

Yaki Point, Grand Canyon

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We made an early escape from the city for brekkie at Lake Mead Harbour. Why does food always taste better with a great view? The water was a bright blue; the mountains a magnificent backdrop, and we had time today to play. So we chose the Jet Ski Ride to view Hoover Dam from the water. We then took our first steps into Arizona as the border is on the Dam. The dam itself is an awesome engineering feat with statues and plaques to tell the story of the great men involved from its conception to completion. From there it was a short trip to Kingman and a relaxing evening as Route 66 was calling.

Soon after 0600 we were 'getting our kicks on Route 66'. Although quite a straight road the scenery is good and nostalgia ensured John got his compulsory t-shirt at the breakfast stop in Seligman, then it was on to Williams to enjoy the old town and garage. The next stop was at Valle for the aircraft museum and then it was on to the Grand Canyon. This was just spellbinding! We stopped at both Yaki Point and Mather Point, before finding our hotel. After another spa and swim, we returned to watch the sun set at Hopi Point. Yes there were crowds, but wondrous things have to be shared and even

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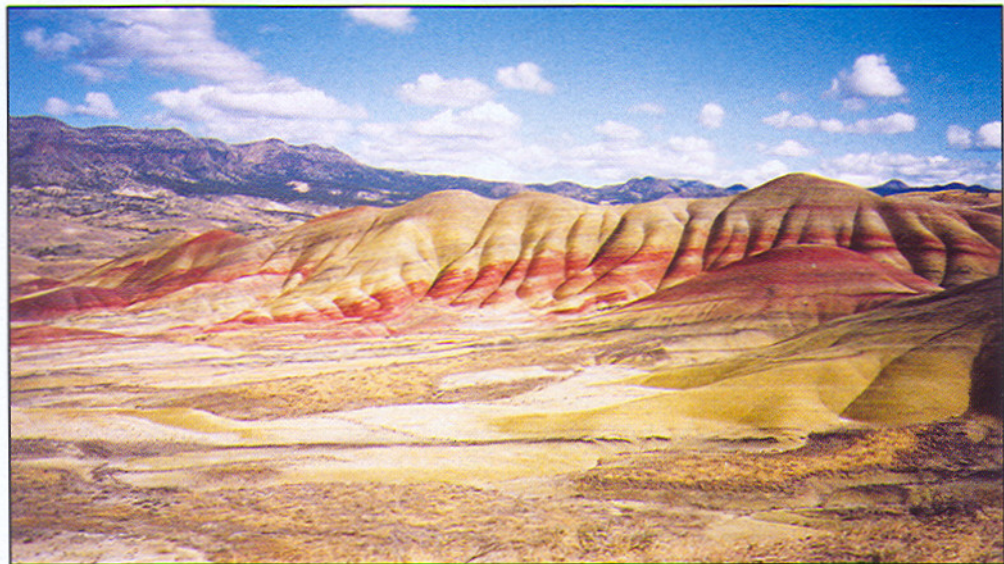
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the queuing for a free coach is fun when you talk to strangers. Later we enjoyed a country singer and some Indian dancers in a local hotel.

By 0730 the next morning we were riding through the Canyon enjoying the early morning sun and heavy dew. We stopped at many viewpoints, including the Watch Tower, before taking the 89N and 163N to Tuba City, Mexican Hat (yes, look for the rock) and into Monument National Park. The shapes were stunning as we rode through Navajo Indian Country, through Bluff, Blanding and Monticello to Moab our resting place. But as

it was only 1600 we headed into Arches National Park to watch the sunset. Again more impressive shapes and with another 407 miles on the clock, and a lost hour due to riding into Utah, the day was nearly over.

Tuesday morning included a bike clean before travelling to Canyonlands National Park. The sun came up, the air was clear and we enjoyed Grand View Point, Shafer Canyon, Buck Canyon and Green River View prior to Green River, Price, the lovely twisting mountain pass to Duchesne, past Strawberry River and Reservoir into Park City the home of the 2002 Winter Olympics. This was a



*Painted Hills near Mitchell*

Lake Lodge where deer roam freely in the grounds. After 423 miles it was time for birthday dinner steak, soft music, candles and raised glasses to absent friends.

All too quickly it was the 13th and the final day of our adventure. We were up early to ride into Joseph for brekkie with the Sherrif at the Cheyenne Cafe. Then it was on through Wallowa, Elgin, La Grande (where the roadwork's proved a navigational challenge), Ukiah and Dale. The Blue Mountains were wonderful but chilly this morning, but by the time we had enjoyed Long Creek, Monument, Kimberley and Shady Grove we were thawed out. This area was mainly for hunting and fishing, with taxidermy a prominent occupation. Next was Mitchell and the Painted Hills, then Prineville, Redmond and back to Bend.

Yes we had celebration hugs in the car park for a sensational holiday and Daffodil was duly thanked for her superb performance. We received a warm welcome from the hotel staff and retrieved our rucksacks for the serious

job of packing to go home. We had enough time the following morning to explore Bend prior to our shuttle bus arriving. Sadly, due to his work commitments, we did not see Scotty again. He admitted to only checking our progress on the first night, as he was confident that we would be fine.

We have tried to agree a holiday high but there were so many really fantastic parts: the miles and miles of twisty roads with beautiful scenery, the friendly natives, the cheap fuel, the glorious weather, nosey chipmunks, lack of traffic, scrummy food. It is hard to single out just one specific thing. There were no lows and even the snow had us laughing. Most useful bit of kit was definitely sunglasses. It was just a shame that on returning to Bend we were unable to turn the bike round and do it all again in reverse!!

Our grateful thanks go to Scotty and Roadtrip USA. If anyone fancies following in our tyre marks or sampling the many other routes he has to offer, just give him a call on 07000 868787.

