



Finsterwalder Perfex

The "Fexes" of the Munich based company are a guarantee for light-weight construction, well considered details, perfect finishing, forgiving flight characteristics and the possibility of packing down short to 2 meters length. The Perfex is very good natured to launch, characteristic are a low minimum take-off speed and excellent directional stability. It proves itself to be a forgiving beginners glider in all flight situations, it is completely neutral by normal thermalling, and if tight spirals are flown, it has a tendency to want to return to normal glide – the same applies if side slipping is provoked by circling too slowly. Direction change is reliable and almost immediate. Minimum sink is impressive for a glider of this classification. Whilst maintaining a true course, the pressure on the control bar increases steadily when flown above the trim speed. The slowing airflow over the wing is easily recognised and the Perfex stall occurs softly and controllably. The glider can be landed in a controlled manner even in turbulent air, and the ground effect is minimal. Due to the top of the A-frame being positioned so far back on the keel tube, the Perfex allows for a very effective flare when landing. Test pilot Martin Jung: "A single surface glider for beginners and leisure pilots with uncomplicated flight characteristics and good gliding performance at trim speed.

Surface: 16,2 m²; span: 9,4 m; certified launch weight: 85 - 125 kg; packing measurements: 5,5/3,7/1,95 m; weight with glider cover: 23 kg; DHV 1-2; pilot group: beginners, junior pilots, pleasure pilots; other sail sizes: none; price: Eur 2680; tested 11/92;

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Finsterwalder Lightfex

The Lightfex is Finsterwalder's solution for light-weight novice pilots. The small A-Frame and a weight of only 22 kg simplifies matters at launch for smaller pilots. The Lightfex launches just as it should for a beginner's glider. Steering is characterised by directness and ease of handling. This glider guarantees pleasant thermalling, without any tendency to slip into the curve, and no need for high-siding. If the glider is stalled, it will only tip over to one side, when forced to do so by the pilot, otherwise it automatically corrects itself straight ahead. One achieves respectable performance/ glide angle up to speeds of 50 km/h, flown any faster than this, it quickly becomes obvious that the Lightfex is not a high performance glider. Prior to reaching a top speed of 70 km/h, the pres-

sure of the speedbar progressively becomes greater and the sink rate rapidly increases. Landing the glider is simple due to the minimal ground effect, and excellent tracking at low speeds.

Test pilot Martin Jung: "The Lightfex is a forgiving beginners glider for pilots up to 70 kg. It offers sufficient performance also for pleasure pilots, and handling that establishes confidence."

Surface: 14 m²; span: 9,0 m; certified launch weight: 85 - 110 kg; packing measurements: 5,3/3,5/1,85 m; weight with glider cover: 23 kg; DHV 2; pilot group: beginners, junior pilots, pleasure pilots; other sail sizes: none; price: Eur 2680; tested 5/92;

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Finsterwalder Funfex

The Funfex caused some excitement when it first came on the market, due to its distinctive negative dihedral which was said to improve the lift distribution especially when turning.

The glider's handling is playfully easy, making thermalling and manoeuvring near to the hillside child's play. Due to the low span, this light-weight glider is non-demanding on the ground and simple to launch. The surface lies very stable in the air at all speeds. The stall speed is approx. 24 km/h and the Funfex drops the nose in

a wave like movement to pick up the air flow again. Stalling when turning also proceeds softly.

Handling is very direct but not oversensitive. Turning in still air or in thermals is relatively non tiring, handling – a dream. This intermediate's performance is good; up to 50 km/h the Funfex need not be shy of comparisons with gliders of a higher classification.

By fast flight, the speedbar pressure is not especially high even above 80 km/h, and the Funfex shows almost no tendency to yaw.

The landing characteristics are not over demanding even for junior pilots, the ground effect is moderate; mistakes on the last landing approach can be corrected quite well.

The air flow can be cleanly halted with a hearty flare.

Test pilot Gerhard Steinberg: "A performance strong bundle of fun for junior and pleasure pilots!"

Surface: 16 m²; span: 9,4 m; double sail: 60 %; certified launch weight: 83 - 120 kg; packing measurements: 5,5/3,8/1,95 m; weight with glider cover: 25,5 kg; DHV 2; pilot group: pleasure pilots; other sail sizes: none; price: Eur 3195; tested 1/88;

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Finsterwalder Speedfex

With the Speedfex, Finsterwalder has further perfected the good finishing details to which one is already accustomed. In spite of the VG and complicated hardware, the glider conforms to the company philosophy in as far as it can still be rigged down to 2,05 meters. When launching, the glider raises from the shoulders after only a couple of steps – the take-off speed is average. When flown with the VG open, the glider retains the chosen bank in the thermal, with tightened VG it tends to slip slightly inwards, which can be corrected by high siding. The good directional stability is noticeable independent of the VG position. The trim speed by open VG lies by 36 km/h, at 83 km/h the pressure on the speedbar allows for no further acceleration. With the tightened VG, the maximum speed (by much lower speedbar pressure) is approx. 92 km/h. The time taken for directional change is pleasantly short with open VG, by tight VG, markedly longer. The stall characteristics are absolutely uncritical – with open VG, a shallow dive follows the stall, with minimal loss of height, with the VG tight, the stall is still unspectacular, the loss of height slightly greater. Equally unproblematic is a stall when turning – in both fully open and tight VG positions, there is only a quite minimal tendency to slide inwards. The pitch character and loss of height are comparable to the stall in level flight. Landing can be described as relatively simple on the whole, the ground effect distance is average, and the flare moment easy to recognize.

Test pilot Thomas Rauch: "I was pleased by the clean finishing of the framework, the short pack possibility without loose nuts and bolts, the forgiving stall characteristics and the good directional stability."

Surface: 13,9 m²; span: 10,0 m; double sail: 85%; certified launch weight: 100 - 140 kg; packing measurements: 8,5/3,9/2,05 m; weight with glider cover: 31,5 kg; DHV 2; pilot group: pleasure pilots; other sail sizes: none; price: Eur 4390; tested 02/97;

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Finsterwalder Airfex

The Airfex is Finsterwalder's intermediate for light pilots between 50 and 70 kg body weight. The glider was not tested by Fly and glide.

Surface: 13,8 m²; span: 9,0 m; double sail: 75%; certified launch weight: 75 - 110 kg; packing measurements: 5,2/3,75/1,85 m; weight with glider cover: 22 kg; DHV 2; pilot group: junior pilots, pleasure pilots; other sail sizes: none; price: Eur 2990;

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