

Sunday, January 11, 2009
251st Cobra flight, 260th PIC, 2 landings
Aiptek Mount, Pools, Ladron Foothills, Rio Grande Valley

Takeoff: 1:12pm Landing: 3:12pm
Today's Airtime: 2.0
Total PIC Time : 637.9 Total Logged Time 659.1



The warm spell continues. I headed down to Belen, but instead of heading directly to the hangar, I drove through town looking for the last ethanol free gas station in Belen. It is called "Garley's Party Doll, Gas Station and Lounge". Some stubborn old guy runs the place and hates ethanol gas. That's good news for myself and all the other ultralight / LSA pilots in Belen. One by one we have watched the gas stations convert over to ethanol, but there is hope that "Party Doll" will endure.

Why is the place called Party Doll? I am not sure I want to know. It was closed Sunday morning, but I took this picture to put on the Albuquerque Ultralights Webpage.

At Belen I saw John Samuli, a private pilot who had recently completed transition training with Frank and now hangars his trike in Belen. The wind was blowing about 5mph, and I reminded John that if it got a little windier, and he was having trouble centering up on the runway, to not hesitate to use the entire runway needed to. He was planning to stick to the pattern until he got in 100 good landings, but I told him I would see him in about an hour.

I fussed around with my AIPTK camera mount some more, this time make sure that my helmet would not block the view like last time.



I took off and followed John in the pattern. It was moderately thermally, and blowing about 5-7mph cross. Not the best conditions for a new trike pilot, but John was handling it well. I took some great air-to-air video of his landings, but unfortunately I deleted the files on my computer the next day. John used power and took his time centering up his trike on the runway. He had no problem dealing with the less than ideal conditions.



I left the pattern and headed west to the pools. The winds kept me from getting too low over them. I made two passes over them then continued NW towards the Sierra Lucero (upper right). I was on the lee side of the mountain and could feel it. This was not enjoyable, so I turned downwind making a final high pass over the pools (lower left).



I saw this ruin near the pools. These pools look like a desert oasis. I wonder if the water is bad. There is a lot of mineral content, as evident by the extensive travertine formations nearby. If the water was good, the ranchers would have built there houses right next to the pools.

I continued downwind into smoother air, flying along the base of Ladron Peak. I passed over Target 2, then followed the Rio Puerco to the Rio Grande. From there, I cruised over the winter farm fields. I started for Belen, then turned back to check out a private airport in the valley. Then I went back to Belen for good.

There were 3 planes in the pattern doing touch and goes, and landing with a 5-7 mph tailwind. I thought about protesting, but decided to just land and get some tailwind landing practice.



