Kestrel Aircraft president Alan Klapmeier has not underestimated the challenge ahead for himself and his company. “We have an engineering team in the former CEO of Cirrus and many key members of his team are Cirrus graduates,” Klapmeier said.

Continued on next page
The 180-knot, all-composite Low-E glass amphibian was designed in the 1980s and was FAA certified under Part 23 in the early 1990s at a cost of almost $150 million, underwritten by the Dornier family. The Dorniers formed the Dornier Seaplane Co. and installed U.S. government incentive packages to build the aircraft’s tooling and composite structure. It hopes to make a vendor selection by year-end. Aircraft final assembly is to take place in St. Jean. The Seastar is to be available with an all-glass cockpit and certified for flight into known-icing. The 180-knot, all-composite Low-E glass amphibian was designed in the 1980s and was FAA certified under Part 23 in the early 1990s at a cost of almost $150 million, underwritten by the Dornier family. The Dorniers formed the Dornier Seaplane Co. and installed U.S. government incentive packages to build the aircraft’s tooling and composite structure. It hopes to make a vendor selection by year-end. Aircraft final assembly is to take place in St. Jean. The Seastar is to be available with an all-glass cockpit and certified for flight into known-icing.

The Kestrel CEO won’t commit to production schedule at this point but he did say that Kestrel is aiming to produce an aircraft with 325-knot maximum cruise speed, a tanks-full range of 1,300 nm with 1,250 pounds of payload and a price on par with or below that of a TBM 850. He said that, while the company has attracted sufficient capital to build a production prototype aircraft, additional capital is required to finance what he estimates will be a $100 million-plus project through certification. He said the company has made significant progress in attracting additional private capital over the summer, and he added that, once in production, the estimated market for the aircraft is 35 to 50 units annually.

Kestrel

Composites are also finding their way into new single turboprop designs, including the refined Kestrel that first flew in 2006 when the company was called Farnborough Aircraft. Following bankruptcy reorganization, the company attracted several new investors and last year former Cirrus Design CEO Alan Klapmeier joined the company as president. While the lone prototype was powered by a 1,000-shp flat-rated P&W PT6-67A, earlier this year the company announced that power on production aircraft will come from Honeywell’s 1,650-shp TPE331-14GR. Klapmeier said Kestrel engineers are redesigning the aircraft’s engine intake inlet and firewall to accommodate the new engine and that, while the cabin for the six- to eight-passenger turboprop remains largely the same, the prototype aircraft is “no longer representative” of the design likely to see production. “We are getting close to final configuration and we are in the last phase of airframe layout—specifically, the fine points of airfoil shape and twist,” he said. “At the conclusion of that we will start making airframe tools.” The reworked prototype could fly as early as 2012.

The Kestrel CEO won’t commit to performance numbers, price or a production schedule at this point but he did say that Kestrel is aiming to produce an aircraft with 325-knot maximum cruise speed, a tanks-full range of 1,300 nm with 1,250 pounds of payload and a price on par with or below that of a TBM 850. He said that, while the company has attracted sufficient capital to build a production prototype aircraft, additional capital is required to finance what he estimates will be a $100 million-plus project through certification. He said the company has made significant progress in attracting additional private capital over the summer, and he added that, once in production, the estimated market for the aircraft is 35 to 50 units annually.

Comp Air CA-12 and CA-11

Kitplane builder Comp Air Aviation continues its quest to bring certified, all-composite, single-engine turboprops to market. The company previously announced that its CA-12 and CA-11 turboprop singles would be powered...
Extra 500

Extra continues its hunt for a U.S. assembly facility and is finalizing FAA certification for its $1.75 million all-composite turboprop single. Extra’s U.S. director of development, Errol Bader, said the company is looking at sites in Prescott, Ariz.; Boulder, Colo.; and the unused production plant of the now-defunct Adam Aircraft in Ogden, Utah.

To date the company has orders for eight aircraft and it plans to deliver aircraft number three to the U.S. later this year with German registry. Extra recently announced that the aircraft will be updated with the Avidyne Entegra R9 glass-panel avionics system and that it has received EASA approval for the installation. Power on the 500 comes from a 450-shp Rolls-Royce 250-B17F/2 that burns 19 gph mated to a five-blade propeller. Cruise speed is 226 knots at FL250 and maximum range is 1,600 nm.

Tweaked Singles & Twins

In addition to Kestrel’s Aeroworks, several other companies are offering re-engining and performance enhancement packages for legacy single-engine turboprops, primarily the Cessna Caravan. The Caravan conversions offer fuel burns reduced by four to six gallons per hour at typical cruise, up to 40 knots more maximum cruise speed and significantly shorter runway and greater payload capabilities.

Extra 500

Comp Air CA-12

Extra 500

Texas Turbines

Supervan 900