

Tech Dummy

By Riaan Struwig



Confused about paramotors? Read this.

Choosing a paramotor

There are many paramotors on the market. Some are winners, some are OK, and others have fallen behind the technology race. Hmmmm. How can you know which is which? As a new pilot, you can't, but many try by reading manufacturer's web sites which all claim their products are best. The fact is that no paramotor manufacturer excels in every pilot weight category. Each pilot is a unique case and several critical factors must be considered.

As a new pilot, you will not be able to determine the best choice on your own. What's interesting is that people often believe what they want to believe. Read on to learn how to avoid the pitfalls of choosing the wrong paramotor.

Tip: choose light

For foot launching, one of the most important criteria in choosing a paramotor is you want the lightest paramotor possible. All foot launchers eventually discover this. However, manufacturers have been known to misrepresent their empty weights. We've weighed many but publish only some numbers because some manufacturer's weight specs are "different" than what we measured and that can lead to confusion. Call us for weights that aren't published and if we have them, we'll share them with you.

Currently the [Airconception Nitro 200](#) is the lightest power to weight paramotor in the world, Strong titanium frame and powerful, reliable leading brand engines make the Nitro 200 one of the best paramotors around. But the Nitro is not necessarily the right choice for you. Depending on your weight and height, the [PxP](#) or [FlyProducts](#) might be a better choice. That's why we offer several brands, because no single manufacturer wins in every situation.

Who can you trust?

If you are confused, you are not alone.

OK, you've seen countless web sites, most insisting that they sell the NUMBER ONE PARAMOTOR in South Africa. With everyone saying they have the best and so many models, engines, hang systems, how can someone who has never even seen

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a paramotor, let alone flown one, decide which one to buy? How?!?!

Don't worry. The answer is so simple!

You're going to love this. All you need is a little inside information on how the paramotor business works along with a little common sense and your eyes will be wide open. Here we go.

Why do manufacturers try to sell what they make?

Ever go into a Ford dealership and have a salesman try to sell you a Chevy? How about an Apple Store offering IBM laptops? The reason you don't see that is that Ford and Apple make bigger margins on the products that they manufacture. Now let's say you walk into a used car lot or a Best Buy. These retailers sell products from various manufacturers. They are not manufacturers so they have no incentive to push a particular brand. You're starting to see it, aren't you?

Avoid the biggest mistake ever

Avoid relying on advice from a manufacturer or a distributor. They are biased because they make more money if they sell you what they manufacture or distribute, so of course they are going to tell you that what they sell is the best! And it may be the best, but it might not be, and there is no amount of research or reading or YouTubing that's going to enable you to know whether what they are selling is the best for your weight, age, height, climate, and budget.

Myth 1: buying from the manufacturer means better service

In the Paramotor industry, manufacturers have the best web sites, and it's money well spent. Some manufacturers do more retail sales than their entire dealer network combined. What would Ford dealers do if the Ford factory started selling direct? Anyway, the warm and fuzzy feeling you get talking to the manufacturer with the fancy web site may not help in two very important areas: instruction and service. Many customers who buy a paramotor direct from the manufacturer are far from the factory, which in some cases is nothing more than a barn. You are often better off purchasing from and training with a local school/instructor who makes half as much as the factory on a direct sale. The local school/instructor is less likely to be biased, and knows you, your equipment and local weather patterns. The manufacturer's favourite customers are the ones who buy direct and are far away because they don't have to deal with them when the paramotor has an issue. And they ALL have issues. Of course, there are exceptions. In some cases, it makes sense to work directly with a manufacturer or distributor, especially when they are in your area. However, we recommend whenever possible working with an instructor at the dealer level in order to increase your chances of getting the best possible advice.

Myth 2: buying from the manufacturer is cheaper

Some manufacturers counting on the fact that you aren't concerned about finding an instructor. Those manufacturers hope that you are like most shoppers in that the number one priority is getting the best gear at a great price, and sort out the training later. But the problem with that line of thinking is that instructors need that gear commission because the training fee is not

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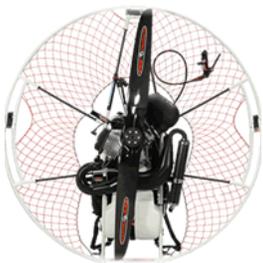
enough. Most instructors charge R1000 more if you already have a wing and a motor. So, if the manufacturer un cuts dealers and offers you a R500 discount, you would actually be losing R500 by purchasing from the manufacturer.

Other Myths

There are many other myths... you need "lots of power", "pull start is the best..." "must have clutch motor...", and a tandem capable unit for flying with friends and family. Yup, you'll probably find someone that will say what you want to hear, especially if they are too far away to have to train you.

The answer

So in case you haven't figured it out yet, whoever ever possible, buy gear from your local school/instructor. Whether that's Epic Aviation or any of the many qualified instructors around the country. If Centurion, Gauteng is too far for you, call us and we'll give you a recommendation for an instructor in your area. Remember, when you call the number on that slick paramotor web site, don't forget to ask if you are talking to manufacturer or distributor of paramotor gear.



Credit - links:

www.footflyer.com

www.epic-aviation.co.za

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