

October 21, 2012 - Flight to Nowhere, or
"You say the Cafe's closed?"

It was a Sunday and a great day to fly. I had been wanting to try out the Jet Cafe, located on the Fort Lauderdale Executive airport, which is located just a few miles to the north of KFLA, their International gateway facility. The flight was only going to take 45 minutes in each direction and it was another clear, crisp South Florida fall morning with outside temperatures in the mid 60's.

After pre-flighting my airplane, I was soon climbing out over the eastern terminus of the vast Everglades swamp visible off of my right wing. At 1,200 feet above this murk I wondered aloud exactly what I would do if my engine suddenly quit and if I would even have an adequate cell phone signal should I manage to walk away from a ditching. However I soon began to encounter the urban communities that hug the eastern coastline of Florida and run from below Miami clear up to Jacksonville. In the south this development runs only 20 miles or so from the beach before it encounters the inhospitable swamp's seen in my upper photo. But in those urban areas you will find sprawling neighborhoods of high end homes, apartments, horse farms, sports complexes, private airport communities, etc. All exhorting the general wealth and opulence of the nation's 1 percenters. There is no doubt that there is a lot of money residing here in South Florida.

As I winged my way south I recalled the last time that I had flown into Fort Lauderdale Exec. It was probably 20 years previously. My fiancée and I were going to take a cruise ship out of Port Lauderdale and she personally knew the owner of Banyan Aviation, the largest Fixed Base Operation at the Executive airport. Donny Champion was one of her classmates when she was a youngster living with her missionary parents in Nigeria, Africa. He was glad to see his old school chum again and even arranged to provide a driver to take us over to the port and didn't charge me a tie-down for the week that my light twin was at his facility.

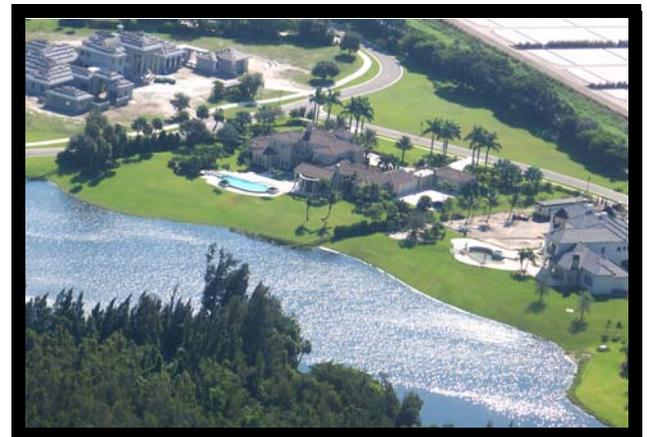
I had also heard good things about the Jet Cafe, which catered mainly to the corporate pilots who laid over while their executive bosses carried on high finance in the Fort Lauderdale area. I was especially looking forward to an order of their famous almond french toast and was pretty hungry by the time that I landed at 9 AM. I switched my radio to the ground control frequency telling the controller that I wished to taxi over to the restaurant. She responded, "Cleared to the restaurant via taxiways Alpha, Charlie and Delta, but you know that they are closed on Sundays, don't you." Well, NO I didn't know that, thank you! So instead of a hearty breakfast I grabbed a courtesy cup of coffee at the Banyan pilot's lounge and found out that its owner Donny would not be in that day either.



Everglades swampland found along my route



Urban areas just prior to Fort Lauderdale



Just 3 of the big dollar homes I saw today



Killing time on the Indiantown Airport Porch

But now I had to think about what I wanted to do next. Then I had a great idea. In my hometown airport city of Indiantown, there was a unique and historic Inn that was built in 1926, and which features a Sunday brunch, starting at 11 AM. I would probably be an hour or so early upon my return, so some relaxing was in order upon my arrival.

After sitting a while on the front porch of the pilots lounge at Indiantown, which had none of the amenities and opulence of the Banyan lounge, I decided that it was time to head over to the Seminole Country Inn, which was a 10 minute drive away on Indiantown's main street. For years and years we would drive past the Inn every other month while on our way from West Palm to Sebring to visit a family member living at a retirement community. Each trip I would say to myself, "one of these days we have to stop in and look this place over".

It is an interesting building which goes back 85 years, and which is on the National Historic Register and still functions as a quaint "bed and breakfast" hotel with individually decorated period furniture adorning each of its small bedrooms. It has a pleasant outdoor seating venue adjacent to a large homey "everyday" dining room where lunches are served. This would be a perfect for us, since we have two Yorkies, and dogs are allowed at most outdoor seating here in Florida. There also is a more "formal" dining room which is used for large functions and which has several wall mounted photos going back to when King Edward VIII abdicated the British throne to marry commoner Wallis Simpson in 1937. Apparently the couple made a stopover, by train, to visit the Seminole Inn while they traveled Florida in 1941 and it is the pictures of that visit which adorn the main dining room. There is also an interesting display upstairs which feature many of the Seminole Indian chiefs along with a bit of history of that tribe. All in all the Seminole Inn would be an enjoyable place to stop and see, even if not partaking of their excellent food.

However, on this day it was the food, and I thoroughly enjoyed their brunch buffet. There are plenty of fruits salads and cheeses which are offered as starters. Then comes the made to order omelets and Belgium waffles along with bacon and carved ham. Next you can partake of the main course which includes hand carved roast beef and turkey breast as well as southern fried chicken, mashed potatoes, sweet potato, fresh vegetables, corn etc. And be sure to leave enough room for the home made peach cobbler topped with real whipped cream. Water, hot or iced tea and coffee are included and the whole shebang will set you back about \$15 per person. My only regret is that this is not a place that I can regularly fly into... since Indiantown is already where I start off each and every flight.



The Historic Seminole Inn - downtown I-town



Inn's upstairs sitting room and museum



A typical guest bedroom at this delightful B&B



Having Sunday Brunch at the Seminole Inn