



Gear of the Year: 2004

A warts-and-all, no apologies listing of the best products and services we've seen this year.

Over the course of the typical editorial year, we examine and test lots of aviation products and services. We like to think we're the professional shoppers of aviation journalism and we have the VISA statements to back up the claim. (By the way, if you think manufacturers give us the stuff we try out, you're mistaken. We either buy it or borrow and return it.)

Our holy grail is to pit one product against another—or sometimes a bunch of others—and decide which ones come out on top so you, the reader and the buyer, can make an intelligent purchasing decision. Because we accept no commercial advertising, we're quite comfortable with warts-and-all evaluations and if a product doesn't measure up, we'll tell you so.

Frankly, these days, not many products fail to deliver on their advertised claims. Competition is too fierce for any company to dare float a product that just doesn't work but it's clear to us that some work better than others and some are definitely better values than others. And that's the focus of the next few pages of this month's issue.

What follows is our annual round-up of what we think are the best products and services we've seen during the last year, with an eye toward innovation, quality and value.

BEST BATTERY: CONCORDE AGM

Battery technology for cars hasn't stood still and now, finally, the aircraft world is catching up. So-called absorbed glass mat technology makes a more powerful and longer lasting battery for about the same amount of money as the old flooded-cell batteries.

When we put batteries through their paces in our January 2004 issue, we found a hands-down winner in the AGM batteries made by Concorde. For essentially the same cost, they deliver more power than the equivalent Gill models and the company proved knowledgeable and helpful in sorting out technical issues. Contact www.concordebattery.com or 626-813-1234.

www.aviationconsumer.com

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