

NAME THAT PLANE

Stits Playboy

Known for his “world’s smallest aircraft” record holders, Ray Stits was asked by several people to design an airplane that an amateur builder could produce at home. In 120 days he was able to design, construct, and fly the prototype SA-3A Playboy (the SA-1 and SA-2 series airplanes were his aforementioned record setting aircraft). The prototype (powered by an 80 horsepower Continental) was flown for the first time in 1953. Construction was a wooden wing and welded steel-tube-type fuselage, all covered in fabric. The single-place aerobatic SA-3A was to be powered by a 65 to 90 horsepower Continental engine, and was a sprightly performer with an empty weight of only about 600 pounds. Mr. Stits sold both plans and kits for the design, and was soon to introduce a two-place side-by-side version called the SA-3B Playboy. He was later to continue his fame in the light plane field as the developer of the Stits line of flame-resistant aircraft covering materials.

The first in the series of Van's Aircraft designed by Richard VanGrunsven, the Van's Aircraft RV-1, was a modified Playboy and directly lead to the Van's Aircraft RV-3 and the highly successful RV line of aircraft.

Specifications Stits Playboy (SA-3A)

(From Wikipedia)

General characteristics

- **Crew:** one
- **Length:** 17 ft 4 in
- **Wingspan:** 22 ft 2 in
- **Height:** 6 ft 4 in
- **Wing area:** 96 sq ft
- **Empty weight:** 600 lb
- **Gross weight:** 902 lb
- **Fuel capacity:** 14 US gallons
- **Powerplant:** 1 × [Continental C-85](#) four cylinder, four-stroke piston engine, 85 hp

Performance

- **Maximum speed:** 145 mph (126 kn)
- **Cruise speed:** 130 mph (110 kn)
- **Range:** 400 mi (348 nmi)
- **Service ceiling:** 12,000 ft
- **Rate of climb:** 1,050 ft/min

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