



Q: I am an instrument rated private pilot with 2000 hours total time and have owned several V35 Bonanzas. I do not think I want an A36. I have narrowed down the search to a couple of airplanes. What is your opinion on the Shrike Commander or a Cessna P210? I like the Shrike's cabin room and the Cessna 210's pressurized cabin, even though I am not wild about having a high wing aircraft. Do you have any good pros and cons of these two birds? Thank you for the input.

A. Both aircraft are very nice (although I don't know what aircraft I don't like). A lot depends on whether you want to jump into a twin or not. You increase your operating cost quite a bit with the Shrike, but you will gain cabin space. The Twin Commander is a big aircraft, which makes hangar space a problem. (Parts and maintenance are not too bad, although I have heard that they are getting more difficult to locate.) You would want to check with your mechanic to see what parts availability is like. You will only get book cruise speed from around 171 to 200 knots. However, you will double or even triple your operating expenses over something like a Beechcraft V35.

I think the Cessna 210 is a very nice aircraft. However, it too has a few drawbacks. If you are planning on using this

as a family transportation vehicle, it is really a four place aircraft and it lacks club seating for your passengers. The pressurized 210 have an even heavier control feel than the normal 210. At altitude it will get respectable cruise speeds (book cruise says 191 to 210 knots depending on the model). The operating costs are higher than the normal 210 or V35.

You didn't mentioned if you are already multi rated. Multi-engine and instrument ratings will be required for the Shrike and at least an instrument and 50 hours retract gear time for the Cessna P210. If you are not multi-engine rated at this time, insurance will be a big expense on the Shrike (or any large twin for that matter). Insurance is not cheap on the Cessna P210 either. Any pressurized aircraft is going to require attending initial factory approved school to start and then recurrent training from a factory approved school each year.



All those factors add up to additional ownership expenses. Actually, an A36 or F33 would not be a bad idea for transition. If you could get a turbocharged Beech 36, it would even be faster. Since you have V35 time, if you want to move to a twin it would be easier to transition into a Beech Baron 55 or a Baron 58 for the next couple of years. Then you could transition to a pressurized 58 or a larger aircraft with a lot less trouble.

*Send your questions or comments to
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Hangar Talk Q & A Continued

Q. Mr. Smith, I am writing to you not to get my letter published in the Aero Trader, but for your expertise in guidance and personal opinion with an issue that is of great importance to me.

I am a 49-year-old male with a private pilot's license and over 250 total hours, most in a Cessna 152 and a 172.

I have several questions that I'd like your help with: If you were of my age and wished to obtain a job as a private pilot at the time I retire, approximately age 50, what is available? Do you feel 50 years old is too late to pursue this career? I would be interested in flying cargo, small commuter airlines, etc.

I am also a 20-year plus veteran of the Police and Fire related fields and am a Licensed Private Investigator. It would be of great interest to me to couple my experiences and training with flying as a supplemental career income upon retirement.

A. I hope 50 years is not too old! I am 45 and always looking for something new to do. Anyway, there are many options in aviation. Following is a quick "off the top of my head" list:

With just a private pilots license you might look into the following: aircraft sales rep, aircraft broker, aircraft financing, ad sales for aviation publications. There are numerous companies where you can use a pilot license as part of the job. In my area, there is an aviation friendly manufacturer where all the sales people fly. With the correct training and testing there may be an opportunity to become a flight instructor in the new

sport category aircraft. The initial comments were that a private pilot who participates in the proper training and passes the appropriate tests could be a Sport Pilot CFI. (Required training and testing are yet to be determined.)

To be a regular flight instructor, you will need to obtain an instrument, commercial and CFI rating and start building hours. I know many FBO's that look for older, established CFI's that are reliable and willing to work.

Most commercial pilot positions will require more hours than you have. To get into cargo and charter, you'll need twin ratings and about 1200 hours total time. You can start on VFR charter flights with about 500 hours total time. That is why it is a good idea to work as a flight instructor for an FBO, to build hours and be close to the action when a flight becomes available.

You could also do photo work, power line patrol or aerial advertising. At one time the FBI was hiring agents with a college degree and a pilot license (not sure about the age requirement). With your private investigator background maybe you could ask around if there are aircraft in "justice" departments and how they are used.

Get involved with a local university. Recently I talked to a pilot that bought an aircraft, obtained his commercial rating and did photo work for his local university.

Actually, now that I read this, there are a lot of opportunities available.

Scott "Sky" Smith is a writer, columnist and author of "How To Buy A Single Engine Airplane" and "Ultimate Boat Maintenance Projects" published by Motorbooks International, and the owner of an aviation and marine insurance agency. www.skysmith.com. © Scott Sky Smith, 2004