

Paso Pleasure - Life, lift, lunch, laughter, and Love.

I flew to Paso Robles (PRB) today with one of my favorite fly-buddies and I had one of my best days of the whole year! We were invited to visit my buddy Phil. It was also the first time that I flew up the Grapevine over I-5. I wish you could all fit in my airplane. I hope I got a few great pictures today.

The day started off poorly weather wise in Corona as the overcast was low and the fog and haze were all around us when I woke up and looked out of the window. It was really yucky then.

Checking on <http://www.wunderground.com/> confirmed that the whole area was that way. Some days are like that. Krystal called me around 8 and we confirmed that we would meet at the airport around 9:30. We did, and my view of the sky was still not legal for VFR flights then. I am sure that her hello hug was legal and proper. I spent some time explaining to her some more about flying, and about our route for the day. She wants to know, and I want to explain.

I did the preflight inspection and put a quart of oil in the engine while she sumped the tanks. Then we waited some more for better visibility.



Krystal loaded her gear into the baggage compartment of my Mooney

It was after 10:30 when we finally launched into lighter haze and with blue skies above. Contacting SoCal on 135.4 MHz a few minutes later brought us into the ATC 'system' and soon we were in radar contact and given a squawk code. Krystal automatically dialed it in to the transponder and pressed 'Ident' as requested by ATC. I flew a shallow profile topping out at only 4500 feet. That put us above the haze and upcoming Class D airspace and we could see for miles from there.

We went northwest by El Monte, then skimmed by north of Burbank and Van Nuys. For a while we were over I-210 and then over I-5. Following I-5 to stay as low as possible we passed by Castaic Lake and then Pyramid Lake.



Just awesome from the air

I followed I-5 right up the grapevine and when I saw that the highway and the terrain were getting higher, I set up a climb to 5500 feet above sea level. Once over the last hurdle, I settled back down to 4500 feet to continue breaking in the engine properly. It was warm outside, around 80.

A left turn to Paso took us over more surprises. Things I didn't know existed. Here's some more pictures.



Hard to explain this unusual landscape



Someone's mining something out here



At a loss to explain the purple and maroon contents of these things and at the bottom it shows the beginning of thousands of oil wells.

The descent, approach, and landing were uneventful and as we taxied to the area of Phil's hangar, a nice guy in a Red Lexus (Phil) motioned us over to where to park. A big welcome session followed with Phil and his wife Linda, and Krystal and me all hugging each other. It had been eight months since we all had last seen each other. Phil showed us his new hangar and then drove us to his home.



Phil's 22Q awaiting her next outing - See, Mooneys are really sexy



Once there, Phil and Linda showed us the view from their backyard, YUMmm

The non airplane segment of my story is included here because people, friends, and love are really more important to me than flying and airplanes are now. My airplane merely allows me to connect to many things much more valuable in my life. Of course I am still passionate about the flying.



We all chatted and it was so nice to see Krystal be comfortable and enjoy herself



Phil and Linda's back yard was all created by the two of them.



Phil and Linda, our host and hostess for the day



Now, it was Krystal's turn to explain the meaning of life

Phil had his airplane scanner turned on as he was expecting Bob and Charlotte Keller to arrive from Livermore (LVK) in their Mooney while we chatted and just plain enjoyed each other's company. When they arrived Phil went to the airport and brought them back to his home. I think I first met them last year when Kim and I flew up to the Vintage Mooney Group Lake Tahoe fly-in. When they came through the door, it was hug time all over again. VMG flyers really do become family.

It was my turn to become totally surprised. Bob had read a previous flying story of mine and he had asked if I could send him the jpg file of a certain picture I had taken and included in that story. This is a clip from that story and the picture he was talking about.

And finally, the nicest gift presented to us today -



Just awesome, read into it what you want to

I sent it to him and he wrote that he would surprise me. That was a couple of weeks ago. Today he walked up to me and asked if I remembered sending him that picture. I said that I sure did and he presented me with a surprise gift. He is a vintner and bottler of fine wine.



Bob presented me with a bottle of his award winning 2006 Cabernet Sauvignon That very picture that I had taken was on his yellow wine bottle label. I was very excited. Thank you Bob Keller



Rob, Charlotte, and Bob before lunch



We were all treated to backyard BBQ of excellent cheeseburgers and fresh salad with plenty of yummy tomatoes. My Blue Can at lunch was a Pepsi
This was one of my favorite days of the year !



After lunch, Bob showed us the great pictures of his wonderful cross country flying vacation on the 'small' screen

When it was time to go, hugs all around once again, and back we went to the airport. After Phil pushed my plane back from the parking area, Krystal got a good picture of us. We are really good friends.



Swappin' cooties

Back to the airplane and flying stuff:

We strapped in and after going through all of my checklist items, fired that puppy back up. Plenty of fuel onboard. No weather concerns. Time to get Krystal 'really' into being my fly-buddy.

Krystal (for the first time ever) taxied the airplane, all the way to runway 19 with me supplying the needed braking before the turns as there are no brakes on her side. We taxi an airplane with our feet pushing on the two rudder pedals. Once at rwy 19, I did the usual run up procedures. All was OK.

She took off on rwy 19, raised the gear, raised the flaps, climbed while turning to capture our course line, intercepted it and turned on course, later leveled off at 5500', reduced RPMs to 2500, leaned the mixture for our altitude, closed the cowl flaps, trimmed the airplane for cruise speed, and made heading and altitude adjustments after that on the way home. All that after having less than three hours of hands on yoke time with me. I just sat there and reminded her what to do next. She already knows HOW to do all of these things. I just suggested what needs to be done. She is a gifted gal.

About 20 minutes later we started looking for the San Andreas Fault as suggested by Phil. It is supposed to be visible from the air in this area. Are we close Phil?



It is still strange flying this low to the ground but we were higher than it looks

Krystal had enough flying for one day so I let the autopilot take over for a while. It was kick back and enjoy ourselves time. I cannot explain how happy I was right then. You had to be there. Once back over the grapevine, we angled back to the east and I had this photo op to share.



The Santa Clarita Valley

Well, I once again crashed my airplane at the airport of my intentions, taxied up to hangar #32, and we stepped out into the cool evening air. It was around sunset, and all was quiet. We had time to sit down and talk about all that had transpired in the previous 10 hours. Way too soon it was time to go home again. She gave me a goodbye hug and then smiled as she turned around and walked to her car. Life is great.

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