

Key Developments

Everyone may want a flying car in their garage, but despite several attempts over the last 70-plus years none has been commercially successful. The dream of personal air transport remains alive nonetheless and could yet blossom into a market.

Latest to venture into the arena is startup Terrafugia with the Transition “roadable aircraft”—an airplane that can be driven on the highway. The wing folds electrically rather than having to be detached and stored at the airport or towed behind the vehicle.



The two-seat Transition is being designed to meet U.S. light sport aircraft (LSA) rules, which limit performance but allow self-

Transition's Rotax engine drives propeller in the air and wheels when on the road.

tification by the manufacturer to consensus industry standards. The aircraft will cruise at 115 mph. and drive at up to 65 mph.

Woburn, Mass.-based Terrafugia argues the Transition should be safer to operate than other light aircraft because when weather deteriorates, the pilot can land at

TERRAFUGIA

the nearest airfield and drive to the destination.

Terrafugia completed 28 test flights with a proof-of-concept aircraft in 2009 and is finalizing design of the production Transition, with deliveries planned to begin in 2011. The asking price is \$194,000, and the company says it has more than 60 orders.

Other personal air vehicles in the pipeline include the Icon A5, an amphibious LSA planned for delivery beginning in late 2011, and a vertical-takeoff-and-landing “slowed rotor/compound” aircraft—essentially a modern autogyro— under development as a kitplane by Carter Aviation Technologies.