

## Bellanca "Cardboard Connie"

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### GIUSEPPE BELLANCA and his "CARDBOARD CONNIE"

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Giuseppe Bellanca has a giant footprint on worldwide aviation and the first airplane ride I ever had was in a Bellanca design. His company designed and built the single engined aircraft that made the first Transpacific flight in 1931. That plane was piloted by Clyde Pangborn and Hugh Herndon and flew from Tokyo to Wenatchee Washington. That flight was intended for arrival at Seattle, but weather was bad and Pangborn proceeded on to Wenatchee to belly land in the "Miss Veedol" J-300 Special which had intentionally discarded its main landing gear after take-off from Tokyo to increase range.

Perhaps the greatest mistake Giuseppe ever made was his decision to refuse selling and aircraft to Charles Lindberg in 1927 for a transatlantic flight.

Bellanca's company went on to design and build aircraft until 1954 when the company was sold and went on under various names until 2002. Giuseppe passed away in New York City in 1960.

#### THE CARDBOARD CONNIE

While just about any of the Bellanca aircraft would be a worthy scale model prospect I'd like to discuss the Bellanca Cruisair series, one of which gave me my very first airplane ride when I was about 10(?). These mid 40's and 50's aircraft featured a fabric and wood welded steel fuselage and a very smooth built up wooden wing covered with fabric. Most were fixed main gear tail-wheel aircraft until the Cruisair Senior, which offered manually retractable main gear, and finally hydraulically retractable main gear. They seated pilot and three passengers.

This version would be a relatively simple model and the specific model for which large scale plans are available is the 14-19-2 Cruisemaster by Jerry Bates, a well-known model designer and builder. [1] The model is ¼ scale and wingspan is 102 inches with a 69 inch length. Power could be a Zenoah G-26 for good performance with a all-up weight of around 16 to 18 pounds. Flaps give a reasonably slow landing speed.

The gear folds straight back leaving a part of the wheel below the wing bottom surface. Gear up landings should cause little damage. According to the Model Aviation article, the gear is available from Century Jet as catalog number 17512, you'll have to call for prices on that.

There is an active Bellanca Owners Club and many color schemes and pictures are available on the internet or from BobBanka's Aircraft Documenting Service. Bob offers good three views too.

Well, there is a lot more to know about good old Guiseppe Bellanca and his original designs, but I'll leave that to your curiosity. By the way, the Cruismaster was also known as the "Weldwood (glue) Wonder".

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[1] Jerry Bates Plans – [www.jbplans.com](http://www.jbplans.com) (251-478\_6720)