

Welcome to Brazil!

Capital: Brasilia

Population 188,078,227



This is the view from the door of one of the Hotels that we Stayed at. Very nice, but very small rooms. Notice the cars in the picture. All of the cars were small and many we had never seen before.

Six months ago Rhonda and I were invited to go to Brazil for their Championship Race outside of San Paulo Brazil. We accepted the invite from the Confederation of Brazilian Aeromodelers. Edson Maluf is the president of their organization, similar to our AMA and was our main contact for this wonderful trip. After 24 hours straight in airplanes or airports, we were greeted with the sad news that Edson had had a heart attack a few days before and was in the hospital recovering from bypass surgery. We wish him a speedy and complete recovery. We found out later, that the reason that they did not tell us before was they were afraid that we would not come.

We left Billings, Montana at 8:00 am on September 12. Our flight was uneventful. The trip through Airport Security was very simple. Our new airplane case worked great! Golfers get allot less questions about what they are carrying than modelers do. I will take some pictures of the case and post an article on my website for the modelers that are going to be interested in a "how to".

We arrived in Sao Paulo Brazil on Wednesday the 13th at 6:00 am. We were looking for a driver with a sign with our name on it... There was not a sign with our name on it. While we were looking for the sign two fine young men greeted

us and took some of our bags. One was Jon Maluf, the son of Edson, and the other was Freddie, our translator. It was a great combination. They took splendid care of us. I asked where the sign was and was told that they had seen lots of our pictures and were looking for us or someone carrying a box that would transport racing airplanes... It worked for us. We left the airport, turned down breakfast and headed for the motel. Our first motel was close to the airport.

The first thing I noticed as we drove around Sao Paulo was the cars... They all drive tiny little cars. They have cars that we had never seen before, including little Fords and Chevy's. There were Mercedes mini cars that are only available in Brazil, and they are made there. Fiats, Renault, and Peugeots were everywhere. I mean everywhere. They were bumper to bumper and side to side, like Mexico City. Like Mexico City, if anyone drove like that in the US, they would be involved in allot of road rage incidents. The rule is simple if the car fits, make the lane change.<G>

I think that the little cars that they drive there make allot of sense. They get 40 to 50 miles per gallon. If we all drove the little cars and we did not have the "undocumented" in the US driving and using our gasoline, we could cut our national gasoline usage by 2/3rds. They also make alcohol and sell it in the gas stations for about half the price of gasoline. Most of these little cars will run on either. They make the alcohol from sugar cane. It is easy to extract the fuel from sugar cane. I have heard that it is expensive to make alcohol from corn... We grow lots of sugar beets in the US. It should be more economical to make the biofuel from sugar beets than corn. My guess is that the corn growers have been doing a great job of lobbying the politicians to put money in their pockets than to keep in it ours.

We arrived at our motel unpacked our stuff, and reorganized everything. We settled in our room for the stay... Mistake.<G> This was our first of 4 different motels in 5 days. About 1:00 Jon and Fred picked us up and we had our first of many experiences with Brazilian Barbeque. We had never seen anything like this. First they have a nice salad bar. Then comes the meat, lots of it and served very unique. The servers would come to the table with long skewers and large chunks of meat on the skewer and a big very sharp knife. They would offer it to you and if you wanted that cut, they would slice a thin slice for you. Each plate had a small pair of tongs to use to put the meat on your plate... Then, it just kept coming. There was every cut of meat that you can think of. Sirloin, tenderloin, rump, lamb, sausage, chicken, chicken hearts... so many different things served one after another, that I can't even think of them all. There is no reason to go away hungry...

This was not one special place, it is a Brazilian specialty. We had Brazilian barbeque at least once a day. We had it in private homes, several different restaurants and at a party Saturday night after practice day. They are also good

beer drinkers. They have a popular brand of beer there called Skol. Tastes great, but as much of it as I drank I do not think that it has any alcohol in it. It is hard to say no and I am a light weight drinker for sure.

Wednesday afternoon, we started meeting the modelers of Sao Paulo. The Brazilians have to be some of the friendliest people that I have ever met. Even though there was a language barrier, they were all happy to try to communicate. Never a grumpy "No English" attitude. Freddie was with us almost all the time that Rhonda and I were not in a motel. He is smart and has a very good sense of humor, more on that later. He is also a super custom builder. The airplane that he painted for the race, would have been best of show in any Formula One judging that we used to do. We went to the leading Pylon Hobby shop in the area. Marcelo is their #1 pylon racer in the area and is a fine gentleman. He really wanted to get beat and appreciated that we were there. He wanted to learn as much as he could for the time that we were there. We shared everything with Marcelo and the rest of the racers that we could.

We found out Wednesday night, that the race was not in Sao Paulo, but in Itapaveda. A smaller city about 200 miles west of Sao Paulo and that we were leaving the next day. It was time to get packed and ready for the drive the next day. So much for the organized room that we had.<G> We messed around all day long and did not get out of town until early in the evening. It was midnight before we got to Itapaveda. We got lost in town looking for the motel and drove around for another hour before we finally paid a pizza delivery guy on a motorcycle to lead us to the motel. When we got there, it was almost scary. Dark and the motel looked kind of bad in the dark. We went along with the program and took our stuff inside and went to sleep. The next morning, it looked much better in the sunlight. When I looked out the window, there was a man with a broom sweeping the street below the window. Now I know why everything was so clean.

We changed hotels for Friday night and went to one of the nicest shops that I have seen anywhere. It was at Elcio's house. He is another professional builder in Brazil. His shop is one that every modeler anywhere would love to have... Beautiful paint both. It was a great place to put the airplanes together and to meet many of the local racers.

As the day went on, the racers congregated at the shop. I spend most of the day setting up motors and showing them what to look for in motor performance. I am not sure how many motors I tore down and set up, but there was lots of laughing and drinking of beer while the education was going on. Everyone was anxious to learn. Yes, there was another barbeque on the agenda. Elcio's shop had an out door patio behind and I do not know where all the people came from... There were more there than at the race on Sunday.<G>

Saturday was a practice day. I put up 3 flights then it was more talking to the locals. They had a different race schedule and race rules. They were anxious to do it like we do and were very open to suggestions. Their old way of determining a winner was to run 5 heats, and go on times only. The times were for the best 3 out of five... That way, the winners were pretty much determined before the race started. I explained our system of 4 for first, 3 for second and so forth and then explained to them why it was better racing head to head gave more of the competitors a chance to win. The real demo of why was during the race. We went to the line for our first heat and the gremlins got us. (they call them Zebras). When it was time for the flag to drop, the motor quit and we watched our first heat from the ground. Our next 4 flights were Brazilian records. Under their old system, we would have swept the contest by allot. With the head to head racing, Marcelo took first and we were second. That was the way it should have been,..

The other knowledge that we left behind was equipment that they should be using. Like lights on pylon #1. A starting clock. Lap counters... Just little things. Probably the best idea was to set their course up differently. They have a beautiful airport runway that they race on. They shut it down completely for them to race. The runway is 100' wide and I don't know how long it was, but very... They set up a circus tent along side of the runway and then went down about 400' and we watched the race from the end looking at 2/3. Some of the landings were exciting.<G> There is a taxi way that is perfect for setting up the pits. I suggested for their races that they move the pits to 400' to the side of the race course and put 2/3 in the middle of the intersection. If they needed to change the course for wind, they would only have to move the #1 and the starting line... It will be both safer and much more fun to watch the races, for both the spectators and participants.

When the races were over, we headed back to Sao Paulo and to yet another hotel. By now, we were used to it. We finally did some Rhonda stuff (Mall Shopping) then back to the good stuff... The Hobby Shop.<G> Our flight did not leave until 10:30 Monday night, so we had a full day after the race to relax before the 24 hour airplane/airport trip.

Before we left, we did something special. Did I tell you that Brazil has a wonderful barbeque?<G> The last one that we went to was really special. It was a 5 star restaurant and it was fantastic. The service was the best that I have had anywhere and we really laughed allot. I get told allot that I look like Sean Connery. While we were in the restaurant, I heard one of the waiters talking to Freddie. I heard the waiter say "double 0 7" When he left, I asked Freddie what it was about. The waiter wanted to know if I was the actor from 007. Freddie, having the sense of humor, told him that "it was he". You can imagine the service we go after that. Rhonda saw them fighting over an empty soda bottle that they picked up from me.<G>

The trip to Brazil was a great trip. We did not so much as break a prop and met many new friends. We certainly hope that we have the opportunity to do it again. I apologize for not having some of the many pictures that I took. The first smart card I had in the camera took a dump. When it said card error, I assumed it was just full. Wrong! It died and took most of my pictures of the city to the grave with it. I have some that I took and some that were sent to me. Mostly of races.



This was a bar across the street from the Hotel. The sign Shows the Brazilian attitude to Americans... We were Welcome everywhere!



This picture was from the upper level of Elcio's beautiful shop. It would be a great place to build airplanes. The paint booth was even down vented, and would make for perfect paint jobs.



This is Fred. He was with us everywhere. He was our translator and became a good friend. Great sense of humor and is a custom builder as well. The airplane in the picture is his first Q40 project and I was very impressed. From the picture you cannot see the detail, but it was perfect.



These are Q40 models that are built in Brazil by Marcelo. I questioned the scale of them, and was shown a picture that was quite accurate to the model



We were treated to a noon time show on Sunday by a local aerobatic pilot. The airplane weighs only 500 pounds and is rated for plus and minus 9 G's. He put on quite a show. It started with a slow roll on take off and went on from there.



This picture is self explaining. It was good to see the local hero standing in the #1 position. He was a very nice racer and most anxious to learn. He will go much faster next year, as will all of the racers in the area.



The last picture we took at the contest. This is just some of the many new friends that we made in Brazil. What a great bunch of modelers and racers.

We are proof that you do not have to know the language of the area if you know the language of modeling. What a super time we had!