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SEE AMERICA FIRST!

This issue covers three recent trips around the country. The increased hassle caused by airport security and our relief at having finally gotten the house in shape has combined to keep us from making any major foreign trips this year. It's not that we have any concerns about airline safety; we don't, it's as safe as ever, it's just that there are lots of nice places to visit in the USA within driving distance and not having to fly is one less hassle. We even discussed driving to Riverside California, for a stereo photography convention, but decided we couldn't afford the drive time.

That last calculation, drive time vs. flying time, has changed quite a bit in the last year. It used to be that any trip that took over 2 hours to drive was a good candidate for flying. Two hours being about the amount of time it took to get to the airport, check in, wait for the flight and actually get on board the plane. Now there's no telling how long the process will take. One trip it's just like the old days, the next it takes two hours just to get through security. Since you never know what kind of delay your going to have at the airport, you have to get there at least 3 hours before the plane is due to depart to allow for "security" delays. So now if you can drive it in 3 or 4 hours it's probably easier then flying. Not that I've got anything against driving across America.

When I was a kid, I remember seeing the old Dinah Shore show that always opened with the "See the USA in a Chevrolet" jingle. While I've never owned a Chevrolet but I have always wanted to travel around the country just playing tourist. Mind you I have "seen" the USA if by "see" you mean flying into every major airport, and not a few of the smaller ones, in the country, driving to some business meeting and then turning around and flying back home.

No, that's not my definition of "seeing the USA" either. I want to do it the old fashion way driving from place to place on two lane roads, eating in local, non-chain, restaurants and shopping in stores that aren't in every mall. Which brings me to a sad observation: It's getting very hard to tell which part of the country you're in!

It seems to me there is a vast, very effective, conspiracy in place whose fiendish goal is to remove all traces of "location" from the entire country. Their plan is to make



Bear Bear discusses this question of time that humans always seem to be obsessing about.

every town and village an exact copy of every other town or village. By carefully placing the same fast food places, stores and billboards in little clusters, all made up of the same standardized set of components, they are destroying any trace of individuality. "Just my paranoia coming out." you say?

Then please explain to me why it's all the little independent business you see closing and only Walmarts, Home Depots and CVS Pharmacies being built? And why do I hear the same "local" radio stations wherever I go? In the latter case I suspect the disk jockeys are simply very good computer simulations and the stations have no actual personnel. It's a conspiracy and it's working.

Then again maybe I'm just over reacting to the discovery that I can set out photos from our trips covering Boston to Miami to New Orleans to Riverside and, if I shuffle them up, you can't tell me which ones are from which city unless you can see a car license plate.

CHARLESTON SOUTH CAROLINA



MY IMPRESSIONS OF CHARLESTON

BY SUZANNE HUGHES

When DSC was at Jekyll Island, we went to Jekyll Island. That's the funny thing about attending an annual convention, you go to it regardless of where it is and you don't really stop and ask, why am I going to that particular city. This was the case for Charleston.

The National Stereoscopic Association (NSA) is holding their annual convention for 2003 in Charleston. Typically, at the previous year's convention, a 3D slide show is presented to encourage attendance at the next year's convention. Since it is the Atlanta group that is sponsoring the 2003 convention, Steve volunteered to go to Charleston and shoot some pictures so I booked us at the hotel the convention will be at and we headed over there not really knowing what to expect.

Charleston sits on a peninsula created where the Ashley River and the Cooper River empty to the Atlantic Ocean. This means it has always been a key shipping center and a focal point for conflict. In many ways, Charleston's history reflects all the conflict and turmoil that formed our nation. This makes Charleston a city rich with history. There are monuments and reminders of every war from the Revolutionary war, it was the first city attacked by the British, through the Civil war and both world wars. But we went there to photograph the city.

Our first night in Charleston, we scouted out the East Battery and White Point Garden areas where we knew we wanted to shoot the next morning. East Battery is the name of the street that runs along the southeastern tip of the peninsula.

There is a boardwalk running the length of it that really reminded me of Boston. It has the same ocean smell in the air, and the city feels aged with experience. It was really nice just strolling the boardwalk and looking at the old mansions across the street with the palmetto trees in front of them.

White Point Gardens, just a little park at the tip of the peninsula of Charleston, has several cannons and a monument 'to the Confederate defenders of Charleston'. Of course for the history buffs, there is Fort Sumter, Fort Moultrie and Patriots Point. Fort Sumter is the fort in the middle of the river where the Civil War began and the fort was pretty well pulverized during the war by both sides depending on who was holding it at the time. As a result, not much is left, but a lot of cannons, some flags, and a souvenir store.

Fort Moultrie is directly across from Fort Sumter on the opposite side of the river from Charleston. Fort Moultrie still looks much more like a fort. Any boats going to Charleston had to come between these two forts. Patriots Point is a little north of Fort Moultrie. It hosts a naval and maritime museum where the aircraft carrier 'The USS Yorktown', the Submarine Clamagore, the Destroyer Laffey and the Coast Guard Cutter Ingham are all housed. It was a lot of fun touring these four boats, especially since we got there within 15 minutes of when they opened and none of them were crowded.

The historic district of Charleston was a lot of fun to wander around. The cobblestone streets, narrow alleys, well preserved historic buildings and hidden gardens all contribute to making it a photographer's paradise. Then there were the restaurants, diverse and excellent, but we only had two days there so I'm looking forward to the convention next year so we'll have an excuse to be in Charleston again.



BEAR BEAR DEFENDS CHARLESTON



Taking aim at the USS Yorktown



Diving the submarine USS Clamagore



Preparing to fire a Spanish American war cannon



This guy probably gave the British hell!



Ready to man the Confederate submarine CSN Hunley

ON THE ROAD AGAIN

BY SUZANNE HUGHES



As soon as you say you'll drive to a city instead of flying, all sorts of opportunities exist for additional places to go to along the way. This happened when we drove to New Orleans. Steve has been tempting me with a beach trip for some time, so I scheduled a three-day stop at Pensacola Beach. I have wanted to take him to the gulf coast to see if these beaches would make a good escape when we don't want to fly to the Caribbean but want to relax at the beach.

We stayed at the Dunes hotel, which has a very nice beach and a small restaurant that was great for breakfast and lunch. Our days were spent either on the beach or out exploring; our evenings were spent experimenting with dining or on the boardwalk.

The local restaurants were a very pleasant surprise. Mixed in with the normal tourist traps are a few first-rate places. You never know what you're going to find when you walk into a restaurant at a beach. The food may be awful or great.

In this case the widely advertised *Boy On A Dolphin* was pretty bad while *Jamie's Wine Bar and Restaurant* was delightful. All the places on the boardwalk cater to those who drink heavily before eating and the food reflects this.

We didn't get a chance to visit the US Air Force Armament Museum at Eglin Air Force Base or the National Museum of Naval Aviation at the US Naval Air Station.

We've already decided that the gulf coast has lots of beaches to explore, and unless it is the dead of winter, it will make a perfectly good substitute for the Caribbean.

Our biggest surprise was some of the unusual houses we found as we drove along the coast. Due to hurricanes and high tide waters, houses on stilts, multi-sided houses and round roofs are common architecture features as are lots of decks at all levels of the house. What you don't expect are houses that look like UFOs, which have just landed, or domes that would look perfectly at home on Mars.

Since Steve has always admired houses which are not "little boxes made out of ticky tacky and they all look just the same", we wanted to share these houses with you.



NEW ORLEANS

New Orleans has always been one of my favorite cities. I first visited it while I was still in high school and it made a lasting impression. Admittedly, it doesn't take all that much to impress a 16 year old boy who grew up in small mountain towns. New Orleans in the mid Sixties was an exciting place. Bourbon Street was full of establishments, technically off limits but Georgia driver's licenses were very easy to fake, that offered, or at least implied the easy availability of, lots of interesting alcoholic and sexual pleasures. The reality was rather different. Cheap booze and beautiful "ladies", many of whom could pee standing up, were and still are the truth behind the glitter.

Suzanne, on the other hand, had never been to New Orleans. When I suggested it might be a nice place to celebrate the 10th anniversary of our first date, yeah pretty sickening but then again that's us, she immediately agreed.

Unlike my first trip, spent sleeping on a friends couch, we stayed in the Royal Sonesta hotel that is located right in the heart of the French Quarter off Bourbon Street. Our room, located in the hotel's inner courtyard, was quiet and very nice. I recommend it to anyone wanting to see the city.

Bourbon Street has changed. It's now longer, closed to traffic at night, and has even more bars. On the other hand it's just as crowded, noisy and vulgar. Our first night there, we spent several hours drifting up and down the street drinking too much and enjoying the people watching.

The next day it was off on a swamp boat tour. It was fun but not what I would actually recommend after a night on Bourbon Street! Way too noisy and bumpy for a hung over Steve. We did get to see the swamp, some alligators and a lot of really pretty birds. We also brought back a pound or two of real genuine swamp mud courtesy of our boat captain's trying to cross a little too much land in one jump. Did I mention that swamp has a very distinctive and lingering odor? It does!

We spent the rest of that day, as much as was left after a very long shower, visiting museums. Our first stop was the National D-Day Museum. It has a wonderful collection of military artifacts and a series of exhibits that clearly lay out the D-Day campaign and give a good overview of the entire war. The presence of several hundred Japanese Naval cadets from two Japanese Self Defense Force ships visiting New Orleans that weekend added a nice touch of irony to the Pearl Harbor exhibits.

I wanted to see the Confederate War museum but the timing didn't work. It's days are numbered as new construction eats away it's land and buildings. I think that's a pity since it chronicles a time in our nation's history we should make sure we never forget.

We spent the rest of the trip browsing antique stores, visiting with friends, eating way too much and just enjoying the atmosphere. It was a fun trip and we will go back.



Bourbon Street remains the prime New Orleans attraction. Keep one hand on your wallet at all times!

Yes, there are alligators in the swamps. These were only 5 or 6 feet long and so used to humans they came right up to the boat looking for handouts.



The K & B Plaza is not technically a museum but it does have a wonderful collection of modern art on display and easily accessible.

On nice days a wide range of vendors and artists gather in the square in front of the cathedral. Remember pickpockets think of themselves as artists!



Inviting shadows intice you into establishments no different from those that fleeced the Yankee occupation troops and Franch trappers in other centuries.

The beautiful homes of New Orleans hint at the old, more cultured side of the Big Easy.



RIVERSIDE CALIFORNIA

DISNEYLAND AND 3D

BY SUZANNE HUGHES

We went to California to attend the 2002 National Stereoscopic Association annual convention in Riverside. These conventions have three primary functions: buying things related to the 3d world, viewing slide shows, and providing an opportunity to shoot your own 3d pictures.

The official place to buy and sell is in the dealer's room, but for real bargains and hard to find things, there is an unofficial network of people selling things from their hotel rooms. Rooms are identified via a bulletin board opposite main elevators and people start showing up as much as two days before the convention just for the room sales.

The term "slide show" is practically a synonym for boring in our culture. The shows at the NSA are far from boring. Take Robert Bloomberg's awesome show on Angkor Wat Cambodia. It consisted of almost 400 slides with an original score and "National Geographic" quality narration and pictures. You could almost feel the intense heat and humidity in the jungle.

This was the first year the convention had a digital theater. Some of the digital shows actually out did some of the traditional film based shows for clarity and color. The digital theater was small but I think we saw the future of stereo photography.

The official trip for personal photography was to Disneyland. Everyone told me I would be disappointed in Disneyland. I guess they just didn't know me. Sure it's not as big as Disney World, but who cares? You still get to walk down Main Street with the same feeling of wonder and even if the castle is small, the rides aren't.

We started in Tomorrowland which didn't really have anything that Disney World didn't have. So we went to Fantasyland. Mt Toad's Wild Ride was closed permanently at Disney World so we had to ride it. The ride itself was much longer in Disneyland. This was a phenomenon that we kept noticing when we rode rides we were familiar with. Pirates of the Caribbean and the Haunted Mansion also seemed longer.

Then there were the fun things like the Storybook Land Canal Boats and the Indiana Jones Adventure which I don't recall being at Disney World, at least I've never ridden on them, that we just had to go on.

Finally we ended the day with the Monorail ride to Downtown Disney where we were able to purchase a blue monorail with Golden Gate bridge to add to our monorail collection.

We ended the trip with a visit to the Chino Planes of Fame Museum and the March Field Museum. It was a great trip and we could easily have spent another week in Riverside without running out of things to do.

The Storybook Land Canal ride at Disneyland is beautifully done with miniature scenes from all our favorite children's fantasies.



Sleeping Beauty's castle in Disneyland looks small after Cinderella's Castle in Disney World but it has its own charm.

Downtown Riverside has been turned into a pedestrian mall with streams and gardens. It's very well done and a wonderful place to hang out.



The March Field Museum has some nice planes on display outside the museum. This P40 Warhawk is a fine example.

The "trade fair" at the NSA is one of its main attractions. It always takes more than its share of my money.



The Chino Planes of Fame museum has many unique planes like this Northrop flying wing prototype that Bear Bear is sitting on.

GAINING WEIGHT IN STYLE: RESTAURANT REVIEWS

Meritage 235 E. Bay St. Charleston, SC Meritage is an Americanized tapas restaurant. Tapas are essentially fancy hors d'oeuvres. When we were in Barcelona, we enjoyed having a dinner consisting of several tapas. In Charleston, we noticed that Meritage was modeled after a Spanish tapa restaurant. As we sat on the patio, dining on lobster mashed potatoes, cedar plank roasted salmon, a var restaurant to anyone who enjoys eating a meal consisting of multiple courses / items.

Jazz Factory 109 N. Side Square Huntsville, AL It's always interesting to experience a restaurant when they are just opening. We were at the Jazz Factory when they just opened for dinner and had the restaurant to ourselves until the dessert course. As a result service was very good, as was the atmosphere and food. The meal started with spring rolls and a Caesar salad. For an entrée, I had the duck with cranberry stuffing and seasoned vegetables while Steve had the fish kabob that consisted of mahi mahi and grouper over rice. The Dry Creek merlot was a wonderful compliment to the meal.

Sister Gooch 382 Slaughter Rd. Madison, AL Sister Gooch has a private room in the basement that serves as their wine cellar and a private party room. The only draw back was that they had to push two round tables together to sit a party of 11 which made it awkward for the people eating in the crevice. I started the meal with the crab cake appetizer, followed by the pork tenderloin which was served with mashed potatoes and mixed vegetables, and finished with a slice of bourbon pecan pie. I had heard that the portions were small and you left the restaurant hungry. That wasn't the case on this occasion. The food was delicious and the only complaint I heard was from the two children who shared a dessert and said it was too rich! They had the maple cheesecake, and it was.

Jamies' Wine Bar and Restaurant 424 E. Cervantes Pensacola, FL Located in the historic district, Jamie's is in a little cottage with two rooms dedicated to restaurant tables. The room we were in had 8 tables with customers at three of them. The service was very good and I remember the food as being very good, I had the French onion soup and filet mignon, but not as memorable as the people watching.

Louis XVI 622 Iberville St. New Orleans, LA Tucked away into the Saint Louis Hotel just off Bourbon Street is the Louis XVI restaurant. I was celebrating the anniversary of when my husband and I started dating so this was a no holds barred dinner. We started the ev this with the salad served with Maine lobster while Steve had the seafood gumbo New Orleans style. The beef Wellington was served wi wonde going on in the restaurant behind me when I chose to notice. It was a magnificent, though intoxicating, evening.

Mr B's Bistro 201 Royal Street New Orleans, LA For our final night out before the diets begin, we selected Mr B's Bistro hoping to get some of that good ole Creole cuisine. We were not disappointed. The Creole fondue was a cheese base with crawfish and jalapenos served with jalapeno and cheese toast. The rabbit was braised with apple cider, bacon, onions and mushrooms and served over mashed potatoes. The rabbit was very tender and delicious and served with only two bones for presentations sake. For dessert I had Mr B's HoneyBee Hive which is a beautiful dish featuring homemade honey pecan ice cream covered with meringue in the shape of a beehive and two chocolate covered mint bumble bees. If food presentation is of interest to you, you should definitely dine here.

Las Campanas 3649 Mission Inn Ave Riverside, CA This is a Mexican restaurant located in the historic Mission Inn with outdoor seating only. Even though there were record breaking high temperatures the day we were there, it was actually quite pleasant sitting under the shade of a large umbrella looking at all the pretty flowers and decorative bells which adorned the gardens. As for the food, it was standard Mexican fare, but with actual ingredients. My chimichanga actually had filet tenderloin of beef sliced in it. Now that's what I call good food.

Café Sevilla 3252 Mission Inn Ave Riverside, CA This is a Spanish restaurant featuring tapas and full course Spanish meals. We opted for tapas and had an assortment of 8 of them between the two of us. All that we had were very good, though the salmon mousse was a little strong for Steve. They did have a good wine list with some nice Spanish wines we had tried in Barcelona so ordered one. It was just as good in Riverside.

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