

Piper PA-23 Apache Model Guide

The Piper PA-23 Apache is a piston light twin built 1954 to 1963 that seats 4 to 5. Sources say Piper built about 2,100 from 1954 through 1961. It has a rugged tubular structure and a roomy cabin, and it was cheap to buy and run. Its known weakness is poor performance on one engine.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Piper PA-23 Apache: rugged tubular airframe and roomy cabin, but weak single-engine performance is its known weakness.
- A 1981 pilot article put used Apaches at \$10,000 to \$20,000. That figure is dated, so check current prices.
- Common upgrade: 150/160-hp Lycoming O-320s replaced by 180-hp O-360s. One modified example cruised 140 knots on about 18 gph.
- Piper treats the main gear drag link bolt replacement (SB 1299) as mandatory at 1,000 hours time in service, then every 1,000 hours.

WHAT TO INSPECT BEFORE BUYING

Rubber fuel bladders: a conversion shop said about half needed replacing. Check the tubular frame for leaks and corrosion; the shop found serious corrosion in very few. Cowlings crack and need constant repair. ADs cover cracks in control surfaces, the landing-gear selector lever and the entrance step frame, plus fuel valves and the combustion heater.

LANDING GEAR AND SERVICE ITEMS

Gear is hydraulic tricycle. An anti-retraction valve stuck by debris and corrosion let the gear collapse on the ground (AAIB report). Gascolator service is due every 90 days or 50 hours (Service Letter 1141). A parking brake placard is required by SB 771A. Drag link bolt SB 1299 covers PA-23-150, -160 and -235.

APACHE 235 REFERENCE FIGURES

The PA-23-235 has 235-hp Lycoming O-540s, 144 gal total fuel and about 22 GPH burn. Listed cruise is 165 kts, with 850 nm range with reserves. Speeds in mph: Vso 62, Vs1 72, Vr 80, Vx 90, Vy 110, Va 145, Vfe 125, Vno 198, Vne 249, Vmc 80.

SPECIFICATIONS

Seats Min	4
Seats Max	5
Pa 23 Main Fuel Capacity Gal	72
Apache 235 Total Fuel Gal	144
Apache 235 Engine Power Hp	235

PERFORMANCE

Apache 235 Cruise Speed Kt	165
Apache 235 Range Nm	850
Apache 235 Fuel Burn Gph	22
Modified 180hp Cruise Speed Kt	140
Modified 180hp Fuel Burn Gph	18

WEIGHT & BALANCE

Apache 235 Empty Weight Lbs	2941
Apache 235 Max Gross Weight Lbs	4800
Apache 235 Useful Load Lbs	1859

SAFETY NOTES

- Left engine is critical and drives the hydraulic pump (Apache 235 notes). If it fails after takeoff, you may need to hand-pump the gear up.
- Placard: do not operate the Lear L-2 autopilot during single-engine operation.
- Pulling and holding the parking brake before or while applying the brakes gives little or no braking (SB 771A).