

"Two for Art"

**The adventures of Bernie and Martha Marks
with Sugar the Campin' Cat
and BluCon, our Lazy Daze mini-motorhome**

December 2010

Late in October, we ventured out on a three-week visit to parts of northern Arizona that we hadn't yet explored via RV. We delayed our departure for almost a week, hoping that a line of thunderstorms across southern California and the entire southwest would clear. Finally, we got tired of waiting and just left.

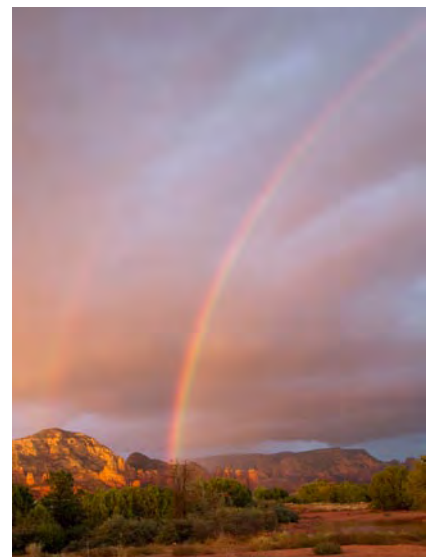


We hit lovely Sedona in a break between storms and enjoyed some amazing sights: a glowing sunset on red rocks as thunderheads boiled up above them, water puddles on slickrock reflecting iconic Cathedral Rock, and a dramatic double-rainbow sky show. Martha made these three images that afternoon.



That was followed by four days of hard rain, which we mostly spent hanging out in BluCon with our Kitty, playing Scrabble, and reading on our Kindles... venturing out only for lunches and visits to galleries. The first cozy day was fun; after that we began to feel pretty claustrophobic in our small RV.

After almost a week of rain, the clouds lifted and we were in the clear for the remaining 2 weeks of our trip. Great fall weather. Blue skies. Golden cottonwoods. Everywhere we went, the days were just as glorious as we had hoped.



On we went to Tuzigoot National Monument, a fine set of thousand-year-old Anasazi ruins nestled in the scenic Verde Valley of north-central Arizona.



Next major stop was Petrified Forest National Park, which encompasses Painted Desert National Monument (see the panorama below). Bernie did a field study there while Martha made a series of closeups of brilliantly colored fossilized trees. Here's a trio of those images; many more are on her website.



Our last—and most exciting—stop was at stunning Canyon de Chelly National Monument, on the Navajo reservation in Arizona... immediately adjacent to Utah, Colorado, and New Mexico. It's an important archeological area with Anasazi and Navajo cliff dwellings and pictographs. Bottom: 17th century Spanish priests, soldiers, horses, and dogs enter the canyon, as seen by a Navajo cave artist.



We took a full-day guided tour, called the "Shake and Bake" because when you do it in the summer you roast. We were there in November, so we didn't roast, but we did do a whole lot of shaking on a flatbed trailer with fixed seats above huge, bouncy rubber tires, towed by a truck. Up and down we went... in and out of Chinle Wash, which over the eons had carved the canyon, just as it took its pound of flesh out of us during those eight hours. It was almost too gorgeous... especially those cottonwoods!



See more of Martha's photographs of this trip and also Bernie's travel-related artwork on their websites:

www.MarthaMarks.com
www.BernardMarksArt.com