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TALES IN 3D

by Bear Bear

Most photography is a flat image of a person, place or thing. A flat image is a great way of remembering an event or place, but it can look very fake. 3d photography adds depth to a picture by fooling the eyes into each seeing their own picture of something. With depth, a photo of a place can put you right back at that place you took your last vacation or right back to that child's birthday party.

In order to fool your eyes into seeing their own picture, there have to be two different images to see. The most popular ways to create the two images are (1) have a 'stereo' camera with two lenses that actually takes two photos at the same time on the same roll of film, (2) have two cameras lined up that you shoot at the same time thereby taking two photos on two different rolls of film, or (3) use one camera that you shoot a picture and then immediately slide it sideways and shoot another photo. As you can probably guess, each of these methods has its drawbacks.

The first method, using a stereo camera, is the method that Steve has been employing for years. This is the easiest way to shoot 3d photos, the problem is that most of the stereo cameras are 50 years old. Like anything that age, these cameras often need repairs. The few ones that can be bought new today are very expensive.



Flowers in the Ellijay Cemetery



Bear Bear enjoys the sunset at Rainbow Mountain

Method two, requires identical cameras, and though any camera can be used, some are better suited than others. The key to taking a 3d photo that can easily be seen, is the spacing between the two lenses. Since we are trying to simulate what is seen by two average human eyes, the spacing for most pictures is about that of the spacing between two eyes, or an average of 65mm. Due to the placement of the lenses, some cameras cannot be used. The synchronization of hitting the shutter releases at the same time is also tricky. Any amount of difference, can lead to the same problems discussed in the next paragraph.

The third method of sliding the same camera and taking two pictures sequentially, has a whole array of problems associated with it. The biggest factor is movement. Anything that is different between the two pictures will not be able to be in focus. This includes running water, clouds moving in the sky, leaves on trees, flags, cars, facial expressions and anything else that can move. As you can tell from the list, the longer the time between the two clicks, the more unlikely one is to get a set of photos that 'work'. Up until the beginning of this year, since Suzanne shoots digital, and couldn't afford two cameras, this was Suzanne's only means of taking 3d photos.

In January, a company in Hong Kong changed all that. Loreo introduced a lens that would produce two images that can be used with any SLR. Since Suzanne got a Nikon D100, it's a digital SLR with interchangeable lenses, she was able to start shooting 3d with ease. As a result, starting with this issue, there will be 3d photos in most issues of Traveler Tales.

ESCAPE FROM THE FOG

by Suzanne Hughes

When you live 600 feet above a valley, the weather can get very interesting. It can be foggy in the valley, and you can be in the sunshine, or it can be cloudy in the valley and you can be in a dense fog. I had never realized how depressing a couple of weeks of cloudy weather can be, when, for you, visibility is less than 100 feet. This is what happened last October. After a couple of weeks of no sun, little rain, and just a lot of fog, I needed a break and hit the internet. After a couple hours of surfing, I realized that the best weather for the weekend was forecast in the Caribbean, St Thomas was the least expensive flight, and my favorite hotel had availability. St. Thomas, here we come! Just making that decision, seemed to lift the gloom away.

We keep going back to St. Thomas because it's a good default place to go to; Delta flies direct, snorkeling is good, taxi service is efficient, there are good restaurants, duty free alcohol is inexpensive and you can bring home five litres of it as long as one is produced there. Secret Harbour Beach Resort has suite style rooms located right on a private beach with pretty good snorkeling and a fair restaurant so it makes a good place to stay.

While on an island holiday, we usually spend one day hanging at the beach, one day out on a sailboat and one day in town shopping. Since we decided to take advantage of Secret Harbour's sixth night free deal, we had an extra day to fill, but couldn't imagine that being a problem.

When in St. Thomas, there's a skipper called Max that we enjoy sailing with. She got her own boat 'Lou' a couple of years ago and though she wasn't planning on going out on the day we wanted, she was willing to. Lou is a classic 41 foot Rhodes Bounty sloop which sails with two crew and up to six guests. Unfortunately for Max, we were the only two guests this day, but we had a wonderful time. We sailed, snorkeled, ate, snorkeled and sailed home.

When you shop in St. Thomas, you have to be careful. Some of the prices are good, but some are worse than at home. Just because things are duty free, doesn't mean the price is good. The exception I've always found to this is alcohol. As a result, we usually bring home a six pack of rums or other liquor. This trip I needed to replenish my Kahlua and Amaretto, so had to settle for four assorted rums, one of them being a flavored one made from on the Island. Our shopping trip was cut short when the rains came and we realized the cardboard box holding the six bottles would be useless once wet.

On our extra day, we took the boat 'Breakaway' to Virgin Gorda where we explored 'The Baths'. We traversed 'The Devil's Bay Trail' over, under and around huge granite boulders, climbed ladders, waded through water and squeezed through rock cracks until we came out at Devil's Bay beach and had a swim. Lunch was aboard the schooner Willie T where people dove from the upper deck into the crystal clear Caribbean waters. Before heading home we snorkeled in and along the caves of Norman Island. Another wonderful day!

When we arrived home, the fog had lifted and autumn was in full swing. My 'Bountiful Harvest' iris even had the crazy notion that it was time to bloom!

On a clear day, I can see 40 miles from this view. When I needed to escape, it was from two weeks of this view.



This is a cave along Norman Island that we went snorkeling in on our excursion to the Baths.

BearBear shows off his new sunglasses as he gazes into the depths of the ocean.



Frequently when dining at an outdoor restaurant, the native animals decide to see what they can scavenge.

When we arrived home, the fog had lifted and amid the fall colored leaves, my iris was in full bloom.



A DISNEY WORLD HOLIDAY

by Suzanne Hughes

I love going to Disney World, wandering around the park after dark, and seeing all the lights. This year we decided to check out one of their after hour park parties, Mickey's Very Merry Christmas Party. The Magic Kingdom park re-opens at 7:00 pm until midnight for a special Holiday treat. Being Disney, anything is possible, special parades and stage shows, character greetings, a Special Holiday Edition of Fantasy in the Sky fireworks, and SNOW on Main Street. As part of the admission price, you get cookies, hot chocolate and a free souvenir picture. How could I resist?

Because special nights at the park can sell out, we bought our tickets ahead of time when we made our hotel reservations. When the big night came, we left the Contemporary at 6:45 to catch the monorail to the Magic Kingdom. There was no snow, no stage shows and no parades. There were cookies, cocoa, a souvenir photo, fireworks and about two inches of rain. It poured steadily from 7:00 pm until after midnight, but we were two drowned rats who had a lot of fun. By 9:00 the park was almost empty, there were no lines for the rides that were open (Buzz Lightyear and Dumbo for example), and plenty of photo ops with characters inside the Exhibition Hall on Main Street. I don't know how they did it, but even with a steady rain, the fireworks went off on schedule and they were wonderful!

Victoria and Albert's

Steve's birthday is Christmas Eve and mine is New Year's Eve. This makes it hard to go out for dinner to celebrate our birthdays, so we usually pick a random December evening and celebrate both. This year we selected Victoria & Albert's on December 10.

Victoria and Albert's is located in the Grand Floridian Hotel at Disney World. It is the only restaurant that actually has a dress code, so when we were seen boarding the monorail in a long dress and a suit, everyone knew where we were going. We leisurely enjoyed a fantastic seven course meal with excellent wine pairings, an attentive wait staff and extremely pleasant surroundings. As souvenirs, we received printed menus with our name and date on them (which include the wines which match each course), and a chocolate birthday card since we told them we were celebrating our birthdays. I also have a new favorite restaurant to compare all others to!

Osborne Family Spectacle of Lights

Q: What is five million lights?

A: The number of Christmas lights that are hung in the MGM Studios Osborne Family Spectacle of Lights display.

One whole section of MGM Studios is closed during the day, but at night it comes alive. For two hours before closing, five million Christmas lights are lit, dazzling the eyes with Christmas shapes, illuminated houses, tunnels and yards. With the supplied holographic glasses, the spot lights all magically turn into angels. A second pass through the display allowed us to see anything we may have missed the first time, and still allowed us to leave in time to see the Fireworks at Epcot!



'Mission: Space' is a new ride scheduled to open in Epcot in August 2003. BearBear is checking out the entry to the ride.



Mickey and Minnie Mouse in the Exhibition Hall at Magic Kingdom are decked out in their Holiday outfits.



Holiday decorations abound throughout the Parks. These white trees are at Epcot.



One of the houses from the Osborne Family Spectacle of Lights display at MGM Studios.



Fireworks light up the sky every night as part of Epcot's Illuminations show.

SAVING SEA DREAM

by Steve Hughes

All too often little bits of history just get swept, often literally, into the dustbin. This is especially true of film history with many wonderful movies having vanished over the years. Early this year one of those losses was averted.

Way back in 1938 Marineland of Florida, then called Marine Studios, was founded to provide a place to film marine life and to be a tourist attraction. It was never very successful as a movie studio, the most famous film shot there being “Revenge of the Creature”, but it became the most popular tourist attraction in Florida in the 1950’s. This popularity was not to last.

In the 1970s, other attractions opened, most notably Disney World, and attendance plummeted. In an attempt to win back it’s following, Marineland added several attractions including a 3D movie: *Sea Dream*.

Unlike the 3D films of the 50’s, often shown in theaters badly designed for 3D, Marineland designed a theater for the sole purpose of showing this one film. The theater featured a large, for its day, wide format screen, state-of-the-art quadraphonic sound and seating that allowed everyone to see the movie clearly.

Murray Lerner, the director among other things, made a major break with previous 3D films by setting much of the action in the movie in front of the screen. This is common practice in Imax 3D today but it was a real crowd pleaser in 1978!

The movie was a tremendous success with audiences. Thousands of visitors flocked into the 400+ seat theater wearing “dolphin” glasses to watch the show. But one attraction, no matter how well done, could not solve Marineland’s problems. Sadly, attendance continued to decline and the theater was closed in the late 90’s.

The property changed hands as various people tried to save it none of them having very much luck. Then Jim Jacoby, an Atlanta businessman, who saw the property as an opportunity to build an educational eco resort, bought the property and started restoring it. Unfortunately the old 3D theater played no part in his plans and it was scheduled for demolition.

This might well have been the last we saw of *Sea Dream* but for a stroke of luck: Atlanta 3D club member Peter Bahouth was part of Jim’s project team. He recognized the value of the movie and put out a call for help from the other club members.

Peter, Lamar Kennedy, my wife Suzanne and I launched an all out effort to salvage as much as possible of *Sea Dream* from the theater. We owe Jim Jacoby sincere thanks for delaying the demolition of the theater to allow time for our salvage efforts.

I am happy to report that several excellent prints of the movie were found. Even better, Mr. Jacoby, impressed by Lamar’s showing of the film in his home 35mm theater, decided to save the projectors and screen opening up the possibility that *Sea Dream* might someday be seen in it’s original glory.

The still below is taken from the movie and has the “stereo window” set just as it was in the theater. You may need to hold it a good distance from your face to see it properly.



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