

LSCC End of Summer Big Trip 2018 – VETTES on the ROCKIES

[Mike & Michele Woolsey](#) - Coordinator



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Roads and scenery like this are a big part what make a road trip to Colorado truly inspiring. The other part is doing it in your Corvette. These are the roads for which Corvettes were built, challenging, scenic and above all, fun. The current plan is to depart **Saturday, August 18 and return August 30**. We plan to attend the Vettes on the Rockies (VOTR) event, put on by Looking Glass Corvette Association (LGCA), in Steamboat Springs, CO. The VOTR event takes place Thursday evening (8/23) thru Sunday morning (8/26) breakfast. Registration opens February 12, 2018. LGCA encourages early registration as they expect a full house and a waiting list. A growing list of the event activities as well as other fun stuff to do in the area is now being shown on their website (<https://www.lgcacorvette.org/votr-activities>).

At least half the fun is going to be just getting there. Things get off to a fast start Saturday evening with dinner at the Big Texan Steak Ranch in Amarillo. The 72 oz. steak dinner is free if you eat it all in an hour. Perhaps we'll have someone up to the challenge. Following dinner is the last performance for 2018 of the Outdoor Musical "Texas" at The Pioneer Amphitheater in Palo Duro Canyon State Park.

- ☐ The Big Texan Steak Ranch - <https://www.bigtexan.com/>
- ☐ Outdoor Musical "Texas" - <http://www.texas-show.com/>

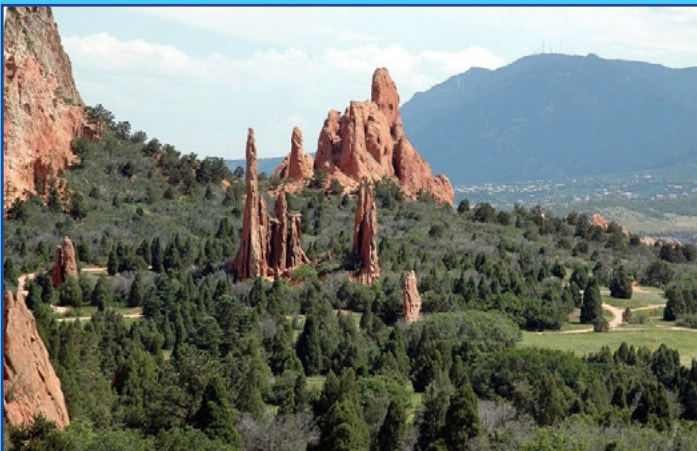


Sunday takes us as far as Colorado Springs, but not until we've had a chance to stop and do some art work at Cadillac Ranch. The Caddies have taken a beating over the years, but it's still fun to paint them up. You will likely hear several different languages spoken here as it has become an international tourist destination. Best to buy your spray paint before you leave Amarillo. Hint: It's best to have two contrasting colors so that you can create your own canvas.



We plan to spend Sunday and Monday nights in Colorado Springs, giving us a full day Monday to see and do. I'm not sure we can see and do it all, but folks will have a large selection from which to choose. Some suggestions are:

- ☐ Pikes Peak – Take the train. <http://www.cograilway.com/pikes-peak.asp> or drive up (fully paved)
- ☐ Garden of the Gods - <https://www.gardenofgods.com/> Great photo opportunities and a peaceful place to relax and spend some time in contemplation.



- ☐ The U.S. A. F. Academy Chapel is an awe inspiring sight - <https://www.usafa.edu/>
- ☐ U. S. Olympic Training Center – world class cars paired with world class athletes - <https://www.teamusa.org/about-the-usoc/olympic-training-centers/csotc/tours>
 - You may have a chance to meet and/or watch some of our athletes in action.
- ☐ The National Museum of World War II Aviation – <http://www.worldwariaviation.org/> Impressive selection of aircraft and displays. Things that go fast and make noise are good anytime.



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☐ **Zip Line!!** - <https://www.broadmoor.com/broadmoor-adventures/soaring-adventures/>

- There are several courses to choose from, but the one that traverses the Seven-Falls area sounds like a ton of fun. This could end up being a group event if there is enough interest. This is one of the top rated zip lines in the world.



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- ☐ What could be better than following up a soaring adventure with a great dinner in a beautiful location? Perhaps dinner at the Restaurant 1858 will provide a fitting end to the day.

This ends Day 2 of the trip. I'm getting excited just thinking about it. I am open to suggestions about other things to include in the area. The more alternatives we have, the more fun we can have. The idea is to let people pick and choose what they have an interest in. If we have enough for one venue, we'll try to get a group rate if applicable/possible.

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In order to register for the trip logon to the club website and go to the calendar. Run forward to August. There will be a link to take you to the sign-up page. You will need to:

- ☐ [Sign up for the trip](#). This will let us know who is planning to go
- ☐ Make your hotel reservations for VOTR. We are staying at the Steamboat Springs Grand Resort, which is the epicenter of VOTR. Be sure to let them know that you are there for VOTR so you get the discounted room rate. We will be there from Thursday night until Sunday morning, so you will need a room for Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights (8/23 – 8/25). Make your reservations as soon as you can. Rooms are going quickly. The hotel staff is amazed.
- ☐ Register for the event. Registration opens 2/12/18. The registration materials are available on the Looking Glass Corvette Association website beginning 2/5/18. There is a link to their site on the sign-up page.

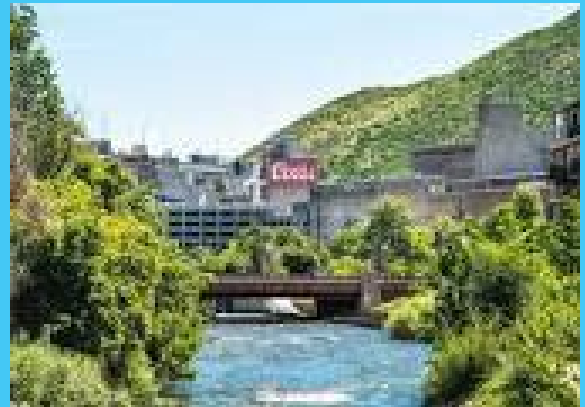
Please let me ([Mike Woolsey](#)) know if you have any questions.



After a full day of play and adventure in Colorado Springs, Tuesday morning finds us heading out to Denver. It's only a short drive, so we will have most of the day to enjoy the offerings of this scenic locale.

Some entertainment choices in and around Denver include:

- ☐ Molly Brown's (The Unsinkable) House - <https://mollybrown.org/>
- ☐ Buffalo Bill Cody – Grave and museum at the summit of Lookout Mountain in Golden. Great views of Denver and the plains, plus one more famous gravesite visited. <http://www.buffalobill.org/>
- ☐ Forney Museum of Transportation - <http://www.forneymuseum.org/> It has everything from stage coaches to steam locomotives, automobiles and an airplane or two.
- ☐ Red Rock Amphitheater - <http://redrockonline.com/> An iconic and scenic natural amphitheater.
- ☐ Coors Brewery – Golden Colorado – This is a fun and interesting tour. The only place in the world that Coors is brewed. <https://www.millercoors.com/av?url=https://www.millercoors.com/breweries/coors-brewing-company/tours>
- ☐ Clive Cussler - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clive_Cussler - auto museum. Cussler's primary protagonist, Dirk Pitt, has quite a collection of classic and unusual automobiles. Cussler himself also has quite a collection. <http://www.cusslermuseum.com/>



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• Wednesday finds us heading up into the mountains through Boulder and Big Thompson Canyon to the bustling tourist mecca of Estes Park. If you need T-shirts, fudge, blown glass, or other artwork, this could be a good place to stock up. We should be in Estes Park by noon, leaving plenty of time for bead and trinket hunting in the various shops and stores that abound in the town, maybe even a horseback ride. I hope that we will be able to stay at the historic Stanley Hotel. I stayed there for the first time when I was there at age 11 with my grandparents, so it is certified to be really old. There are ghost tours and all kinds of fun stuff.

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• Stanley Hotel - <http://www.stanleyhotel.com/>



Estes Park is a town built for walking. It's hard to get too much fudge and ice cream. Thursday morning finds us headed out through Rocky Mountain National Park via Trail Ridge Road. Read more about that next month.

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We will be heading out of Estes Park to today's destination of Steamboat Springs. In this case, the journey is the destination. Welcome to Rocky Mountain National Park and Trail Ridge Road. Make sure your cameras are charged up.





This is typical scenery above the timber line on Trail Ridge Road. Not a bad place for a GoPro if you have one. Scenic turnouts abound. Take your time and enjoy it. It could be cold even in August.



The road is great, but there are also opportunities for enjoying short hikes and fabulous overlooks. Construction on the road began in 1929 and was completed to Fall River Pass in July of 1932. I'm sure that was quite a project given the altitude and weather. If I remember correctly my first trip over the road was in 1962 or 1963. It really hasn't changed much.

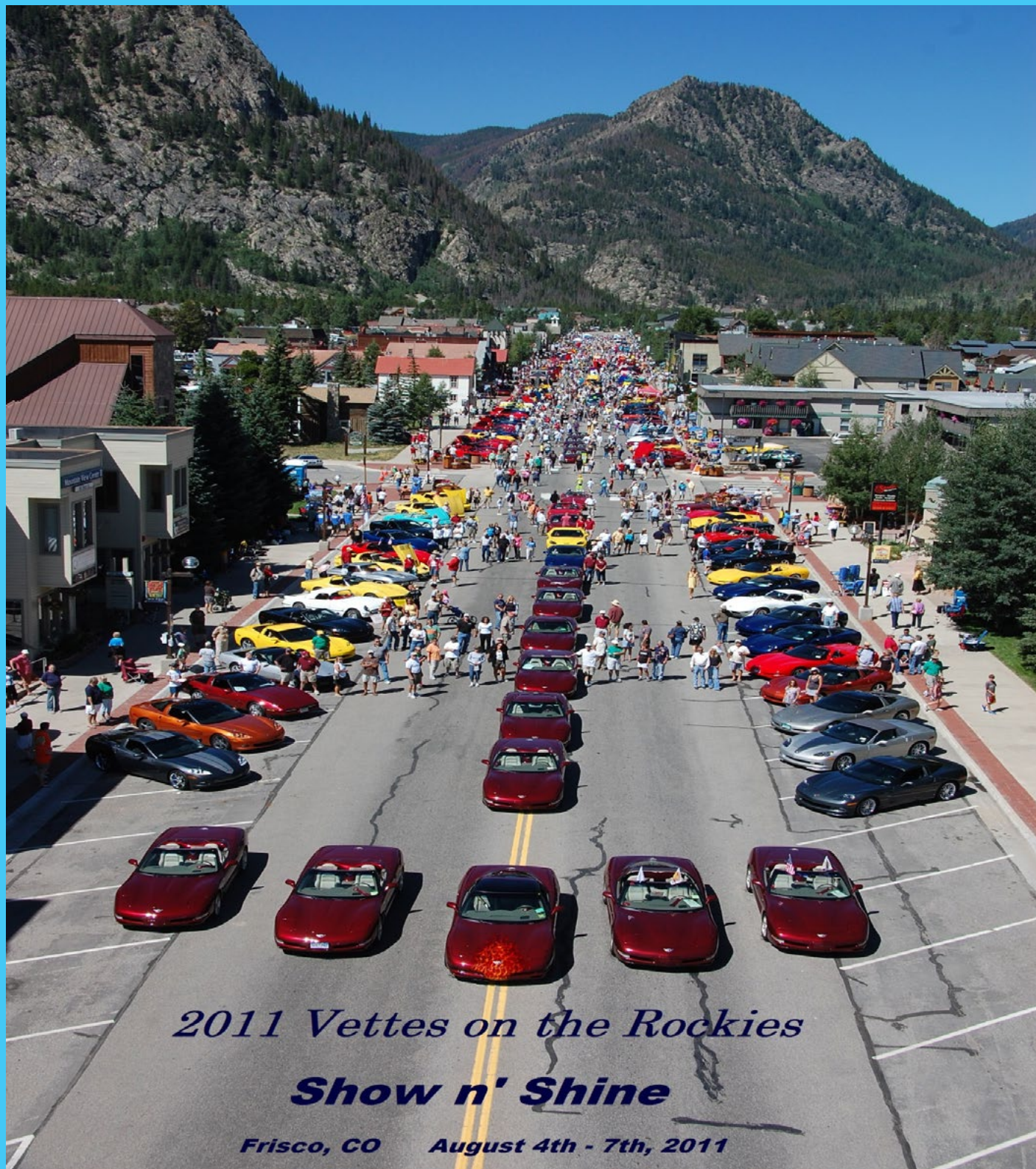


Does this look like fun or what? The passenger typically has the most fun on this stretch as the driver has to make sure to stay on the road and keep watch for tourists.



During the heat of the summer the elk are usually at high altitude, so we may see some. We will be top-ping out at over 12,000 feet.

After most of a day of scenic driving, we will arrive at the home of Vettes on the Rockies!! Welcome to Steamboat Springs. Cash bar upon arrival. Wahoo! We will be at VOTR from Thursday evening through our departure on Sunday morning. It looks like there will be a ton of stuff to do besides gawking at all the Corvettes.



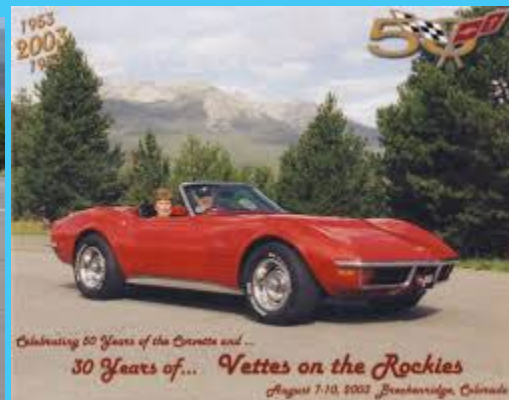


The Steamboat Grand – This serves as the hub of activity for VOTR.



<http://steamboatgrand.com/>

They are expecting quite a crowd. It looks like a good group in 2011. This should be a very large time.



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After a couple of fun days at VOTR, we will turn our sights southwest and head for Montrose. Sunday will primarily be a day devoted to scenic driving over the Grand Mesa area of Colorado.



At present our one planned scenic stop on this leg is the Black Canyon of the Gunnison. The canyon is spectacular. My mom and sister saw a mountain lion from a range of about 40 yards on one of their stops here. We should arrive at an ideal time to view the canyon.



The following day, our first stop will be Ouray, named for Chief Ouray of the Ute tribe. The town is known for its hot mineral spring baths and natural beauty. Approximately one million ounces of gold were mined in the Ouray area in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Ouray is also known as the “Switzerland of America”. There may be some marketing going on there, but the scenery is pretty spectacular.



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D1MAW6
www.alamy.com

A quick look and we are on our way. The “Million Dollar Highway” beckons. There are several stories with regard to how the highway got its name. Some say that it cost a million dollars a mile to build, others that the road bed, because it was built in part from mine tailings, contains a million dollars of gold and silver ore per mile. For us it will be the views that have the value, so enjoy the drive.

It's quite a sight, running down the “Million Dollar Highway” towards Silverton. Pay attention to this section of road, there are steep drops and, for the most part, no guardrails. Passengers have your cameras ready. This is a fairly tame section.



The person in the Jeep doesn't seem to be taking any chances.

We are going to have a number of activities to choose from in the area between Silverton and Durango. Depending on what folks have done before or what they have an interest in on this trip we may end up somewhat scattered out. There are mine tours, train rides, an alpine slide at Purgatory, cliff dwellings at Mesa Verde, shopping, general sight seeing as well as other activities. In any case, we will be meeting at our hotel in Durango at the close of the day to compare notes and adventures.

Silverton's famous mines are no longer active, but the locals still mine gold and silver from the tourists.



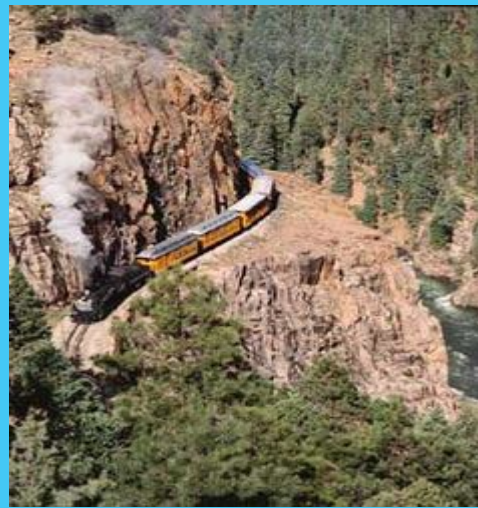
Mine tours are still available. One of the favorites is the Old Hundred. That tour comes highly recommended.



Old Hundred Mine Tour - <http://www.minetour.com/>

Visit the mysterious secret underground world of the gold miner! Ride the electric mine train 1/3 mile deep into Galena Mountain then easy walking with your miner-guide through the quartz vein tunnels for live mining demonstrations. You'll see operating air drills, hoisting skip, slusher, mucker and learn about the "honey" wagon - all authentic San Juan mining equipment from the 1930's - 1960's. Do your own mining at the sluice boxes outside and keep what you find! Somehow we missed this tour on previous trips, but plan to make it this time.

The Durango and Silverton narrow gage train is a treat for the steam train aficionados. It winds its way down the Animas River valley to Durango. The best way to ride is to take the train to Durango and the ride bus for the return to Silverton. If you opt for this train ride, plan on it taking most of the day. Interestingly enough I couldn't find a picture of the bus.



Durango and Silverton Railroad - <http://www.durangotrain.com/>

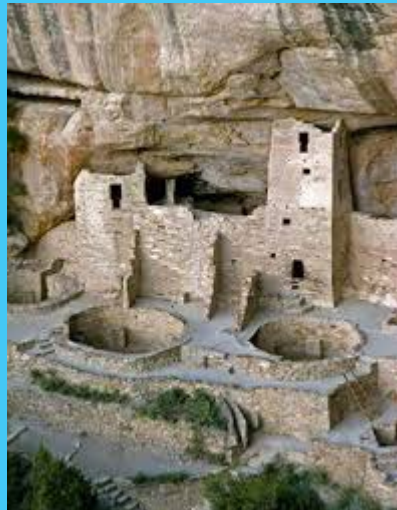
"On our railroad, you will experience Colorado at its best...wildlife, waterfalls, majestic peaks, all from the view of an 1880s train. You will see places you can get to only by foot or train. You will experience first-hand why the D&SNGRR was voted "One of the World's Top Ten Most Exciting Train Rides" by the Society of American Travel Writers in 2009. The most important part of our mission is you. It is to give you an experience you will never forget. Riding the D&SNGRR you are now a part of history". We've ridden the train several times and it is a great experience.

The Purgatory ski area is the home of an alpine slide. It resembles a twin bobsled run using a plastic "sled" for the ride. Competition can get fierce. I'm not sure how fast you can go, but it seems fast.



Oops! Well, it's faster and more comfortable on the sled than it is on your rear end. Here is where to find additional information regarding the Alpine Slide - <http://purgatory.com/alpine-slide/>

Mesa Verde National Park (<https://www.nps.gov/meve/index.htm>) is located about 50 miles west of Durango. Mesa Verde, Spanish for green table, offers a spectacular look into the lives of the Ancestral Pueblo people who made it their home for over 700 years, from AD 600 to 1300. Today the park protects nearly 5,000 known archeological sites, including 600 cliff dwellings. These sites are some of the most notable and best preserved in the United States. By the time you get there and see the main attractions this is pretty much an all-day affair. It is extremely interesting.



The following day we head for Taos and Santa Fe. It's a more relaxing drive than the Million Dollar Highway, but still fun. We'll cross the Rio Grande in New Mexico. No wading across here.



Once across the bridge, we are on the home stretch to Taos. There is plenty of history and art in Taos. The city is home to Kit Carson's home and museum. It's worth taking a look.



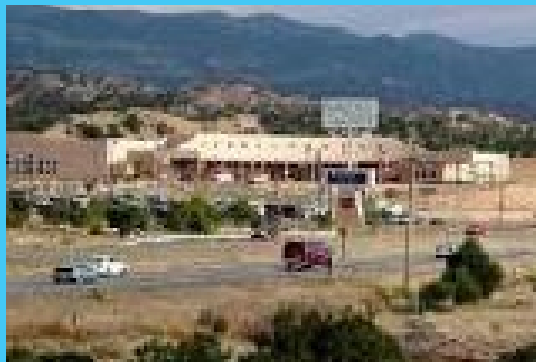
There are also a ton of art galleries in town. If you are interested in Western Art, this is a good place to shop. Another interesting sight is the Taos Pueblo. Other than the glass windows and screen doors, not much has changed for hundreds of years. If you haven't visited here before, it is well worth the time. There is a lot of shopping here as well and no taxes. There are plenty of opportunities for early Christmas shopping.



After our visit in Taos we are ready to continue the drive to Santa Fe. We will be taking the quick route from here. As we get closer to Santa Fe, on one side of the road is the Camel Rock monument.



On the other side is the Camel Rock Casino.
As you can see, the rock is much larger.



In any case, we will soon be in Santa Fe. Our accommodations are within an easy walk of the plaza where you will find great food and once again, shopping opportunities. I can attest that the jewelry stores do a great business. Also, be sure to stop at the La Fonda Hotel and the Indian market at the Palace of the Governors.

Around the plaza in Santa Fe. A great place to relax and watch the world go by.





There is new and old for sale here. We won't be leaving until after lunch so there will be time for wandering around the plaza and the downtown area. We won't be taking a lot of extra time on the way back to Amarillo. There are some remnants of old Route 66 in Tucumcari. Here is a sample.





From here it is I-40 for the rest of the way to Amarillo. Those who didn't have the chance to paint some Cadillacs will have another opportunity as we pass back by Cadillac Ranch.

The currently planned itinerary for the trip is as follows:

8/18/2018 – Overnight in Amarillo
8/19/18 & 8/20/18 – Overnight in Colorado Springs
8/21/18 – Overnight in Denver
8/22/18 – Overnight in Estes Park
8/23/18 - 8/25/18 – Overnight in Steamboat Springs
8/26/18 – Overnight in Montrose
8/27/18 – Overnight in Durango
8/28/18 – Overnight in Santa Fe
8/29/18 – Overnight in Amarillo
8/30/18 – Home

[2018 LSCC Big Trip - Vettes On The Rockies Sign Up](#)

Log-in to LSCC to see the sign-up page.

[VOTR Information](#)

Note: As of March 15th VOTR was 80% full, so there may be a small window of opportunity for those that are interested but haven't signed up yet. Remember you must login to the club website in order to see the sign-up page.