

Antoinette

The Antoinette was a French aircraft first designed and flown around 1908. Despite its sophisticated design and powerful engines it was not successful and only a handful were made before the company went out of business.

In 1902 engineer Leon Levavasseur approached industrialist Jules Gastambide with a proposal to design and build aircraft and their engines. He suggested using the name Antoinette after Gastambide's daughter. They formed the Societe Anonyme Antoinette for this venture and started with engines because no aircraft had yet flown.

The company produced a highly sophisticated light weight V8 engine of 50 horsepower and Levavasseur then produced a range of engines of increasing power which were popular in automobiles and motor boats. They were also used in some of the world's first aircraft.

In 1908 Antoinette returned to aviation, establishing a flying facility for the French Army and building its first aircraft. They were generally unsuccessful but set an altitude record of 500 feet and won several other prizes at an air salon in 1909. However the Antoinette technology was soon overtaken and the company went out of business in 1910.

Renwal 1/72 kit completed by Leigh Edmonds in September 2024.



The Little Aviation Museum

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