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First flight: Merlin LSA

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Glasair Aviation's new light-sport aircraft, Merlin, took its first flight through the skies above Arlington Municipal Airport (KAWO) in Washington state, April 7.



Following detailed validation testing, including engine run-up, high-speed taxi, and ground roll lift off, the team at Glasair stood back and watched as Merlin departed the surface of runway 34 with test-pilot Grant Smith at the controls. The flight lasted 57 minutes, as Smith took the plane through a full test flight profile that included validating the engine's reliability, exploring flight control characteristics in flight and conducting standard flight maneuvers.

"While nothing can replace the sheer wonder of witnessing the birth of a child, the introduction and maiden flight of a new airplane design is a close second!" Glasair Development Manager Ted Setzer said. "The 'parents' were all there to witness it, including

the Glasair Aviation’s flight designer engineer, Chuck Hautamaki, and the entire Glasair Aviation team. Seeing the joy and exhilaration on everyone’s faces was as satisfying as hearing the test pilot Grant Smith’s, positive comments as he emerged from the cockpit.”



Flight testing will continue throughout the coming weeks, according to Glasair officials.

Merlin is a composite high-wing, tricycle gear aircraft designed to meet LSA certification requirements and based upon ASTM standards. It is fitted with a Rotax 912iS engine and Dynon’s Skyview glass-panel avionics. Glasair also designed the Merlin to utilize the optional BRS parachute system for added pilot safety. The SLSA will also be the company’s first certified aircraft.

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