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APRIL 2021 | VOLUME 16 | NUMBER 4

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# COPA<sup>®</sup> Pilot



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The Flight  
Debrief

JASON SHARP



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Photo credit: The late Gregory Akers.

## MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

» Getting to Know COPA Pilots

# Mountain High

French COPA Member Hervé Liboureau Takes Advantage of His Beautiful Surroundings

by Kim Blonigen

*“... took my dad and I up for a flight above the highest Pyrenees mountain ... That gave me the aviation bug and I knew one day I had to be a pilot!”*

At age 8, Hervé Liboureau explains that a kept promise from his doctor to take him for a ride in his airplane if he took some bad-tasting medicine was what gave him the aviation bug. He knew after that flight that someday he wanted to be a pilot. It would be 32 years later that he had the time and finances to become a certified aviator and a couple more years to own his “dream airplane.” Whether he’s flying or trekking, Liboureau enjoys views of which many would be envious.

**COPA PILOT:** Can you provide a short summary of your life?

**LIBOUREAU:** I was born in 1968 in Loches, a small city located in central France, known for its medieval Loire Valley castle. From age three, I grew up in Lourdes, located in southwestern France, in the foothills of the Pyrenees mountains. I have a double Masters of Science degree in telecommunication and imaging from Telecom SudParis, part of the Institut Polytechnique de Paris.

I worked most of my career in telecommunication and software, starting in 1995 with a small company called Cisco Systems with only 2,000 employees. Then my colleagues and I developed a startup called Tahoe Networks, which we sold to Nokia in the early 2000s. My next move was to BlackBerry, where I was the managing director for Europe and signed contracts with Angela Merkel, presented new products to the press with tennis great Boris Becker and inked a large deal with Airbus. I enjoyed the work as it was fun and helped the company receive great exposure.

**COPA PILOT:** Do you have any unique hobbies besides flying?

**LIBOUREAU:** I have a deep sea boat license but now that I’m living in Zermatt, Switzerland, I am more around the mountains. I started skiing at 3 years old in the Pyrenees mountains and still enjoy downhill and backcountry skiing about 40 days a year. I am also a long-distance runner and have completed the Paris marathon, and the 2019 Matterhorn Ultraks Extreme, a





demanding course that requires mountain and altitude experience (<https://youtu.be/YFLu06rNpk8>). My longest trail run has been 105 km and 10,000 feet up through the Burgundy vineyards. In the U.S., I privately ran the course of the Grand Canyon Rim2Rim2Rim, (approximately 50 miles) and others including the marathon in Leadville, Colorado, with heights up to 13,200 feet, and 50 miles in the Jemez mountains of New Mexico. My current big project is climbing all of the mountains of the Alps that reach 4,000 meters or higher. I'm currently at 47 out of 82 and summited the three highest last summer.

**COPA PILOT:** When did you think about becoming a pilot? Was there something that sparked it?

**LIBOUREAU:** When I was 8 years old, I was sick and at the family doctor's office where I read a kid's book about airplanes. When the doctor came, he saw me reading the book and asked if I had ever been in an airplane. When I told him I hadn't, he said he'd take me up in his airplane when I was feeling better. I sincerely thought he was saying that to

get me to swallow the horrible medicine he gave me, but three weeks later on a beautiful, sunny day he showed up at our home and took my dad and I up for a flight above the highest Pyrenees mountain in his Socata TB9. That gave me the aviation bug and I knew one day I had to be a pilot! As a college student, I had no money for flying lessons, then I was married, eventually had three children and a very busy business life with a lot of travel. Many times, I considered



**LIBOUREAU USES HIS SR22** to commute for work and also for personal use and says he has already landed in 23 different countries and 180 different airports.



**HERVÉ LIBOUREAU** in 2012 after landing in his just purchased 2007 SR22 G3 GTS.





*"I had been admiring it in flight magazines and it became my 'dream airplane.'"*

joining a flying club near Paris but I didn't want to be away from my family even more than I already was.

**COPA PILOT:** When did you take your first flight lesson and receive your private certificate? Did you fly much after receiving it?

**LIBOUREAU:** When I was 40 years old and recently divorced, I moved to Lausanne, Switzerland. My work, flat and the airport were all within five minutes of each other and I had the time and money for flight lessons. In September 2009, I joined an aeroclub at Lausanne La Blécherette Airport (LSGL) and started working toward my private pilot certificate in a 160-HP Robin DR400. By summer 2010, I had earned my pilot's certificate and started traveling in the club's DR40. Not long after, I took transition training for the

Cirrus and then rented multiple SR20s and SR22s.

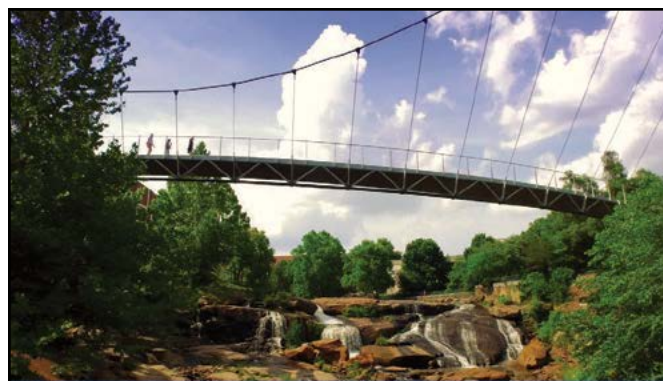
**COPA PILOT:** Do you have any other ratings? If so, what are they and when were they acquired?

**LIBOUREAU:** In 2012, I passed my Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) IFR SEP, practicing mainly in France, the UK and Switzerland. In early 2020 I had started to prepare to get my FAA Commercial license (CPL) and was ready to take the written test, but now the exam cannot be taken outside of the U.S. so it is part of my plan for 2021.

**COPA PILOT:** How did you learn about the Cirrus?

**LIBOUREAU:** I had been admiring it in flight magazines and it became my "dream airplane." Back in 2010 when I received my private certificate, there weren't many Cirrus aircraft in Europe.

(continued on page 18)



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**LIBOUREAU TAKES OFF TO BEAUTIFUL VIEWS OF THE ALPS.** The Matterhorn, on the right, is easy to recognize due to its pyramid shape. Mont Blanc, the highest mountain of the Alps, is in the background just left of the Matterhorn.

(continued from page 16)

Being Austrian, the Diamond DA40 was popular in flying clubs, but the Cirrus started becoming more available.

**COPA PILOT:** Do you own, lease, partner on your Cirrus or are you a member of a flying club that has a Cirrus?

**LIBOUREAU:** I started out renting the Cirrus from the French importer

Aerolithe at Le Plessis Belleville Airport (LFPP) and another rental company at Toussus-le-Noble Airport (LFPN) near Paris. But after I received my IFR rating, I purchased a 2007 SR22 G3 GTS (N978SR) with an Avidyne 430W with DME, MLS770 satellite. I added a Garmin Flight Stream 210 and BlueMax avionics upgrades, TKS Ice Protection and onboard oxygen which is very useful in the Alps. She was beautifully maintained with less than 300 hours Time Since New (TSN). I even became friends with Othmar Iseli, the previous owner.

**COPA PILOT:** What sort of flying do you do – personal, business or both?

**LIBOUREAU:** I have been commuting to work in Paris, France; London, England; Dusseldorf, Germany and Amsterdam in The Netherlands. My rule of thumb is up to 500 NM, I'm more efficient with the Cirrus than flying commercial and it's



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➤ **HERVÉ AND HIS FRIEND JULIA** on their longest leg while flying through the Greek Islands, Aegean Sea and Cyprus. There was no available stops on the flight from Cyprus to North Macedonia due to the Turkey/Greece conflict and military zone activity.

so much more enjoyable. I always have a backup plan for weather as storms or icing are a clear “no-go.”

For long weekends or vacation, I love to fly to a variety of locations and have already landed in 23 different countries and 180 different airports, from one with a 480-meter long runway to Zurich International!

**COPA PILOT:** Do you have a favorite flight, and/or one you take often?

**LIBOUREAU:** I love a short flight around the Matterhorn and going for a quick pizza in Locarno, Ticino (the Italian part of Switzerland) with approach over Lago Maggiore. Also the flight to Corsica or Sardinia Islands, starting VFR above the Alps and then over the French Riviera and Mediterranean Sea for a weekend on the Island is pure pleasure.

**COPA PILOT:** What do you like most about flying?

**LIBOUREAU:** The freedom and flexibility for travel. Personally, I'm constantly learning and once settled in cruise just clearing the mountains and experiencing the beauty around is a never-ending, wonderful feeling.

**COPA PILOT:** Since you've flown both internationally and in the U.S. what do you consider the biggest differences?

**LIBOUREAU:** When flying in the U.S. I have always been in a rented Cirrus SR2X and with a local flight instructor so it would be difficult to judge. From what I experienced, it seems there is much more simplicity and friendliness in general aviation in the U.S. than many of the European countries, but there are definitely some amazing places in Europe to fly.

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6HX	1HY	2RY
6HY	2HY	4RZ
5HZ	7HZ	3SA
7HZ	8HZ	4SA
9HZ	9HZ	5SA
5IA	6IA	3SB
6IA	9IA	5SB
2JB	3JB	9SB
6JB	9JB	5SD
7JB	9JB	6SD
3JC	4JC	7SD
5JD	3JE	8SD
3JE	9JE	2SE
2JF	3JG	4SE
3JG	3JH	6SE
3JH	3JL	7SE
5JM	4JN	8SH
8JN	6JP	9SH
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3JQ	4JQ	7SL
6JQ	6JQ	9SL
8JQ	8JQ	9SL

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## MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

**COPA PILOT:** When did you join COPA, and how did you hear about it?

**LIBOUREAU:** As I was reading magazines about the Cirrus, I had heard about COPA and joined as soon as I started flying one. Since early 2010, I have never missed reading an issue of the *COPA Pilot* magazine, it's the only paper magazine I keep and archive on my bookshelves!

**COPA PILOT:** Do you frequent the forums? What COPA events have you attended – CPPP, CDM, PIC, regional activities, Migration?

**LIBOUREAU:** I was registered for the COPA European Migration 2016 in Kalamata, Greece, but due to unplanned work commitments, I had to cancel last minute. I attended the European Migration 2019 in Maribor, Slovenia, and was registered for event in 2020 in South

France ... hopefully we'll be able to make it happen in 2021.

**COPA PILOT:** If you have volunteered for something within COPA, can you explain what made you decide to?

**LIBOUREAU:** I participated in some calls about IT redesign and international requirements, but I was in the middle of changing jobs and couldn't be too involved. It is definitely something I wish to contribute to now that I have more time.

**COPA PILOT:** What do you think the benefits are of being a member of COPA?

**LIBOUREAU:** Learning and sharing. I can't imagine any reason why a Cirrus owner or a regular Cirrus pilot wouldn't be a member.

**COPA PILOT:** What are your future plans? Are there any big trips, licenses or different aircraft on the radar?

**LIBOUREAU:** Besides the FAA CPL I mentioned, I also have an EASA Mountains Wheel extension on the wish list. Likely regulation will force me to complete an IFR EASA conversion. It's great that the FAA and EASA are working closer together for GA but there is still so much protectionism that it still has quite a way to go. Last fall, we had an amazing flight experience through the Greek Islands, Aegean Sea and Cyprus and when possible this year, we'll fly to Portugal, Azores, Gran Canarias and Madeira. I also still have Iceland, Greenland and maybe even an Atlantic crossing on my bucket list. ☺



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