

State of the Hobby

WHAT'S HAPPENING
IN MY WORLD?



BRAND NAMES?
RECOMMENDING
PRODUCTS



MY REVERB
IMPROVEMENT VS
INNOVATION



WHERE TO IN FPV?
RACING, FREESTYLE
OR COMMERCE

FGA PATREON NEWS



Be Happy

Being constantly in the limelight over the last few years has certainly helped me understand myself better. I spoke to an international airline pilot recently who told me that living in different time zones plays with your mind and body clock. I knew instinctively what he meant. Living out of a suitcase for over 2 years traveling through 27 countries may sound like fun but it's taken its toll. I had hoped that I would more settled by now but alas that has not been the case. Its been an experience of a lifetime but I have decided to settle down and plan longer term. My technical skills and recent experiences have stood me in good stead but my search for full time work in the commercial industry continues.

Reappraisal.

After 2 years of constant travel its very satisfying to get back to reality and family life.

Products I Prefer

I often get asked to recommend products. I fly what I recommend and rarely make changes to my fleet. My original Alien frame continued to be my “go-to” quad for more than 18mths but I was looking to tweak a number of things. I bought out the new Reverb frame because the original Alien frame could only be altered so far without radically changing aspects of its design.

Over the years as part of my Rotor Riot technical review responsibilities, I have tested many different frame types, and shapes and sizes of quads. Some were even made from plastic and wood. There was one using carbon layering (Kore), a very familiar manufacturing process used in gliding. Each design claimed to have had an improvement but, as is the case with everything, improving in one area is inevitably offset by created difficulties in another. Its what this hobby is all about - compromise. Changing one aspect of a component to improve efficiency may cause a resultant negative change somewhere else. For example strengthening a frame “up in the front “ causes stresses to be transferred elsewhere. If it does not break in the front there will be another place that is weakened that will break. And making any material “super resilient” usually results in cost escalation thus making the product less affordable.

I have tested micro quads (for inside use), larger frames (for long range flying and for cinematography use), ready-to-fly quadcopters and literally everything in between. I find that the smaller the quad the less responsive it is, particularly when a camera is attached for recording. The bigger the quad the more chance there is of jello/vibrations. I tend to keep coming back to my 5” trusted Reverb because it covers a lot of bases for me.

In the end I can say with absolute certainty - be it frame, motor, propellor or whatever, no matter what component you look at today, “the differences between each component” are minimal and it’s really only up to a person’s preference as to what to choose. Buy any well known motor for example and I am almost certain it will perform well. That’s because the 40 or so motor manufacturers are all watching what each other are doing and following suit with any improvement as quickly as possible. Any new ideas are checked out and, if appropriate, they are copied. This process happens in all industries.

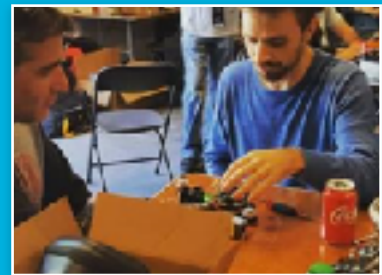
My recommendations here:

<http://www.finalglideaus.com/products.html>

Quad related products I use are found in the text:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kw5Q-lKpSV8>

*FPV has been my
life for over 2 years*



Depression and FPV

After my recent video about depression I received an overwhelming number of letters of support. The video hit an accord for many pilots because they too have used FPV as a release mechanism in their stressful lives. Many identify with my story and have shared their experiences. I am humbled to say my particular story pales into insignificance when I hear other stories about loss, anger, true friendship and redemption. Its great to see so many pilots using

FPV to release their emotions and fly with the birds into a hidden world that is free and filled with only positive thoughts. I pay homage to all my FPV friends, especially those who were prepared to come on to my show and speak about their experiences. The video forced us all to think about the mechanisms each of us use to recognise when things are spiralling downwards and how to step up and out of our largess. It's a small world out there in FPV land and we should all be glad there are so many friends very willing to give us a hug and to "be there" for us. Thanks everyone.



Observing the Law

I watch with interest when videos are posted that deliberately push the boundaries of safety. I don't fly unsafe and I don't post videos to get views. I have never posted videos to increase my exposure, my name or my reputation (especially for extreme FPV flying). I make videos that explain things, tell a story or describe how I feel at any particular time. Each of my videos tell a story pertinent to my life. Unfortunately, because of my celebrity status, I attract a small number of people who are quick to judge me under their own specific definition of "dangerous" and call in the law. Many of these same people have their own agenda. I am sure too that everyone has watched videos over the last few years showing pilots who deliberately dive high rise buildings and fly over heavy CBD traffic and pedestrians yet there are few ripples of indignation. Everyone is fully aware of how dangerous it is flying close to passenger jet liners yet some quad pilots are never held to account while others, far less extreme in their behaviour are held up indignantly as "ruining the hobby". I don't fly unsafe - never have, and never intend to. But then that is my opinion. The simple fact is that if you break the law then you will suffer the consequences. Unfortunately some of the laws are not clear and can therefore be open to interpretation.

I note with interest in Australia at the moment, a substantial amount of money has been allocated by the government in the recent budget, to be used to help tighten the drone usage laws. One of the key people in CASA tasked with doing this is someone I know well from earlier RC days. I continue to watch this space with great interest.





Future Directions?

I am currently pursuing a number of options for working in the commercial sector. This is not easy given that I don't have any formal qualifications and the demand for celebrity FPV pilots is limited. I hope that my technical knowledge might be of more interest to drone companies. I will certainly continue to fly for fun and to advise and keep discovering new ways of doing things as a practicing drone consultant. I aim to continuing to work with like minded people to develop new and exciting products where ever I can. To be sure I will be

taking my Patreons with me on my journey and giving

them the benefit of my knowledge base. I am mindful of "what's in it for me?" and hope to convince each of you to keep investing in me as I navigate my own path in this enjoyable hobby. I might even take you for a fly in my glider but know that quads will always remain a major part of my life.

Over the last 12 months I have noticed a significant change in how the FPV hobby is being viewed by the media. Gone are the notions of this "sport" being "the next big thing". Gone are the days when the global media giants see FPV quad sports as a worthy investment. The industry has changed. Being a "professional" FPV pilot was seen as a licence to print money but not any more. The potentially huge FPV racing scene has died down quite a bit leaving many pilots and entrepreneurs scratching their heads about how to make ends meet. I looked over the edge of the precipice just before the 2016 Drone Worlds in Hawaii and warned people then that the sport was about to implode due mainly to greedy entrepreneurs seizing on FPV as the way to make their fortune. I told pilots that they should not forget why they got into this hobby in the first place. I stood up at international conferences to demand that FPV race organisers looked after the competitors - its the pilots who should be in the limelight, not the sponsors or the entrepreneurs themselves. Over the last 12 months, far from being a "consumer tsunami," recreational racing drones have become less and less of a buzz word. "Ready-to-fly" sports drones marketed by the major suppliers are not being taken up



as much as the pundits have hoped. The reason is simple. Heavy duty racing/freestyle drones are not easy to fly. They need technical and maintenance experience. The industry has reverted back to its roots - where nerdy individuals build their own and fly for fun with mates having similar interests. Yes, a number of FPV sports events have endured but the sport is now not seen as spectator friendly (no matter how many LED lights or specially edited video images). Watching a few black spot blips in the air following each other and racing round and round a course has ceased being of interest for the general public. DRL and DR1 competitions have morphed into an “entertainment



package” on TV where a few “selected” pilots fly homogenised drones around deliberately selected “cool” locations. The resultant product is a conglomeration of a number of fast and furious edits highlighted by bright lights and simulated crashes. Elsewhere, real time FPV racing is covered by MultiGP/DCL/ERSA-type team, local and national events that cater for local FPV flying aces. Today, well known celebrities are slowly being replaced by new fresh faced “Luke Skywalkers” who earnestly believe they have a big future in the sport. The industry has ranged from 5” basic quads into tiny quads (for indoor use) right up to 7” long range quads (that get lost in mountain terrain) and on to the bigger XClass/Freedom 1m class for racing. Everyone is praying for the next “big thing” to happen. In the shrinking commercial marketplace the limited demand for products is being ably serviced by an explosive increase in the range and number of commercial players all vying for market share, all hyping up similar technical offerings and all pretending they are “there for the community” - as long at people keep buying their online products. The market is growing but nowhere near as quickly as the entrepreneurs would like. And another year goes by!!



I am always happy for Patreons to contact me if they have questions or issues. My Shooting the Shit videocasts have been a disaster because of extremely poor local broadband speeds. I am still pondering how I can overcome this very real problem. More to come I assure you - its been a work in progress.

Use finalglideaus.com website or the Patron website or message me via FB.