

German duo flying around the globe free as a bird

By Staff Reporter - October 18, 2014



Airborne in the Trike

For German adventurers Andreas Zmuda and his partner Doreen Kroeber who are flying their aircraft around the world, flying is best when it is as close as possible to flying like a bird.

No fancy Boeing jet with enclosed cabins, auto pilots and charming air hostesses. Zmuda said last week: “Jets? That’s not flying. Mankind has always dreamed about flying like a bird and that’s what we’re doing. Flying around the world like a bird. Free as a bird.”

“We are living our dream. We always say if you want to do something just do it; cause you know for sure, you only live once so do something with your life. This is our dream. Live your dream whatever it may be.”- Andreas Zmuda

And that is indeed what the amazing German couple are doing. They touched down at Ogle International airport from Suriname last week on the Guyana leg of their world tour on an aircraft known as a Trike, basically a converted three-wheel motor cycle

attached to paragliding wings. It is a completely open aircraft built solely for two; basically a flying motor cycle. Zmuda and sit behind each other as on a motor cycle.



German flying duo Andreas Zmuda and his partner Doreen

The open aircraft they are using for travel allows for a true flying experience. The Trike does not have a windshield or any kind of enclosure.

Zmuda once told a foreign journalist that if he forgot to tie up a shoe lace properly before take-off, that boot could fall off while the Trike is airborne, plummeting 3,000 feet to the forest below or the ocean or mountain or desert or lake or whatever terrain they are flying over.

Navigation of the Trike is by body weight shift.

Zmuda said their flight on the Trike is definitely dangerous but also very exhilarating.

“Travelling to destinations at altitudes ranging from 3,000 feet to 15,000 feet, at speeds up to 70 M.P.H, the maximum for the Trike, we smell the air, endure the cold, the heat.”

He added: “The exhilaration of the bird’s eye view always outweighs the danger.”

The couple told the Guyana Chronicle that they started their Trike globetrotter trip around the world since September 2012.

They have covered approximately 20,000 miles to date and they travel light.

The Trike take off load is 1,100 pounds including their body weight fuel and equipment such as scanners and computers: not much room for baggage like clothing.

Zmuda said: “There is now way to carry excess load on a Trike.”

So they travel with five T Shirts, each : two trousers each: one long and one short (Doreen has the luxury of being able to take on board an extra piece of a clothing : a dress); they carry three pairs of shoes; three pairs of socks and five underwear each.“

They additionally both have to watch their body weight because if they gain weight they would have to dump some of the clothing.

The couple who are very much in love, met each other in November 2010 during an Amazon expedition in Peru, Bolivia and Brasil, Andreas as tour leader and Doreen as participant.

Doreen is a business engineer.

They are both fascinated by travelling.

Their plan is to fly by Trike over five continents, 74 countries and three oceans.

Their trip is scheduled to last approximately four years before it ends in Sydney Australia in August, 2016.

They are not necessarily looking to break records but have already broken some.

“We already have some records like never ever before a couple travelling in aviation so long distance and so long time together as we are doing.”

They crossed the Atlantic from Canada to Norway; a feat never ever done in a Trike.

Doreen laughingly said:“Another record: Twenty four hours a day with each other every day for months on end. Almost unbelievable.”

Zmuda said: “It’s not so much about the records. We want to see the countries see the culture; what is in the country what the people are like what the food is like.”

She is not unmindful of the dangers of the Trike expedition but said: “Andreas is the Captain. He trusts his aircraft and I trust my Captain.”

She added: “Also I think God is with us.”

The trip has been far from uneventful. Indeed at times downright scary.

Zmuda recalls a time when they were forced to make an emergency landing in a small village in Mexico and then found out that the village was controlled by the Mexican drug mafia.

“Very, very strong winds came over the mountains. We were forced to land. It was a small village. It was controlled by the drugs mafia. We spent five days with them before they let us go.”

He added: “But we had a good time. They gave us food; we slept under a tent and they were very nice to us.”

Then there was their flight over the Andean mountains at a height of 15,000 feet.

“That flight over the snow-capped mountains was very, very cold. Doreen in the back seat was in charge of the oxygen. If she had made a mistake we would have gone down.”

Of course they could go down at any time for any number of reasons including engine failure.

“To fly over jungle and over water is quite dangerous because if anything happens and the engine fails, you just go into the bush and nobody ever will find you there.”

Zmuda said that they deliberately fly at heights over fifteen hundred feet.

“When we fly higher it is more secure for us because if anything happens, if the engine fails or whatever then I can glide down and have more time to think where I can touch down. When you fly low the time will be much shorter.”

The Trike is however equipped with electronic equipment which can guide rescuers to a crash site if it goes down.

Zmuda said that he had always dreamed about flying the way he does now.

Both he and Doreen said that they had found Guyanese to be a very hospitable people.

“They helped us with immigration. They gave us a hangar and all the people are nice to us.”

He added: “Myself and Doreen are not rich people. We are average. We get some funding for our adventure from some companies but not much. “

He added that he still works with his tour company contact via the internet organising tours in the jungle.

“I work every day like three four hours and the rest of the time we work together. “

The duo have already written two books on their adventures.

They have already made two movies on their adventure.

They go back to Germany every year for one month and do presentations at big theatres and cinemas where people pay entrance fees to hear of their adventure.

They make enough money to finance another round of flights.

The travelling duo has documented their journey to date in their blog with detailed reports and photos with help from close-to-the action 3-D cameras on the Trike’s wings.

The Trike also carries a little satellite messenger which sends signals to a satellite so that interested persons can actually watch live on their computer, their actual progress.

The voyage of the Trike can also be tracked on their website, Trike-Globetrotter.com, or on the Trike-Globetrotter Facebook page facebook.com/Trike.Globetrotter.

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(Pictures: compliments of Trike.Globetrotter.com)

(By Clifford Stanley)