

LA SENORITA

Dave Goodenough clears his workbench to build a Brazilian beauty

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A short while ago I saw a webpage that highlighted a range of model kits I'd not seen before but I later found that some are stocked by 4-Max Models. Delving further saw me lusting after a few of these curvaceous lovelies and mentally calculating the cost of both buying and importing a couple for myself. Throwing caution to the wind I contacted the manufacturer, Bluesky Airmodels, to price up both purchase and postage of my choices. Whilst the price of the kits seemed reasonable enough (sold in US Dollars for export from Brazil) the freight cost made it more cost-effective for me to buy three models.

The following review is my honest opinion of just one of the model kits that I purchased for my own use; I have no vested interest in the manufacturer at all. There will be reviews on the two other models I sourced as time and weather allows.



As it comes from the box. Lots of lovely laser-cutting and with a rolled pictorial instruction sheet.

A LISSOM LOVELY

I don't know if it's something innate, but I do like curved shapes, especially when that lovely blend of curves is rendered into model form. 'La Senorita' ('Miss' in English) is one such kit that carries the form well. I may be an old recidivist when it comes to ignoring current 'woke' thinking but the model's name and curvy outline fits its given title. This kit is the original 1500mm wingspan version but there is a slightly larger 'Version 2' at 1800mm span available. Okay, let's open the box and see what I bought.

There was a lot of air in the box as Bluesky appear to use a standard sized carton for their kits, even this smaller one. But the bubble wrapped, laser-cut sheets and small section strips, once unwrapped, looked crisply cut and of a decent quality wood. The bundles were taped inside the box to prevent them rattling around in transit, a nice touch. There's a packet of small parts too, with a 'Bluesky' key ring for good measure. Unfortunately, the 2mm fibreglass pushrod material, curled to fit in the box, was split. Enough was left undamaged to make one

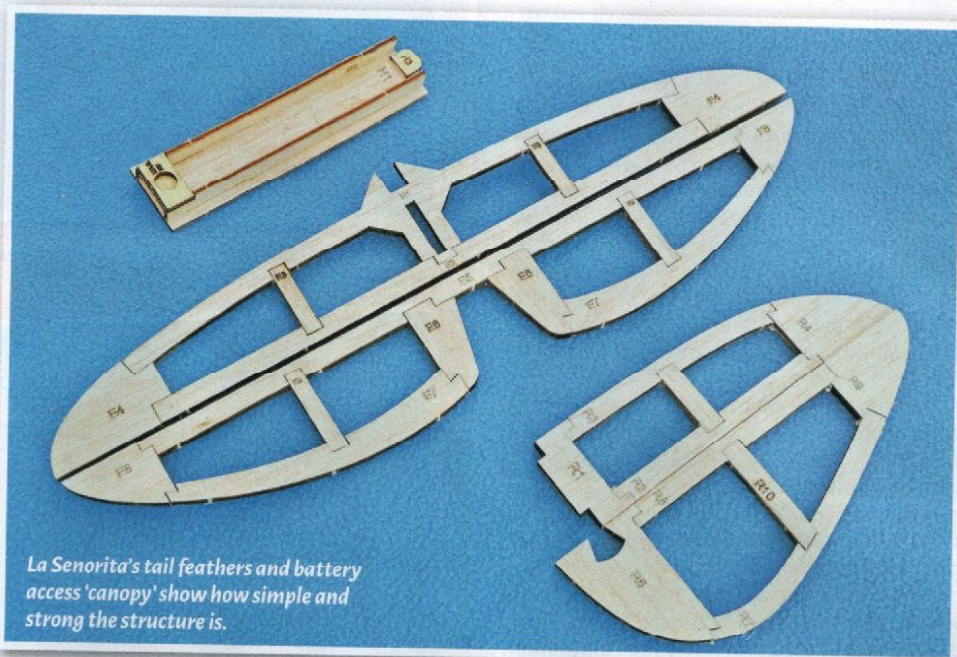
pushrod and I have other rod and wire 'in stock'. I didn't bother to claim a replacement; it wasn't worth the trouble.

No plan is supplied, just a very well laid out assembly drawing, and also a booklet with assembly instructions. Mine was in reasonable Portu-English with some 'quaint' descriptions, obviously an auto-translated and uncorrected document. It was relatively easy to follow and mentioned the model's one design quirk - it has a curved dihedral. The process of building the curve into the wing halves is covered in the instructions and I found it easy to follow, if somewhat different from the normal 'flat panel' wings I'm used to.



Wafting out into the Elkstone uplift, La Senorita is in her element.





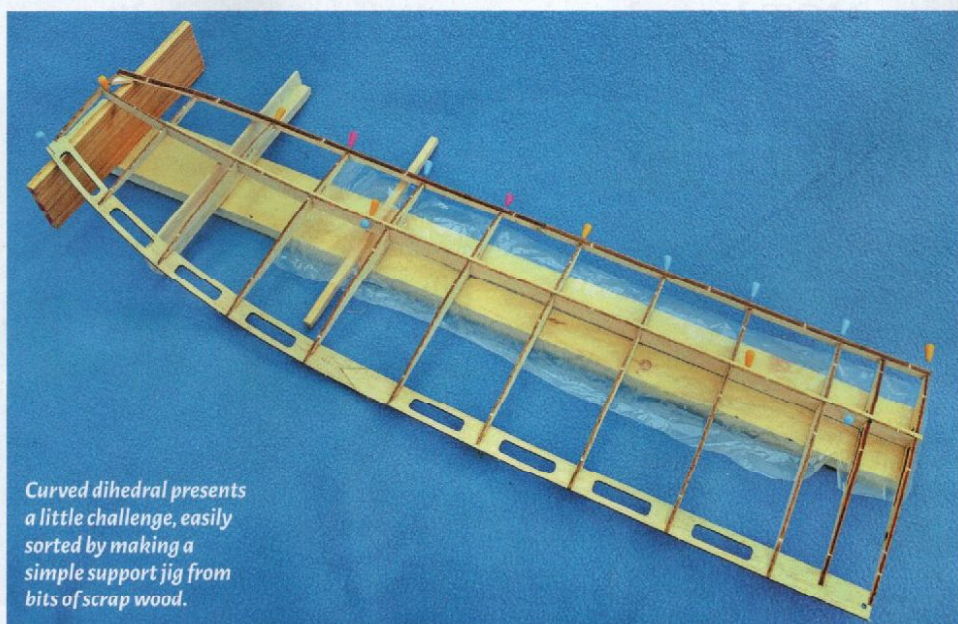
La Senorita's tail feathers and battery access 'canopy' show how simple and strong the structure is.

FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS

Despite my Sinatra-like yen to 'do it my way', I largely followed the instruction sequence almost slavishly, mindful that this model is designed to be simple to build for a near-beginner. The tailplane/elevator and fin/rudder are easily aligned and glued as per the drawing, the 'hood' (canopy) too, all simple stuff. The instructions tell you to build the wings next and a little interpretation from the 'English' instructions was needed. The construction is novel in that it's not built flat on a plan - it can't be. One, it's a curved structure and two, there's no plan. Assemble the ribs

onto the wing spar, glue the two trailing edge parts together and once set, wet the trailing edge unit and induce a curve by either tweaking, or in my case, placing a weight on the wing root end, putting a spacer under the tip end and then, using small weights, ease a curve into the trailing edge and letting it dry. A permanent curved 'set' in the wood is the result, following the curve of the mainspar. Do the same with the wing sheeting, remembering that the sheets are both top and bottom and any curve set into the balsa must be 'handed' left or right.

"I don't know if it's something innate, but I do like curved shapes, especially when rendered into model form"



Curved dihedral presents a little challenge, easily sorted by making a simple support jig from bits of scrap wood.

I was reluctant to clip all the bits together 'in the air' and then wick cyano into all the joints as it seemed a recipe for warping. The slots in the trailing edge were a tad too tight for easy rib fitting so I eased them with a fine file. Finally admitting that I needed a third hand, I assembled a simple jiggging support from a few spare bits and pieces of scrap wood, then rested the curved spar and trailing edge on them for (in my mind) a more accurate build. It worked for me.

Adding the ribs, spars, sheeting and leading edge as per the instructions resulted in a satisfyingly rigid wing panel and the second was assembled in the same manner.

Wing tip parts are thinner than the tip rib W12, so I dampened and eased them over a felt marker body to form an undercamber. Once dry a reinforcing scrap balsa 3mm leading edge was glued on and the tips attached to the wing ends before final sanding. The solid aluminium main wing joiner simply slides into place and the wooden dowel rear joiner is glued in place in one of the wing halves. Finally, epoxy glue the root ribs W0 in place, ensuring that there's a small tilt to them; this allows the locating tabs to fit into the fuselage former C2. The notes don't mention the angle and I forgot that it was needed and so I had to cut and re-glue the parts to fit properly; a minor annoyance.

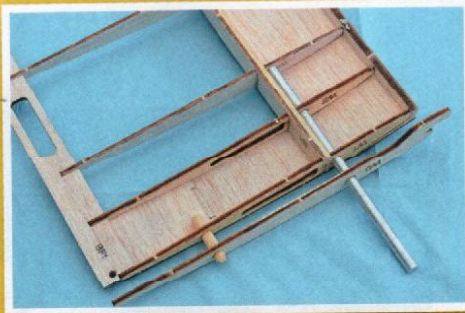
Finish the wings with your chosen covering; I used transparent film. The curved dihedral (upwards) and rib curves (downwards) mean that wrinkles are impossible to avoid on the initial top covering. Careful use of the iron and easing of the film whilst adhering it will remove the wrinkles but it takes a bit of work.

By now it was apparent that this should NOT be a beginner's first model. A third build perhaps, due to the slightly awkward wing construction and the 'we assume you know what you're doing' instructions.

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DATAFILE

Name:	La Senorita
Model type:	Electric glider
Manufactured by:	Bluesky Airmodels
Available from:	4-Max Models https://www.4-max.co.uk/aircraft-ba-la-senorita.htm
RRP:	£149.99
Wingspan:	1500mm (59")
Length:	970mm (38.2")
Weight:	570g (1.25 lbs)
Rec. power system:	PO-2830 motor, 4M-HESC30A ESC, 9 x 6 folding prop, 2S 800mAh or 2S 1000mAh LiPo
Functions (servos):	Elevator (1), rudder (1), throttle (ESC)



Wing root assembly before the final sheeting goes on. All straightforward stuff.



Pre-curving the wingtips before gluing gives a tidier top surface.



Oops! I didn't allow for the rib tilt needed for the dihedral break and this is the result. A bit of judicious sawing and an epoxied ply filler sorted it.



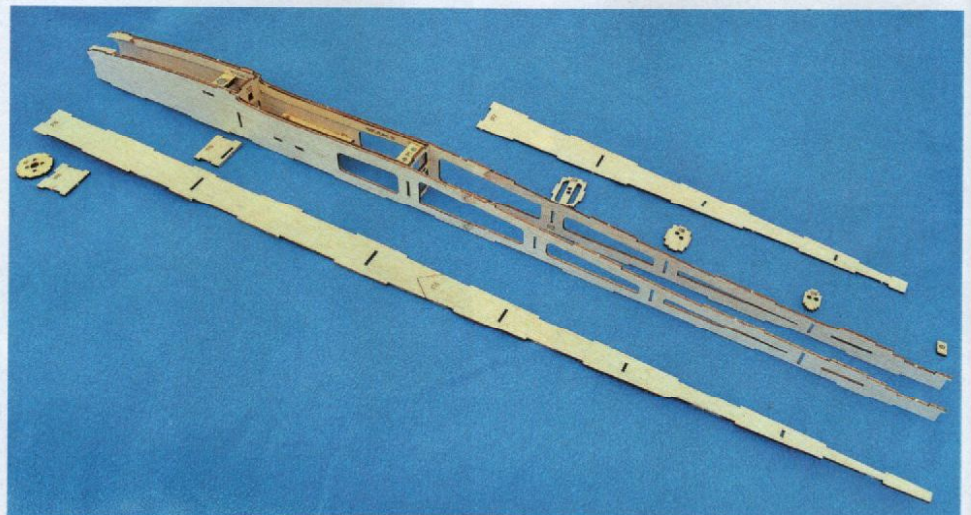
A bit of sanding was needed to make the tailplane slot fit the fuselage.

FUSELAGE

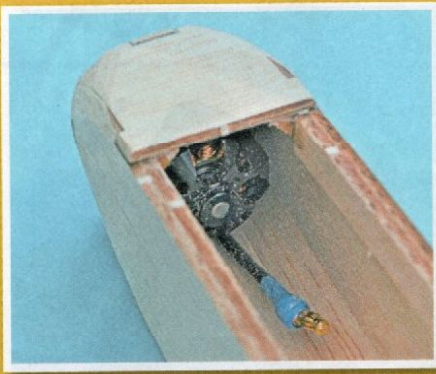
This is a self-jiggging structure and is very simple, providing you follow the notes and 'ease' the laser cut parts with sandpaper where the fit is too tight on the locating tab slots. It's close to impossible to get it wrong and the sparse instructions and pictorial outline are enough to bring the structure together quickly.

One thing worth mentioning is the nose ring/motor mount. The notes say to sand the triangle nose reinforcement to fit the ring but mine didn't need it. The fit was perfect and only needed epoxy to glue it in place. Even motor downthrust is taken care of by the angled laser-cut fuselage side.

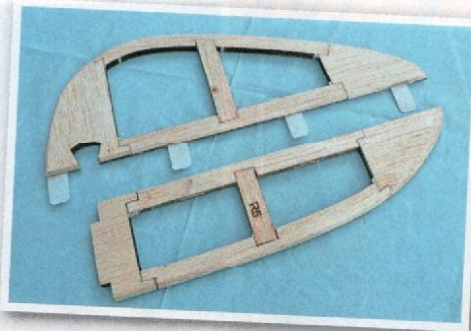
The preferred motor is a nominal '2212' in the notes, a 22mm diameter outrunner of 1400kV. That equates almost perfectly to the Multiplex Roxy C22-20-20. I could find none in stock anywhere in the UK, or any other equivalent 22mm dia. units available. I did find a 28mm diameter Overlander motor in my 'waiting to be used' drawer and it just fitted in the nose, with care taken to keep the power 'tails' away from the outrunner's rotating body. The 2822/27 1200kV Tornado Thumper is rated at a maximum 85W, more than enough for this



Fuselage part assembled. It's all self-jiggging but the laser-cut slots needed some 'easing' to fit properly.



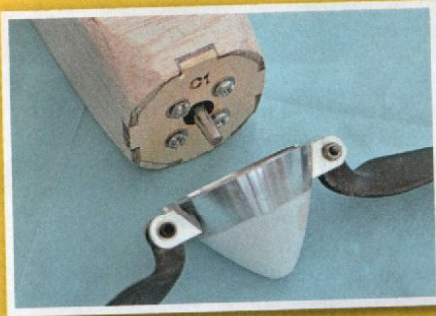
A 22mm diameter motor is recommended but my spare 28mm Thumper fitted just right, taking care to protect the motor tails from the rotating body.



Above: I used simple 'hairy hinge' strips cyanoed in place. Perfectly adequate and they have not shifted, even in a bouncy landing.



Right: Supplied T-nuts were not useable. I fitted my own M3 units and used nylon screws to secure the wing trailing edge. Even a rough-n-tumble landing didn't get them to 'let go'!



When fitted the pushrod outers form a curve through the fuselage side which makes the supplied fibreglass pushrods 'stick'. Replace with 1.0 to 1.2mm dia. piano wire and the problem is solved.



Left: The finished structure before covering starts. Nice, innit?

model at its likely weight of well under 1kg. A 30A ESC was sufficient to provide the power from a 1600mAh 2S LiPo, chosen for low power testing, driving a 9"x4" folding propeller. The motor power with this battery is probably only around 50W at most. The nose was sanded to a profile that blended into a 40mm dia. spinner. Despite a larger than recommended motor and battery the model balanced 5mm in front of the recommended C of G point.

(Since this is one of the Bluesky Airmodels kits stocked by 4-Max Models, a recommended motor set has been worked out to suit La Senorita: <https://www.4-max.co.uk/aircraft-ba-la-senorita.htm>)

FINISHING

Unusually, there are no control horns or control surface hinges supplied with the kit. I dug around in my shed drawers and unearthed some 'hairy hinge' Mylar strip, a pair of spare 20mm horns and a pair of pushrod end stoppers to fit into the horns. I opted to use my own 1mm wire pushrods instead of the 2mm fibreglass rod supplied. The pushrod exits in

the fuselage rear demand relatively tight curves that make the original fibreglass rods drag in the outer tube, but 1mm wire is adequately rigid and slides through more easily. Z-bends at the servo arms give simple no-slop, minimally intrusive connections. I opted to use cheap 12g metal gear servos. A bit of overkill but they were going spare. You would normally fit 9g servos but do stay with metal geared units.

The hinges were slid into slots cut into the tail feathers, with thick cyano used to adhere them after first completing the covering. You could also pin the hinges in place as 'belt and braces' fixings but this is a low-stress model when in flight and I felt that pinning was

unnecessary. The control deflections were set at the maximum left and right rudder possible between the elevator halves, with 8mm up and down elevator. I did allow for dual rates by setting 60% of the 'normal' settings as the rudder is large.

The final all up weight, ready to fly, was 640g.

FLYING

I bet you came here first! On a low wind day of around 7mph I pitched up at a local slope and plugged in the LiPo, all the other fettling having been done prior to leaving home. A quick check of the three functions proved all was well and the 'La Senorita' was pushed out into the breeze.

Trim was a little out, needing a bit of up elevator to counter the slightly nose heavy balance, but a few chirps of up trim sorted that. A little right rudder was needed too. Out it went quite happily whilst the trim was sorted for the prevailing conditions and once neutral on the sticks the power was eased on. In all honesty it didn't alter the flight much as the 2S battery wasn't enough for much more than a slow climb. A patch of sink proved that the model wouldn't rise out of it, barely keeping its height.



It's clenching time! Casting the little lovely out over the Peak District landscape.



Oh dear! A difficult landing shows up a fuselage weakness.



Blast! My mistake. I used cyano for the joint and it couldn't stand the poor arrival on Mother Earth. It has since been repaired and reinforced, a simple job.

A second visit to the slope with a 3S battery of around 1000mAh proved to be much better. With 30g less nose weight the C of G was spot on the recommended position and a launch into a 7 to 8mph breeze had the model climbing gradually away from the slope edge. Using the outrunner proved that the 3S battery suits the Thumper motor well, as using around 75% power gave the 'La Senorita' a steady climb. I've no doubt that this would be a good combination for flat field flying.

Being only a rudder/elevator controlled model doesn't appear to be a drawback as the 'La Senorita' is responsive and easy to pilot. At one point I'd got to 'just about see it' height and decided to quit the lift and dive down to start the process again. A little down elevator and a smidge of left rudder had the model diving fast for the deck and at a few tens of feet I eased off

the elevator, straightened the model and let it zoom up before a touch of 'down' settled her into low level lift again. That tested my doubts about the strength of the wing joiner!

After some twenty minutes of enjoying the invigorated young lady, I called 'landing right' and brought the model back in for what I thought was a reasonably good arrival, just clipping a small sedge grass clump with a wing and spinning the model round. Walking across to collect it I could see damage to the fuselage, behind the wing. Closer inspection revealed that the 'whip' of spinning the model round had broken the fuselage across the lightening holes and the cyanoed fuselage join - an area with a built-in weakness. If you build this model, I recommend reinforcing the fuselage inside, across that hole and the fuselage glue join, strengthening it with at least 1/32" (0.8mm) plywood.

Once repaired - a simple job - I returned to the slope side in similar minimal conditions and thoroughly enjoyed myself with this pretty model. Over several flights I've found it to be better in flight than I'd expected, always a bonus. It has thermalled 'from the flat' and likes slope breezes of 7mph up to around 15 mph. The fuselage reinforcement has been tested in a couple of 'clump collisions', proving that the minimal reinforcement across the glue joint was all that was needed. The curved dihedral gets many favourable comments, as does the curvaceous shape. I've a feeling I now have my new 'go-to', leave it in the car model, as it fits nicely on the back seat.

If you brave the instructions and build this model, I have no doubt that, like me, you'll find that it will become a firm all-round favourite. ✈️



All primed and polished, ready for the dance. 'La Senorita' is as pretty as a picture.