

The following pilot report was received from Darell on 24 January 2003.

Darell's "Snoopy" Vampire tale

I saw "Snoopy" as she is now known advertised on the Web and as I was looking to buy an ultralight I fell in love with her design. I e-mailed the then owner Paul O'MALLEY in Sydney and obtained further photos and info of her. After some negotiation I travelled to Sydney to have a look at her personally. When I saw the little beauty I told Paul, "She is mine".



I stayed the night with Paul and his family and looked at some videos of her flying and checked out the documentation. The next day I had her on the trailer and to took her home to Brisbane. I then set about becoming a member of Watts Bridge Assn. And made contact with Tony HAYES who is an ultralight instructor. I informed Tony that I had purchased a Sadler Vampire SV2 and wished to obtain an ultralight license. I'm G.A. licensed with approx 2500hrs on various types. (Anyway enough about the license).

The next weekend I introduced Tony to SNOOPY, THE LOOK ON HIS FACE WAS PRICELESS, I don't know whether it was, shock horror or what the hell is this. He said, "how in the bloody hell am I going to fit into that thing if I am going to test fly it". After some pushing, prodding and inspecting Tony finally got himself seated in the aircraft and strapped in. He taxied out onto the



strip and did some strip runs. He was unable to get the nose to come off the ground. Being a very cautious man Tony decided to do some further investigation into the design of the aircraft. He made contact with Paul and other known Vampire pilots who advised him of the characteristics of the Vampire. Tony was not impressed with what he had been told and decided to do weight and balance

and a complete airframe inspection with the help of his good mate Roy GILBY. Snoopy was gutted and inspected from the nose wheel to the tail booms. No problems were found other than a repair to the nose wheel mounting area, where she had experienced a heavy landing some time back and had been repaired by Kirk SUTTON.

Testing continued but Tony could not get the nose wheel to come unstuck. We decided to take her to Kingaroy and use the sealed strip for further testing. On this occasion after many strip runs and speed checking with a vehicle we were able to get the nose wheel off the ground. One of the problems we found was that the A.S.I. was over reading by about 15kts, so in actual fact when we thought we were at rotation speed 45-50kts she was only doing 30-35kts. This problem was rectified by moving the pitot to the nose of the aircraft rather than under the wing near the main wheel strut. We did not fly her at this time..

On return to home base I continued my ultralight endorsement and obtained my license.

NOW THE GOOD PART*****

The next weekend after obtaining my license I took SNOOPY to Wondai Airport,(3000mtrs. gravel and grass surface). After a through check and engine run up I taxied out onto the strip and made 2 high-speed runs. At 45kts I could feel that she wanted to fly. So with sweaty hands and a few Hail Mary's I lined up and opened the taps. I held her on the strip until I showed 50kts. I then made a quick back stick move and she leapt into the air. Caught me completely by surprise. She was, I imagine, like her namesake VAMPIRE. I eased the stick forward and she continued to climb at 1000fpm. At 500ft I reduced the power and continued to climb to circuit height. Once at 1000ft I levelled off and trimmed out at 70kts. She was extremely sensitive to control input. I found that once in the cruise configuration you had to leave the rudders alone otherwise you would fishtail all over the sky. I made three touch and goes on that occasion and could not upset her. No flap on take off, full flap for landings. I found that 45kts was around the right rotation speed. Down final full flap at 50kts over the threshold at 45 and gently flare. Once the mains contacted the ground it was very difficult to hold the nose off. She has exceptional directional control on the ground as well as in the air. Obviously the Hail Mary's worked.



I would still own SNOOPY except I was under a lot of pressure to buy a 2 seater. I hope this little story may help some other new Vamp owner to better understand the characteristics of a Sadler Vampire.

Darell