

Tuesday, November 16, 2004
18th Cobra flight, 28th solo
Mellow Sunset flight along Rio Grande
Landed Mid-Valley, 5 Landings

Launched 3:45pm, Landing 5:30pm
Flight time: 1:45min Total logged time: 59:30
Launch: Calm on runway 21 Landing: Calm runway 21



Dead calm conditions with stratus cloud cover all day long. Winds aloft, calm at 9000ft. A nice mellow day to fly.

Left work early (2:20pm) and headed to the hanger. Got to Belen a little after 3pm and was in the air at 3:45pm. Mel was flying the pattern with a student, I did one touch and go then headed east.

I crossed the I-25 and flew over the farmlands in the Rio Grande Valley.



All along the Bosque, they were burning brush. I could see 4 or 5 smoke plumes rising in the still air. I could smell the burning wood. It smelled nice, mixed in with the smell of the freshly cut fields.

I took a closer look at one of the fires and flew through the smoke plume. There was big thermal there, and I circled the trike a few times and gained some "free" altitude.





There were large flocks of birds flying in the valley. They were down low near the ground and I was above them, at least 500 ft higher.



I flew south, all the way to Bernardo and the northern boundary and the Sevillita Wildlife Refuge. Then turned around and headed north again.

The colors were much brighter on the return leg with the sun at my back.



I flew north to the Mid-Valley Airpark, with its notoriously narrow runway. Landed fine, then taxied off the runway to take a look at the place. No one else was flying at the time.



Mid-Valley has homes with attached hangars so you can taxi your plane home, and put it in your hanger.

I taxied back to runway 36 and was preparing to take off when I saw a bicyclist excitedly pull up along side me on the taxiway. I waved at him and wondered if he wanted to talk to me. Then I saw him flap his arms like wings.

He just wanted to see me take off.



I took off and departed the pattern to the east towards Tome hill. Tome is an ancient volcano, similar to Black Butte to the south.

On the summit was a collection of crosses.





The sun set at 5:00pm.
30 minutes left. I
headed back to Belen.





Flew by (not over) the Los Lunas Prison. Then over to I-25 and south to Belen airport. Got in two landings.

Nice sunset flight in mellow conditions. I was surprised that I was in the air for 1:45. The flight seemed much shorter.

