

History of the Aero-lite 103

Terry Raber is the original designer of the Aero-lite 103. Back in the 90's Terry was an instructor and a dealer for several types of ultralights and had a pretty good handle on what worked and what did not. So he took the best of the best and like many great things done in a garage the Aero-lite came to life. In the summer of 1997 he was awarded Oshkosh Grand Champaign Ultralight.

About a year later I remember Terry stopping by our shop and telling me that he had a lot of interest in his aircraft but really did not want to go into the manufacturing business and asked myself and my partner Joe Naylor (owners of Wings of Freedom) if we would be interested in purchasing the rights to the Aero-lite. Terry had already established a company name Aero Works Inc.

In 1998 myself Mark Klotz, Joe Naylor and Terry's Brother Todd Raber purchased Aero Works Inc. and the manufacturing rights to the Aero-lite 103. As President of the company and one of three partners of Aero Works from 1998 to 2000, I enjoyed the exciting growth and development of this new product. The Aero-lite continued to be a winner by receiving more awards such as 1998 Sun-Fun Best Commercial Design, 1998 Oshkosh Reserve Grand Champion Ultralight, 1999 Sun-Fun Grand Champion Ultralight and 1999 Oshkosh Grand Champion Ultralight. (Much of it due to the new pilots of the Aero-lite 103)

In the year 2000 we found ourselves with many challenges and like many partnership we could not find resolution so I and Joe Naylor sold our stock to Todd Raber and his new partner Bob Sprang.

In 2005 Aero Works closed their doors and the Aero-lite 103 was no longer manufactured.

In 2005 Mark Klotz owner of Wings of Freedom LLC a manufacture of the Flitplane since 1996 began to produce quality replacement parts for the estimated 100 + Aero-lite Pilots that were desperately in need of a service and support. At about the same time the Builders Forum was turned over to me by Max Rentz who was the original founder of the forum and also happened to be the last person I sold an Aero-lite to in 2000.

In 2008 I released the Phoenix -103. As President of Aero Works from 1998 to 2000 and having provided replacement parts and support since 2005. I have been involved in every aspect of the Aero-lite and knew its strengths and weakness. So when designing the Phoenix – 103. I applied those ideas that I believe would make a good plane even better and even though the two designs are similar in looks they are different in many ways... hence the name Phoenix. Check out (Phoenix vs Aerolite) under Phoenix 103.

In August 2010 Terry Raber bought back the Aero-lite design from his brother Todd Raber and re-entered the market place with the original Aero-lite design.

In 2012 Terry once again sold the design, only this time to Dennis Carley owner of U-Fly-it. They will offer new manufacturing as well as replacement parts.

While I have respect for Terry as a designer I thought it important to make you aware of the two products and how they came to be. I will continue to be of service to the Aero-lite pilots their planes and the Aero-lite Builders forum. I hope you can appreciate the service and support that Wings of Freedom has provided for the Aero-lite pilots over the years and the work that has gone into the design of the Phoenix 103.