

Phenom 100 Visit to Turks and Caicos Sporting Club by Bill Minkoff, ATP, JetQuik, LLC.

We wing toward the Turks and Caicos for a brief respite from the flight to California. The Phenom 100 is such a great flying machine that my new owner/pilot wants to keep going, but he has promised his wife a little time-out on the way home. He mockingly suggests that he put her birthday on the tail number so that she would let him have the new Phenom. He confesses that to keep his two other airplanes, a Beechcraft Premier I and a Cirrus he incorporated his wife's birthday into the N number.

Our flight level 400 optic of the multi-hued water of the Caribbean is soon replaced by a much closer connection to the sea. Greater Ambergris Cay appears ahead through the lazy afternoon clouds which dot the horizon. The tiny islands of the Turks and Caicos fill the southeastern area of the Caicos Bank with Greater (or Big) Ambergris Cay at four miles long is one of the larger of the Ambergris Cays. The entire island is a neatly organized community being constructed by DPS Development, the same folks who built the hugely successful Greenbrier Sporting Club in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia. We are absolutely awed by the airport facility they have completed. At 5,790 feet, MBAC is the longest private airport in the Caribbean. This illuminated strip with firefighting and state of the art construction is long and smooth welcoming us from lofty perch over the sparkling Caribbean.

We taxi up to the door of the reception building where we are welcomed with tropical island drinks made with Bambarra Rum, The Spirit of Turks and Caicos. Quickly we learn that our complete enjoyment is the staff's unrelenting goal. With no cars, and consequently no paved roads, on the island, we are each assigned our own golf cart to whiz around the community and we delight in the freedom of our new personal transportation. We all agree to freshen up and meet at Calico Jack's for dinner.

The thatched hut of Calico Jack's tropical bar, on the leeward side Ambergris Cay is the perfect spot to watch the Caribbean sunset. Calico Jack's has an open air, covered dining area adjoining the climate controlled dining room. With the weather always nearly perfect its hard to imagine wanting to eat inside. With only 22 guests in residence we are guaranteed a table at any time during the evening, (twenty homes have been completed with more under construction). Walking to our table I'm greeted by Peter Pollock, the "P" in DPS Development. Peter is an affable New Yorker who once worked as the General Manager of the Boston Celtics. With an eye for appreciation, Peter has always picked real estate winners. No where is this more evident than The Turks and Caicos Sporting Club. After dinner it off to bed with thoughts of tomorrow's bone fishing on the flats.

The sun peeks brightly into the single-room cabana where I awaken to the sound of the surf which lulled me to sleep. I enjoy my morning coffee in solitude from a deck that is eight feet above the azure Caribbean below. Designed to impart relaxation, island style, my 400 square foot cabana, is unique, not so much for what it provides but more for what

is missing. Here there is no telephone, no internet, no television and no roof over the bathroom; yet I have travertine marble floors and Ferette sheets. The bamboo furnishings evoke strong memories of my time spent in the Philippines when I flew A-7 Corsairs from the deck of the USS Midway. I'm sure they hold up in the tropical humidity, but I much prefer the teak furniture on the sun drenched deck.

We are off to Calico Jack's again in our golf carts. I doubt any of our carts can exceed the posted 14 mph speed limit, but after some horse trading among the available carts, my pilot friend has found one that will out run mine and he seems completely delighted. Again I think of my time in living in Japan where the Western Pacific WESTPAC junior officers all had motorcycles and horsepower couldn't replace skillful driving on the narrow roads. I am treated to island pancakes with coconut syrup while my friends began their morning with a variety of equally appetizing breakfasts.

Famous for the waxy secretion, ambergris, from the North Atlantic Humpback whales that migrate through the islands in the winter, the island is also home to a wide variety of marine life. Among the land dwelling creatures of Greater Ambergris are the rock iguana. The island teems with these foot long reptiles who scurry between the areas of vegetation and may be seen sunning themselves on nearly every road and outcropping. My owner/pilot friend and I opted out of the manicure/pedicure event that his wife and mother enjoyed, instead we explored the island with Ceci Richard who showed us the original estate of Horatio Stubbs who acquired the island from John Lightbourne who purchased the island from the government of the Bahamas in 1811. Horatio Stubbs planted sisal and reportedly organized a waypoint for livestock destined for the islands. The remnants of limestone and coral rock paddocks can still be found on the southern end of the island. The last private owner of the island, Henry Mensen has teamed with DPS Development to create a private sanctuary which will ultimately be comprised of 425 homes and a members only club.