

Temple Bar Isn't

It isn't a temple, as least not now. It isn't a bar. It is the name of a massive rock formation that gave the area its name. And it is the name of our destination on the south shore of Lake Mead.



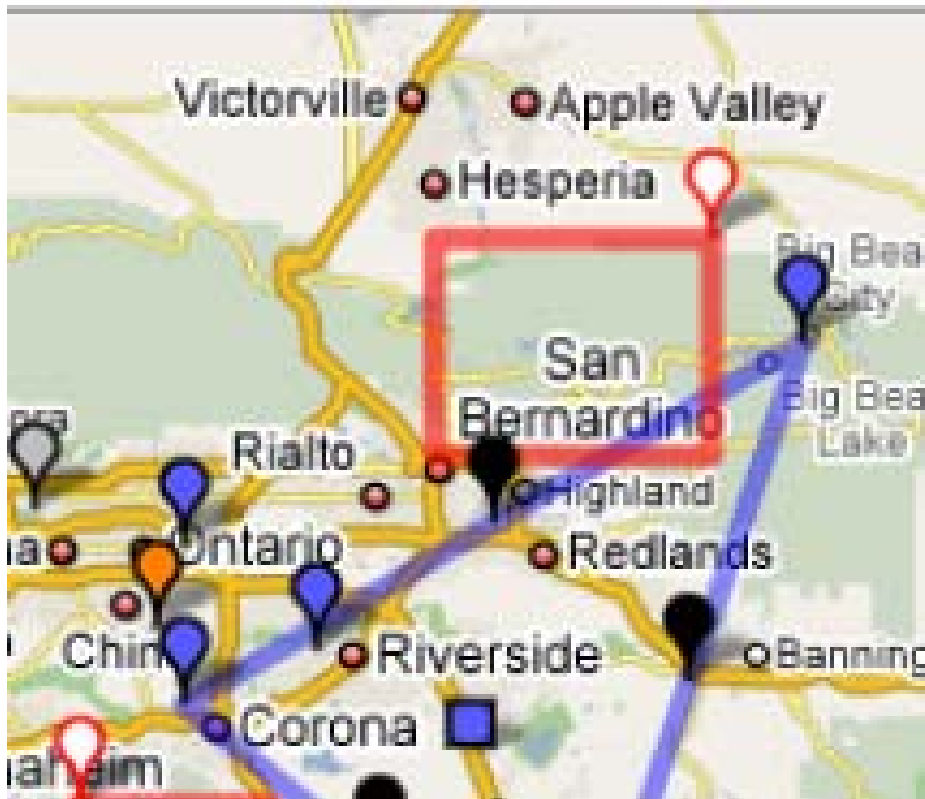
Temple Bar Marina on Lake Mead

A couple of weeks before the Temple Bar fly-in, the Santa Ana winds blew for nearly a week aggravating southern California wildfires and blowing dirt through every tiny opening to my hangar. For four days, the dirt accumulated on my airplane, and on the fifth, the winds changed depositing wildfire ash on top of the dirt. I just had to blow on a wingtip to show you what I am describing.



Brian and his friend washed my airplane. David installed a new landing light, and Deepun installed a new intercom, so 07T was primed and raring to go. Valerie arrived 5 minutes after I got to the hangar. We topped off the fuel, set up the GPS, ran up the engine, and departed.

Climbing out of Corona and in contact with ATC, we pointed at Hesperia, our only waypoint along the way. Using Hesperia in the flight plan kept us clear of a Temporary Flight Restriction (TFR) area that was set up to protect the aerial tankers fighting the forest fire around Lake Arrowhead. The TFR is outlined in red.



The blue route lines were from something else, we went north to Hesperia (Courtesy runwayfinder.com)

As we crossed the western edge of Riverside, a female ATC controller called out "Mooney N5807T, traffic 5 miles 11 o'clock, an Embraer." The Embraer is a medium range jetliner made in Brazil. An ATC computer alarm must have gone off because a man called out "(airline name), Traffic Alert, expedite a 20 degree right turn." Strange that they turned the airliner instead of turning us, but that is how it happened. We saw it go by to our left, in the opposite direction, about a mile away, and around 1000 feet below us.

After Hesperia, we turned right to 41 degrees and flew straight for 202 miles to Temple Bar. The Hesperia waypoint also kept us clear of restricted airspace R-2501N further along our route. Normally, the Hector VOR is used for that purpose. Normally, we don't have forest fires.

The closer we got, the cleaner the air was. The 100 mile visibility clean air was a treat for us from SoCal.

Ransom Hicks from Cable airport in Upland which is just 13 miles from Corona, arrived at Temple Bar at the same time that Valerie and I did. He was off to our left and lower so I yielded the right of way to him. We were both on 122.8, the Temple Bar frequency, so I said, "You go ahead, and I'll make a right 360 for spacing." A standard rate 360-degree turn takes two minutes and it provided just the right amount of separation. Ransom was pulling off of the runway, as I turned final.

The Temple Bar resort monitors 122.8 and asked if we would like the shuttle van to come out to the airstrip. We said we would like that. It is about a mile away down some dirt roads.

That Temple Bar runway is one hell of a hill. Corona's runway changes elevation 18 feet end to end. Bill Barnes taxied the full length and measured the Temple Bar runway rise on his altimeter at 120 feet, end to end. It would be real hard to bounce while landing because the runway just keeps coming up, up, up.



The airstrip



The Mooneys (and a red thing) from far away



Temple Bar across the Lake on the left, the marina on this side

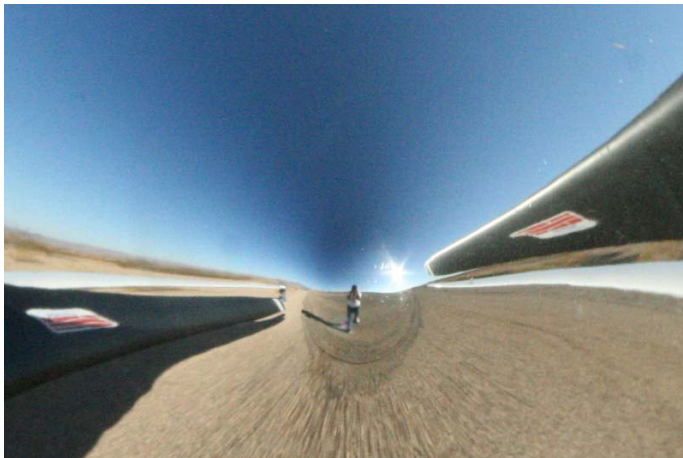
The shuttle was there at the airstrip, waiting for us as we secured the airplane. The shuttle van drivers were so courteous, and one was even there on his day off. Ransom, Valerie and I climbed in and left 13 beautiful Moonies and one red something-else-airplane all alone. About a mile away, we pulled up to the resort's restaurant. We were so late that another van was about to pull away with a bunch of VMG people who had already finished lunch. Valerie and 8 or 9 other VMG flyers took a tour of a 50' houseboat that the resort has available for rent. It has bedrooms on the second floor and a water slide extending out over the safety railing. Then we were accompanied by Bill Barnes as we went into the restaurant, so we had good Mooney conversation. There were 7 or 8 of us VMG types inside. Somebody noticed something out of the window so Valerie slipped outside to get this shot of the neighborhood coyote.





The shuttle van driver was kind enough to take our picture before he departed.

As I was doing my walk around inspection, a Mooney took off and as it went by at around 30 feet above the runway, the engine started running rough, real rough, as if it was running on three cylinders instead of four. I instinctively choked up as if I was inside and it was happening to me. It flew low toward the lake and then made a sweeping right turn as if it was returning for a landing. Things must have cleared up because when it was again close enough to be heard all sounded well and it began climbing for departure. I breathed a sigh of relief.



Val had fun with my spinner doing her self portrait and one of me

After take off, we flew level and let the earth go down. That departure is so weird, and it is the easiest one I have ever experienced. We flew over the marina and then turned right and headed east for a few minutes over Lake Mead to set up for a photo-op. After a left 180, Valerie was set up to take a picture of the Temple Bar rock formation for this flying story. We then continued west for a few minutes over the lake, enjoying some of the other geological presentations offered to us.



Temple Bar



Bathtub ring effect due to drop in the water level



General lay of the land

Picture taking done for the time being, it was time to go back to full power, head south, and start climbing. I immediately noticed that the elevation rose considerably in front of us, so I chose to go west again to see more of Lake Mead while I gained altitude over lower terrain for additional separation from the ground until I had a safe altitude buffer.

I thought the next turn to the south would be a great time to give Valerie some 'hands on' time, so I said "let's see you turn left to just past where the sun is." She did a great job and held attitude until near the end of the turn when the nose of the Mooney chose to start to divert to mother earth. Valerie was thankful when I said, "I'll take it." A few minutes later after we were climbing at 500 feet per minute and pointed at Hesperia, I let George take it and we all headed straight home.

The return flight was within one degree of directly into the sun. That really accentuates the image of haze and smog. The first 100 miles were fine, but the second 100 miles increasingly showed us the extent of the haze down there. The mountaintops were easily visible for 50 miles ahead but the lowlands were obscured by an opaque white veil. This was much more evident towards the sun than the view looking out of the side windows.

At Hesperia, we turned left, went over the Cajon Pass, and pointed at Corona. We were still above the haze layer, in clean air, but our turn was coming soon. ATC restricted our descent at 3500' for a while then turned us loose to descend the rest of the way.



Val titled this one 'Pretend it's Fog'



Unusual camera angle, we were actually coming down 1100 FPM and the wings were level

Notice the blue sky over the white haze

Valerie was kind enough to help this old guy push 07T up the rise and into the hangar. Oh yes, this was her first time up in a private airplane, so she received an AOPA First Flight Certificate when we got back to the hangar.



Looks official!

I popped a Blue Can and she opted for a water. We chatted for a while about her first GA flight and all of the new experiences. She gave me a hug and then was off to meet her daughter. It looked to me like everyone had a good time. Valerie and I sure did

Ed Shreffler
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Photography by Valerie