

Gyroplane World Tour Completed



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There are a number of ways to travel around the world. One way is to do it the fastest in order to set a world record. Another way is to take your time, and visit the parts of the world you want to visit. A married couple from Germany chose the "trip of a lifetime" route.

Melanie and Andreas Stütz, who started their Gyroplane World Tour in spring of 2009, arrived back safely in Germany this fall. The successful completion of their adventure fulfilled a long-cherished childhood dream; a dream they wanted to accomplish before having their own children. As a child growing up in Eastern Germany, Melanie had always dreamed of travelling without any frontiers. As a boy in Western Germany, Andreas watched the children's television series "Robbi, Tobbi und das Fliewatütü". His childhood dream was going on a world tour like the character Tobbi in a vehicle that could do the following: fly ("Fliegen"), float on the water ("wasser") and drive like a car ("tüüt").

In 2006, the Stütz family had their first test flight in an aircraft similar to the "Fliewatütü", a gyroplane. With a little imagination, the gyroplane fits the definition. Using floats a gyroplane can land on water and, if necessary, be driven to and refuelled directly at the filling station. In 2007/2008, the two adventurers received their sport pilot license. Then in spring 2009, they started their world flight with planned stops in Europe, Africa, Australia, New Zealand, USA and South America.

In Europe Melanie and Andreas followed the course of the pilgrimage route "Way of St. James" starting from an airfield near Berlin. They flew through France, over the snowy Pyrenees, across the Spanish Atlantic Coast to Santiago de Compostela and to Cape Finisterre. A complete power failure on board, flying with poor visibility over cloud-covered mountains and a fierce thunderstorm created more excitement than they had

hoped for, especially so early in the journey.

The pilot couple continued their dream tour in southern Africa. They flew low over elephants, zebras and water buffalo herds. From above they enjoyed a blaze of colors, the lush green of the Okavango, the snow white of the salt lakes and the bright orange of the highest sand dunes in the world.

An engine failure in Namibia caused an emergency landing on a dirt road in the middle of a seemingly deserted desert. However, within 15 minutes they found themselves surrounded by armed security forces, a special commando unit of the Namibian military.

Later, a defective card printer, the rejection of the European aero-medical confirmation and the lack of insurance for the gyroplane threatened to end the flight adventure in Australia. However, they succeeded in taking off and experienced Australia from the air. The flight in the gyroplane led through the eucalyptus forests of the Dividing Range to the East Coast and from there towards Cairns. Due to an approaching storm and heavy rains on the coast it was no longer possible to continue



the flight. Melanie and Andreas could only continue their journey in New Zealand. There the couple flew in a formation of five gyrocopters from the northern mystical "Lord of the Rings" islands to the southern tip and back again.

In the United States they planned to fly from the State of Washington via Oregon to California. Due to the attacks of 9/11 special provisions apply to this category of flights. For more than three weeks their flying adventures seemed to be at risk in the land of opportunity. Finally Melanie and Andreas were able to take off in spite of sleepless nights in Seattle. They flew along the West Coast, over the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco, past the Hollywood dream factory to their final destination in Los Angeles.

For the last leg of the gyroplane world tour the Stütz's travelled to Argentina. Weeks of negotiations, visits by six authorities and a personal letter from the President of the Argentine Civil Aviation Authority were required before the gyroplane could finally take off from an airfield near Buenos Aires. The pilots flew through Argentina along the Río Uruguay, the Iguazú Falls and further on to the Brazilian coastline. The last flight of the gyroplane was past the beaches of Copacabana and Ipanema. As one of the final highlights of their adventure, Melanie and Andreas Stütz circled around the Statue of Christ the Redeemer in Rio de Janeiro in their gyroplane.

The low flying, especially in an open cockpit, gave Melanie and Andreas a unique and multi-sensory perspective of the beauty of this earth. Melanie enthusiastically says, "When flying over beaches I looked down at the surf, smelled and felt the sea breeze and even tasted the sea salt."

The solidly manufactured gyrocopter MTO Sport of the German AutoGyro GmbH resisted even extreme weather conditions, such as heavy turbulences in New Zealand.

During their world tour Melanie and Andreas visited projects of the children's fund, Terre des Hommes, in South Africa,



India, Thailand, Peru and Bolivia. They interviewed children and adults about their dreams. The couple learned in discussions that dreams are an important key to development in life. Andreas Stütz says, "People who pursue a dream during their lives

have a strong motivation to overcome resistance and adversity." With the achievement of their world flight, Melanie and Andreas want to encourage others to cross frontiers and to achieve their dreams.

The world flight adventure has been documented on film, the first parts are already available on DVD. The DVD is available in both German and English. A book about the adventure will be published in the German speaking markets in Spring 2011. With the marketing of the adventure Melanie and Andreas Stütz are supporting the children's fund Terre des Hommes, to help make childhood dreams come true.

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