

Sedona Trip Recapped

Ah yes, the hundred dollar hamburger. Pilot speak for let's fly over there for lunch. This time we went over budget and that doesn't include the food! No complaints, it was well worth it.

Last Saturday Alan Van Leuven, a former associate from Bldg. 12, Civic Center, Santa Ana, met me at Corona's airport and after briefing him about our route of flight, and how to close the door (it's different than a car), we launched into a cloudless California sky. We took off going westbound due to the wind direction and made the required left turns to point the nose toward Arizona.



Alan and Ed



A thin low level haze covered the Inland Empire most noticeable when looking at the horizon

By the time we were over Banning, we had leveled off at our cruise altitude of 9,500 feet leaving the haze behind. Pulling the prop back to 2,500 RPM for noise reduction and the mixture back to around 8.5 gallons per hour and we were stylin'. Alan was in charge of taking pictures and I monitored systems. Outside of paging through the GPS or setting radio frequencies and talking with ATC, there was little to do. Alan asked a hundred flying questions like I was taking an oral exam, but I aced that part. Headwinds kept us back at around 125 knots over the ground. That's 143 mph in English. The conversion factor is 1.15 to 1.



We passed many miles of desolate uninhabited territory – a poor place to run out of gas



We passed Lake Havasu City along the Colorado River.



The little white streaks in the water are boat wakes.



60 more miles of rough countryside



We crossed over the mining town of Bagdad AZ. That is one impressive mining operation

Ahead we could see the forecasted alto cumulus clouds at 15,000 feet (Pict0031). Once we passed over Prescott, we started to let down but held it at 8000 feet as it became evident that we had one more minor mountain range to cross. There was a "saddle" directly ahead so we had plenty of clearance. Again coming down, we over flew Cottonwood and then the stunning red rock country of Sedona was a sight to behold.



The airport sits on a mesa at the edge of the city. It is a very large hill with a flat top and the perfect place for an airport. We entered a left base for runway 3 as the winds were out of the Northeast, and turned on a two mile final .



Two mile final

On short final, an invisible sink hole (wind current effect over a small valley) pulled us below our previous glide slope which gave an immediate pucker effect. The prompt application of power (I gave it the gas pronto) put us back on track. The landing was uneventful, the runway was long and wide compared to back home, the parking area was large and very well maintained, and the restrooms were close by.

We had lunch with the Vintage Mooney Group guys on the airport restaurant's outdoor patio. Temp was in the low 80s. What a view. Stunning, awesome, and yes, gorgeous scenery all around. After lunch we jaw jacked a while with some VMG folks and then Alan walked around the airplane parking area trying to decide which style of airplane he wanted to buy. I think he'll settle on a twin engine type of some sort. He's sort of uppity that way.

We had used a couple of gallons shy of half of our fuel on the way up and with tail winds on return you would think that we should arrive with 4 - 6 gallons, but winds are never guaranteed by the FAA weather briefers and mother nature don't tell. I ordered 10 gallons of fuel as insurance before firing that sweet four banger up.

After departure (eastbound of course), I made the required left turns to point the nose toward California. Alan captured the city on e-film. We climbed to 10,500 and leveled off. The outside air

temp was 57 F. The air currents were uncooperative and the plane just would not maintain a constant altitude by itself as it had on the way over. I was constantly making corrections, a little up here, a little down there, climbing or descending, trying to stay within a hundred feet of 10,500. I told Alan "This is too much like work, you drive." So he did. For two hours. He drove practically all the way home. I asked him if he was getting stressed out after a while but he said he was doing fine with this huge grin on his face. He did an excellent job by the way.

You should have seen the afternoon smog over the basin after we passed Palm Springs and started descending. Paris Lake and Lake Mathews were just two shiny orange areas, reflecting the late afternoon sun, in a sea of gray.



We live in that muck

Of course the sun was directly in front of us making all features below us nearly invisible. The GPS kept us headed toward Corona. Alan was still a grinning and a driving.

We were over the city of Corona at 2,500 feet when he graciously gave control back to me. I lucked out and pulled off a "greaser" (silent landing). I taxied to fuel and after fueling up, it turns out that we had 16.8 gallons remaining but insurance is very comforting. You can never have too much fuel in your tanks. The restroom was closed for the night but the little green port-a-potty 'round back is always open.

I taxied back to my hangar and shut down. We pushed 27V back into the hangar. Alan thanked me for the day and said he had an excellent time. I should have thanked him for driving during the hard part. We each popped a Blue Can and talked about... BOWLING! Go figure. His comments are attached.

Here are the round trip stats:

Distance - 612 nautical miles = 703 statute (regular) miles. What - for lunch?

Air Time - 4 hours and 42 minutes.

Average speed - 130 knots = 150 mph.

Max speed 176 knots = 202 mph (Alan driving, me screaming).

Fuel used - 45.2 gallons of 100 low lead.

Put downs, jabs, word play, insults, one ups, and left handed complements, 300 per hour.

Memories - wonderful.

ed

P.S. For those of you who are on, or who want to be on, my other email list to go on future flights, here's a sneak preview. Next month's VMG fly-in destination is in - **UTAH!** More details when they become available.

Ed Shreffler
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NEVER AGAIN!

Will I have such an enjoyable experience (with Ed).

Last week I got to fly to Sedona, AZ, in Ed's Vintage Aerostar. Don't let Ed try and tell you it's a Mooney, 'cause it's not. It was a 'more than good time', and a beautiful flight. The landing in Sedona couldn't have been more breathtaking.

Ed's knowledge, ability, caution, and attention to detail are nothing short of nauseating. He had the entire flight pre-planned, and was in constant communication with the 'people in the radio' at all times. Ed keeps his craft in tip-top shape. The engine never skipped a beat. He has also installed every electronic device that (a county employee's) money can buy.

As for the Flight...

This was not your 747. Although we had 'mild' turbulence on the way back, a small plane like this tends to yaw quite a bit. And drop a bit. And dip a wing a bit. Those with weaker stomachs might want to re-think making the trip. I found, however, that the initial discomfort was soon replaced by a kind of soothing feeling. Like flying an old waterbed. I also got the chance to 'fly' the plane myself. I did all the hard work, while Ed made sure that we were on course, and not getting into the 'shoot to kill and ask questions later' areas. And the view was..... well you'll just have to take a trip yourself. Bring a camera, and lot's of film!

Alan.