

PLANE CRAZY VITTORIO MAGNI

# The King of Autogyros

After 45 years Vittorio Magni had enough of paying through the nose to get in the air, so he did what anyone would do: design and build your own aircraft!

**B**ORN in Italy in 1938, Magni Gyro founder Vittorio always had a love for autogyros. But how did it all begin?

**Q** What first attracted you to flying?

**A** In a word, passion! When I was a child, I lived close to an airfield so I've always been curious about anything that involves flying. I then started my career at Agusta S.p.A. [AgustaWestland today]. I just loved being in the sky with the helicopters. But I wanted something different. I wanted to develop something less expensive, easy to fly, stable, and safe.

**Q** When did you start flying?

**A** I started about 45 years ago by flying a Benson autogyro glider. It had no engine and it was a single-seater so I had to fly without an instructor. At the time the autogyro was virtually unknown in Italy, so there were no instructors to teach anyone how to fly them. In fact I've never had an instructor tell me how to fly and I know have nearly 10,000 flying hours.

**Q** How did it progress from there?

**A** After a year of flying in the Benson autogyro glider I decided to add a 1600cc Volkswagen engine to the glider it worked so well I suddenly realised that the gyro would be the machine for the future, so I committed to making autogyros.



**MAIN:** One of Mr Magni's inventions. **INSET:** Vittorio has more than 10,000 hours in gyros

**Q** What happened after you left Agusta?

**A** Well, I started working for Agusta in 1956 at 18. In 1962 I was recruited as a specialist in the Helicopter Division of Montedison, acquiring experience in crop spraying and aerial disinfections.

After that I started my own company with another pilot. The company was called Elitaliana and we specialised in crop spraying. Then in 1967 due to the success of my other work I was invited to collaborate with a brand new company created to build a new light helicopter Silvercraft S.p.A. At Silvercraft, I was appointed Flight Line

Leader and obtained my helicopter licence. While all this was happening I was also importing the plans for the Benson gyroplane from America. This was going to be the base to produce Italy's first gyros.

**Q** What happened then?

**A** After the first machine was built I knew I could do so much more and started to develop a complete range of one- and two-seat gyros. Every time they seemed to work better and better.

In 1977 I also created a new company called VPM, which had a specialist skill of manufacturing composite parts. There was a huge increase in the need of composite parts from other local companies such as Agusta and Aerea, so it was set up to meet real demand.

**Q** How did working on autogyros move on from a hobby to a business?

**A** My first commercial success in the field of autogyros arrived in 1986. I sold two patents to a Spanish company called Cenemesa. The rights were for my single

seater the MT5 and a two seater called the MT7. Both of these gyros were powered by Arrow engines.

In 1996 my old company VPM became Magni Gyro. The new company had a new purpose. We were going to improve on models that were already on the market and design completely new models of autogyro as well. I feel that since the beginning we showed Magni Gyro to be well founded and capable of a good development.

**Q** You've been in the industry for many years now. But since starting up Magni Gyro, what do you feel has been your biggest achievement?

**A** There has been many, but I think it must be receiving the English Section T Certification. I think that I was also the first person to believe, and prove that the autogyro is a safe and stable machine. I think that I have helped other companies and competitors to expand market opportunities and give major job opportunities worldwide in the autogyro industry.

**Q** With all your work commitments, do you still get much time to fly and what do you enjoy flying?

**A** I don't get to fly very often anymore with work commitments. Recently I've been flying at the weekends, but that is mainly flight-testing our prototypes. I really enjoy testing our prototypes or any technical innovation!

**Q** What are you working on at the moment?

**A** Ah, that's a secret, I would like to tell you but I can't! Not right now anyway, so you'll have to wait and see!

**Q** If you're going out flying What's is your favourite autogyro?

**A** Well there is not one in particular. It all depends on what I'm going to be doing in the sky. If I want to enjoy the flight, for the sheer fun of it, I'll fly the M14. If I'm on a training flight it'll be the M16. For longer cross country flights I'll go in the M22 and if I want to be comfortable and protected by the air especially in winter-time then I'll fly the M24 Orion.

[www.magnigyro.it](http://www.magnigyro.it)



Magni has grown and grown over the years