

PRISTINE AIRPLANES FEATURE

By Kathy Vogel

Not many people get to do for a living what they truly love. Throw in a heavy dose of integrity and a pile of pride in a job well-done-- and there's a successful formula. "There hasn't been one day in my life that I haven't gotten up and not wanted to go to work," said Matt Kozub, founder of Pristine Airplanes.

The company, headquartered at Harry Cleaver Field (PHD) in New Philadelphia, Ohio, is in the business of buying and refurbishing airplanes. Kozub's love affair with all things aviation sprang from early childhood.

"My whole aviation career started with Dad taking me to air shows. I was four or five," said Kozub, "It sparked the whole passion for airplanes. I started building model airplanes. The rest is history."

Dad, Hank, joined Matt in the business as it expanded. It's the ideal partnership on many levels.

"We've always had a great relationship (growing up) then I turned 16 and girls and cars came along," Kozub chuckled, "The last seven years or so, we've rekindled our bond from childhood. We've had our differences, but we never argue. It's great to work with someone you trust."

Trustworthiness is a key component to Pristine Airplanes' success. The Kozubs believe in customer satisfaction, and they work hard at what they do.

"It's like 'Flip This House' but we do airplanes," Kozub said, "We do it all-- the interior, the paint, engines, props, state-of-the-art avionics."

The company handles mid-70s to mid-80s planes, and refurbishes them to today's standards at an excellent price. For example, the company sold a Saratoga for \$200,000.

"Saving \$500,000 makes it an enticing purchase," Kozub said.

Kozub travels all over the country, hitting up trade shows, making offers and working the dealer network to find planes for his customers. He's on the hunt for a nice, clean, low-time plane with no corrosion, a complete log book, and no damage history.

"We are looking for a plane's structural integrity and its air worthiness," Kozub said.

Once the diamond-in-the-rough is found, the plane is brought to the shop and given a thorough inspection.

"Every nut and bolt is inspected and insured that they are 100% safe and air worthy," said Kozub, "We make sure everything works properly to maintenance specifications down to the last light bulb."

Then, it's on to the paint shop. It's stripped and re-painted with Sherwin Williams AcuGlow paint. All external hardware is repainted with stainless steel hardware.

The plane then returns to the shop for all new insides. Everything is stripped out, and the plane is examined for corrosion. If any is found, it's cleaned and treated. All new FAA-grade tinted glass is installed.

The old seat foam is replaced with foam that is conducive to lumbar and thigh support. Say goodbye to the side panels. Pristine Airplanes fabricates all new side panels. The hardware is new. Even the seatbelts. Nothing is old.

(Pristine Take 1)

“We re-web the seatbelts and color coordinate them to match the interior,” said Kozub. New carpeting is installed. The window trim plastic is removed, re-dyed or replaced to look like new.

The dash panel is refurbished, with the instrument panel inspected.

“For example, if the lenses on the dash are foggy, we send them out to the instrument shop and they make them like new,” said Kozub.

If the engine or propeller has more than 500 hours, the engine is overhauled by FAA repair station Signature Engines in Cincinnati, Ohio.

“We do the overhaul set to manufacturers new limits with factory new cylinders,” said Kozub, “That includes a two-year or 500-hour warranty.”

The engine is installed, and the firewall forward is removed. The firewall is cleaned, the engine mount is inspected and painted. All fluid-carrying hoses are replaced - so are the scot hoses. The engine lord mounts are replaced. The starter is inspected, as well as the alternator, and vacuum pump.

“Everything is checked for air worthiness,” said Kozub, “If a propeller has over one thousand hours, we overhaul it with a one-year warranty.”

The complete process of refurbishing a plane takes 90 days if the engine needs overhauled. Otherwise, it’s 60 days.

Pristine Airplanes has an outstanding reputation, and satisfied customers. As to why his company is a success, Kozub attributes that to plain ol’ integrity.

“We do what we say we’re going to do,” said Kozub, “We are a totally transparent company with nothing to hide. There are no surprises with us. We deliver what we say we will. Nobody does it better with this scale of planes.”

Find a list of current inventory and comprehensive services at www.pristineairplanes.com.