

My father and I have been looking to purchase a plane for a couple years until in September of 2022 we came across the listing ad for a 1968 Cessna 177 Cardinal being sold somewhat locally. After seeing the ad we had an interest to go look at it and check it out and the airplane seemed to be a really good deal. The aircraft N3268T at the time of its sale had about 3394 hours on the Airframe, and 75 hours since major overhaul on the engine. These two factors were a big selling point for the plane. We wanted a low time aircraft with a low to mid time engine as well and this particular aircraft had that and more of what we were looking for. The seller was motivated and the aircraft had no damage history, equipped with some good avionics, and the engine was overhauled by a previous owner and flown some since.

After having seen the aircraft in person, inspecting and reviewing what we could about the aircraft we decided to make the purchase.

After having purchased the aircraft we intended to fly it regularly and that we did.

I myself am a pilot building my hours, my father a pilot and two brothers who have their license to fly would be flying the aircraft. Over the course of time the plane held up well and flew fine, I myself had gotten my A&P licenses as well sometime after the purchase of the aircraft which helped to be able to do regular or preventative maintenance.

The first annual was an extensive one, we had to comply with an AD that had been published in regards to the Wing spar. We had to deal with Cessna the manufacturer for about 4 or so months and that was the only period the aircraft sat for some time without being flown due to being grounded for the annual. After the completion of the thorough annual the aircraft flew the way it should, I flew it often and it performed fine. The thought that this engine would have an issue that would lead to an inflight failure never crossed my mind due to the meticulous maintenance and upkeep we have done with the aircraft. Having bought it with the engine overhaul already in the past and flown after the overhaul by the previous owners and us, we thought we had gotten a fairly safe and sound engine especially considering the results from recent annual inspection we had on the aircraft showed **no** signs of any mechanical defects or symptoms of any problems.

Having flown on the day of the accident May 18, 2023 I would have no reason to not fly the aircraft then due to the fact that the engine and aircraft showed no sign of any problems. Even the thought of it still is a shock and surprise. I flew the aircraft for about 3 hours that day before the emergency occurred with no signs of any issues in regards to aircraft performance, oil consumption, fuel, etc.