

vicky benzing biography

Born and raised in California, Vicky Benzing is an accomplished pilot, skydiver, aerobatic performer, and air racer. With over 10,000 hours of flight time and over 1300 parachute jumps, Vicky has a passion for everything airborne. Her flying career has spanned over forty years and she currently holds an Airline Transport Pilot rating as well as a commercial rating in helicopters, seaplanes, and gliders.

Vicky still remembers her first flight in her uncle's airplane when she was just a small child. Inspired by that flight at a very young age, Vicky learned to fly in a family friend's antique Taylorcraft in her hometown of Watsonville, on the California coast. She was thrilled by the spins, loops, and rolls that her ex-military instructor taught her and subsequently took aerobatic instruction from legendary pilot Amelia Reid.

Vicky's aerobatic flying took a brief back seat while she earned her PhD in Chemistry from UC Berkeley and began working in the Silicon Valley high tech industry. But her passion for spins, loops, and rolls soon returned when she took an aerobatic flight with air show legend, Wayne Handley.

In 2005, Vicky began her aerobatic training in earnest. She began competing in aerobatic contests throughout the US, working her way up through the many categories. In between contests, Vicky also began performing in local air shows. Today Vicky holds a surface level aerobatic waiver and has flown hundreds of air show performances at venues across the United States, including as an invited performer at the greatest airshow in the world, EAA AirVenture in Oshkosh, WI.

In addition to aerobatics, Vicky got the racing bug when a friend invited her to "come play in my sandbox" at the National Championship Air Races in Reno, NV. In her first year of racing, Vicky was chosen as "Rookie of the Year" after having won her first race ever, and in 2015 Vicky became the "Fastest Woman Racer" ever in the history of the Reno Air Races when she qualified an Aero Vodochody jet on the race course at 469.831 mph. Last September, Vicky flew her historic P-51D, "Plum Crazy", to a 4th place finish among the Gold racers in the Unlimited Class. She is only the second woman ever to race in the Unlimited Class in the 59-year history of the Reno Air Races and the only woman to have raced in three classes- Sport, Jet, and Unlimited.

Vicky has had the opportunity to fly in a number of film, television, and other media projects. Vicky can be seen flying her beautiful Boeing Stearman in the documentary film "Mercury 13" which is currently airing on Netflix. Other film and television projects include episodes of "Ice Pilot," "NCIS LA," "Walker Texas Ranger," and extensive stunt work in her Stearman for the short film "Niner Echo Foxtrot."

Vicky is sponsored by [California Aeronautical University](#), an aeronautical training center offering aviation-related degree programs to prepare students for exciting careers in aviation. The University's campus is a purpose-built flight training facility located at the Bakersfield International Airport. The on-airport campus hosts ideal flying conditions year-round, student housing, and FAA Part 141 approved training. Visit the California Aeronautical University website at CALAERO.EDU to tour the campus and learn more about their aviation-related degree programs.

Vicky's other sponsors include: APECS Aerospace Corporation, Concorde Batteries, Tempest, Gleim Aviation, Oregon Aero, Lift Aviation, Best Tugs, and Method 7 Performance Optics.

You can learn more about Vicky by visiting her website at www.vickybenzing.com