ARGENTINA’S CICARE PREPARES FOR CERTIFIED HELOS

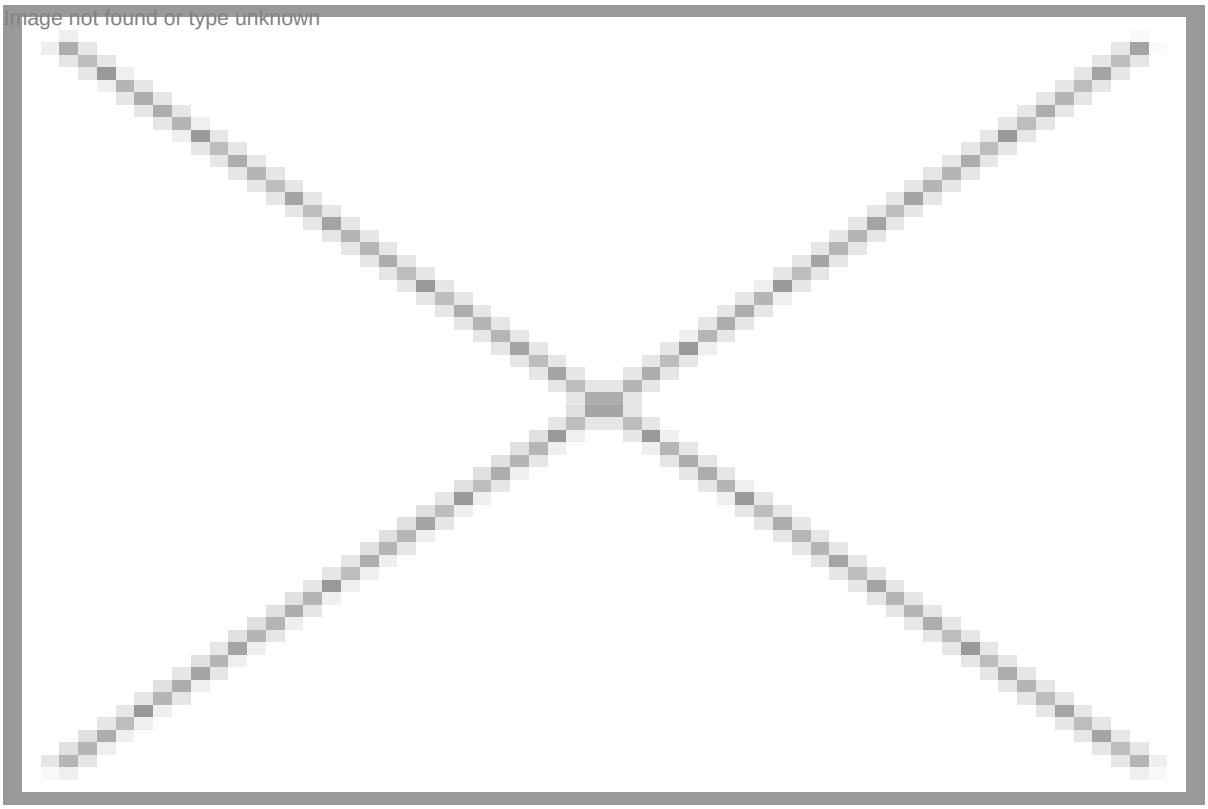
News / Business aviation, Manufacturer



Argentine kit helicopter maker Cicare plans to enter the certified helicopter market. Raul Oreste, the company’s chief commercial officer, told AIN that the company is working on a certified version of the Model 12 two-seater that is currently sold as a kit. It hopes to have it certified to Part 27 standards within “three to four years.”

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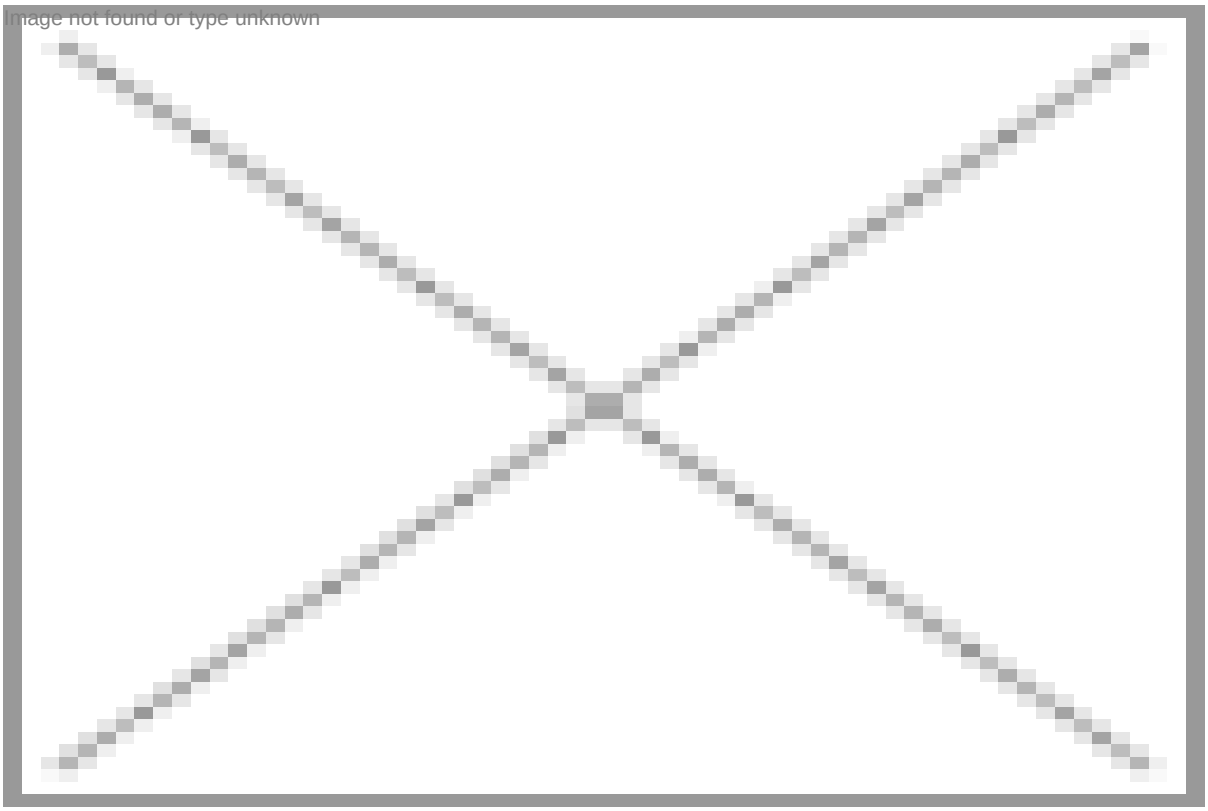
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The Model 12 kit sells for $189,000. It is powered by a Lycoming HIO-360G1A four-cylinder piston engine that delivers 180 hp; empty weight is 948 pounds and mtow 1,543 pounds; and cruise speed is 89 knots, with a Vne of 110 knots. The Model 12 has a two-blade composite main rotor system lifed on condition, monocoque cabin construction and tube skid gear, a cabin that includes a T-bar cyclic, a bullet-shaped instrument cluster and no-nonsense toggle switches. It is stylistically similar to the smaller 992-pound-mtow, 130-hp, 80-knot Model 8, which has already been certified under ULM rules in Europe and Argentina. Cicare hopes to expand the ULMcertification of that helicopter in other countries in the coming years. The company has had success selling its even smaller, Rotax-powered Model 7B (single seat) and 7T (tandem seat) kits recently, at prices ranging from $77,000 to $129,000, depending on build level and if engines are included. Cicare brought a Model 7B to this year’s EAA AirVenture at Oshkosh, Wis.

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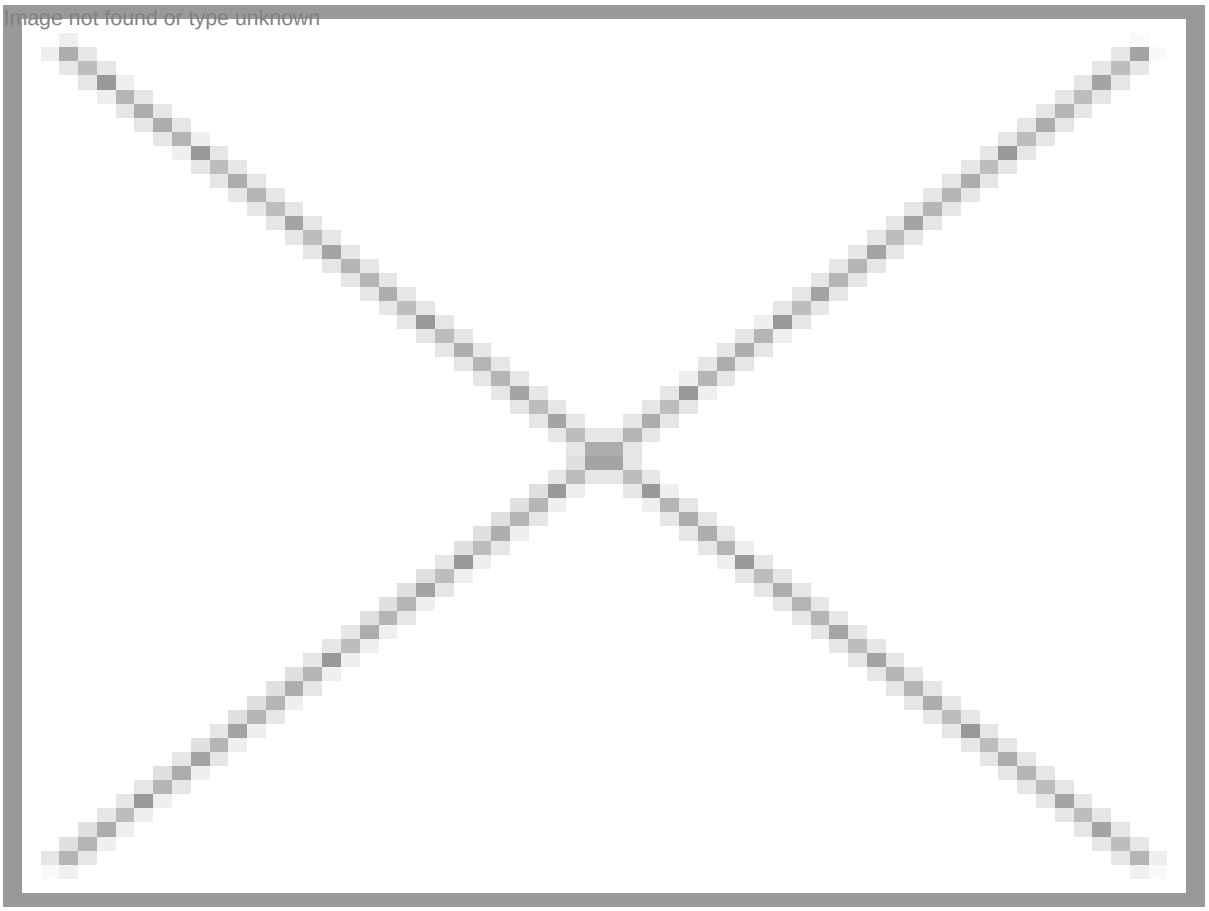
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Cicare sells an unusual training device called the SVH4, basically a Model 7B attached to an adjustable ground-based platform, which allows liftoff, to normal hover, to hover taxi all at the safe controlled altitude of 3 feet agl. The FAA has approved the device for the first 10 hours of flight training, according to Cicare's Oreste. He says the SVH4 provides the new helicopter student with numerous benefits over training in a conventional helicopter early on. "It makes it easier for the student because he doesn't have the stress of the instructor or the stress of flying in a helicopter alone. It makes it so you are learning gradually. In the first stage it [the device] is locked on the floor. You can't move so you can control only the collective and the pedals. The worst thing you can do is go around and around and around. So that is for two hours. Once you master the pedals you can release the platform and you can move around with the cyclic. It makes it more friendly. It takes away that fear for a person who is starting from scratch." The predecessor of the SVH4, the SVH3, was declared Argentina's national invention of the year in 1998 and awarded the gold medal for best aerospace invention at the 1999 Geneva Motor Show.

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To date, Cicare has sold just 60 helicopters and 30 flight training devices. Oreste attributes this slow gestation to company founder Augusto Cicare's humble nature and lack of access to capital, but says all that is changing now. While Cicare remains family owned and Augusto Cicare remains active in the business, the company has new outside investors and a game plan to expand. It sold 18 helicopters in 2014, retrenched slightly with sales of 15 last year as the company focused on engineering projects, and now plans to sell 20 this year, Oreste said. Backed by funding from the Argentine government, Cicare is also developing the low-cost, turbine-powered, tandem seat Model 14 for the parapublic market. It is powered by a 420-shp Rolls-Royce 250-C20B.

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