

Dec. 1-8, 2015 - Avast Matey - It's ***The Allure of the Seas*** that I crave

One of the rules that I have about my blog articles is that it **must** have *something* to do with General Aviation (vrs. commercial flights). I do not always have to actually handle the controls of the aircraft involved, but the article does have to involve some sort of flying activity. I was at conflict with this particular article, but since it **did** involve traveling above the ground at a fairly rapid speed, I figured that it just might qualify. See what you think.

Living in south Florida provides relatively inexpensive cruising as special pricing is available to this State's residents. Our final trip of 2015 was to be a one week Western Caribbean cruise aboard Royal Caribbean's, ***The Allure of the Seas***, a 6,000+ passenger mega ship. What makes these **Oasis** class ships so extraordinary is the fact that many of the balcony rooms face toward the inside of the vessel. So, instead of looking out over an expanse of empty ocean you can have your morning coffee or afternoon cocktails overlooking a beautiful lush garden of flowers, plants, bushes, vines and trees, called "Central Park", or down at a vibrant and bustling Atlantic City style boardwalk scene complete with a full sized carousel, candy, taffy and ice cream shops and even a large 1,000 seat Aqua Theater which features nightly spectacular Mayan Culture themed diving exhibitions set to stirring music and lighting.



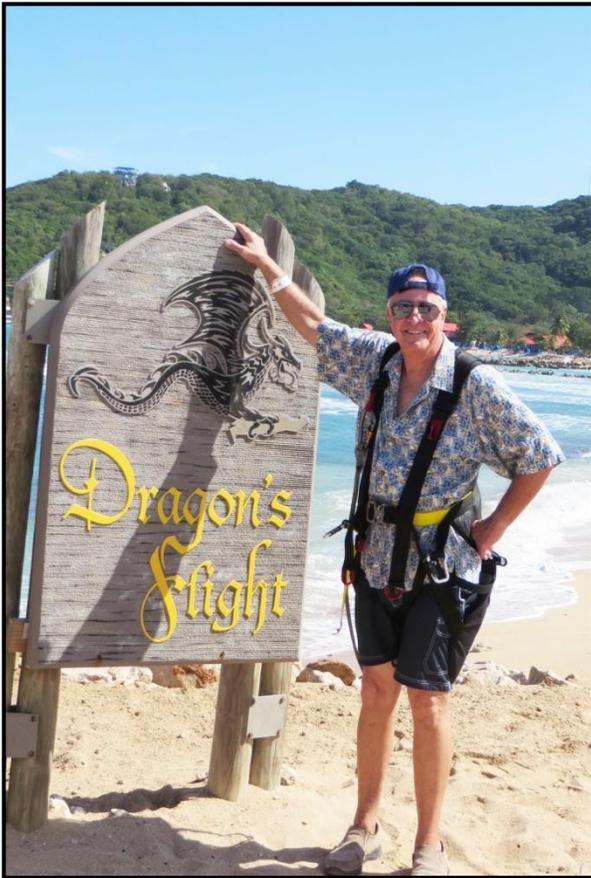
The photo to the left shows the Central Park area, complete with live trees, climbing vines & fresh flowers, including hundreds of potted Poinsettias. The photo at the right is the view down from our 14th floor balcony showing the rear half of central park, some of its outdoor restaurants, bars and the Aqua Theater.

Our journey started out from Port Everglades, in Fort Lauderdale, a mere one hour drive from our West Palm Beach residence. After a delightfully smooth day and a half sail we arrived at our first stop, Labadee, Haiti an RCL privately operated beach resort destination located at the northwestern point of the Island of Hispaniola. This gave us a whole day for water sports, swimming or just sunning on its broad white sandy beaches.



While Miriam and I are not what you would exactly call "beach people", (after all I have lived in Hilton Head, SC for much of my life, just two blocks from the beach, and Miriam has spent most of her time in either Miami or West Palm Beach for hers), we did enjoy the opportunity to just sit and relax in this exotic island location. One of the things that I **did** want to experience on this stopover was the *Dragon's Flight Zip-line*, which I had done on a previous cruise on ***The Oasis of the Seas***. This exciting journey starts from a nearby 500 foot high hilltop and ends on the beach a half mile later. It is said to be the longest zip-line over water and takes a full two minutes to complete, with speeds up to 45 MPH possible.

While it may appear to be "dangerous", this is actually quite a pleasant and smooth ride since you are well harnessed and strapped into a sling seat secured by two clips to the main line trolley. On this page you will see several photos of me on this zip-line adventure, which satisfies the "flying" theme for this blog article.



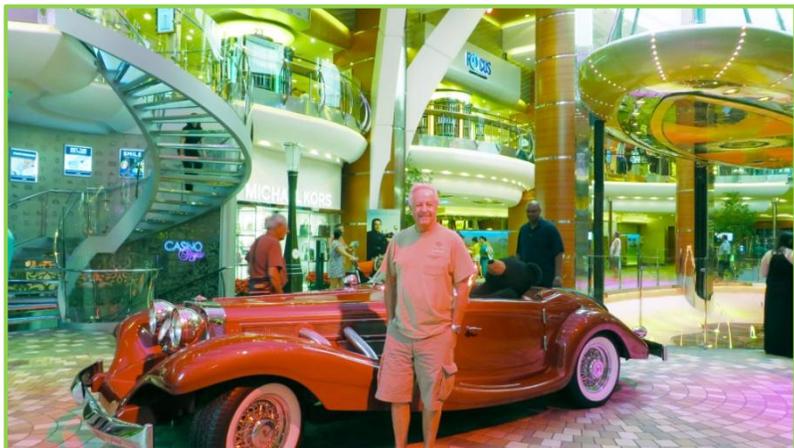
After strapping on the harness I posed by the landing zone on the beach for a photo in front of the Zip-line sign. Then we were transported, via flat bed truck, up a rutted and windy trail to the very top of the hill. There we had a spectacular view of the peninsular 500 feet below and our ship moored at the dock beyond. Groups of 5 each zip-liners then would depart on the long slide to the distant beach. As we neared the landing zone we were instructed to spread our legs outward so that the sudden stop would not cause our knees to jolt upward and into our chin. On the photo on the center right I am the second person visible with my legs in the proper configuration. I don't know what the lady in front of me did to recover her missing teeth once she stopped. **LOL**

After my aerial adventure we used the remainder of our afternoon to partake of a delicious beachside barbeque along with a little relaxation time just enjoying the wonderfully sunny weather. On this particular cruise the ship was the real "destination". Our additional stops in Jamaica and Cozumel Mexico really did not warrant us even leaving the boat. We have been to both of those destinations before and, instead, simply enjoyed the amenities and activities that we had available to us aboard.





The Royal Promenade is the ship's "main street" where all of the "action" takes place, including food, bar & entertainment venues.



I owned 3 Mercedes autos, but none like this 1936 two seat roadster replica.

Miriam and I pose by the 30' high Christmas tree



Central Park was a great place to stroll thru after dinner.

A night time photo of Miriam at the Boardwalk's Carousel.



There were plenty of restaurants (13) in which to have dinner.

Our 14th deck balcony gave a wonderful view of the boardwalk