

South Coyote Buttes By Tibor Vari

I was in Las Vegas the third week in October of 2005 for a business convention and decided to stay the weekend (10/27), to do some photography. On this trip, I was joined by my fellow traveler Jeff Norton. The nice thing about Las Vegas is that within a few hours of driving is a treasure trove of photography locations. My main challenge was to pick a place; preferably one that I had not been to in the past. One spot I had heard some excellent reviews of was South Coyote Buttes (The Wave is in the North section).

Our base of operations was the small town of Kanab in Utah (4:00 hours from Las Vegas and about 1:30 from Page AZ). Our hotel was the Best Western Red Hills Inn which was very nice and included high speed internet access.

Researching on how to get to this location convinced me that we would need to hire a guide who had excellent 4WD vehicles. Following a recommendation, we hired Wally from Canyon Country Out – Back Tours (see <http://www.ccobtours.com/> for details). Because there were only two of us, the cost (\$375), was steep per individual (better to go with 3 or 4 people which would spread out the cost). But it was worth it because Wally arranged to get the necessary permits and meet us at 4:30 AM at our hotel.



After quite a bumpy ride down House Rock Road off Route 89 we arrived at our location. Our decision to use Wally turned out to be wise as the route was difficult with deep sand ruts, mud (it had rained), and some tricky turns to find if we had been following a map.

Unfortunately, as we arrived at the location it had begun to rain and the clouds had rolled in making for a very flat gray color. Nonetheless, after a short wait in the truck, the rain seemed to ease up and we hiked about 20-30 minutes to the edge of the buttes. At this point we began to shoot and explore deeper into the terrain. In a way, South Coyote Buttes is like The Wave in that you can aim your camera just about anywhere and find wonderful rock formations with leading lines. The difficulty was that you did not want to include too much in the image as it would have been very “busy”. So as we hiked further in, I was looking for ways to simplify my images while still capturing the

essence of the landscape. Of course, with the cloud cover, there was not much warm light but the sun did occasionally peek through. Besides the amazing rock formations, the colors were at times really amazing (almost bizarre).

Unfortunately, though the time went by quickly, the dark clouds came back and it started to rain. This was of course a concern as the road back would become a quagmire and dangerous. So we decided to leave as the light was poor but vowed to come back again. Hopefully the next time we can catch a wonderful sunrise in this location and really nail the shots!

