

Sept. 19, 2013 - Frogmore Intl. Airport & Steamer's

The County of Beaufort, SC operates two airports. The main one, on Hilton Head Island caters to the rich and famous with mostly corporate and personal jets occupying its parking ramp. The other is the Lady's Island Airport, also know as Frogmore International (although there is absolutely nothing international about it). While it can accommodate most turboprops and cabin class twins, its 3,400 foot runway generally relegates it to small single engine general aviation aircraft. It is only 15 miles north of the Hilton Head strip, which does have commercial airline service via USAirways DeHaverland Dash 8 prop jets that hop over to its Charlotte NC hub. Even with a half dozen of these "milk run" flights each day, along with a dozen or so biz-jets coming and going, HXD is a very easy airport to fly into. The tower personnel are both friendly and accommodating. I have never found it to be a burden working in a controlled environment. In fact, during my twin engine aircraft days I would routinely fly into Charlotte's Douglas Field, as well Palm Beach International and a myriad of other very busy commercial airports, including DC National, Houston International, St. Louis's Lambert field among others. However it is always easier to be able to come and go without having to "ask permission", so a short flight over to Lady's Island for lunch seemed like a good thing to do on a perfectly beautiful flying day in mid-September.

I subscribe to an online site called "The \$100 Hamburger" (which I have made reference to in previous articles). It lists many airports throughout all 50 states which feature restaurants either right on the field or very close by. I have used it extensively searching out good places to fly to while I have been in Florida. And, although SC does not have nearly so many airfields with nearby eating facilities, it did mention an excellent seafood restaurant called Barbara Jean's located less than a mile from the Beaufort County airport at Frogmore. Thus I decided to give it a try, since I probably have not been into the Lady's Island airport for more than a quarter century. The flight over takes one across the Broad River which is directly off the end of Runway 3 and which provides for a 10 mile water crossing, until one reaches the south shoreline of Port Royal, where the Paris Island Marine Recruit Training Facility is located. From there it is another 5 miles before one enters the traffic pattern at Frogmore, being very careful to stay out of the airspace controlled by the nearby Marine Corps. Air Station.

Once tied up on their ramp I posed for an "affirmation photo" and then started on the 15 minute walk over to the restaurant. However, when I got there I was shocked to see a "closed" sign gracing its front door. Apparently after 9 years, and with an excellent rating, the place had gone out of business just 2 weeks previously. Well, on the way over I had passed another seafood place called "The Original Steamer Seafood Restaurant" and I decided to pop in to see what they had to offer. The daily special was a Buffalo style oyster po' boy sandwich, with crispy sweet potato fries, which was both spicy and good. Washed down with multitude cokes, it filled the bill quite nicely. Upon my return to the airfield I spent a while chatting with their attendant and was briefed on what had transpired in the two and a half decades since my last visit. Since it is such an short and easy flight over from Hilton Head, I probably will return again... next time to give Steamer's lump crab cakes a try.



Living Large on the South Carolina Coast



The downtown Beaufort waterfront



At Frogmore International Airport



Lunch at Steamer's Seafood, Lady's Island