

## The Flying Gourmet Santa Rosa

I'm not ashamed to say that I am a fair weather flyer; amusement parks and roller coasters have never been a favorite of mine, so I study the weather and pick the ideal time. My last flight was no exception to my rule, a perfect autumn evening with a little nip in the still night air. I asked my neighbor to accompany me and he enthusiastically accepted. He has been with me once before and really seems to enjoy the light aircraft experience.



Out to the flight line we went to kick the tires, check the oil, gas and especially the lights since this was going to be mostly a night flight. My plan was to fly the highway 680 corridor up past Concord, across the

Carquinez Straights, along San Pablo Bay and into wine country to our destination, Santa Rosa (STS).



Our trusty steed for the evening was a Piper Arrow with a brand new engine so she actually might be producing the advertised 200 horse power. The flight would not be long but it would be a busy one since the air traffic in that area can be heavy and we would be flying just under San Francisco's class B air space. During my climb out, prior to switching frequencies to Nor Cal Approach Control, I was alerted by the Livermore tower of conflicting traffic. That was just the beginning since once contact with Nor Cal was made

they had several other traffic alerts for me. This is when having another pair of eyes in the cockpit really pays off and Paul was an excellent observer. Once we were turned over to Travis Approach everything seemed to calm down until we entered the traffic pattern at STS. There was a twin turbo-prop commuter holding short, we were number one, a Cherokee number 2, and a Challenger jet number three for landing. I tried to expedite my landing, so as not to cause anyone to go around, but my roll out to taxiway Charlie seemed long.

The restaurant, **The Sky Lounge Steak House and Raw Bar**, located in the Terminal Building was almost deserted so the service was excellent. We settled for the lettuce wraps for appetizers and the special of the evening, Fish and Chips, for the entre. Someone in the kitchen has been to Chef's school since the main course was served with a flair that you don't usually see with Fish and Chips. The restaurant has a Sushi bar and has a very pleasant atmosphere, the food was tasty, reasonably priced and the waitress attentive. What more could you want from an eatery at an airport?

Santa Rosa is an interesting place; on the ramp were two Grumman Albatrosses and a B-25 Mitchell bomber (actually I think it had been converted to an A-25) lots of gun ports in the nose! When we returned to the FBO ramp to depart we were surrounded by four large corporate jets, it's really a hopping place.

The flight home was beautiful with the San Francisco Bay all lit up and twinkling and all that previous air traffic was gone.