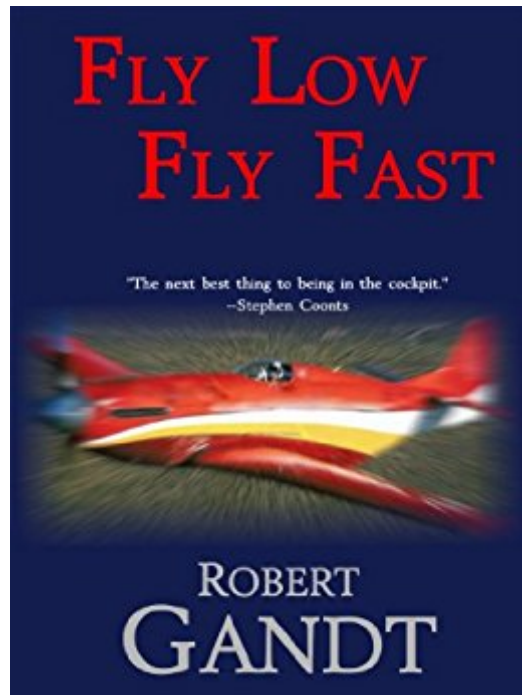




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Fly Low Fly Fast: Inside The Reno Air Races



Synopsis

This first-ever insider foray into the world's fastest and most dangerous aviation sport is as thrilling as Ernest Gann's classic *Fate Is the Hunter* or Tom Wolfe's *The Right Stuff*. In *Fly Low, Fly Fast*, Robert Gandt takes us into the high-risk world of airplane racing, chronicling the Unlimited championships at the Reno Air Races, attended every year by more than 100,000 spectators and featured on scores of web sites. Flying wingtip to wingtip around pylons at 500 mph, just feet above the sagebrush, Reno's killing machines are piloted by an adrenaline-addicted, type-A elite whose big talent and big egos spawn a hundred stories. With the same vivid reportage of his *Bogeys and Bandits* --"about as close as you can get (to the cockpit) without arming the ejection seat," said the *San Diego Union-Tribune*--Gandt traces the history of this exhilarating but often deadly sport. He follows the evolution of competition planes from the 1930s custom exotics to today's big, throaty warbirds like the Mustang and Bearcat, still the fastest piston-engine planes ever built. Gandt also looks at the evolution of the pilots from famous laconic old-time air cowboys to the younger, slicker hot shots, the jet-fighter-trained "top guns." *Fly Low, Fly Fast* ignites with fierce rivalries, the struggles to keep the vintage warbirds flying, the heart-stopping drama of the races themselves...with winners, losers, close calls, spectacular crashes, and glorious victories. It's a book for aviation buffs, armchair adventurers and anyone fascinated by the passions that drive men and women to test their limits--and risk their lives--in the quest for speed.

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Customer Reviews

As a life long aviation fan, I've oddly somehow managed to never go to the Reno Air Races. Now that I've moved to Southern California, I've still not gotten my act together to attend Reno. After reading this great book, I shall definitely be making plans to remedy this omission. Very informative and action-filled book. You'll learn the inside scoop on these races, the planes and the pilots. Recommended.

This ought to be required reading for all pilots. You get some serious perspective when you see what it means to really push the limits versus getting nosebleed from 60 degree banks in your Cessna back home.

I read this under the stars at the 50th Reno Air Races this year. First, I would LOVE to see a followup to this with recent history. The publish date for the Kindle version is misleading insofar as how recent this is (as always). As such it does predate the 2010 and 2011 accidents by quite a bit, but I digress... You get the history of the races. The history of what came before. It also covers many of the issues that are inherent in air racing and have prevented it from taking off, a la NASCAR. Many of these points will seem obvious, yet hadn't occurred to me before. It places you in the cockpits of some of the most famous unlimited racers for triumphs and tribulations (one of which was disturbingly similar to the 2011 Galloping Ghost crash). The one thing it doesn't do much of is give do much mention of the other classes of racers (particularly sad since one of the long time biplane racers is a family friend). While granted the Unlimited's are the star attraction, there are many other classes out there (F-1, Biplane, Sport, T-6, Jet). If you've been to the air races, are interested in what air racing is like for the pilots and crews, or have any affinity at all for aircraft, READ THIS. It will give you a far greater appreciation of the event. This is REAL racing. Eight aircraft all in the sky at once, some far exceeding 500mph, racing for home pylon and the checkered flag.

This book is great! It brought back so many wonderful memories of watching the Reno Races with my dad. The author captures the sound and fury of those hard charging machines and the brave men who flew them. I stayed up all night devouring this well written and exciting book. I strongly recommend this to all readers and especially aviators young and old.

Gandt's aviation tale is a fascinating account that brings to life unlimited air racing and its history, people and airplanes. Although the book focuses on Reno Races in 1997 and 1998, there are also chapters on how racing started in 1964 by Bill Stead. Famous racing aircraft are described, telling how they were modified for the fast races. Gandt masterfully takes the reader inside the aircraft, as well as describing what the pilot sees and does while racing around the pylons. Even better are his descriptions of the people involved. This is one of the most entertaining aviation books that I have read. by Jan Churchill, also a writer and photographer at the Reno Air Races.

I have read most of Gandt's books and found this one to be "in the middle of the pack". However it did keep my interest. It was somewhat repetitive when describing the air race event year to year which of course it must be. Gandt continues to write so that I felt that I was in attendance at the races and in the plane's cockpit and hanger. He is a very good author.

For an airplane nut, this is an interesting read with a lot of unusual details and perspectives. The author's sometimes hysterical, often repetitious style gets very old very fast. But if you are an air racing fan, it's still a keeper. For example, I did not know the detailed history of Rare Bear, or the litany of problems which plagued the Pond Racer. Enjoy the material, ignore the babble.

Great history of the Reno Air Races, just wish it covered the last 15 years.

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