

Dale Ritchie

Dale Ritchie lives in Golden, British Columbia, Canada. Dale started training for his balloon pilot's licence in 1977 and received his licence in 1978. He started flying balloons as a sport and was given an opportunity to start flying commercially in 1979. Since then, Dale has trained many balloon pilots in Canada, flown regular shape and special shape balloons in quite a few countries and is an avid competitor.

Dale has had the privilege of being able to travel to many countries to compete and has placed in the top ten in the world a few times. Dale has won the Canadian Hot Air Balloon Championship a total of five times...more than any other balloon pilot in Canada. His best finish at the World Hot Air Balloon Championship was fourth amongst over one hundred competitors in Battle Creek, Michigan in 1985.

In thirty-nine years of flying balloons, he has accumulated over 4500 hours of flight time and has balloon licences for Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom and has a gas balloon and a gas airship rating as well. He is a Certified Flight Instructor and night rated for balloons and is also an Aircraft Maintenance Engineer for balloons.

Dale's balloon's name is "Emily" and she was built in 2006 just prior to going to Japan to compete in the 2006 World Hot Air Balloon Championship. Her inaugural flight was in Motegi, Japan and she has flown at quite a few festivals and competitions for the last eight years.

Dale gets a lot of joy and satisfaction from flying balloons...he has flown in Japan, England, Jordan, Mexico, Costa Rica, Australia and all across Canada and the United States...and always enjoys a challenge. Flying a huge dairy Cow shape balloon, Dale was able to fly the only balloon, ever, directly over the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, California during the New Year's Day football game for the Wisconsin Badgers and Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board. Flying a giant T-Rex Dinosaur shape balloon over Niagara Falls was an incredible experience and challenge as was flying the Cow shape balloon over

the city of Tijuana, Mexico. One of his favourite adventures was joining six other Canadian pilots to travel to and fly over the deserts of the Wadi Rum in Jordan for the birthday of King Hussein. This was the first time that balloons had ever flown in Jordan and all had a fantastic time.

Dale is looking forward to flying at the Heritage Inn International Balloon Festival and compete in the Canadian National Hot Air Balloon Championship in High River.