

Christmas Eve 1962. What followed now were many flight tests and many flights during the spring. The 300-km-triangle record was broken and a little later the regional championships were won hands down by Bjorn.

To anyone who saw the BS-1 in the air, it was quite clear that a new epoch had started for sailplanes and after these successes, a multitude of orders arrived which decided Bjorn to become a maker of sailplanes.

I got back to Europe during August, 1963, and on the 16th made my first flight in the BS-1. This was certainly one of my greatest experiences of flying in sailplanes. It was a Sunday and I was lucky with the weather. It was a fine day with good cumulus clouds, cloud base being about 4600 feet above ground.

The first time one installs oneself in a cockpit where you lie on your back it is a strange sensation. One's visibility is much better than people think when they see one lying there and once you lift off the ground visibility becomes really very good. I think it is just the new perspective of looking over one's bottom eyelid which is the thing to get used to. The same applies for approach, one's judgment of height relative to ground is somewhat changed but after a little time one is accustomed to this and as far as physical comfort is concerned, it is very much less tiring to fly lying down instead of in a sitting position. I personally now prefer to fly lying rather than sitting.

I released at about 700 feet and, not being used to an all-flying tail, as well as having a very direct stick elevator ratio, I found her a handful to fly and I used the first hour staying up and getting used to the bird. The second hour I began to try her through her speed range, her rate of roll as well as behaviour and performance with various flap positions. The third hour I flew a very nice 100-km triangle. One becomes quite intoxicated by the long, flat glides which almost seem supersonic. Although the sky was still full of lift, after three hours of flying without headrest and trim. I was quite frankly exhausted and decided to come in.

As the flying angle is so flat that you can no longer see your point of touchdown as you can in an ordinary plane, you have to check your height above ground on the altimeter and guide yourself this way to the correct height for final-glide path. Then you release your brakechute and your angle of approach is not only better than with ordinary air brakes, but seems quite alarming after having been flying for some time with so little sink.

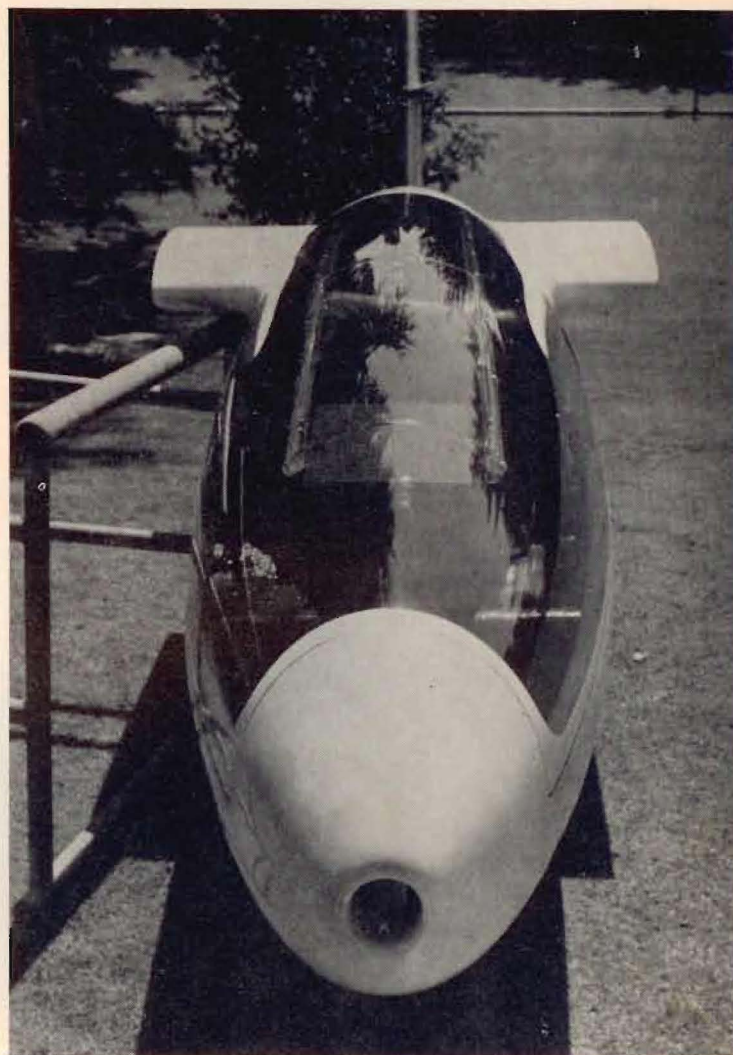
I had two more flights in Europe and then prepared the BS-1 for shipment. I was really looking forward to having her at home in the African skies.

I was in Milan in early October when the frightful message of Bjorn's death reached me. I was absolutely stunned. What a terrible waste, this brilliant young man! A great loss to all those who pursue this sport of gliding.

The plane arrived in South Africa early in December, and during the following four months I had some unbelievable flying.

The BS-1 was fitted with an automatic Tost tow hook, and unfortunately, on one launch, the rope released after catching a little grass tuft. This forced me to land in tall grass resulting in a ground loop which caused the undercarriage to collapse sideways. This in turn started a tear in the fuselage resulting in a very large crack. I am convinced that an ordinary plane

would have been destroyed under such circumstances, but the strength of fiberglass construction is quite incredible. So is the ease with which this material can be repaired.



Nose-on view of Lasch's BS-1

While repairing the fuselage we took the opportunity to debug the BS-1. The main changes, which led to improvements in her flying characteristics, were to install a trim, to change the ratio of stick to rudder and to disconnect the coupling of aileron with flap. Since I have done this, the plane is infinitely more maneuverable and easier to fly and it will be interesting to make comparison flights with the new production model to see which version has the better performance and which handles more easily.

I got back into the air early in 1964 and had again wonderful flying.

Speaking of comparisons, the sailplanes we have at our base are

Standard Austria  
Phoebus  
BJ-2

It is impossible to make a direct comparison between these planes as the BS-1 is just so much better. To remain with the other planes in level flight it is necessary to fly a circle every few minutes to let them catch up.