

AVSIM Commercial Scenery Review

AUSTRIA X Professional



Product Information		
Publisher: Flugwerk Design		
Description: Scenery add-on.		
Download Size: N/A	Format: DVD	Simulation Type: FSX
Reviewed by: Gene Davis AVSIM Senior Staff Reviewer - July 16, 2008		

Introduction

I guess if I ever had to create a list of places that I would love to visit outside of the United States, Austria would definitely be on that list, right along with Ireland and Scotland! So, being one of those places that encompasses both a rich history and a beautiful backdrop, I am left wondering when could such a trip be a reality and I am left saying to myself. "probably not for a while".

That ultimately leaves me with the virtual world of Flight Simulator. A venue that allows me to visit places like Austria and get lost in the landscape virtually and allows me to do this at a fraction of the cost of what it would be to actually go to Austria, and for that I am grateful!

Austria fascinates me and it is only reasonable that I would go looking in Flight Simulator to feed that fascination. What I found in the default FSX was okay, but it lacked a certain authentic feel to it and didn't really represent the country properly, as it lacked the country's true beauty. One afternoon I was surfing the web and I just happened to come upon Austria Professional X totally by accident, and was quick to want to have an indepth look at it.

Installation and Documentation

The program comes via DVD and is packaged with a printed manual that outlines just about everything there is to see and do once the product is installed. Also included, are printed maps and charts for the entire region. This was especially helpful as I didn't really know my way around and I just wanted to get in and go see it!

Features

What Austria does for Flight Simulator X is quite remarkable, as it adds the entire road network, custom buildings and objects, landclass, photo type scenery for several cities and accurate terrain mesh data for the entire country. Thus giving the Flight Sim user an all-out true to life representation of Austria in FSX.

When I first heard about this product I think I was expecting a photo-real type of environment that would stretch from border to border. This is in fact is what it isn't, but I have to say that I am not in any way, shape or form, disappointed with the overall product and I am glad it is what it is.



What it does do, is add much needed scenery across the entire region that makes up the country of Austria. If you were to make a comparison, I would have to say that it does for Austria what the VFR products from Aerosoft do for Germany by giving it a complete VFR makeover by accurately placing roads, buildings and landmarks.

Included in this package are four of Austria's biggest cities; Vienna, Linz, Salzburg and Graz. Each have been designed from the ground up using aerial photographs for proper placement of all of the buildings, landmarks and bridges, along with a photo-real overlay that blends in well with the surrounding terrain textures. The box calls it an "accurate visual model" of the places in question and I really do think they deliver on that statement.

All of the buildings in Austria Professional, aside from the autogen, are native to that country, and if you are flying in places like Vienna, you will see accurate landmarks and commercial buildings plucked right out of that part of the world. My favorite area to fly is probably Linz, especially East Linz, as there is lots to see and experience.

I do have one complaint and that is the over use of one type of church, as flying in one area reveals well over 20 of the same scenery objects as you progress over the region during your flight. I understand the use of autogen to fill in the gaps, but there are way too many instances of this one church to make it believable.



What I really like are the castles that litter the landscape, as each castle is designed to match that of their real world counterpart and they are placed accurately throughout the entire region. Places like the Hohensalzburg and the Mirabell Castles are ominously standing guard in Salzburg and the gothic St. Stephens Cathedral is waiting for you to find it in Vienna.

The roads, rivers and landclass is where the heart and soul of this product comes in to play as it covers the entire country no matter where you fly. If you are flying VFR, as this product is intended, then you should be able to find your way via geographical references with little or no instrumentation. In the end, I found that I wish I knew more about Austria and its geographical layout to have made better use of the VFR references during flight.



The terrain mesh that is included with this package really enhances the look and feel of the surrounding mountain ranges, especially in areas like Salzburg! Salzburg is inherently mountainous, and you don't have to go far to find that

mountainous terrain and the valleys to fly into. I had quite a few cross-country flights with those mountains looming off in the distance and it wasn't until I discovered Salzburg that I realized how treacherous they could be.



It really doesn't matter what time of the year or what time of the day you choose to fly in Austria, as the scenery is developed to encompass day and night flying as well as the seasonal changes. I was impressed with the winter textures, especially out of Salzburg. It really did give a feeling of winter as you fly out and over the vast mountainous region near there.

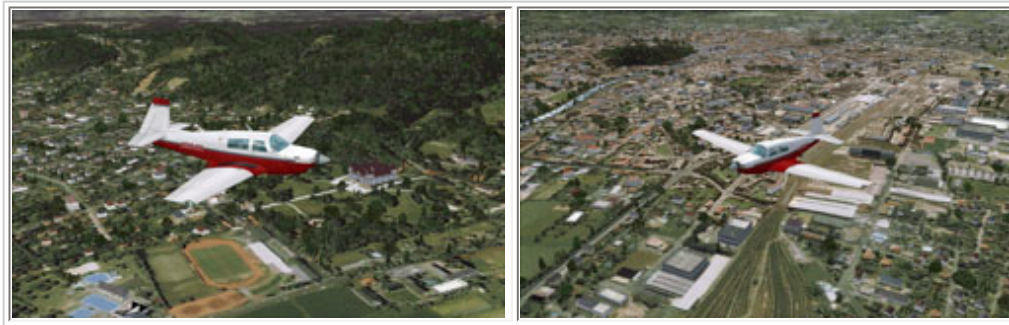
Flying Over Austria

If you know as little about Austria as I do, then it might be wise to spend some time examining the manual, as it explains each of the four main cities that are included in detail and outlines where the best places are to fly. I found that a trip to Google Earth was the most educational for me; from Google, I was able to examine photographs of important places and find them in relation to that of the local airports that I would be flying from or arriving at. Thus giving me a better feel for my surroundings. Tourists have also donated pictures of some of the areas for use in Google Earth, giving you another outlet to examine and compare.



Over the few weeks I spent looking at this add-on, I found that I really liked Linz. After spending some time looking over Salzburg, I couldn't help but fall in love with its mountainous surroundings. Salzburg had some of the prettiest and most ominous looking terrain that I have yet to find anywhere else in Flight Simulator, and from a visual standpoint, it actually makes me want to see more and see it for real, rather than from the virtual skies.

Vienna's backdrop was rather impressive, as it made for some impressive cross-country flying. The city center is true to scale and was actually much larger than I had envisioned. Its buildings and landmarks mark the way as you fly out over the immense residential areas and complex road systems.



I was a little surprised to find that the actual airports were all but untouched with custom objects. In some cases, like that of LOWW near Vienna, it wasn't even enhanced with photo-real terrain. In fact out of the four locations, I found Vienna's LOWW to be the worst appearing airport in this package, as it has this big green field next to it with a bunch of roads running through it. Call me funny, but this being a product that is supposed to simulate VFR, you would think the airports would have gotten more attention than what they actually did, as their visual reference is rather important.



Performance

Austria Professional is a beautiful product and it adds a lot to that particular region of the world. But in FSX, some of its features can come at a cost and that is in the way of frame rates. I found that with my E6600 (I know time for a Quad!), I had to turn the scenery objects slider to dense and the autogen slider to normal.

This gave me consistent frame rates throughout all of my flights, though it does look better with the sliders cranked all the way up. Oh well, I was happy with the tradeoff and didn't mind sacrificing the autogen to get it. In fact, it eliminated some of those over-used churches.

In The End

Austria Professional X is a decent product and offers an incredibly detailed and realistic representation of Austria. I think this is an area of the world that usually gets little or no attention in Flight Simulator and many don't know what they are missing.

Test System

Computer 1:

Intel Core Duo E6600
 3GB Dual Channel Ram
 ATI X1950 512 Ram
 Saitek Yoke and Throttle
 CH Peddles
 Saitek X52 Flight
 Controllers
 Track IR 3 W/ Vector EXP
 Patchberri Flight Panel

Computer 2:

P4 3.0 800 FSB W/HT

Do I think this product is worth its price? Yes, given everything that you get in one package, this is a good deal. I mean realistically, you are getting roads, landclass, terrain mesh, custom objects and buildings, and photo real scenery for four different cities all in one nice little package; and if that was not enough, the product covers the entire country instead of just a portion of it.

2GB Of Corsair Ram
ATI X1600 PRO 512
Saitek Cyborg 3d Joystick

Flying Time:
20 hours

What I Like About Austria X

- The region
- Coverage
- Variety

What I Don't Like About Austria X

- Over use of certain Autogen objects
- Lack of enhanced airports

Printing

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[**Austria X Professional**](#)

[\(adobe acrobat required\)](#)

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