



RUTAN EYING MORE RECORDS

It seems every time Dick Rutan starts looking at the horizon, records fall—and he is looking again.

Rutan just purchased a Berkut kit from Experimental Aviation in Santa Monica, California. It should be done by the end of 1995, allowing him to attempt a National Aeronautic Association/Fédération Aéronautique Internationale distance record for Class C-1b, Group I, aircraft from Oakland, California, to Hawaii.

Following that, Rutan will take the aircraft to Alaska (perhaps Anchorage), stuff nearly 300 gallons of fuel into the tiny aircraft, and fly south until the tanks nearly run dry, which should occur somewhere near the southern tip of South America. Actual departure and destination cities are not firm as yet, but the distance could be as much

as 12,000 miles.

Berkut is named for a sub-species of golden eagle flown by nomadic tribesmen in Kirghizia, in south-central Russia.

The Berkut kit costs \$26,890 and requires an investment of about \$60,000 to complete. Rutan will save on that by using avionics and a Lycoming IO-360 he has on hand from other projects. The airplane cruises at more than 200 knots with 35 gallons of fuel and two passengers, or 175 knots with Rutan and 300 gallons of fuel. What's Rutan get out of it?

"I get a really nice plaque to hang on the wall," Rutan jokes. "Records are there to be broken. When they are, it's because we made advancements in technology." His *Voyager* earth-circling aircraft now hangs in the National Air and Space Museum. □