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Stephen A. Jorgensen, CPA #31145
Grand Prairie, Texas
1976 Cessna 182P, N9091M

COVER STORY..

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I never thought that owning and refurbishing an airplane would be such an exhilarating and satisfying experience, until I acquired my Skylane, "91 Mike", in June of 1996. It has been an enjoyable diversion and tremendous learning experience not only from a flying standpoint, but also from the nuts and bolts of maintaining the aircraft and coordinating and helping on the restoration project.

Almost from the moment I purchased her in Michigan and flew her home to Dallas, my good friend and flying partner, Chad Wilson, and I decided to make "91 Mike" a real "head snapper." We began by taking an aircraft owner maintenance course from a local A&P school to get acquainted with systems and the maintenance items we could perform on the plane. We then upgraded the avionics by adding MAC 1700 conversions to both KX-170B comm/nav radios, a Davtron DT6 Clock, a four place intercom, and upgrading the Loran to an ARNAV 50 unit. Other current avionics accessories include a KMA20 audio panel, KN162 DME, KR85 ADF, and a Cessna 300A autopilot. As there was only 350 hours on the engine since last overhaul, only a prop overhaul was required to make things "tip-top." The 1850 hour airframe was in good shape also, with no damage history.

During the annual inspection, Chad and I went "all out" on the restoration. We installed Horton speed fairings on the lift struts, Horton fiberglass elevator and stabilizer tips, and Texas Aeroplastics landing gear strut fairings and nose gear pant. All plexiglass was replaced with gray tinted glass, and new tires and brakes were added. Horton flap gap and aileron gap seals were also installed to increase the cruise speed. During this time we also began designing a new paint scheme to replace the Cessna Bicentennial colors that were faded and cracked. In addition, we planned on replacement of the aging interior



After the annual was completed, we flew "91 Mike" to GLO Custom Aircraft near Roanoke, Texas, for painting and interior work. Grady and Angie O'Neal spent the next month stripping, laying out and painting the intricate metallic blue and gray pattern we designed for the Skylane. Then Wayne and Judy Caron of C&H Custom Aircraft Interiors took over and installed the plush soft gray interior. Nova Suede was applied to the headliner and all plastics, while leatherette was used on the reconditioned seats and sidewalls, and deep pile wool carpeting was laid on the floor and kick panels. Wayne added many extra pockets for maps, flashlights and other accessories, put in additional insulation, and installed a Grimes maplight in the cockpit. The efforts of these artisans were absolutely show quality.

The results of the restoration exceeded our wildest expectations. Although I was proud of "91 Mike" before, she is now the "ultimate Skylane" (at least in my book). Despite all of the work Chad and I did on the aircraft, we still managed to put over 300 hours on her since last summer, flying both trans-Texas and on many cross countries from the Rockies to the coast. This Skylane is a real performer with great range, excellent payload capability, speed and comfort. In the future I might add a slaved HSI, upgraded ILS, and a stormscope, but right now it's good just to "burn holes" in the sky. What a life!

Steve Jorgensen is an MD-82/83 captain with a major airline, and Chris Wilson is a flight instructor in Dallas, and is flying for a regional airline. Chad got Steve reinstated in all aspects of general aviation flying, and was responsible for all his checkout training (no small chore, as he had his hands full getting a jet jockey back into thinking about props!)

—Photos were taken in the Dallas area by Steve Jorgensen.



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