
[Test] The Road Less Travelled

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“It is very hard to say where you’re going until you get there. That kind of thing is based very much on instinct. As a photographer, one of the most important lessons I have learnt is that you have to learn to listen to and trust your own instinct. It has helped to guide me – this far at least.”

James Nachtwey



Ruby Valley road in Nevada

The day after a snow storm

The Road Less Travelled is such a perfect title for this newsletter in many ways, having recently returned from an epic two-week adventure that took me through snow-covered roads and mountains to the cactus and warm weather of southern California (and back, of course). It was memorable - from a route I had not covered before, to winter weather shutting down travel, to roads that were empty for hundreds of miles across the US Southwest, this trip was all I had hoped for and more than expected especially where photography opportunities were concerned.

This newsletter is a little longer than most because it covers a significant amount of travel and photography since my last letter in mid-January. Not only did I just return from the February road trip, at the end of January we kicked off the motorsport year with the Rolex 24 Hour race in Florida. A great start to the year, providing Blue Marble and Action Graphics content to work with for a long time, with thousands of new photographs. Album links are below, some narratives follow.

[The road less travelled album](#)

[Rolex 24 hour motorsport album](#)

Instinct and Intuition

I was driving past the possibility of taking the above photo in Nevada in a rush to get somewhere further south. I saw the tops of mountains glistening in the the morning sun on the western horizon and then passed a road that headed in that direction, towards Ruby Valley. I was five miles further down the highway before I decided I had to go back and take that road, driving 20 miles out into a snow-covered wilderness. After all, this is what this trip was about. That decision confirmed this two-week tour as one of the most successful Blue Marble photography ventures I've ever embarked on, and that all started because my grand plan for this journey had really not gone as planned.

The venture - new locations

I live in Vancouver. Watching the weather in mid-February I could see a major Pacific storm heading directly in my path through the western states, with predictions of heavy snow and poor road conditions. I knew that I had to get over Deadman's Pass in the Blue Mountains of Oregon or I faced potential road closures. That pass can be shut down for days, and that would have really played havoc with my plans. 10 hours of driving on the first day achieved that goal, but as it turned out I spent an extra day in Boise Idaho because the officials suggested it was a bad idea to drive south into Nevada, news (and good advice) that actually started a series of decisions and wins that really made this trip successful



The view from the road to Deadmans Pass summit

The plan was to travel from Vancouver BC to Palm Springs, in southern California, without using the I-5 interstate. My approach to travel is that 2-lane roads are better than 4 and the occasional gravel or dirt road is even better. I had charted out a route through Boise, down into Nevada and finally to Palm Springs in southern California to visit a friend there. It was mostly new roads for me. For photography purposes I had anticipated that there would be mountains with snow on them through central Idaho and Nevada - and that often leads to some great images. Then I learned that my chosen route was expecting several feet of snow in some areas, so I looked further east, and discovered the Great Basin route through eastern Nevada, and that looked better. And what an experience that turned out to be.



Click on the photos above for a link to the album for this trip.

Getting held up for a day in Boise meant I could go exploring around the city (in the middle of a snowstorm) and subsequently I tripped over a real photography gem. The [Warhawk Air Museum](#) has multiple hangars of airplanes, many of these planes are flown in airshows. By being there for that snowy and windy day I received an invitation to come and photograph their September airshow in Boise, and I am hoping to be able to make that happen. I spent almost four hours, and given the opportunity will spend more. Without the storm, I would have missed this completely.





The Ruby Valley discovery

What was really amazing about the Ruby Valley detour was that although I spent several hours there I had the entire valley to myself. It is the only place I've photographed where I was photo-bombed by a hawk! Every time I stopped the truck and got out it was completely silent except for the wind and the occasional songbird. A perfect photography day, the light coming from the right direction, and no real need to hurry. The snow dumped by the storm the previous day provided a new coat for the mountains, the clouds were just hanging around adding to the drama, and it was wonderful. You have no idea how many times I was grateful that I turned around and made this detour, and realized how the storm had created this opportunity that annoyed me on the previous day. This day was such a reminder that bad news can turn to good results if you look for the opportunities created, and take the risk of following the road into the wilderness occasionally. In this case, pretty much literally.



From snow-covered mountains to the deserts of the Southwest

From Ely, Nevada southward the trip got back on plan. I made day-visits to parks around Las Vegas, a day each at Red Rock Canyon Conservation area, the Valley of Fire, Lake Mead and Hoover Dam, and Death Valley. Again, most were first-time visits and it was a bit overwhelming to have so much to absorb and photograph but it was well worth it. Some photos are included in the album (click on the photos above). There are some videos - watch for those as you go through the album. The approach I'm employing is to use video as an overview, with still-photos pulling up the details. Also, the vastness of these areas is hard to communicate and I find that video in some ways is more effective for that. At this time I'm publishing about 50 new images and 5 videos - I brought home many more that are on my list to get back to at some point.

Backyards and trains - and some photography fun



The reward at the end of the southward journey was an astounding few days photographing and videoing my friends backyard train setup in Palm Springs. There is a short video in the album link - just click on the photo above to go to see that. A longer YouTube video is in production - it was too much fun to not do something more than the few shots in this newsletter. It was a great opportunity to use the GoPro and smartphone even more than described in that last newsletter.



Motorsports 2025 kickoff - Rolex 24 Hour race at Daytona

The “big cameras” came out for heavy use at the end of January for two weekends of endurance racing in Florida. This was the 15th time I've attended and photographed this race, and it still carries a thrill when you walk in the gates of Daytona, go through the garages, and watch 60 cars cross the start line for a brutal 24 hours of high-speed racing, most of it at night because of the January race dates. I've already signed up for next year, but while we wait for that there are some shots from this year's event on my events website. Most of these have been posted on social media over the past 6 weeks. The link for this year's race photography follows - more to come from the many photos that came home with me.

[Rolex 24 hour motorsport album](#)

Finally....

If you made it this far, thank you for your interest in my photography and the business that it has allowed me to develop. Everything you see here, on social media, and on my websites is available for sale as digital images, and in wall-art print sizes up to 6ft. It has been a pleasure to work with you in the past year and I look forward to more of that experience in the coming year.



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