

Mountain AIR

MAGAZINE

OCTOBER 2026 · ISSUE 01

Above the ordinary.

The art of going somewhere worth flying to.

SEDONA / The red-rock arrival

BOB HOOVER / The elegance of mastery

CATALINA / An island in the sky

THE MUSTANG / History with a heartbeat



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Fifteen pages. Infinite reasons to look up.



FROM THE EDITORS

Leave room for wonder.

Welcome to the first issue of Mountain Air Magazine.

An airplane is a remarkable way to arrive. But the destination begins long before the wheels touch down: in the map spread across a desk, the phone call that makes an unfamiliar airport feel possible, the small decision to take the weekend somewhere new.

Mountain Air Magazine celebrates that anticipation. We are interested in places with character, machines with stories and people whose skill makes the extraordinary look effortless. Luxury, in these pages, is as much about attention as it is about altitude: an unhurried meal, a well-chosen itinerary, a beautiful view earned by careful preparation.

Our inaugural edition moves between the red rocks of Arizona and California's island coast. We look at Bob Hoover's disciplined artistry and a Mustang whose story reaches beyond the warbird circuit into aeronautical research. We also make room for the pleasures after the flight: dinner, conversation and the luxury of staying another night.

This is an invitation to be curious. Choose a place that makes you want to learn more. Give the journey the same care as the arrival. And leave enough space in the plan for something wonderful to happen.

The best luxury is having somewhere extraordinary to go.



THE DESTINATION • SEDONA, ARIZONA

The red-rock arrival.

A mesa-top runway. A landscape that stays with you.

Sedona Airport sits on a mesa above town, giving the arrival a perspective that a highway approach cannot match. The surrounding red rock makes it a natural destination for travelers who want an airport to be part of the experience.

The destination begins with the view, but the weekend should not end at the ramp. Once transportation and lodging are arranged, the mesa becomes an opening scene: a place to pause before the galleries, landscape and dinner table take their turn.

Our imagined Sedona weekend has fewer appointments and more breathing room. An airport-side meal, a considered evening in Tlaquepaque, and an afternoon left deliberately open. Choose one thing you will remember, rather than a list you will rush to complete.

The landscape is already dramatic. The art is in allowing it to remain the main event. Arrive with the important arrangements made, put the camera away occasionally, and notice how much of a journey happens after the airplane has stopped moving.

SEZ / KSEZ • Sedona Airport • Arizona

Explore Sedona Airport →

Start planning in Flight Desk →



SEDONA • BEFORE THE ARRIVAL

Make the arrival count.

Good preparation is part of an exceptional weekend.

A beautiful airport photograph is a reason to start planning. Read current official airport information, watch the airport's recommended first-visit safety video, and assess terrain, wind and aircraft performance for the actual conditions and loading of your flight.

Red Rock Aviation is the airport's FBO contact for fuel and guest services. Confirm current hours, services and arrangements directly before departure. The airport FAQ says there is no crew car, so reserve your ground transportation rather than hoping to improvise it.

Plan the day in two parts: the flying and the time on the ground. Give each enough margin. An alternate airport, a flexible arrival window and a dinner reservation that can survive a delay are practical ways to protect the pleasure of the trip.

Before leaving, check current weather, NOTAMs and the aircraft's approved performance information. Once safely parked, move into the slower rhythm you came for. The most elegant travel plans make room for change without making the whole weekend feel uncertain.

THE ARRIVAL FILE

Weather • Performance • Fuel • Alternate • Ground transport

Ramp photograph: Alleravis • Archival, 2012

Airport & first-visit information →

FBO & contacts →

Transport & airport FAQ →



THE COOL AIRPORT · CATALINA ISLAND

An island in the sky.

A mountaintop airfield with the Pacific around it.

Catalina's Airport in the Sky occupies a mountaintop in the island's interior, ten miles from Avalon. It is an evocative aviation destination: an airfield that feels like a place in its own right, rather than an entrance to somewhere else.

The Catalina Island Conservancy describes a runway originally built in 1941 by leveling two adjacent peaks and filling the gap between them. A 2019 reconstruction gave the airfield a new chapter, but the dramatic setting remains its defining feature.

The airport is also a starting point for the Airport Loop Trail, with access to the Trans-Catalina Trail. For visitors, the appeal is the combination of arrival, landscape and the chance to slow down. Confirm trail access, transport and guest arrangements for your intended day.

Preparation matters here. Read the Conservancy's current airport procedures, operating hours and fees; its published guidance describes runway slope and visual peculiarities that deserve study. This is a destination to approach with familiarity and respect. A rewarding island visit begins with a well-considered flight.

AVX / KAVX · Airport in the Sky · Archival aerial, April 2012

Conservancy airport information →

Read the official procedures →



THE PERSON • BOB HOOVER

The quiet art of mastery.

What a legendary aviator can still teach us about elegance.

Bob Hoover's story crosses several aviation worlds: wartime fighter flying, flight testing and the airshow stage. Smithsonian accounts describe a pilot whose extraordinary feel for an aircraft made demanding maneuvers appear almost conversational.

His Shrike Commander demonstrations were especially memorable. Engine-out aerobatics and precise energy management turned a familiar-looking twin into an expression of remarkable control. The spectacle was the result of understanding the airplane, not ignoring its limits.

That is what makes Hoover such a compelling figure for a magazine about adventure. His appeal was not simply bravado. It was the apparent calm of someone who had done the work: practice, judgment and a profound awareness of how an aircraft moved through the air.

The lesson is not to copy an airshow routine. It is to value proficiency as a luxury of its own. A carefully flown ordinary flight, with passengers at ease and decisions made early, has a beauty that needs no audience.

Precision is a form of style.

Explore Hoover's Shrike at the Smithsonian →



THE CLASSIC • NORTH AMERICAN P-51

More than a silhouette.

A Mustang with a second life in the pursuit of knowledge.

The Mustang's silhouette is one of aviation's most recognizable. But the aircraft in this photograph carries an unusually interesting chapter: it is a restored former NACA research airplane, photographed by NASA's Jim Ross in 2000.

NASA's image record describes the aircraft's role in late-1940s research using a scale airfoil mounted above the wing. The photograph preserves that distinctive research installation, a reminder that an aircraft famous for military service could also become a laboratory.

John Muszala reconstructed the former testbed for owner Bill Allmon. It returned to flight in 1998 and appeared at an Edwards reunion in September 2000. That history gives this particular machine a story beyond polished metal and a familiar insignia.

The most interesting classics reward a closer look. Ask what changed, who flew them and what they helped people discover. Sometimes the detail that interrupts a perfect outline is the very thing that makes the aircraft worth remembering.

ARCHIVE PHOTOGRAPH • NASA / Jim Ross • September 2000

Read the NASA photograph record →



THE FBO • EAGLE COUNTY, COLORADO

A mountain arrival, well handled.

Signature at KEGE brings the ground plan into focus.

A mountain escape begins before the aircraft reaches the ramp. At Eagle County Regional Airport, Signature Vail is a gateway to Vail and Beaver Creek. Its Gypsum location puts the FBO conversation at the center of a thoughtfully arranged Colorado arrival.

Signature's published location information lists conference facilities and assistance with customs arrangements. Those are useful starting points for a conversation about your particular flight. Call ahead about parking, hangar availability, service hours and any arrangements that need to happen before you arrive.

Then connect the airplane with the weekend. Coordinate the car, the people traveling with you and the destination beyond the airport. A ski bag, a late arrival or a change in weather can alter an otherwise elegant plan. Give the ground team a clear brief, and confirm the details directly.

The appeal of a good FBO is the handoff: from cockpit decisions to a journey that feels settled. Keep mountain flying preparation with qualified pilots and current official information. Once the aircraft is secure, the valley becomes the next chapter.

EGE / KEGE • Signature Vail • Gypsum, Colorado

Explore Signature at EGE →

Airport's FBO information →



AT THE FBO • WINTER HAVEN, FLORIDA

Lunch, with a flightline view.

Flightline Café makes KGIF more than a fuel stop.

Some airport stops deserve a little more time. Flightline Café is inside the main terminal at Winter Haven Regional Airport, Gilbert Field. The City of Winter Haven identifies it as the restaurant within the FBO: a place where the flight and the meal belong to the same visit.

The city's restaurant page describes indoor and outdoor seating, with breakfast and lunch choices including omelets, burgers, sandwiches and salads. The attraction is the setting as much as the menu. Aircraft arriving and departing give the table a view that changes throughout the day.

Plan it as a relaxed stop, rather than a race between the airplane and an order. Confirm current hours and the menu with the café, sort out parking with the FBO and allow time to settle in. The restaurant welcomes the public, so friends arriving by road can join the occasion.

This is a dining idea drawn from official visitor information, not a firsthand tasting review. What makes it appealing is the simple connection between people who love flying and a table close to the ramp. Sometimes a memorable aviation outing ends with lunch, not another leg.

GIF / KGIF • Flightline Café • Terminal photograph: City of Winter Haven, archival

Official café information →

Explore the main terminal →



INGENUITY • NASA'S SHUTTLE TRAINER

The jet that taught astronauts to land.

A Gulfstream II took on an extraordinary second job.

A business jet can have a story far beyond executive travel. NASA modified Gulfstream II aircraft to reproduce the space shuttle's handling during the final phase of landing. The result was a flying classroom for a very unusual arrival.

The cockpit reveals the transformation. NASA describes shuttle-style controls and displays on the left, with conventional aircraft controls on the right. During a simulated landing, the astronaut occupied the left seat while an instructor watched from the right. The familiar jet became a bridge between practice and the real mission.

This archival photograph shows the cockpit of N945NA at Kennedy Space Center in October 2010. Look closely at the different working environments on either side. The most compelling detail is not a polished finish; it is the way the space was shaped around a demanding training task.

There is a larger aviation lesson here: an aircraft's second life can be its most fascinating. The same family of machines that carried travelers between cities also helped crews prepare to bring a spacecraft home. Good engineering often begins by asking what else an airplane might make possible.

ARCHIVE • October 13, 2010 • NASA / Jack Pfaller

NASA explains the modified Gulfstream II →

View the original NASA photograph →



THE TABLE • SEDONA AIRPORT

Stay for the view.

Mesa Grill makes the meal part of the airport experience.

There is a particular pleasure in choosing a restaurant that keeps the destination in view. Mesa Grill sits at Sedona Airport, making it a natural place to connect the flight with the rest of the day.

The restaurant's official site lists breakfast, lunch and dinner menus. That flexibility makes it a useful anchor for a travel plan, whether the day begins on the mesa or ends there. Check the current menu and hours directly; a flight delay is a good reason to call ahead.

Treat the meal as a pause rather than a checklist stop. Allow time to arrive, settle in and enjoy the setting. Confirm reservations or seating availability for your party, particularly if the visit is built around a specific time of day.

For a high-end itinerary, the attraction is the combination: an airport with a distinctive landscape and a table that keeps you close to it. Save the departure planning for a separate moment. Good conversation deserves your attention, too.

MESA GRILL • Airport-side dining • Photograph: Mesa Grill • Verify hours and availability

Official restaurant & reservations →

Explore the menus →



THE TABLE · TLAQUEPAQUE

Make an evening of it.

René brings a different kind of arrival to Sedona.

René is tucked into Tlaquepaque Arts & Shopping Village, a setting that invites a slower transition from sightseeing to dinner. Its official description emphasizes French-inspired, Mediterranean-influenced dining and an intimate courtyard atmosphere.

That makes it an appealing second scene after the airport mesa: leave the aviation day behind, take time around the village and let dinner become the evening's main event. The setting is part of the reason to go.

Review the current menu and reserve through the restaurant's official site. If courtyard seating matters to your plans, ask directly about availability and conditions. Make transportation arrangements for the return as carefully as you made them for the arrival.

This is a dining idea, rather than a firsthand restaurant review. The pleasure we are planning for is simple: a beautiful setting, a considered meal and enough room in the schedule to enjoy both. An extraordinary weekend does not need every hour filled.

RENÉ · 336 State Route 179, Suite B118 · Sedona

Official restaurant & booking →

Current menus →



THE LONG WEEKEND

Less itinerary. More experience.

A framework for a fly-in escape that leaves room to breathe.

FRIDAY / Make the arrival easy. Choose either Sedona or Catalina as one complete trip, with airport requirements, lodging and transport confirmed. Keep dinner close to where you are staying. The first evening is for settling in, not racing a reservation.

SATURDAY / Choose one memorable experience. In Sedona, build time around the landscape, village galleries or a relaxed lunch on the mesa. On Catalina, confirm transport and choose an island experience that fits the day. Check local access and conditions before heading out.

SUNDAY / Leave space for the flight home. Reassess weather and aircraft performance with current information. Have an alternate and the flexibility to stay longer or change transport if needed. A good weekend is not improved by a pressured departure.

THE PACKING NOTE / Travel light enough to fit the actual aircraft and its weight-and-balance limits. Comfortable shoes, a layer for changing conditions and a small camera tend to earn their place. The finest souvenir is often the story you bring home.

One destination. One beautiful meal. One day with no hurry.

Start a trip in Flight Desk →

Explore fly-in destinations →



UNTIL THE NEXT ISSUE

Keep looking up.

Mountain Air Magazine · October 2026 · Issue 01

Mountain Air Magazine is a monthly publication presented by its publisher on AV8FLY. This inaugural issue pairs original editorial perspective with verified public sources. Historical images are identified as archival; restaurant features are planning ideas, not firsthand reviews.

EDITORIAL SOURCES / Sedona Airport; Catalina Island Conservancy; Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum; NASA; Signature Aviation and Eagle County Regional Airport; City of Winter Haven; Mesa Grill; René. Direct links accompany the online features.

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