

TO SEE OR NOT TO SEE:

Going on a trip? Each day is irreplaceable - you can't back up, you just go this way once.

So now picture this: There you are, the first day of your trip.....you walk to the top of a rise.....out comes the camera or perhaps you have your video camera with one eye glued to it most of the time as you wave it around.....you take short, quick breaths as you quickly survey the scene for the best shot. Put the camera on automatic or set the F stop, check the speed, focus in on the unsurpassed view....click, turn on your heel and head for your car. You jump in, turn on the motor and head on to the next viewpoint. You feel good....the classic shot, the one that to be framed along with all the others taken over the past few days. Those folks that travel with you, sit in their seats while you jump in and out, observing and smiling, surveying, focusing and snapping. They see only that you have stopped their travel. They talk among themselves. The glass mutes their view and the window frame gets in the way....**they see nothing....they smell nothing, they feel nothing, experience nothing.**

Both travelers are missing out on why they have come to this place. Most have spent thousands of dollars and hours of time to reach this unforgettable destination. The days are packed with activities and they rush from one location to another, trying to squeeze it all in. But they have only gotten a few cents worth of what is available if they only took the time, relaxed and used their senses and savored and devoured the feast that is set before them.

Tired, maybe bored, they check into their hotel, go to their rooms, have a cold drink from the mini-bar or head for the restaurant or bar. And what are they missing here? Much more. Perhaps a conversation with the barman, or the waitress, the receptionist will give clues as to the lifestyle here....a walk in the neighborhood observing the homes, the children tells you of lifestyles.....buying a small item in a family run shop is a fun experience different than our large "have everything markets".....but wait....

..... let's go back to the ridge, to the river's edge, or to the glen. Let's park the car. Turn off the motor. Everyone gets out. Stretch, take a look around. Sniff the air, look close, look far. Take the camera(s) but also the sketch pad, pen and notebook, cushion and then linger awhile at this beautiful place. Perhaps no conversation, each one tuned into what they are experiencing. And here's a simple trick to help "seeing" for the non-photographer or for the children. Take a 4" x 6" card and cut two L-shaped pieces out of the bottom left and top right corners, using the sides of the card. Now by making a rectangle of them with edges overlapping, you can change the size of the open rectangle in the middle by moving the two pieces closer or farther apart which becomes a "lens" in which to focus a scene. You really will "see" something specific for a change. Now settle in 5 or 10 minutes or if you can spare it, 30 or 60....to capture the smell of the water, inspect the nearby wild flowers..... see the hawk soar overhead..... see

the rabbit crouch nearby..... actually see all the colors collected in the scene....to use ALL your senses, to hear, see, smell, feel.....then you will hear a deep sigh pass from your lips as you feel your heart swell with pleasure and happiness.

It only takes a few minutes to restore the soul, to charge the energy cells, to discover answers to today's problems. It only takes a few minutes to make you realize how dear life is and how fortunate you are. And it only takes a few minutes to get \$1000 worth of rewards from this simple stop. And, you captured it on film as well.

Patty Price, PATTY'S PLACES