

VISIT TO ARIZONA DECEMBER 2007

Mari and I took a short trip in mid-December to visit Arizona. We needed a break and I wanted to put my new (old) car to the test. I hadn't taken it further than San Francisco and I wanted Mari to enjoy its comfort.



Jaguar XJ6 1986

I thought it would be just the right time of year to visit – not as hot as summer and perhaps slightly warmer than Santa Cruz. How wrong I was. We arrived in Flagstaff on the second day in the middle of a snowstorm. We slid around in the snow trying to find our hotel and then walked to a nearby restaurant for dinner.



The next morning we visited a museum and an art gallery before heading just a little south to Sedona. Our first sight of the red rocks was in light rain, but was impressive all the same. Fortunately, the rain stopped after a late lunch and we were able to get a good view of some of the main "monuments" by driving around.



Cathedral Rock

From Sedona we drove to the valley that contains Montezuma Castle, a cliff dwelling built about 800 years ago by the Southern Sinagua Native Americans and inhabited until around 1425 A.D. The 45 rooms are built on five levels, one above the other; access was by ladders. Down below the valley was irrigated and very fertile.

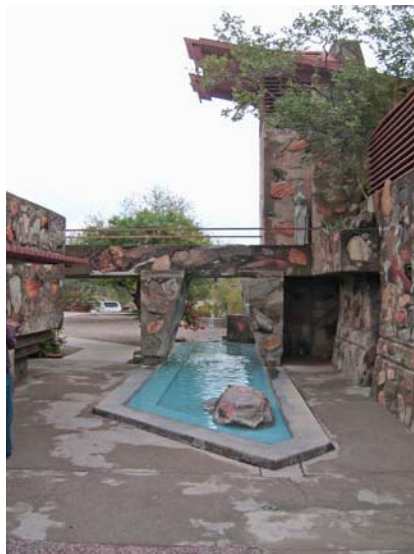


Montezuma Castle

The rest of our stay was spent in Phoenix, which has a fascinating history in the centuries before European settlement. We made a visit to Frank Lloyd Wright's school for young architects, which he built in the desert at Taliesin West, just a few miles north-east of the city. He spent the winters here and returned to Wisconsin in the summer. Constructed by his students in the 1940s, it is still fairly primitive in terms of modern technologies, but definitely eco-friendly. We found the guided tour very interesting and enjoyed the scenery.



Taliesin West



Another highlight of our stay in Phoenix was our visit to the Heard Museum, which has an enormous collection of artifacts from the various tribes in the region. Unfortunately taking photographs was not permitted.

On another day we spent some time in the Scottsdale Arts area, which is, of course very touristy. We also visited the Desert Botanical Garden, which has a bewildering variety of cacti and other succulents. It was really very pleasant to wander around on a warm afternoon and to take some photos.



And then back to Santa Cruz.