



Bell 505 Testimonial Isobel Stone



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Interview with Isobel Stone
Pilot, 12 Apostles Helicopters

TELL US ABOUT YOUR BACKGROUND?

“WHEN I WAS YOUNG, I SAW A VIDEO OF AN ARMY HELICOPTER ON A NEWS PROGRAM AND THOUGHT, “HOW COOL DOES THAT LOOK? I REALLY WANT TO DO THAT!”

“I always wanted to fly helicopters, I guess people usually say that. When I was young I saw a video of an army helicopter on a news program and thought “How cool does that look? I really want to do that!” I set myself up throughout high school to study all the subjects I thought I needed to become a pilot. In year 12, I started testing to become a pilot in the army. The flying component is about two weeks of pretty intensive flying in a fixed wing aircraft and I’d never flown before. Even though they offered me a different officer role, I declined because I was focused on flying helicopters. After some travel, I went to a university in south Australia to study aviation, but they didn’t have rotary wing courses. I ended leaving the university and going straight into getting my commercial license for helicopters.

I don’t know if in the states there are companies that can kick start your career, but here in Australia, it’s 12 Apostles. It’s a very well recognized company in the industry. It’s been great and I’ve been really lucky to work here.”



WHY ARE HELICOPTERS THE RIGHT TOOL FOR THE JOB?

“I LOVE THE IDEA OF BEING ABLE TO HELP PEOPLE WITH THEM. MY MAIN GOAL IS TO EVENTUALLY GET INTO EMERGENCY SERVICE WORK”

“I have a love for helicopters. I love their ability to get into any confined area where-as, in a plane, you need a big clear area to land. Terrain does matter, but basically you can land anywhere. If you want to go there, you can land there. I think of a helicopter’s maneuverability. The way you’re able to move through the air; I can go left, right, up, down. In a plane you can’t do that really. They both have their benefits, but I just think helicopters are amazing and so much fun to fly. They make anyone excited. You see a helicopter and you just feel excited.

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I love the idea of being able to help people with them. My main goal is to eventually get into emergency service work. I think it's an acquired skill and, if I can ultimately help people by doing something that I love, then that's what I'd like to do."

WHAT FEATURES ATTRACTED YOU TO THE BELL 505?

"THE FADEC IS AWESOME AND SO EASY TO START. IT'S JUST SO SIMPLE"

"The Bell 505 is really easy to fly. It's the first turbine helicopter I've flown, so I've been really lucky. I have about 430 hours on it now. The FADEC is awesome and so easy to start. It's just so simple. I hopped back in a manual aircraft the other day and I said to myself "How do I start this up? This is so much to do!" If there's any emergency, or anything goes wrong, you're going to know right away. The Crew Alerting System will pop up on your screen, and you'll also hear an alert in your ear. In other helicopters, a light can come up, but the bulb might be broken so you don't actually know if you have a problem. When I first hopped in and, while my first take off wasn't perfect, it really wasn't hard to get the hang of. It's got a nice feel to it. In an emergency, if I had to execute an autorotation, it feels safe. Because of the inertia in the blades, you can easily pull it into that hover during an autorotation.

"IT'S IMPRESSIVE HOW MUCH POWER THE 505 HAS. I'VE NEVER BEEN SHORT OF POWER"

It's impressive how much power the Bell 505 has. I've never been short of power. The passengers really like it, too. People enjoy how big the windows are and how great the visibility and views are, especially compared to our long light single helicopters. In those bigger helicopters, the windows are so compact the views are especially bad from the middle seats. In the 505 you have great views from all around.





“PEOPLE ARE ALSO IMPRESSED WITH THE G1000H...YOU DON’T HAVE TO LOOK AROUND, ITS ALL RIGHT THERE IN FRONT OF YOU”

People are also impressed with the Garmin G1000H, everyone loves that. I love the PFD and the Power Situation Indicator. It’s so simple to see if you’re about to limit. It’s great that it tells you how much time you have in the takeoff power range with a timer. I’ve flown to Melbourne a few times and, when using the maps, you can bring up the levels of air space and terrain. It’s a really great feature. I love that you can get all your navigation instruments up on the MFD. You don’t have to look around because it’s all right there in front of you. It took a little while to transition to the glass cockpit, but now when I hop back behind steam gauges, I notice that I’m really used to the glass cockpit being right there.”

WHAT’S IT LIKE TO WORK WITH BELL?

“...FROM WHAT I’VE SEEN IF SOMETHING GOES WRONG, BELL IS THERE. THEY’RE GREAT AT LOOKING AFTER THE CUSTOMER.”

“When I think of Bell, I think of the 206. It’s really exciting that Bell’s been able to develop and evolve on that platform. The development of the Bell 505 is pretty impressive. To come out with this brand-new helicopter and design that’s affordable and competitive in the market is a testament to their continued growth of their rotorcraft. There’s a lot of companies here interested in getting a 505 for their operations now. That really says something about how much people want the machine.

Our leadership does most of the communicating between Bell and the company, but from what I’ve seen, if something goes wrong, Bell is there. Bell wants to know what’s going on and they want to fix it. They’re great at looking after the customer and the way some other companies look after their customers isn’t quite the same.”