



## ▶ Sunday, October 4, 2009

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### Brazilian Adventure - Day 1



It was a great summer and now it seems so long ago. September was a blur with board meetings, charitable events, a high school reunion, the marriage of one of my sons, a trip to **Demo** in San Diego with a stopover along the way in Telluride with some friends, and then the business trip to Brazil. I would not have predicted that e-tirement would have led to business in Brazil. The origin goes back to 1972 when I got my pilot's license. The interest in aviation was somewhat dormant for a few decades but like **motorcycling** it came roaring back years later.

The re-kindled interest lead to an investment a couple of years ago in a small aviation charter business in Danbury, Connecticut called **Diamond Air Charters**. The company started a dozen years ago with one airplane and now has six. Although getting a black eye from Congress and car companies, chartering aircraft can add tremendous convenience and cost effective transportation for busy executives, especially when it comes to destinations that have **general aviation airports** -- there are 5,300 of them. A major change in the economic model of charter aviation is about to enter the picture with the emergence of a new category of aircraft called "very light jets" or VLJ's. The **new jets** will typically seat two pilots plus four passengers, can fly up to 41,000 feet at more than 400 mph like big jets, are very quiet, and are highly fuel efficient compared to prior generations of aircraft. The leading producer of the new planes will likely be **Embraer**. The name means "a Brazilian aerospace company" and it is headquartered in **Sao Jose dos Campos**, Brazil.

Check-in for the flight to **Sao Paulo** at JFK was uneventful although it could have been much more automated. A swipe of the finger or a vascular scan could have validated that it was me and then the online reservation could have been confirmed and an electronic message sent to the gate to be followed by a second biometric authentication. In the future

I expect that we will be able to go directly to the gate, authenticate and board. **Security** was rigorous as usual and I knew the pound of **oxinium** that makes up my artificial knee would set off the alarm. The body check was easy but the "please remove your laptop" step proved more difficult. What is a laptop? I removed the **ThinkPad** as usual but the Kindle and Kindle DX were still in my backpack. Are they laptops? They surely are computers -- the person doing the scanning said he believed I had a DVD player. That must be what the scan looked like. I also had a GPS, a pedometer, a Sony HDCam, an iPod Nano, and a few other electronic gadgets in the bag. None of them are "laptops". The line of demarcation will get more and more blurred moving forward.

My first **trip to Brazil** was in 2004 when I visited Salvador, Bahia for an **IT conference**. It was very beautiful there but my visit was just an overnight stay to give a **speech**. Today's flight was to Sao Paulo, Brazil where I would be spending at least four very full days -- no trips to the beach. Brazil is the fifth largest country in the world, with nearly 200 million people and 4,655 miles of coastline and it is the largest national economy in Latin America and the tenth largest economy in the world. Brazilian exports are booming, with major export products including coffee, automobiles, soybeans, iron ore, orange juice, steel, ethanol, textiles, footwear, corned beef, electrical equipment and aircraft. It is the latter product that brought me here. **Stay tuned**.

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## ▶ Friday, October 16, 2009

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### Brazilian Adventure - Day 2



The flight arrived on time in **Sao Paulo** and things went smoothly through immigration and customs. An **Embraer** driver was waiting to take me up to San Jose dos Campos -- about 75 miles north of Sao Paulo. **Sao Jose dos Campos** is a city of more than 600,000 people and headquarters of **Embraer**, the third largest aircraft manufacturing company in the world. The hotel **Caesar Business** would be my home for the next six nights.

The shuttle bus from the hotel to Building F-300 -- the delivery hangar -- takes about ten minutes, the last several of which is driving by the immense Embraer facilities where 15,000 people work. As I walked in the door, I was greeted by Mark Steer and Bill Minkoff of **JetQuik** who introduced me to Paulo Negreiros, Contracts Administrator and Marcelo Cruz, Configuration Engineer. These four people became very special to me as the week unfolded -- I plan to maintain contact with them in the months and years ahead.

The original plan had been to arrive on Monday, start the three-day process for inspection and closing, and then depart on Thursday for the U.S. However, I had received a call on Day -3 that there was something wrong with the airplane. Turns out the problem was a tendency for the plane to roll while at cruise but the engineering team was able to make an adjustment to the flaps which corrected the problem. Nevertheless, there was a delay. Bill began the flight planning for a possible Friday departure - routes, weather forecasts, fuel prices, hotels, and local transportation.

During the afternoon there were two positive developments relayed to us by Marcelo and Paulo. First was the news that Embraer had arranged for a shuttle flight the next day to take us up to the production plant in **Gavião do Peixoto**, where major components are manufactured and flight testing

is conducted. We would then bring the plane back to the delivery center. This sounded like a good idea to me because I had wanted to see the factory there anyway. Later in the afternoon there was a second surprise development -- the **Phenom 100** would be arriving at the delivery center in Sao Jose dos Campos today!

We waited on the tarmac in the cold breeze and around 7 PM we saw a plane making the approach. As it turned onto final, there was no mistaking that it was the Phenom. It was thrilling to see the Phenom taxi up to building F-300. After shutdown the door opened and out came Captain Rafael Silva, Embraer Test Pilot. There was not enough light to take good pictures so that had to wait for Day 3 in the hangar. We would also get to know Rafael much better as it turned out he would be in the cockpit on the flight home on Day 10.

Bill, Mark, and I met up back at the hotel with Adam Letts, Director of Operations at **Executive AirShare**, a fractional **Phenom** ownership company based in Kansas City, Missouri, and Rob Posselt, a partner at JetSolutions - Europe. We went to a casual Brazilian restaurant -- I could not pronounce the name of the **large fish** which was their specialty -- but it was the first of a string of tastes of Brazil's excellent food.

Day 3 would begin the process of inspecting and acquiring the Phenom.  
**Stay tuned.**

There are also some **more pictures** uploaded.

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## ▶ Sunday, October 18, 2009

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### Brazilian Adventure - Day 3



**Captain Bill Minkoff** already had 100+ hours of flight time in the **Phenom 100** but I think he was as enthusiastic as I to take the plane for a workout. And a workout it was. The initial climb to 41,000 feet took about a half hour. Once at a reduced speed, Bill put down the landing gear! At 18,000 feet he depressurized the cabin. Whoosh! I thought I would feel my breathing get heavy but all returned to normal quickly. I don't know all the maneuvers but Bill put the plane through it's paces and it passed with flying colors. Not a single squawk with airframe, engines, or avionics. The only issue is that upon descent when things warm up from 60 below to above freezing, the emergency door handle defrosts and leaks water into the cabin. This is a known problem and Embraer has a fix (some insulation) coming soon. The landing at **Gavião Peixoto** was smooth as glass.

The test flight could have gone anywhere but the advantage of going to **Embraer Unidade Gavião Peixoto Airport** is that the company owns it and has control of the airspace above it. It also has the distinction of being the **longest runway** in the Americas -- there are two in Russia and one in China that are a bit longer. Five thousand feet is more than enough for the Phenom -- **Gavião Peixoto** is 16,295 feet. The control towers -- and all air route traffic control -- in Brazil are operated by the **FAB** (**Força Aérea Brasileira**), the largest Air Force in **Latin America**, with about 700 manned aircraft in service, and 73,000 personnel on active duty.

Unfortunately, because of various military projects at **Embraer Unidade Gavião Peixoto Airport**, it is not permissible to take any pictures. We were able to take a short tour of the facilities and have some lunch in the employee cafeteria (where all employees get free meals). Seeing the inside

of a Phenom during construction was impressive. The Phenom is a midget compared to a **Boeing 777** but both were designed with **CATIA** (Computer Aided Three-dimensional Interactive Application), software originally developed by the French company **Dassault Systemes** to develop Dassault's **Mirage** fighter jet. There were eight Phenom's on the assembly line and others in various stages of painting and final trim. In all we counted 35 Phenom 100's (and three 300's), including the ones back at the delivery hangar. Although visiting **Gavião Peixoto** is not part of the normal delivery process, it would certainly convince any doubters about the seriousness of the Phenom program.

The wind was really howling when it was time to depart and since there was no tow bar handy on the tarmac (I am sure they had one close by), the gear pins were removed, Bill released the emergency brake, and a couple of people easily turned the Phenom ninety degrees so the wind was not blowing into the engines during startup. (See the **guy on YouTube** effortlessly spin a Phenom 180 degrees).

Once back on the ground it was time for Mark Stear of **JetQuik** aka Inspector Clouseau to begin examining the interior and exterior for **squawks**. This is where the value of having delivery assistance comes in. Being an aeronautical engineer and with experience working at several aviation companies, Mark has seen it all. I may have found a few places where the paint wasn't perfect or a blemish in the interior but Mark found 103! None of these were safety related or structural in any way. They were cosmetic items -- a tiny scratch here, a rivet not painted just right, or a tiny spot on a seat. Mark went over every square inch of the plane - literally from top to bottom -- using his flashlight. He used a marker to literally put a circle around each item. Embraer documented every squawk in both English and Portuguese. We were assured a team would work during the night to correct all the minor defects. I saw them working as we left for the evening. By company policy, each person entering the plane removed their shoes, were not allowed to wear belts or rings, and placed hair covering on their heads and booties on their feet. They treated the airplane like it was their own baby.

Dinner this evening was very special as it included **Executive AirShare**, **JetQuik**, and the Embraer team. **Villa d'Aldeia Churrascuria** has a **Rozio de Carnes** that is a real treat. People call it a **barbecue** but the term does not do justice to the special service provided. I have seen a lot of salad bars around the world but never one like this (see **pictures**) and

the flow of delicious food was continuous. If you are not a **carnivore**, this is not your place. Brazilian people are very friendly, courteous and professional and it was a great pleasure to get to know some of them better.

Day 4 would start with inspecting progress on the squawks and beginning the process of acquiring the Phenom. **Stay tuned.**

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## Monday, October 19, 2009

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### Brazilian Adventure - Day 4



The Embraer team must have worked all night -- by mid-morning of Day 4 they had cleared 80 of the 103 **squawks** on the **Phenom 100**. Mark Stear of **JetQuik** continued his due diligence ~~working~~ with Marcelo while Paulo ramped activities on the paperwork side of the process. The steps ahead were to sign off on the plane, close on the transaction, and then connect with the FAA in Oklahoma City where **Wright Brothers Aircraft Title** was holding our registration paperwork in escrow. (When I say "paper" work I mean it. The registration is a three part - three color -- with carbon paper form). As soon as Embraer informs WB that the airplane has been accepted by the new owners, WB would deliver the paperwork to the FAA and the FAA would then issue a "flying time wire" that would then enable us to have **ANAC** -- basically the Brazilian FAA -- to conduct a conformity inspection that would result in a **Certificate of Airworthiness** which would then enable us to make a request of the ANAC office in **Rio de Janeiro** to issue an overflight permit which would enable us to fly over Brazil to Belem where we would officially "export" the plane from the country.

Believe it or not, this is a repeatable process. **JetQuik** has done it more than once. Decision #1 was whether to wait until the last squawk was ~~resolved~~ and jeopardize getting ANAC scheduled for Friday morning (Day 5) or to trust that the Embraer team would keep working on the squawks even if we went ahead with the closing. That was an easy decision -- I trust the Embraer team completely. Getting the "flying time wire" from the FAA usually takes an hour or so. We completed the closing and got the documents to Wright Brothers in Oklahoma City at 12:07 PM. Around 4 PM the Embraer team said they would like to have a small ceremony to celebrate the acceptance of the airplane. It was only 10:07 AM in Oklahoma City so there was plenty of time to get the wire and contact ANAC to confirm the Friday morning inspection. An alcohol scrub removed the temporary Brazilian tail # and enabled N784JP to glisten. Everyone was feeling good. The ceremony included a short tour of Embraer's museum upstairs in the delivery hangar, a nice movie about the Phenom, and some toasts among all.

We got downstairs to the office area -- each customer group was assigned a very nice office with unlimited WiFi and long distance phone service and incredibly strong coffee -- a bit after 5 PM. No wire yet and the FAA accepts no phone calls after 3PM. No problem. We will have it first thing in the morning, get ANAC to start the conformity inspection, get the overflight permit, and still get airborne late afternoon Friday, worst case. Captain Bill had reworked all the flight planning details. Got back to the hotel around 8:30 PM. Time for some Brazilian pizza. It was really good.

Day 5 would start with high hopes that we would be airborne before the end of the day. There were surprises in store for us. **Stay tuned.**

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## ▶ Wednesday, October 21, 2009

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### Brazilian Adventure - Day 5



We started the day with optimism but got an ice cold shower when we learned that the **FAA** had found an "issue" at 2 PM the prior day (and did not notify anyone until late morning the next day). The "issue" was that the paperwork about the company buying the airplane showed that the company was formed on August 1, 2006. The official document from the **State of Connecticut** confirming the formation was dated August 2. Tilt. Two different dates -- something must be wrong. Reject everything. No flying time wire. The best laid plans foiled by the bureaucracy.

We had to think through our options quickly. If we get the wire in the next couple of hours we can still get **ANAC** in for the afternoon, get the conformity completed, contact ANAC in Rio for the overflight permit, and still get to Belem before dark. Flying over the Amazon at night and then landing in the crime riddled city did not sound appealing. As a backup plan we decided to seek a "ferry permit" to take the plane directly to the U.S. and get the conformity inspection and airworthiness certificate there.

The afternoon turned into a frenetic effort. People running up and down the halls. Great teamwork. We got the flying time wire at 2:30 PM. The next step was to get ANAC to come in to do the inspection. Too late. They start at 8am or 1pm. Ok, on to plan B. Get the **ferry permit** and then the overflight permit. People said it was impossible to get a ferry permit in less than a day but Mike Origel at **airlinecert.com** performed miracles. He had the contacts and the FAA was cooperating to issue the permit. We had to pull together a ton of information -- pilot biography and medical, maintenance sign-off that the plane was airworthy, and a number of other documents. Let's call ANAC in Rio and tell them to get ready to issue the overflight permit. They are at lunch. The Olympic decision had just been announced. They were at a long lunch. We made contact with ANAC before 4pm and urged them to wait. We would have the ferry permit any minute. We got it at 5:15 PM. It was Friday afternoon. ANAC had left for the day.

Day 8 would start with high hopes that we would be airborne before the end of the day. We would get ANAC in first thing Monday morning, get the overflight permit from **Rio**, fuel and provision the airplane, and head for the States. Now what to do for the next two days? Some said go to the beach. After months of detailed planning and five days of intense focus on the task at hand, I was in no mood for relaxing. **On Monday I get an education on buying fuel in Brazil. Stay tuned.**

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Brazilian Adventure - Day 6



After simmering down a bit after the unbelievable bureaucracy trap of the day, Bill, Mark and I decided to take a ride on Saturday up to Campos do Jordao and check out what things were like at the higher elevations of the State of Sao Paulo. The ride was at least an hour and a half but well worth doing.

Campos do Jordao has a population around 50,000 but surges to four times that during their Winter vacation time (July). The city is 5,000 feet above sea level and has an economy based primarily on tourism. It reminded me of Telluride, Colorado and of European ski villages. The architecture was a mix of German, Swiss and Italian. I wish I could have been there during their winter (our summer) and attended their classical music festival. There were many nice restaurants, bars and shops. We also visited a state park called Horto Florestal. I don't know much about horticulture but we saw some trees that I have never seen before. See pictures.

At dinner we decided that Day 7 (Sunday) would be a day to wind the rest of the way down, catch up on some writing and emails, upload some pictures, recharge batteries, and get ready for the (hopefully) final day in Brazil. I learned a lot about aviation from Bill and Mark. Their company, JetQuik, is young but the two of them have 50+ years of experience in the industry. On Monday I would get an education about aviation fuel! Stay tuned

● Picasa pictures from Campos do Jordao

## Aviation October 21, 2009 07:33 PM

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## ▶ Friday, October 23, 2009

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### Brazilian Adventure - Day 6



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### ● **Picasa pictures from Campos do Jordao**

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## 🕒 Saturday, October 24, 2009

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### Brazilian Adventure - Day 7



No trip away from home is complete without looking for a geocache. According to [geocaching.com](http://geocaching.com), there are 130 in the State of Sao Paulo and several within a few miles of the hotel. The one I set out to find is called [A Grande Árvore - São José dos Campos](#) and it was less than a mile from the hotel -- the way the crow flies. If you are not familiar with the area and don't have good street-level maps, things can be tricky. There might be a river with no bridge between you and the destination.

I headed out from the hotel with the geocaching app on the iPhone. The walk turned out to be several miles including crossing a six-lane highway and walking through a number of neighborhoods that may have been dangerous. I finally turned a corner and immediately knew that the [big beautiful tree](#) a couple of blocks away was the spot. Was the cache hidden up in the branches of the tree? Unfortunately, the description and the hint were in Portuguese and the passersby did not speak English. I was ready to give up when an elderly couple came by. They interpreted the hint on the iPhone. It said the cache was hidden among the rocks at the base of the tree on the southwest side. I switched over to the iPhone's compass and then went to the spot. The huge roots of the tree with small rocks scattered at the base made an excellent hiding place, but alas I could find nothing.

I have had disappointments in not finding cleverly hidden caches before, but have found 102 of them since 2003. It was very frustrating to not find this one - I know I was at the right spot. There was a bottle of water where the hint said the cache should be. It is possible I was inept at finding it but I had a suspicion that the cache had been stolen. I posted a DNF (did not find) a [geocaching.com](http://geocaching.com). The next day the owner of the cache posted something in Portuguese. I don't know what it said but the symbol used and the line through the cache name indicated that "This

cache is temporarily unavailable". That is code for "stolen". I could not help but wonder if any government aviation entities were involved in this expedition. The good news is that I got a lot of exercise.

At dinner Bill, Mark and I discussed flight planning and how the day would go on Monday (Day 8). It was time for luck to turn our way. **Stay tuned.**

**Aviation October 24, 2009 11:19 AM**

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## ▶ Sunday, October 25, 2009

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### Brazilian Adventure - Day 8



It was good to check out of the Caesar Business hotel for the second, and hopefully, last time. Our luck did indeed turn the corner. All the squawks were cleared. The tail number had been transformed (see photos) and was ready to be inspected for airworthiness. The gentlemen from ANAC arrived on time and completed their inspection by noon. There was a delay in getting the over-flight permit from Rio but we had it by 2:30 PM. The Embraer team provisioned the plane with some sodas and snacks. The baggage was loaded. The only remaining step was to purchase fuel.

Jet fuel prices are volatile -- down 6% from a year ago but up 10% from a month ago. The prices are also somewhat unpredictable so it is a good idea to use a fuel program such as Colt International to get pre-negotiated prices. Colt can get the price and provide you with a fuel authorization so that when you arrive somewhere the price is already set and the purchase is placed on your Colt card. Colt is international but the airport in Sao Jose dos Campos does not recognize them. In fact they don't accept any credit cards -- cash only. The in thing currently is to say the U.S. dollar is weak but if you are outside of the U.S. people seem to like the dollar very much -- in fact insist on it. With a plane ready to head to the U.S. and only one fuel provider at the airport you can really appreciate competition and know what happens with the lack thereof.

We took off around 4 PM and headed for 41,000 feet and straight to Brazilia, the capital city of Brazil. By the time we got to the FBO, the Petrobras fuel truck was waiting for us. Captain Bill and Captain Rafael Silva, who speaks Portuguese, got into a discussion with the fuel truck driver and colleagues but then with a supervisor. We had been told by Colt that we had a fuel authorization but the gentlemen from Petrobras said they never heard of Colt and that their price was north of \$6 per gallon and they only accepted cash -- U.S. dollars. Captain Bill pointed to

a **Shell** fuel truck across the runway and the supervisor knew what he meant. The Petrobras truck pulled out and the Shell truck pulled up to take their place. The price was more than \$1 per gallon lower. This is another reason to have a delivery consultant like **JetQuik** along -- they have seen this movie before.

The flight from Brazilia would be the longest leg of the trip -- more than three hours. It started out smoothly but we then entered unexpected and heavy icing. Very heavy even by account of the two heavily experienced captains up front. It was exciting to watch the **deicing boots** expand and contract and comforting to know well the Embraer engineered deicing equipment worked. I certainly did not expect to see the boots in action on the first day of flight. **Belem** is a large city on the banks of the **Amazon** estuary. The city was founded in 1616 and was the first European colony on the Amazon. The giant river is a tiny bit shorter than the Nile but is definitely the largest river in the world by all other measures. At some points in the season it has a width of more than 120 miles. It is not the size that has resulted in there being no bridges over the river -- engineers could certainly design one. The issue is that the rainforest is so intense that there are no roads and cities that a bridge would connect.

Belem undoubtedly has many treasures worth visiting but for transient pilots the city was not a joy -- far from it. The good news was that the FBO had received the Colt fuel authorization so although we did not know the price we were paying we knew it was pre-negotiated by Colt and would be billed to the Colt card. The four of us loaded our bags into a small taxi and made our way over the most pot-holed road I have ever encountered. The drive was a half-hour or so with many red lights. At each one the driver stepped on it! Turns out that stopping at a light is an invitation to thugs to attack. The Hilton was claimed to be the best hotel in the city but the stench upon entering the lobby was a big turn-off and the beds reminded me of my days at **Fort Bragg** in the **U.S. Army** forty years ago. It was 11 PM and although we had had no dinner, for some reason no one had much of an appetite.

Tomorrow would begin the island hopping through the **Caribbean**. **Stay tuned.**

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## ▶ Monday, October 26, 2009

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### Brazilian Adventure - Day 9



A lot of flying would take place on this day, starting out from Belem, which we were all happy to leave and heading northwest along the coast of Brazil to our first stop which was at **Georgetown, Guyana**. We passed over the country of Suriname on the way. **Suriname** is the only Dutch-speaking region in the Western Hemisphere that is not a part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Georgetown is the capital and largest city of Guyana and it is situated on the Atlantic Ocean coast. Nicknamed the "Garden City", Georgetown would be our launching point into the Caribbean. Now that we were out of Brazil the fuel prices began to get better.

The flight to **St. Marteen** -- about 185 miles east of Puerto Rico -- was over the ocean but never far from an island -- hundreds of them. Think of all the famous vacation spots and we flew over all of them. There have also been some **famous movies** and pictures of very large airplanes landing just barely above the beach at St. Maarten. Our landing was not that dramatic but it was a beautiful sight to see and Captain Bill greased the Phenom onto the runway as usual. The best part about St. Maarten was the fuel price -- \$2.55 per gallon, less than half of what we paid in Brazil.

Taking off over the beach we headed straight for Florida 41,000 feet. It was hard to make out which island was which but the Bahamas were down there for sure. We landed in Ft. Lauderdale early in the evening and began the import, immigration, and customs processes. The customs agent looked the plane over but much to our surprise he did not go aboard and inspect. Once inside an agent requested passports and asked if anyone had a visa. Our friend and Brazilian pilot, Captain Rafael Silva did and after presenting it he was accosted by a highly uninformed, rude, and antagonistic customs agent. There was something the agent did not like about the documentation and he

berated Rafael for no reason and threatened him with fines and delays. I was so thankful to be back in America but highly embarrassed that such a crude person wore a uniform of the U.S. Government. The despicable treatment put a chill on the thrill of being back home. After the rants were over we loaded our bags into the Hilton van and headed to the hotel. We celebrated the return to the U.S. at the Crab Shack and introduced Rafael to something they don't have in Brazil -- **Keywest Conch chowder**.

Tomorrow's posting will be a summary of the trip. **Stay tuned**.

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## ▶ Sunday, October 11, 2009

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Brazilian Adventure - Day 10



On the morning of Day 10 the three member crew -- Captain Bill, Flight Engineer Mark, and assistant navigator John -- departed **Fort Lauderdale - Hollywood International Airport** on the last leg of our 5,000 mile journey and climbed to 41,000 feet in about a half hour. From that point, we were able to fly non-stop to Danbury, Connecticut (**KDXR**) and land with 493 pounds of fuel on board. The range and performance of the **Embraer Phenom 100** far exceeded my expectations. At cruise we were burning 76 gallons of fuel per hour. By aviation standards this is very efficient. Our speed varied but likely averaged above 375 mph.

The **winds aloft** were highly variable with a constant crosswind from the west that reached as high as 137 knots. At times, we had a headwind component, and at times a tailwind component, with the overall average probably netting out to zero. However, the strong crosswind component required that the plane crab into the wind by as much as 19 degrees. This meant we were tracking northbound over the ground with our nose pointed west. Airplanes like to fly straight and the significant crab angle is not good for efficiency, making the non-stop performance all the more impressive. Once we got to the New York area, there were quite a few vectors due to traffic. We experienced moderate **turbulence** as we came down from high altitude and the winds on the field were gusting at more than 30 miles per hour. It was quite bouncy, but Captain Bill greased the plane onto the ground very smoothly. The **Phenom 100** -- tail # N784JP -- continued on to Dayton, Ohio where it will spend a few weeks at **Stevens Aviation** for the installation of some additional features.

Speaking of Captain Bill, I must say that the services, advice, flight planning, and piloting skills provided by **Bill Minkoff** and **Mark Stear** of **JetQuik** were superb. I got to know them really well during our

extended (partly unplanned) stay in Sao Jose dos Campos. On a scale of 1 to 10, I would rate them an 11. There is much to share about what happened between Day 1 and Day 10. **Stay tuned.**

There are quite a few pictures and movies of Embraer people and jets in the **Picasa Web Album** - there are many more and at some point I will get them organized. Note that the Phenom tail # of the plane we flew back was PT-TGX for the first month or so of it's life. (All Brazilian airplanes have a **tail #** starting with PP, PR, PT or PU. All American airplanes start with N, **dating back many years** to the Air National Guard.) An alcohol wipe of the engine covers on October 1 (Day 4) removed the PT-TGX letters and revealed the permanent tail # of N784JP.

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## ▶ Tuesday, October 27, 2009

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### Brazilian Adventure - Summary



I did not really have to go to Brazil for the delivery of the **Embraer Phenom 100** -- **JetQuik** demonstrated that they could have done it very professionally on their own -- but it was a once in a lifetime opportunity. No doubt about it, this was an educational experience.

Although a somewhat experienced pilot with 500+ hours of flying, that was a drop in the bucket compared to what I learned over the course of nearly ten days with Bill and Mark and the Embraer team. Reading a great deal about the Phenom was informative but nothing compared to spending a week in the hangar and 15+ hours in flight. It is an incredibly well engineered airplane and I will have more comments on the technology aspects of it in future posts.

After arriving in Connecticut from Ft. Lauderdale, Bill and Mark took the Phenom to **Stevens Aviation** in Dayton, Ohio where it is undergoing some enhancements. Embraer had thought of just about everything but not quite everything, especially in the areas of collision avoidance systems, air-to-ground communications, and audio/video. The interior walls of the plane have to be removed and a half-dozen wiring harnesses have to be installed. The FAA has to inspect and approve every minute detail. The plane will return to Connecticut before the middle of November. Just so happens I will be in Ohio at that time for a board meeting and will return with the Phenom.

After yet another FAA inspection, the Phenom will be put into "service" with **Diamond Air Charters, Inc.**, a charter aviation company in Danbury. The plane will be made available to anyone through **flyDiamond.com**. Federal Aviation Regulation **Part 135** provides stringent standards -- above and beyond what private ownership requires -- to insure excellent safety, properly trained and experienced pilots, and regular inspections of all operational aspects of the aircraft and the business. Will the demand be there? Remains to be seen but I believe it will. The VLJ -- very light jet or "microjet" -- fills a niche that is getting harder and harder to fill by normal commercial aviation. The market segment I am referring to is traveling between small and medium sized towns and cities.

If you need to fly between San Francisco and New York City, you can not beat commercial airlines -- as of this writing \$242 round trip with one stop. On the other hand if you want to go from Danbury, Connecticut to Roanoke, Virginia it costs \$904 and takes seven and a half hours plus the time to drive to Laganardia and be there in time to park and get through security. In other words it takes a whole day to get there. The Phenom can go direct from Danbury to Roanoke in 80 minutes. Admittedly it is much more expensive, so it comes down to how much is your time

worth. For many busy business executives their time is worth a lot. Being able to be in Roanoke in time for coffee, make a presentation, close a deal, and be home for dinner is very good from both a business and personal point of view. Roanoke is a random example -- there are more than 5,000 general aviation airports, most of which are not accessible to commercial aviation but are accessible to very light jets. The U.S. Congress put a wet towel on aviation temporarily but there is another side to the story. See **No Plane No Gain**.

It was a pleasure to share the Brazilian Adventure in **JetBrief** and **patrickWeb**. Below you can find links to each of the stories and a printable document that includes all the stories.

- **Day 1 - Flight to Brazil**
- **Day 2 - Intro to Sao Jose dos Campos**
- **Day 3 - Test flight and barbecue**
- **Day 4 - Squawks and the FAA**
- **Day 5 - FAA Redux**
- **Day 6 - Campos do Jordao**
- **Day 7 - Geocaching**
- **Day 8 - Departure and fuel**
- **Day 9 - Caribbean islands**
- **Day 10 - Florida to Connecticut**
- Trip Summary
- Printable version including all the stories

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