

# HM Review

Joe Weizer

## Seagull Models' Harmon Rocket

Based on a popular homebuilt, John Harmon's creation makes a great RC model.



### Specifications

- Wingspan: 50.4 inches
- Area: 558 square inches
- Length: 51.6 inches
- Weight: 6.2-6.4 pounds
- Power: .40-.46 two-stroke, or .52-.82 four-stroke glow
- RC: four-channels, six servos

### ARF Kit Features

- Factory-built airframe parts
- Factory covered in bright film
- Complete hardware package
- All necessary fasteners
- Pushrods, horns and clevises
- 24-page assembly manual

Attractive Harmon Rocket looks are further enhanced by the included painted ABS pilot bust and a large sheet of colorful, adhesive-backed graphics. Harmon Rocket design is a modified RV-4, an airplane very familiar to HM's Joe Weizer, who test flew and almost bought one of the full-scale airplane kits.

I was absolutely thrilled when *Hobby Merchandiser* asked me to review the almost-ready-to-fly Harmon Rocket from Seagull Models, based on John Harmon's full-scale modified RV-4. A few years ago at the Oshkosh annual flying event, I was seriously considering the purchase of an RV-4 airplane kit, so seriously that I got as far as taking a test flight in one of the demonstrators at the airshow. As events turned, I passed on the RV-4 because the estimated building time was something close to six years. Not about to miss my second chance at the design, I accepted the Seagull Rocket, which went together in a day.

This is a truly beautiful kit. The laser-cut woodwork is first class, and everything fits better than anyone has a right to expect. An expertly applied polyester film finish covers the airframe, and the fiberglass cowl and wheel pants are factory painted to perfectly match the covering.



One JR SPORT Standard AIRPAC with two extra ST47 Standard Servos handles the radio requirements of the Seagull Harmon Rocket. Two aileron servos are in the wing, one rudder and two elevator servos are in the tail, and the throttle servo, receiver and battery are mounted inside the cavernous fuselage.



Assembly starts with applying thin CA to the hinges that join the flying surfaces to the control surfaces. Because of the fuselage design, the ailerons, elevators and rudder can all be hinged prior to mounting any of the flying surfaces. The wing consists of two panels that join over a plywood dihedral brace, and



Hangar 9 30-Minute Epoxy is the adhesive of choice for the job.

Radio installation begins next, and I chose a new JR SPORT Standard AIRPAC with two extra ST47 servos to meet my needs. Extensions are required for the two aileron servos in the wing and the three servos in the rear of the fuselage. A Y-harness to connect the aileron servos is also a good idea.

My power choice was at the very top of the model's engine range, the Saito .82 Golden Knight. This engine installed on the supplied



*Saito's black powder-coated .82 Golden Knight four-stroke glow engine fits perfectly inside the Harmon Rocket's factory-painted, white fiberglass cowl.*

nylon mounts, followed by the included fuel tank with its factory-assembled plumbing, and a Kwik-Fill fueling valve and Remote Glow Connector from Du-Bro Products. Cutting the cowl to accommodate the valve covers, muffler and needle valve took more time than anything else, but was still a relatively easy task. After the propeller and spinner were mounted, I installed the aluminum landing gear legs, wheels and fiberglass wheel pants.

The horizontal stabilizer and vertical fin are epoxied into slots in the fuselage rear, then the control horns and pushrods are added. Rods from the servos to the horns are short and straight, so the linkage is extremely solid and accurate. Hardware is all better than average.



*Takeoff is smooth and effortless. This model tracks straight and true, both on the ground and in the air.*

I set the center of gravity and control throws as recommended in the manual, then added approximately 30 percent exponential to the control surfaces in both high and low (65 percent) rates. The tank was filled with Byron 15 percent fuel and the big Saito cranked over immediately.

Most of the fliers at Valley Forge like to break their engines in while flying, and I'm no exception. After a few minor tweaks to verify the low end and set the high end slightly on the rich side, I pointed the Harmon Rocket down the runway and gradually applied throttle. With hardly any rudder correction needed, the model gradually reached flying speed, broke ground and headed skyward.

Seagull's design team should be rewarded for doing such a good job. Their Harmon Rocket took only a click of elevator trim to begin tracking perfectly, hands off. I



performed a few inside loops to verify good rudder trim, and everything was quickly determined to be in excellent flying order. The model

handles beautifully, and routine pattern-style aerobatics are performed with ease at 3/4 throttle on the Saito .82.



*Down the chute at half throttle, Saito .82 Golden Knight is an ideal power complement to this model.*

The Saito .82 four stroke is an ideal power choice for the Harmon Rocket, although the typical sport flier wouldn't need more than a .72. Most of my flying was done at 1/2 throttle or less, and I only hit the top for vertical climbs and energetic snap rolls.

Exclusively available through Horizon Hobby, the Seagull Models Harmon Rocket is a great sport aerobatic model that any intermediate to expert RC pilot will enjoy to the limit. It sure does the trick for me. **HM**



*Back at rest after a rewarding maiden flight, Seagull Models' Harmon Rocket is ready to do it all again.*