Mack
firewalls th
Photo cou



Photographers who braved the frigid temperatures were rewarded with superb images. Photo courtesy Bill Fawcett



Above:
The owner of this Challenger ultralight has a day job flying Challenger jets for Bombardier! Photo courtesy Bill Fawcett

At left:
The annual Challenger Winter Rendezvous posters are created by Dave O'Malley of Aerographics Ottawa. Dave is also an historian and webmaster at Vintage Wings.

This 582-powered



The arriving Challengers were greeted by fresh, unbroken snow! Photo courtesy Jean-Pierre Bonin



Visiting guest star Antonov An-2 is based near Montreal. An oil change for the 1000 h



Patrick Vinet, owner of Puddlejumper Floats, arrives from Mont-Tremblant. Photo courtesy Bill Fawcett



Neil... the throttle on the river runway. Photo courtesy Jean-Pierre Bonin



The sky was as blue as only a winter sky can be. Photo courtesy Jean-Pierre Bonin



Challenger leaves a rooster tail of snow on takeoff. Photo courtesy Bill Fawcett



...p engine requires 120 litres! Photo courtesy Bill Fawcett



Multi-coloured Challengers are always easy to spot against any background. Photo courtesy Bill Fawcett