

THE SAN PEDRO SUN VISITOR GUIDE



June 22, 2006

FREE

The Island Newspaper
Ambergris Caye, Belize
Central America

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You haven't seen a tree until you've seen its shadow from the sky.

— Amelia Earhart



It's amazing the view from the top, and seeing "La Isla Bonita" from this perspective makes one appreciate the island even more.

How do you know you are on an island? How do you know that to the east of our caye the Barrier Reef borders and protects us? How do you know that to the west our caye is embraced by channels of deep green mangroves and lazy, dark waterways? How do you know that to the north of San Pedro the jungle meets the water...with vast stretches of coconut trees and white sandy beaches lining the shore? Have you ever soared above the crystal clear waters, swooping down so low you can

almost see the spots on the eagle rays that glide beneath the shallow transparent water? Once you see all of this from the sky, you affirm what you already know in your heart...you are in paradise, you are surrounded by a painter's palette of tropical colors, smudged and blended into rich textures, and you are sharing the same view that our feather-winged patrons of "La Isla Bonita" experience each day.

Although airplane travel is no

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QUESTION: What memory will you take with you?



"Seeing the sunrise with one of my kids and watching my other two excel at snorkeling." **G. Morgan Taylor** (son of WOTB), his daughter **Riley** and twin sons **Jackson** and **Hunter** spent a week at The Villas @ Del Rio and plan to return next year. Morgan works for FedEx as well as a real estate broker and they live in Livermore, California.

WOTB will be traveling and will be back in October. We'll miss her, but wish her well in her travels!!!

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Astrum Helicopters

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longer a novel experience, there are few of us who can say we travel by helicopter. It is a thrill to experience the flight of this mechanical, bug-eyed dragonfly that seems to hover and maneuver so much like the insect. The sensation is completely different from airplane flight, especially when taking off vertically. Inside the spacious and comfortable cabin you experience every tilt and dip as you soar effortlessly above the land and sea.

Based out of Belize City, Astrum Helicopters, a third-generation family business, offers helicopter tours, VIP transfers and chartered flights that are tailored to meet your specific needs. They specialize in transfers from Belize City to San Pedro, Ambergris Caye, Placencia or other destinations in Belize. Their custom tours include trips to the Blue Hole, Glovers Reef, Turneffe Islands, Victoria Peak, 1,000 ft. Falls, Altun Ha, Caracol and Lamanai to name a few. They also provide specialized services such as Search and Rescue, aerial surveys, external load, aerial photography and aerial filming. Although they are not an emergency aircraft they can also provide Medivac and Evacuation services. Astrum Helicopters also possess an AOC (Air Operator Certificate) that permits them to cross border airspace and land in other countries like Mexico and Guatemala.

It all began many, many years ago, when Gustavo A. Giron became a pilot. After learning how to fly DC-3's, T-6's, T-11's and WACO aircrafts, he continued his life long love for fly-



Gustavo Jr. and Sr.

It's three generations of helicopter pilots: Gustavo Jr. at age three (center) helps his father (right) out on the runway. Now a grown man, he and his father pilot Astrum Helicopters and bring amazing bird's eye view memories to many!

ing when he started his own crop-spraying business, treating cotton fields and banana plantations with pesticides. His passion also included acrobatic flying. His son, Gustavo Jr., shared the same passion for flight and laughs that at the age of 16 he was allowed to fly a plane but was not allowed to drive a car. While working in the family business, Gustavo Jr. flew a variety of planes. Now, a

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Shopping in San Pedro, Part III

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Step out in style with lovely sandals courtesy of Mambo Chill Boutique...be sure to check out the wide array of shoes and clothing available for every occasion!

Astrum Helicopters

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soft spoken gentleman with a shy smile, Gustavo Jr. has logged 10,176 flight hours in helicopters, with a broad range of helicopter civilian work, charters, tours, film and photography tours, external load, VIP transportation and corporate transportation. Like his father, his career has always been in the aviation industry. Now that his father has passed away, Gustavo Jr. is regarded as Gustavo Sr., and his son is now considered Gustavo Jr. (technically "the 3rd."). In keeping with tradition, Gustavo Jr. has followed in the family business

footsteps.

An energetic man, Gustavo Jr. manages their new business, Astrum Helicopters. Gustavo Jr. explained that when he was faced with the task of naming the business he wanted to use something different and meaningful. He purchased a Latin dictionary and started reading the meaning of different words. He finally found a word from the dictionary that he liked; astrum -i n. [a star, or constellation]. Before moving to Belize, Gustavo Jr. lived in the US for eight

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Astrum Helicopters Continued from Page 11

years where he earned a Master's Degree in Industrial Engineering and Operations Research. He worked as a Strategy Consultant in New York, and then as a Trader/Manager in New York City.

When asked what inspired the family to start such a business in Belize, Gustavo Jr. explained, "My father's helicopter company was hired in 2002 to bring a group of individuals from Europe to do a documentary about Belize. They spent one week flying with the helicopter all over Belize gathering film and photographic footage. They flew close to 20 hours gathering footage for the project. My father was amazed by the beauty of

Belize, and was amazed by the many areas he saw from the air. At this point the idea started to evolve, and in late 2003 we started discussing the possibility of opening a helicopter company in Belize. After two years of planning, research and permit application processes we brought our first helicopter to Belize in October 2005 and in June 2006 we got the final permits to endeavor in a commercial helicopter operation in Belize."

Gustavo Jr. emphasized that safety and professionalism is their number one priority. Their Bell 206 B3 Jet Ranger helicopter is a world renowned turbine powered rotary wing aircraft and is considered to be



From an aerial view, quaint, small islands take on an even more impressive beauty, and one can truly appreciate the wonders of nature.

A Truly Divine Experience

This elegantly appointed restaurant features both outdoor seating and indoor air-conditioned split level dining with high ceilings, local artwork and more. Our wonderfully decorated lounge invites you to enjoy the island's largest selection of drinks, cool tropical cocktails and martinis.

El Divino

CARIBBEAN STEAKHOUSE & MARTINI LOUNGE

Dinner entrees include...

- Filet Mignon, Garlic Mashed Potatoes with Cabernet Wine Sauce • Pork Chops, Steak, Fries and Warm Apple Chutney
- Pan Seared Grouper, Garlic Mashed Potatoes with Grapefruit Beurre Blanc
- Steamed Local Lobster Tail with Saffron Risotto • Sautéed Snapper over Black Bean Salsa with Caribbean Citrus Sauce
- Sautéed Shrimp, Herb Pesto Couscous and Flavored Oils

For lunch enjoy...

- Chilled Gazpacho Soup with Shrimp • Sirloin Burger with fries
- Fish Fillet Sandwich • Broasted Chicken Breast Sandwich

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the safest, most reliable aircraft of any kind flying throughout the world. It holds four passengers with an average cruise speed of 100 mph.

All helicopters are equipped with the latest avionics, communication devices (all helicopters carry a satellite phone) and with an emergency flotation device to land the helicopter in water in case of an emergency. Their pilots must have 3000 hours of flight time and 500 of those hours must be model specific to the Bell Helicopter 206. They have gone to great lengths to establish a maintenance facility in Belize City with all the necessary tools and parts to maintain their helicopters, and in the future they plan to offer helicopter maintenance services to visiting helicopters and/or private helicopters registered in Belize. "Our Director of Maintenance has extensive experience in the helicopter industry (20+ years) and has worked in both commercial helicopter companies and civil aviation authorities performing different roles, both as an operator of helicopters and a regulating entity," explained Gustavo Jr. "Locally, we have hired personnel with the potential to become helicopter mechanics, and currently we have an apprentice working with us. Based on his performance he could become a helicopter mechanic in two to three years. As we grow and bring more helicopters to Belize, we will combine hiring people with extensive expertise in the helicopter industry (both pilots and mechanics) and local candidates that can work with us and develop the skills needed to become helicopter pilots and mechanics over

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more curved head and larger eyes. These fish are known as real brawlers to sports fishing anglers. I usually catch them in fast moving schools from the surface to depths of 60 feet. Lone horse eyed jacks can be caught as deep as 400 feet. They can be caught on mullet, sardines, jigging, spoons and even flies.

When I am grouper fishing, I will typically see schools of 10 to 20 passing right under the boat. If I am quick enough I and can get baits down to their depth in time, I can get at least two on before they move on. Throwing a dozen live sardines in the water as soon as I see them sometimes can keep them around the boat longer. By doing this I've been able to land dozens of these fast hard fighters in a go.

Like their cousins, the jack creville, amberjack and black jack, horseyed jack are always back breaking fighters that grow to a size of up to 38 inches. Fish of 20 inches are more common. No matter what size they are, these fish are packed with 100 percent pure fight. And they make a nice complement to any barbecue grill at the end of hard day's fishing.

The Horse Eyed Jack

Horse eyed jack-similar in size and appearance to his cousin the jack creville, horse eyed jacks have a



Big John happily reels in his catch, a great Horse-eyed Jack, perfect for the grill!

Astrum Helicopters

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the years."

As the business grows they plan to establish regional helipads on Ambergris Caye to service different parts of the island. By the end of the year their second helicopter will be in Belize, a Bell 206 L4 Long Ranger, purchased new from Bell Helicopter, which holds six passengers and has an average cruise speed of 110 mph. Astrum Helicopters, is in the process of finalizing new contracts that might increase its fleet of helicopters before the end of year.

Soaring through the sky in a helicopter is a thrilling adventure that will never be forgotten. If you want to REALLY see this country, see it from the sky. For more information you may contact Astrum Helicopters at 501-222-9462, by e-mail at info@astrumhelicopters.com or go to their website at www.astrumhelicopters.com.



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