

# Ownership Alternatives

In addition to renting, there are alternatives to outright, 100-percent ownership of an aircraft. These can include flying clubs, partnerships and leasing/fractional ownership. Some of the pros and cons are outlined below, but the financial side always will pencil out differently for each situation, depending on the aircraft, the locale and the intended use. Meanwhile, the issue of safety and its cousins familiarity and contempt always will be lurking in the background.

## FLYING CLUBS

Clubs can range in size from five members to hundreds, and feature multiple aircraft, CFIs and even simulators and social events.

Typically, a club will have an initiation fee plus a monthly dues payment, even if you don't fly during that month. Most administrative duties are performed by volunteers, so functions like scheduling aircraft availability and maintenance can be uneven, even within the same club.



*Thanks to fuel and maintenance costs, used piston twins are dirt cheap these days. Depending on your needs, budget and long-range career plans, one might be a screaming deal.*

## PARTNERSHIPS

Assembling a group of like-minded pilots to own, operate and maintain a single aircraft is a time-honored way to reduce the cost of flying but isn't without its pitfalls. The more people involved in decision-making, the more opportunities there are for disagreement. Different opinions on usage, upgrades, budgeting for reserves and even destinations can ruin a good thing. Even minor disputes can ground you for months.



*Buying into a fun airplane, like this taildragger, while renting a traveling airplane, might be a good compromise.*

## LEASING/FRACTIONAL

If you plan to use an airplane for business purposes, leasing or fractional ownership might be an attractive alternative. The greater expense can be tax-deductible, the airplane can be new and the owning company can be responsible for some or all of its maintenance, depending. And at the end of the agreement, the airplane goes back to the owner, allowing you to lease something else, buy or go back to renting.



*Well-managed clubs operate well-maintained aircraft and often offer a range of available types.*