

Boys Out West II
By Tibor Vari
Photographs by Tibor Vari

Friday 10/31/03

The cast for the “Boys Out West” sequel are, Jeff Norton, Dave Mills, Joe Giordano and T-Tours guide Tibor Vari. We set off bright and early on Friday morning and meet up at the check-in at Newark airport for our flight to Las Vegas. On arrival, Jeff and I pick up the Ford Expedition where Jeff deftly talks the counter person into giving us the truck with unlimited miles! A very promising start to the trip as we load up our gear into this monster.

We set off for Valley of Fire, which is about 45 minutes from Las Vegas just off Route 15 N. We are a little late as the best light is late afternoon but we still get some great shots at sunset. The last rays light up the red rock with incredible intensity. Dave graciously takes a photograph of a newly married couple and promised to send them a picture.

We continue on to Kanab UT where we will spend the next couple of nights at the Holiday Inn Express.

Saturday 11/1/03



Unlike the first installment of “Boys Out West”, we have 4 tickets to The Wave via the Internet at <https://www.az.blm.gov/paria/index2.html> (thanks Jeff). Dave swore the first time he would never do this hike again. But he grudgingly signed on for another 2.5 mile tour over rough terrain. We prepare the night before by stocking up on Power Bars and a gallon of water/Gatoraid each. We take about 3 hours to hike to the wave with frequent stops for rest and photographs. Because of the altitude and walking along a sloped mountain, this is not an easy hike. Fortunately, the temperature was much cooler than in May and we all felt far less fatigued after arriving.

Joe was blown away by the incredible patterns and variety of subject material. In fact, Joe, as we all know shoots very sparingly, set a personal record by going through 5 rolls of 36 exposure slide film. We all used Velvia film, a polarizer, and either a warming filter or an enhancer filter.

Using a GPS unit we head back after spending about 3 hours shooting the wave.

Sunday 11/2/03



We wake up to an overcast day, which destroys any chance for a sunrise shot. After a quick bite at the Kanab McDonalds, we head off towards Page AZ hoping for clearer skies. We stop off at Lake Powell and take some shots of distant mountains when an occasional break in the clouds sends shafts of light on them.

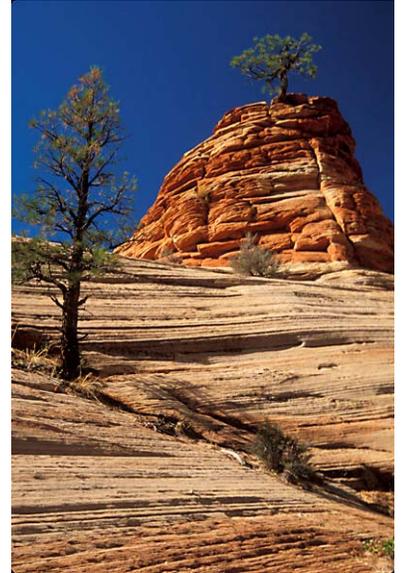
From there we head over to Upper Antelope Canyon where the best time to photograph is between 11 AM to 1 PM. The Navajo have a stand off route 98 just before the electric power plant on the right hand side of the road. You can visit either Lower Antelope Canyon (\$20.00), by driving literally across the street. Or \$26 and be driven 3 miles along a wash to Upper Antelope. We chose Upper this time, even though the lighting in the slot canyon was not good at all because of the

clouds. You really need a clear sunny day to get the beautiful light bouncing along the smooth sandstone to create incredible light patterns. The light near the entrance turned out to be the best shot. The rest of the canyon proved to be difficult to shoot as the light was near the very top and very dark near the ground floor. It was real hard to look through the view finder when the lens was virtually straight up. We again used Velvia, no polarizer, an 81A warming filter and either spot or matrix metering.

After Antelope Canyon, we head off to Zion NP. Unfortunately, the cloud layer got even darker as we approached the park, so no sunset shots. We find the Zion Adventure Company (www.zionadventures.com), in Springdale where we are to rent cold weather gear to hike The Narrows the next day in Zion NP. Because the water is very cold (about 47 degrees), and can get up to the knees in depth, we rent what are in effect a wet suit and special shoes to survive the cold. The instructor sells us on renting waterproof backpacks as she guarantees that we will slip and fall into the river. I think both Dave and Joe think either I am nuts or they are nuts for agreeing to go on this adventure.

Monday 11/3/03

We wake up at 5:30 and it's cloudy and raining. So it appears that Dave and Joe have a stay of execution from hiking the Narrows. We drive around to scout some locations and return our gear at 9:00 AM. The plan now is to pick up the gear in the evening and hike The Narrows on Tuesday. After breakfast we spend the day shooting various locations around Zion. In particular, the Temple of Sinawava, The Patriarchs, and various other locations along the main scenic drive road are great photo locations that parallel the Virgin river. Unfortunately, the cloud layer was pretty thick throughout the day and not as great as it could have been. Each of us try a roll of 100vs film to pop the colors. With Velvia we used an enhancer filter along with a polarizer.



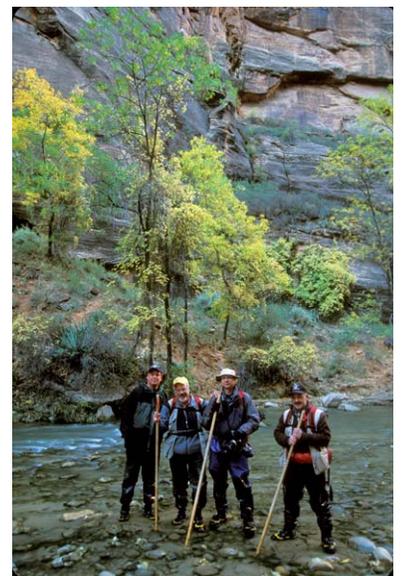
We go back to the Zion Adventure Company, to once again pick up our gear for hiking the Narrows. Tamara, who is working the store again spends time talking with us as we are the only ones in the store. She guesses Joe to be in his 30's and clearly has made his day! It must be his cigar and debonair. We all get a good laugh out of this and end the day with a great dinner at the Pioneer Restaurant.

Tuesday 11/4/03

We rose early to catch sunrise behind the Zion Museum where there was another workshop that joined us. The light was great and we used Velvia, polarizer filters and enhancer filters. After this we went for a quick breakfast and changed into our wet suits for the hike up the Narrows (Virgin River).

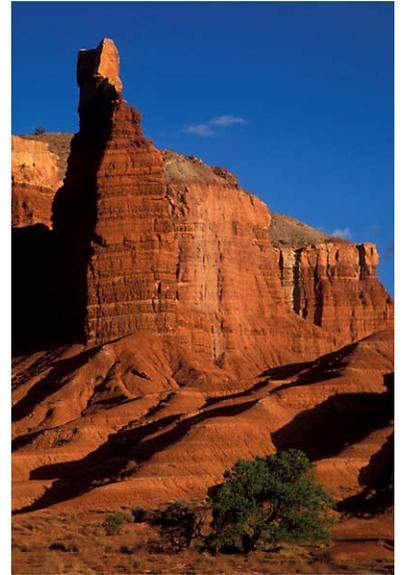
Hiking The Narrows is one of the key activities to do at Zion NP. This late in the year you have to have the proper gear otherwise hyperthermia is a real danger. We hiked the paved path from the Temple of Sinawava (20 minutes), before entering the river. At this point you are hiking for the most part in the river (60/40), or along the shore. After reaching the Orderville Canyon confluence with the Virgin River (2 hours total hiking), we stopped for lunch (Powerbars). At this point we took out our camera gear and started hiking back. This time we shot various scenes with trees and bends in the river using polarizer, warming, and enhancer filters. Overall, this hike was very easy and well worth the effort! Though in retrospect, we should have taken pictures as we hiked up (bad advice from the rental company employee).

After arriving back at the parking lot we changed out of our wet shoes and drove back to our hotel and dinner.



Wednesday 11/5/03

Another early rise as we catch the warm light one ridge over from the Zion Museum. From there we go down to the river near The Patriarchs and then on to the Temple of Sinawava. With the light still good we head over to the east side of Zion NP along Route 9. There are a number of great rock formations that we shoot at 90 degrees to the sun (to get maximum polarization). During the harsh mid-day sun we race over to Capitol Reef NP and catch a spectacular sunset near Chimney rock. After which we check into the Best Western in Torrey UT.



Thursday 11/6/03

At the crack of dawn we are off to the Bentonite Hills which is technically just outside of Capitol Reef. You head East on Route 24 and look for the Cathedral Valley sign on the left side. Follow the dirt track and cross the Fremont River at the ford (so have a high clearance vehicle). Drive about 9 miles on the dirt road and you get to this incredible location. The sand is like concrete in the shape of popcorn and is of various colors. There are Basalt rocks scattered about and they make for great compositions.



Unfortunately, the cloud layer comes in and we lose the sun. So we go scouting the Scenic Road in Capitol Reef but take few pictures. Sunset turns into a bust as well with a thick cloud layer.

Friday 11/7/03

We are still be-deviled by the thick clouds and decide not to drive to the Temple of the Moon in Cathedral Valley for sunrise. Instead we head south on Route 12, which has been called the most scenic road in the US. Needless to say, the viewpoints are incredible and we stop on occasion to take some shots. Lunch is spent in Escalante before we head over to Kodachrome Basin for some late afternoon photos. The rock shapes and chimney like rock spires make for some great compositions. We end the day by heading over to Bryce Canyon NP and shoot sunset just outside the park as well as the rising moon. The gang checks into Ruby's Inn and have dinner at the restaurant.

Saturday 11/8/03

We awaken to a brisk 19 degrees clear morning and leave Rudy's at 6:30 AM for the short drive to Inspiration Point for sunrise. This location is the first time any of us have shot here and the warm light was very good. From here we drove over to Sunset Point and walked down the Thor's Hammer trail to take pictures of this famous feature. With the sky clear we decide to race over to Page via the Cottonwood Road, which though unpaved, saves us an hour of driving. We arrive at Page and Antelope Canyon by 11:45 AM. By this time the clouds were coming in but the light was still great and created much better lighting in the slot canyon. The two hours we had went by incredibly fast. Unfortunately, towards the end of our time the cloud layer became much worse to the point that we knew there would be no sunset opportunities.



We head off towards Las Vegas via Zion NP and call it a day!

Sunday 11/9/03

We are up at 5:00 AM to pack and drive to the airport for our 7:30 AM flight from Las Vegas. All in all, another great T-Tours, that ranks as one of the best.

The final tally of 36 exposure slide rolls was Jeff (31), Tibor (29), Dave (29), and Joe (25), all while putting on 2200 miles on the truck. I am sure the club will be seeing shots of The Wave, Antelope Canyon, Zion, The Narrows, Bryce, and Capitol Reef throughout the competition year!

We also took 2 hours of digital video so there may be a "Boys Out West II: The Movie" coming soon to a 20 minute short shorts!