

Flying Eyes Glasses: Versatile, Flexible

These eyeglasses designed for pilots have proven durability, good optical quality and excellent customer support.

by Larry Anglisano

I was an early adopter of the headset-friendly Flying Eyes sunglasses, evaluating the company's first Hawk model back in 2012. I liked them so much I had them fitted with my prescription. I kept the long-term evaluation going and today I own three pairs of Flying Eyes glasses—all fitted with my prescription.

How are they holding up after sustaining my abuse? Just fine, actually—and better yet is the company's support is among the best in the aviation accessory market.

GROWING LINE

Flying Eyes sunglasses are the result of company founder Dean Siracusa's frustration with the lack of comfort in his own flying missions. The

Flying Eyes product line has grown substantially over the years from the single Hawk product (still in production), which was unique because with adjustable webbing straps instead of fixed temples, it solved the comfort problem of wearing sunglasses under headsets. You can also easily fit Flying Eyes glasses with more traditional temples by pressing release tabs on the straps and sliding ultra-thin bendable temples in place.

Moreover, the Flying Eyes have proven excellent optical quality with shatter-resistant and scratch-resistant polycarbonate lenses that complement the color displays we regularly fly behind.

Starting at \$229, the most popular current frames include the Os-

All three pairs of our Flying Eyes glasses have served us well in a not-so-gentle long-term trial. That's the ophthalmic Luzon model, the Golden Eagle Sport and original Hawk pictured below with the Bose A30 headset.

prey, Kestral Aviator, Golden Eagle and Kingfisher. My most recent purchase was the Golden Eagle Sport—a wrap design that the company had fitted with my nearsighted prescription. These are available in a wide variety of lens tints—from Gradient Gray to Mirrored Rose to G15 Neutral Green.

I chose the Golden Eagle Sport because it has the highest lens curvature (head wrap) for the most optical coverage of any model in the Flying Eyes product line. They also have an ANSI Z87.1 safety rating, making them worthy for motorcycling, shooting and other high-contact activities.

The flexible Resilamide temples are 1 mm thin and I found that they offer extreme comfort under my Bose A30 headset, under my full-face Shoei motorcycle helmet and with my bicycling helmets.

By far the best decision I made when equipping all of the models I own is going with the solid-gray transition lenses called XTRActive



Given the investment, we like that Flying Eyes are versatile for use during action sports. The Eagle, shown in the top photo, is a favorite for use with motorcycle helmets. That's an Otus model with a magnetic clip-on sunglass, bottom.

technology. They adapt seamlessly, offering the exact amount of tint for the cockpit ambient lighting conditions. I can launch in bright sun and land in total darkness, park the airplane, drive home and stand in my kitchen still wearing the glasses and not even realizing it.

EVERYDAY EYEGLASSES

Flying Eyes also offers a line of everyday ophthalmic glasses because the company said there has been a huge demand for them, also pointing out that 75 percent of the adult population requires some sort of vision correction. The Flying Eyes ophthalmic line includes four styles—the Noctua, Athene, Luzon and Otus.

I bought the \$229 Luzon model fitted with my prescription, plus the magnetic clip-on sunglass, which is available in solid or gradient gray. Like all Flying Eyes models, the ophthalmic line has the Resilamide frame made from advanced polymers. The frames offer a 20 percent weight savings over non-polymer ones. I find them to be comfortable in and out of the cockpit (though the Golden Eagle Sport is my go-to for flying) and are just as durable as any Flying Eyes model. I particularly like the smooth, molded nose pads because they prevent pressure points on the nose—a problem I battle with other glasses.

Of course, comfort starts with a good fit and Flying Eyes has the right approach for that with its prescription glasses and sunglasses try-on kits, priced at \$30 each. It includes four try-on pairs to see which frame size fits best. The way it works is you have one week once the shipment is marked as delivered to try them on and send all four pairs back. For prescription glasses made by the Flying Eyes third-party lab, you'll mark the location of the center of your eyeball with a Sharpie on the lens. It was seamless for me.



LOSS PROTECTION

This is a \$35 upsell for non-prescription glasses purchased within the last 30 days and still in your possession, of course. Flying Eyes glasses have a lifetime frame warranty (my wife had an older Kestral frame that cracked and the company immediately exchanged them—no questions asked), but loss protection seems logical given the big investment. If loss protection is purchased for a prescription pair, the protection only covers the frame replacement. You can only claim a loss once per pair.

There's also a limited lens replacement guarantee in force during the first 90 days of ownership. Break them and the company will replace them at no cost. If it's outside of the warranty, Flying Eyes said the lenses are easily replaceable and you can order them on the company's website.

After 12 years of owning several pairs, it's easy for me to recommend Flying Eyes. Aside from a well-built, well-designed and versatile product, it's refreshing that the glasses are backed with some of the best product support in the industry.

Visit www.flyingeyesoptics.com.