

# Summer gear



## Downtube folding bike

Since my first days on the job as new-products editor for *Pilot*, it seems I've been a magnet for folding bikes. We've tested a few, pedal-powered and motorized—and they all offer great utility for pilots. The latest innovation in this arena is from Downtube.

Yan Lyansky based Downtube on his experience cycling cross-country. By designing and importing the bikes and processing every order himself, he's created cost savings that he passes along in an extremely competitive price. The Mini, which we tested, and the FS, which an AOPA staff member owns, are both rugged, yet light, snap open with ease, and ride well around airport terrain and local roads.

The Mini features an eight-speed internal shifting crank hub (so there's no rear derailleur and no gears) and rear suspension. The forged crank has a re-



placeable chain ring, and the wheels have stainless-steel spokes and V-shape rims for additional strength. The handlebars fold down—when the post is extended, the wide handlebars fit me well, giving me an almost upright riding position. The seat post also drops so that the bike essentially folds into its rear wheel and crank hub—measuring about 10 inches by 20 inches by 29 inches and weighing 24.5 pounds.

The Mini features smaller tires than the FS, which helps on size (the FS fold-

ing dimensions are 12 inches by 24 inches by 33 inches, and weight is 27.5 pounds). The only drawback is slightly twitchier handling—when you initiate a turn, it happens a little more quickly than if you had a larger-diameter tire. But I adjusted quickly and don't foresee this as a problem for most pilots. The bikes do have a maximum rider size—the Mini tops out at 225 pounds, and the FS allows for 245 pounds.

**Price:** \$399 for the Mini; \$329 for the FS

**Contact:** [www.downtube.com](http://www.downtube.com)

## Practical Risk Management for Single-Pilot IFR

John and Martha King developed the Practical Risk Management series to address what they saw as a pressing need for guidance in teaching pilot decision making. Many instructors (and pilots) would argue that judgment cannot be taught—but I disagree, in the sense that it can be shaped if the pilot in training is given a solid road map to follow in making good decisions. The latest in the King Schools' series is "Practical Risk Management for Single-Pilot IFR"—addressing probably one of the most challenging realms of flight.

Because flying IFR successfully is about workload management rather than physical skill, according to Martha King, the course focuses on helping pilots "work smarter" through planning and shifting workload from busier phases of flight to quieter ones. It also offers strategies for optimizing the use of the autopilot and GPS in reducing overall workload.

The two-CD course qualifies you for credit in the FAA Wings program (formerly the Pilot Proficiency Program).

**Price:** \$49

**Contact:** 800/854-1001; [www.kingschools.com](http://www.kingschools.com)

