

CONSOLIDATED PBY CATALINA

THIS WAS NOT A COMMISSION, MORE A GRABBED OPPORTUNITY!

I was in working in the garden of our NZ holiday home, which happens to be on the flight path of aircraft on finals to the small north island airport of Whanganui. Daily there are aircraft like King Airs, SAAB 340 commuters, even Convair 200's and the occasional DC3 doing joy flights. So when I heard the deep throb of radial engines, I looked up thinking DC3? ... but no, it had a high wing? now almost over the house, low and behold here was a WWII Consolidated PBY Catalina on finals into Whanganui? how is this possible I thought?

After a few phone calls I found out she belonged to the NZ Catalina Preservation Society and was here for the Whanganui vintage weekend. I asked the association if it were possible to do an air to air shoot, after explaining my interest and experience, they agreed. At the airfield the pilot Brett Emeny, introduced me to pilot Dee Bond who owned a lovely Cessna 180 that was there for the event and agreed to be the cameraship for the shoot. So with the door removed and a quick briefing with both pilots, we set off to formate on the PBY. It was going to be doing a joy flight over the city and my wife Jude was a lucky passenger! Even though it was a grey overcast day, we got some great shots by either getting in close, or against the ground so as not to get a gray background. Jude wrote a great little article about the shoot and her experience in the 'Cat' that was published in a number of local magazines and newspapers. So it was a great opportunity to be alongside this lovely old lady of the skies.





The PBY Catalina served throughout the Second World War in nearly all theatres, rescuing thousands of downed airmen, hunting submarines, or as a resupply aircraft. It was a true workhorse. Since the war it has been used as a fire bomber, executive transport, aerial sightseeing and many other roles. Many are still flying worldwide today.



