

SPORT

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Aerobatics

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE of the INTERNATIONAL AEROBATIC CLUB



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▶ **PITTSSES IN ITALY**



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Rob Holland, now eight-time U.S. National Aerobatic Champion, is also the undisputed master of the 4-Minute Free. Photo by Evan Peers.

Above: Laura Radigan launches Jason Stephens, flying Laura's SZD 59 Acro Sailplane, from taxiway Papa during glider operations. Photo by Evan Peers.

THE BIG Pitts FLY-IN

HOW TO MAKE NEW FRIENDS, THANKS TO THE PITTS
BY ALBERTO BECCARO, IAC 2583



THIS IS A SHORT story about a small fact that turned big. At the end you can say a few aircraft gathering together is not a big event. Nevertheless, it turned into something important to me, and this is the reason I want to share it with you.

To better understand what happened it must be said that there are not too many Pittses in Italy. In *Sport Aerobatics*, on websites, and in blogs I see many pictures with several Pittses or aerobatic aircraft together, and I always think of what a great opportunity it is to have other pilots/owners to discuss and share experiences with, to push each other to improve, or just to do some more flying.

Actually, aviation in Italy is not as popular as it is in the United States, and, as everywhere, aerobatic pilots are a small part of the general aviation community. In addition, we are close to France and Germany, so aerobatic pilots are more used to CAP and Extra aircraft than Pitts, but everyone who flies a Pitts recognizes how great the airplane is.

There are less than 10 Pittses in Italy, spread around the country. Recently, another one joined, coming from the United Kingdom, where the Italian owner, Francesco, was working. He was also competing in the UK aerobatic championships. One year ago Francesco decided to accept a job in Italy, and he and his family came back — with the Pitts.

Francesco is an enthusiast and was looking for other enthusiasts to share his passion. We had some conversations without





meeting for some months; then Francesco wrote to me. “I am in contact with some other Pitts pilots, but I have not been able to meet any of them so far. What do you think about organizing a Pitts fly-in?” he asked. I and other Pittsers said, “Great idea!” and Francesco’s organization machine was up.

Shortly after, March 25, 2018, Francesco was waiting for us at Reggio Emilia Airport (LIDE). Unfortunately the weather was not very good, at least around the mountains. My trip was over flatland, and even though cloudy, the visibility was okay.

At the end we were only three Pittses: my S-2A and two S-2Bs, Francesco’s and Mario’s. Three other

WE COME FROM DIFFERENT BACKGROUNDS, BOTH WORKING AND FLYING EXPERIENCE, AND IT WAS VERY NICE AND INTERESTING TO SHARE OUR EXPERIENCES AND OPINIONS.

— ALBERTO BECCARO

Pittses were expected, two S-1s and one S-2B, but the pilots were less lucky, and they were not able to cross the Apennine Mountains, and one was kept on the ground by a delay in airworthiness review certificate renewal.

It was a great day, with people talking about their passion and experience in a friendly, nice atmosphere. The very good restaurant at the Reggio Emilia helped in creating a good mood, but no wine, please — we had to fly later on!

I know that it could seem like nothing to have a few Pittses together, but it is not so usual in Italy, and all the people were happy. We come from different backgrounds, both working and flying experience, and it was very nice and interesting to share our experiences and opinions.

The people in Reggio Emilia were also very friendly (a particular thank-you to Monica for the AFIS and airport coordination), and the three Pittses on the tarmac gathered other enthusiasts.

We ended the day with a formation pass over the airport: Three Pittses flying together is a beautiful view!

But this was not the end. On the contrary, I think this has been the start for more flights, more meetings, and more friendship. Actually, a couple of weeks later, Mario and Francesco attended a training together on formation flight.

I do not know if the Pitts attracts nice people or flying the Pitts helps in making the people nicer, but the people I met that day were excellent ones. And I think the feeling was shared: We talked about meeting again, going to fly-ins together, etc.

Many thanks to Francesco for the initiative — great job done! We made new friends, and that is always a great result.

Sometimes you do not need to organize big events to do something big. ***IAC+***

