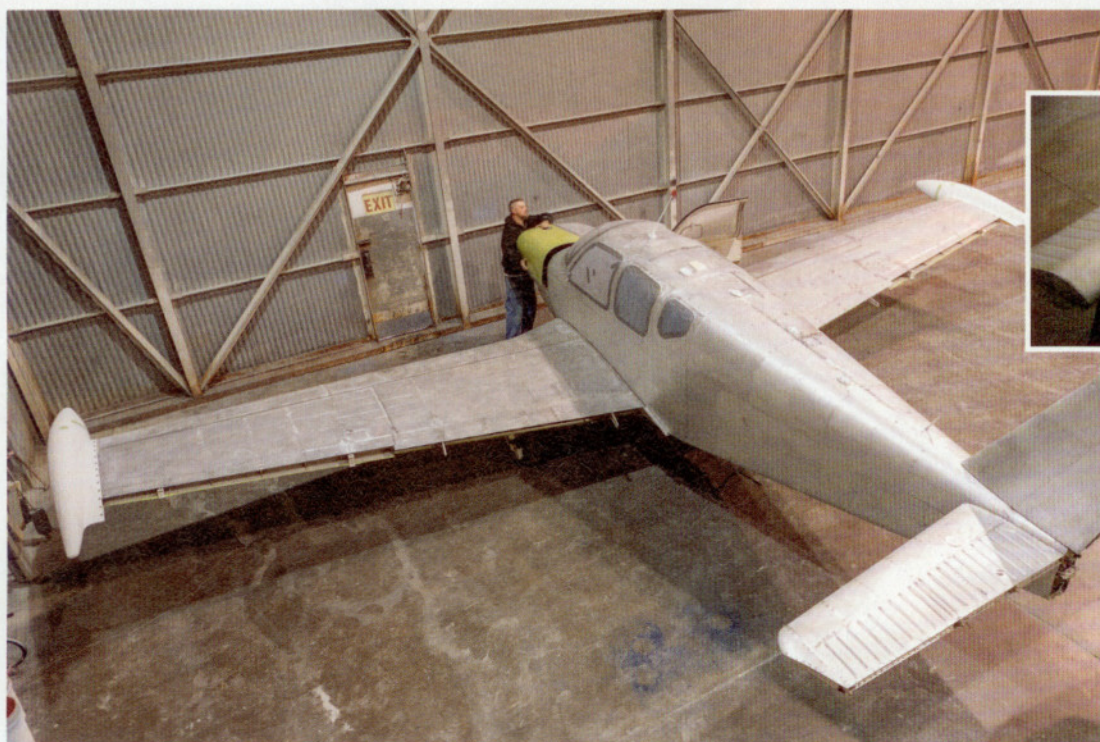
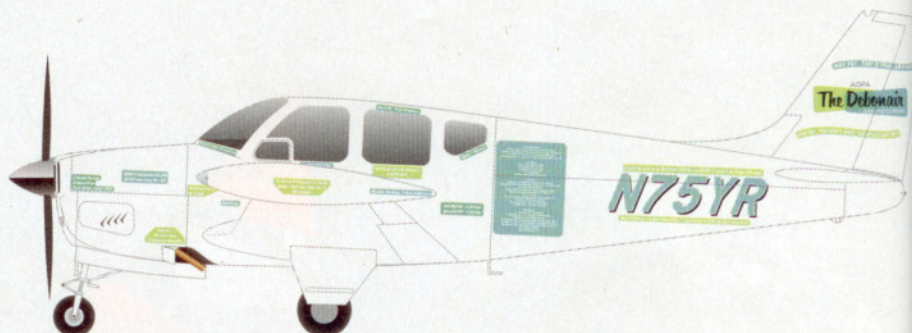


AOPA
The Debonair
Sweepstakes

Getting the look

New parts and new paint

BY THOMAS A. HORNE



BY THE TIME YOU READ THIS, the AOPA Debonair Sweepstakes aircraft will have made yet another huge transformation—thanks to many generous contributors to the effort. When last we visited the Debonair in these pages, its new panel had been installed. And we even went on a flight, to KD Aviation at the Stewart International Airport in Newburgh, New York. KD is the Debonair's paint shop, and, brother, this stop couldn't come soon enough. That old—50 years old, to be precise—paint job needs to go!

I've been covering the process in my "Sweepstakes Logbook" blog, so for the latest news and photos check AOPA's website. Which brings up another point: our website has been redesigned, if you hadn't noticed. To find the Sweepstakes Logbook, go to the Membership

THE 1963 DEBONAIR has been stripped of its old paint and it's having a new cowl door fitted thanks to Beechcraft. Newly reskinned flaps (inset) were provided by Airframe Components by Williams.

tab on the homepage, then to the Sweepstakes link. Or direct access (www.aopa.org/membership/sweeps).

But back to paint. In prepping for the paint phase, KD's Don Reese removed all the control surfaces, and found a cracked flap leading edge where the actuator rod is attached. Not a problem, however. Trusty Roy Williams of Airframe Components by Williams in Kendallville, Indiana, came through—again. Williams reskinned both flaps, fixing the bad actuator attach point in the process. He also signed off on a

THE AIRPLANE'S white base coat will be on display for a few months, along with decals explaining the Debonair's improvements—and factoids about the world of 1963.

rudder airworthiness directive. Williams has helped us in the past, by providing a reconditioned stabilator for 2004's "Win-A-Twin" sweepstakes Twin Comanche. Need control surface repairs? Call Roy.

Beechcraft provided a rare, critical component—a new cowling access door. The original door's leading edge was all chewed up from 50 years' worth of friction, and so the new door was a stroke of luck—and a very encouraging sign that, yes, the newly reconstituted Beechcraft really is committed to supporting its piston line. Even 50-year-old airplanes.

Select Airparts also stepped up to the plate. Select's Michelle Souder checked out the Debonair in person at the Sun 'n Fun fly-in and pointed out that the left nosewheel door had a rather large notch, probably created by impact with a stone on some antediluvian takeoff. Well, Select sent the paint shop a replacement door from its stock of Beechcraft parts. Problem solved! Who says you can't find parts for a 50-year-old airplane?

Knots2U—another long-time contributor to AOPA's sweepstakes and restoration project airplanes—provided a new dorsal fairing, as well as a vertical stabilizer tip fairing.

After stripping off the old paint and applying the airframe fixes, KD applied a base coat of Matterhorn white. That's right, a solid white paint job will be the rule for the next few months. The stripes will come later. In the meantime, for your reading pleasure, we've applied decals explaining features of the airplane—and historical facts relating to the year of this Debonair's birth. So if you're going to be at EAA AirVenture this year, stop by AOPA's big white tent and have a look at all the progress we've made. The new propeller will be worth a gander, as well.

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