

Albatross ready to soar again – in Spirit

The New Nose Company (NNC) has launched a new clean-sheet twin-engine amphibious turboprop. The carbon-fiber Clipper Spirit is aimed specifically at salt-water operators and is based on the design of the 1949 Grumman Albatross seaplane.

The Clipper Spirit will be 66ft 6in long, with a hull beam of 9ft and wingspan of 96ft. The target range is 1,000nm with a payload of 6,000lb, flying at 200kt at 10,000ft with a maximum altitude of 25,000ft and highest operating speed of 250kt. NNC says it is looking at Rockwell Collins ProLine 21 for the flight deck.

NNC is looking to create a lighter fuselage than that of the Albatross. President Charles Simpson says: "There is a spray problem and landing problems with aluminum aircraft because of the weight."

The 6ft high, 220sq ft interior will have a flat floor and be configurable up to 24 seats, or for corporate or medevac applications. NNC sees a market demand for 200 aircraft over 10 years. New Nose has received 10 letters of intent from Italy's



In good spirits: Len Curreri, Don Sterling and Charles Simpson.

Aqua Airlines to develop the aircraft in an airliner configuration

Simpson says it will cost \$120m to create two conformity versions towards production. Simpson is designing the aircraft using Siemens Nx6, the PLM software used to create the Eclipse 500 VLJ. He says: "My day job is working for the FAA, so I understand the certification process and pitfalls. With

Siemens Nx6, we could have a conforming aircraft within five years."

The company has not decided on powerplants yet. Simpson says: "So far we're looking at existing certified engine designs, such as Honeywell's TPE331-14 engine, but we would not discount Pratt and Whitney. The engines will be customer-driven."

The anticipated market is the Near East, Europe,

Caribbean and Dubai, "or anywhere there are offshore hotel projects".

Simpson points to the 2004 Asian Tsunami as an example where an amphibious aircraft would have been superior to a helicopter.

Unusually, there are several offerings from seaplane manufacturers at the show this year, including Dornier, Icon and Viking's Twin Otter.