

## *Free Flight 5/98*

The Journal of the Soaring Association of Canada

### *Diamant meets Diamant*

Pierre Pepin

Friday, 17 April, 5:30 pm, Toronto

After a tough two days at head office (I work for Kodak), I left the company parking lot with my Diamant in tow, which I had trailered from Montréal three days earlier. The Montréal- Toronto drive was boring but easy — the Q.E.W. on Friday night is a lot busier than when I lived in Toronto in the early 70s.

In any case, getting to Niagara was half the battle. I arrived at Keystone Soaring in Pennsylvania around 1 am. The field was soggy from rain. So I parked in the driveway, crawled in the back of the Suburban and collapsed there for the night.

Saturday morning, 9 am, I crawled from my sleeping bag only to stare at some huge boxy type of a trailer. Written on the side of this huge thing is DIAMANT. My first thought is, go back to sleep, you're hallucinating.

Later that day, I met the owner, Art Babiarz who, I found out, is an expert on the subject of the Diamant. Art proved to be a mine of information and might be a world authority on the topic. I learned a great deal from him.

Art saw a picture of the Diamant on a magazine cover in the 70s and fell in love with the machine. Almost 20 years later he was able to fulfil his dream and own a Diamant. As luck would have it, he ended up buying that very same glider.

The fascinating thing about our two Diamants is that they (the gliders) met in the 70s and competed against each other. Art's machine was then owned by George Moffat while mine was owned by John Seymour. My glider is almost stock while Art's has been substantially modified with wings extended to 18 metres.

One thing is missing however; neither Art nor I fly as well as the two original owners, unfortunately.

Incidentally, there is a Diamant collecting dust at SOSA. In my book, that

glider offers the best price/performance ratio around. The machine at SOSA is a later generation glider with the balanced flaps. With an L/D of 42, it performs as well as a PIK-20 according to Bernie Palfreeman, who owns a PIK and used to own a Diamant. He flew a Diamant again a few years ago and was pleasantly surprised to feel how pleasant a machine it is to fly.

My partners and I love the Diamant because it allows us performance at a low cost. Our motto has become, "We fly like kings but pay like bums."

Pierre Pepin is past president of the Canadian Soaring Society

Opposite page: Pierre in wave

