

Whahey, this thing can shift!



The Dynamic WT9 with a 160hp Rotax 916iS is a rocketship, says **Dave Unwin**. Photos by **Keith Wilson**

ONE of the perennial problems with owning an aircraft is - where do you keep it? Unless the wings fold, you need some sort of hangar, and as airfields close and farm strips fade, hangarage is getting both difficult to find and expensive to pay for.

But what if you could find a field where the operators not only let you have hangarage for free, but even contribute significantly towards your running costs. Too good to be true? Read on!

When I tested a 100hp Aerospool WT9 Dynamic in 2018, I said to demo pilot Jonathan May: "I bet if you put a 140hp Rotax 915iS in this thing, it'd make an amazing tug!"

Well, Aerospool not only 'saw' my bet, it upped the ante by another 20hp and installed a 160hp 916iS, creating an aircraft I couldn't wait to get my hands on.

Experienced sailplane pilots like to say that there's no substitute for span, but for tug pilots, there's no substitute for

horsepower.

James Watt defined horsepower as work done over time, and in the tug pilot's world, the work is to tow the sailplane into the air in the time it takes to avoid hitting the trees at the end of the runway.

Would the latest version of the WT9 be as Dynamic as its name suggests? Only one way to find out: tow something with it!

Same, but different

Externally, the latest WT9 looks essentially the same as the Dynamic tested by David Bremner for December 2023 MF, with perhaps the biggest giveaway (apart from the huge 916 stencilled on the cowl-ing) the oversized exhaust.

To turn all those horses into thrust, the three-blade constant speed hydraulically-actuated Woodcomp propeller features scimitar-shaped blades.

More subtle differences are the lights around the circumference of the engine air inlets, the slightly larger tailplane, fin and rudder than on the earlier version, and of course the glider tow hook on the large tail bumper.

The wheels feature snug-fitting spats; in fact, possibly too snug, as it isn't easy to inspect the tyres, brake pads and discs with the spats in place. When aerotowing, I'd replace the spats with simple deflector plates mounted at 45° behind the wheels.

The cockpit is nicely laid out, and I of course intuitively looked for the tow rope release handle, as knowing its location can literally be the difference between life and death.

It's in the sub-panel below the centre of the instrument panel, which also carries the Vernier prop control, rotary fuel valve and a T-handle for the BRS.

I really think that the colour of a BRS actuating handle should be standardised as black and yellow stripes, the same as ▷

Top
Juraj and Dave try to squint a smile as the sun melts their retinas

Middle
Fixed gear or no fixed gear?

Bottom
It's got some pulling power, even with a hefty glider on tow

▷ for other powerful life-saving pyrotechnics, and preferably a hoop, the same as on an ejection seat. This is particularly pertinent on the Dynamic, as the T-handle for the tow rope release is in the same sub-panel.

The throttle and brake levers are both in the centre console, and somewhat surprisingly, bearing in mind how good most of the ergonomics are, are both topped by black T-handles.

What a tug!

For the first launch, Aerospool demo pilot Juraj Chudý and I tow a solo pilot in a Perkoz from the grass, and as soon as the throttle hits the stop, it's a revelation. What a tug!

The combination is airborne after a commendably short ground roll, and rockets straight up to 6,000ft.

The descent is easy to manage, as the fuel-injected air and liquid-cooled motor makes engine handling relatively simple, although I was somewhat surprised by the two rotary knobs that control the cowl flaps for the oil cooler and radiator, and couldn't help but feel this could be better handled by installing thermostats in the appropriate circuits.

The next tow is a Puchaz, and as we now have four pilots in the combination, I decide we'll go from the concrete, just to be safe. As it turns out, I needn't have worried, even though the wind has picked up and there's a blustery crosswind from port generating some curl-over from the trees south of the runway.

This tow goes to 2,500ft, then we take the Perkoz two-up to 3,000ft. This really is a great tug, and one facet I particularly approve of is that the large bubble canopy provides a fine field of view. This is very important for any tug, as on a busy day the sky around an airfield can be literally teeming with gliders, and they all expect the tug to give way.

Another feature the sweaty tug pilot will appreciate is that there is plenty of fresh air provided by the vents and DV panel scoops.

The very broad speed range is also very impressive. The aircraft is more than fast and powerful enough to tow high-performance two-seat sailplanes weighing up to 850kg, yet can fly slow enough to tow a vintage glider.

I'd really need a full day towing an array of gliders



WT9 DYNAMIC

Dimensions

Length: 6.72m
Height: 2.00m
Wingspan: 8.90m
Wing area: 10.50sq m

Weights & loadings

Empty weight: 385kg
Max takeoff weight: 600kg
Useful load: 215kg
Wing loading: 57.14kg/sq m (11.70lb/sq ft)
Power loading: 5.12kg/kw (8.26lb/hp)
Fuel capacity: 126 litres
Seating: two
Baggage capacity: 40kg

Performance

Vne: 181kts
Max cruise (TAS): 159kts
Stall (clean): 46kts
Stall (full flap): 37kts
Takeoff to 50ft: 185m
Land over 50ft: 527m
Climb rate: 1850fpm
Service ceiling: 15,000ft
Range: 600nm

Engine & propeller

Rotax 916iS air/liquid-cooled flat-four, producing 160hp at 5,800rpm driving a Woodcomp composite three-blade constant-speed prop.

Price (as tested)

€289,200 (£251,070 at time of writing), including VAT, plus delivery. The range starts with Rotax 912S and fixed-pitch prop at €180,000 (£156,000). Avionics and equipment depend on customer choice and are extra.

Manufacturer:
Aerospool sro, Prievidza, Slovakia

UK agent: LX Aviation. Phone: 07474 454583,
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website: lxaviation.co.uk.



to gather proper quantitative data, including timed tows to 4,000ft (for aerobatic competitions), turn-around times and fuel consumption on a typical 2,000ft tow, but from a qualitative perspective, I really liked it.

Handling in the circuit was as safe and predictable as every other aspect of the Dynamic's characteristics. Because of the crosswind, Juraj recommended only using 'Flap 2', and the slightly higher approach speed of 60kts ensured I retained plenty of control authority right into the flare.

As I'd suspected, on final it does feel slightly more speed-stable than previous Dynamics.

Finally, I jump into the Puchaz with CFI Graham Headey to experience the type from the other end of the rope.

For this final test, we have four in the combination, from grass, in a crosswind, but the acceleration is excellent, and we still clear the bales at the end of the runway by 400ft. It really is a fab tug, and would also be an equally impressive tourer.

To conclude, I've flown a lot of different tugs, and while I will always love Pawnees and do have a soft spot for Chipmunk Mk.23 *Bumblebunk*, the 916-powered Dynamic might just be the best tug I've ever flown.

It's also a fine tourer, so if you're in the market for a high-end microlight but don't have anywhere to hangar it, it just might be worth seeing if your local gliding club has space for a tug... □

Dave loved the instrument panel

