

Jan. 18-22, 2021 - To the River Ranch Dude Resort... once again!



Yes, I know, I am NOT supposed to post articles about the same place unless something special or unique warrants a duplication. Well, the River Ranch, located in the Yeehaw Junction area of central Florida is such a unique flying destination that I decided to give it another look/see. Apparently it has been a year since my last visit and things have changed a bit, mainly with the addition of many unique accommodation choices. I made the fly-in by myself this past Monday, the MLK holiday, with the expectation of seeing its newly dedicated RV camping area. We had been planning an upcoming visit with our motor-home and heard that it now had its own resort electric/water sites to supplement its long standing "dry camping" area. The above photo shows my plane on a left downwind approach to the airports runway 34, which can be seen at the upper right hand portion of the photo, (just below my overhead wing). In the foreground is the boat marina with its Smokehouse restaurant, (which is open for dinner every evening during the peak winter season). Beyond are the tennis and basketball courts, the private owner campground (where we usually stay) on the left, and the motel lodging just area behind. In the far left background is the kids play area, the rodeo the "rustic campgrounds" as well as the "glamping" (glamor camping) zone and the log cabins and cottages. Also in the right background is the skeet and trap range across the road from the golf course along with a children's petting zoo and pony rides.

This is a VERY comprehensive resort which has something to offer for everyone. There are swamp buggy rides and airboat tours and a hayride with a barbeque dinner along with a saloon and music entertainment for adults and rock climbing, zip line and a mechanical bull for the kids. Plenty to do if you are so inclined, including the Saturday night professional rodeo. For us it has been a chance to get away and escape for a couple of days in the peace and quiet of the private owner's campground with its upscale RV lots and the chance to enjoy an evening campfire with a cocktail and our dogs. On the following pages are some photos from this recent fly-in visit and the follow-up, a couple of days later, with our motor home.



Despite it being a holiday weekend, there were only 4 aircraft on the ramp when I arrived. I found an open spot between a Cessna 414 Cabin Class twin a Skyhawk 4 seater. It is about a mile walk from the airport to the Marina where I planned on having lunch. The walk over takes one past the camping areas that abut the

airport. Since this was a long holiday weekend I found them to be absolutely packed. The campgrounds have a multitude of options ranging from the basic \$50 per night patch of ground on which to pitch your own tent, to \$1,000 per night luxury lodgings in either an Indian TP or a 500 sq. ft. Conestoga wagon style accommodation that will sleep 6. There are also "platform" mounted tents which offer private bedroom lodgings with easy access to the common bathhouse/ toilets just a short walk away. Although some of these are more "rustic" and better suited for the young family with kids, they are all located amongst "wild life" ranging from free roaming horses and donkeys to Texas longhorn cattle.





Texas Longhorn cattle along with the Angus variety



The grazing horses were friendly and liked nose rubs



As it turned out, I was not very impressed with the new \$125 per night "RV Park" at the resort. The sites were on plain grass and very close together and with no on site sewer hook-up. For our stay we will continue to book at the adjacent \$100 per night owners park within easy walking distance to the Marina and its dining room. The sites there are all well improved with paved driveways, wooden patios, fire rings, full hook-ups and nicely landscaped. Our upcoming stay, in just two days, will be documented on the pages following.

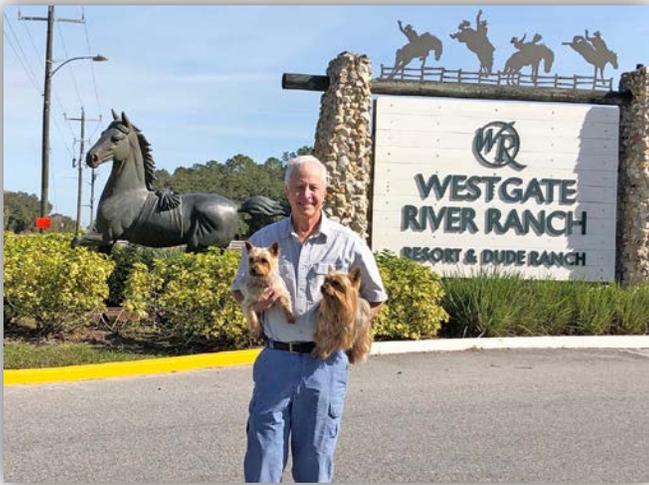


And speaking of the Marina eatery, this is where I went for today's lunch, a very flavorful pulled pork bar-b-que sandwich, fries & slaw, along with a Coke. I worked off the calories with the return mile walk back to the airstrip, stopping along the way to take in the doings at the miniature golf and zip-line kids park. It was a beautiful day for these outdoor activities and also for flying. It is just a 50 minute flight in each direction from my Indiantown airport to River Ranch, and it makes me wonder why I do not make more of these trips during the year. In any case I am looking forward to my return in just two days with the Sprinter RV, Miriam and our two dogs.

Jan. 20-22, 2021 - To the River Ranch Dude Resort... Part Deux!



The above image is of the River Ranch Resort's map. At the lower right hand corner is their airport at which I landed on Monday and at the upper left hand corner is the owner's RV park that we drove into on Wednesday. In between those two locations is the *not to scale* layout of their entire 1,700 acre complex. An interesting fact: the direct distance between my Indiantown airport base and the River Ranch airport is 70 air miles, which takes me less than one flying hour. The drive between my home in Tradition, via the Ancient Oaks RV park in Okeechobee, and then onto River Ranch is 110 miles and takes almost 2 hours. However it takes me an additional 35 minutes to go from my home to the Indiantown airport, so the actual portal to portal travel time is almost the same. The main difference, however, is that once there with the motor-home we have our "house" with us and do not have to avail ourselves of their motel style rooms which start at \$250 per night. In fact all of the resort's accommodations are, in my opinion, vastly overpriced. However they certainly offer a lot of amenities and plenty to keep the kids (and their parents) well occupied for a long weekend. On a mid-week retreat, such as the one that we were on, things were quite a bit more laid-back and even the owner's RV park, at which we stayed, had plenty of open sites to choose from. Much like my own RV park in Hilton Head, all sites are privately owned. And while most are occupied by their owner's motor homes or travel trailers for their personal use, whether as seasonal "snow birds" or full time residents, some, like mine, are "investment" properties and are on the rental role during those times that the owners are not present. We stayed on a beautifully landscaped site in Phase 3 with a lot of high end (quarter million \$ plus) RV's as our neighbors.



Me and the dogs at the resort's entrance road



The Sprinter parked at our site with the slide deployed



It didn't take long for me to get into "the program".



We did take walks though...some to the saloon!



The whole purpose of this short get away was to find time to relax and enjoy the peace, quiet and solitude that RV'ing offers. There was plenty of time to read, do small projects & even sit by an open campfire. With evening temps in the 40's having an on-site fire ring was a nice amenity. And it was good practice for our anticipated upcoming Spring of 2021 trip out to the far Southwest states. I might even get to rent an airplane there, so that I can do another post.