

The Photographer

Steve loves the west and its national parks. He has photographed the Rockies from New Mexico to the Yukon, hiking hundreds of miles, with both still and video cameras, along the way.

The pristine waters of the coast, the glacier topped peaks of the rockies and the expansive open plains make Western Canada one of his favorite subjects.

He hopes these images will inspire you to see them for yourself.

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The West is Big

Words and Photography by Steve Salis

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About this book

This volume is part of the Western Portraits series of travel photography. The other books feature the beauty and grandeur of a specific region of the western North America.

This volume contains my favorite images of all my western travels.

I hope it will inspire you to explore the west as well.

Steve Salis
July, 2011



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The background image shows a vast, open landscape. In the foreground, there is a grassy field with several horses grazing. The middle ground consists of rolling hills and a wide valley. The background features more distant, hazy hills under a cloudy sky. The overall scene is a typical representation of the American West.

Introduction

I like to explore the west. The variety of landscapes never ceases to fascinate or to heighten my curiosity. The park services of the US and Canada preserve much of the west. There's splendid isolation in the southern deserts. There's remnants of the last ice age in the north, and there are inspiring mountains along the way. Being there cannot be compared to looking at pictures but before turn each page try to imagine that you're there.

Each shoot was planned well in advance but, the itinerary often changes due to weather or the quest for interesting lighting conditions. Some of my favorite shots are the result of sudden changes in weather. I've waited for an approaching storm and literally chased its rainbow for an hour. I've hiked on ice with blue sky and within a few minutes been trapped in white out conditions. Oddly, that was nearly as disorienting as hiking in 114 degree heat in a sea of white sand in southern New Mexico.

Like everything else in the west, the colors are extreme. There's oranges and reds in the southwest. There's vibrant greens in the mountains and luminescent turquoise water in glacier fed lakes. These colors are not seen in the rest of North America, at least not in nature. Today, even many urbanites speak of the need of preserve the environment, I am dismayed that few from this country take the time to venture into it. Most of the west is simply dismissed as "fly over country".













Water Fowl Lake along the Ice Fields Parkway
Facing Page: Bow Lake before an evening rain.









Athabasca Glacier in Jasper National Park, Alberta is a part of the Columbia Ice Field. Its the largest ice field in the northern hemisphere south of the arctic circle.



12 Sculpted treeless mountains as seen from Parker Ridge in Banff National Park. A look to the right from here is an unfettered view of one of the glaciers flowing from the Columbia Ice Field.



Top: A short trail climbs 900 feet to a pristine landscape above an untouched Glacial valley. This is one of my favorite places. Several miles of spur trails head in both directions along the ridge. Right top: the trail to Parker Ridge. Bottom right: the view to the trailhead.





Peyto Lake in Banff gets its striking color from fine dust particles suspended in the water. The particles were scraped off rock by a moving glacier.









Canoes on Emerald Lake. Outdoor dining is available at the Emerald Lake Bistro, on the right. When the weather is right, this is an idyllic place. One of the world's most important fossil beds is located high above on a nearby ridge.





Bow Lake at dusk from the Num-ti-jah lodge. The lodge has only 25 rooms and Conde Nast magazine says it has one of the 25 best hotel room views in the world. I've stayed there several times and I agree. Next page: Emerald Lake









Top left: Athabasca Glacier. Top right: The Prince of Whales Hotel above Waterton Lake.
Bottom left: Lake Cameron. Bottom right: Canoeing on Lake Loise.





The Ice Field Parkway heading to the ice fields.
Facing page: After an hour of chasing the full rainbow was where I wanted it.





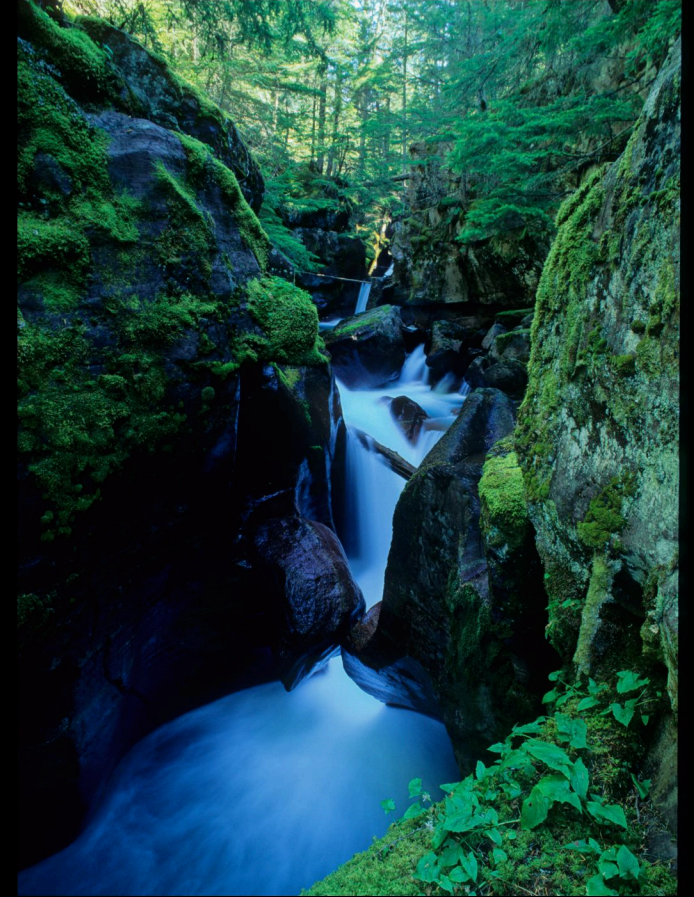
Facing page: Takakkaw Falls. Top left: just east of the divide are the vast fields of Alberta. Bottom left: the White Line train runs from Skagway Alaska to the Yukon. Right: A forest in Banff. **29**





Scenes from Glacier National Park. Facing page: St. Mary's Lake in Glacier National Park, Montana. Top left: St. Mary's Falls. Big Horn Sheep on the Grinnell Glacier Trail. Bottom right: Mt. Gold, Glacier National Park.





Two of the hundreds of water falls in Glacier NP. Left: along the Going to the Sun Road. Right: Avalanche Creek on the east side of Glacier National Park Opposite: Kintla Lake is hidden away in the Northwest corner of Glacier National Park (GNP). Next pages: Wild Goose Island in GNP. The Many Glacier Hotel.









Right: Lake McDonald. Left: 2000 feet above the Swiftcurrent Valley from Swiftcurrent Pass.
Opposite: Swiftcurrent Lake in front of the Many Glacier Hotel in GNP
Next pages: Fog on Swiftcurrent Lake. Fly Fishing at Bullhead Lake.









Above: Upper Grinnell Lake with Salamander Falls and Hidden Falls 41
Next pages: 180 degree view of Grinnell Glacier









Left: Wild Goose Island. Above right: Scenes from the Many Glacier Valley





Opposite: Mt. Gould in the Many Glacier Valley 47
Above: Scenes from the Going to the Sun Road in Glacier National Park.





Facing page: a quick snow storm decorates the peaks of the Many Glacier Valley.
Above: the road to the Town of St. Mary's. Bottom: views from trails.





Facing page: Morning fog near the Many Glacier Hotel. Above: the Swiftcurrent River







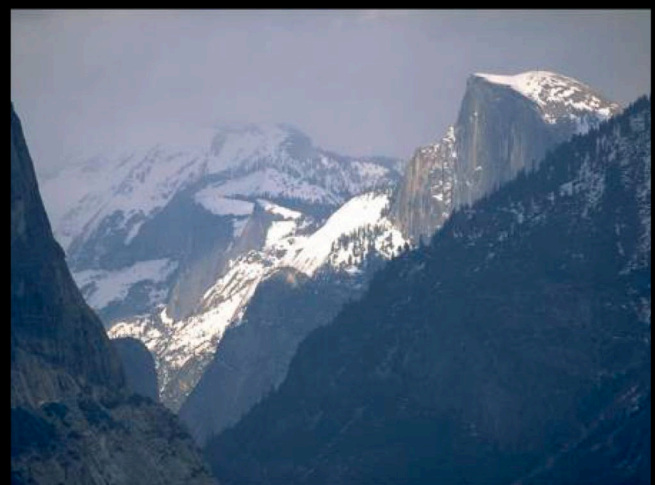


The waters of southern BC are dotted with islands. Calm waters and numerous ports make this one of the most popular sailing areas in the world. **55**















62 Mt. Rainier dominates the Seattle Skyline from 60 miles away. Even when you're on it its size is difficult to grasp. From this point the top is several miles away and 9000 feet up.















Facing page: View along the Alaskan Highway in the Yukon. Top left: Yukon Mountains. Top right: Yukon house. Bottom right: Downtown Carcross, Yukon. **69**



Deserts

Much of the west is desert. For generations deserts were places to be avoided. They are harsh places where life is difficult for both flora and fauna. Deserts can be hot or cold, sometimes in the same day, and they are always dry. So, why do the deserts of the west attract millions of the world's travelers every year?

Because they are spectacular.

There are beautiful dunes and canyons, powerful rivers, extinct volcanos, exposed faults and much more. Deserts are also natural laboratories where the erosive effects of time are displayed and waiting to be studied. Bizarre shapes on an immense scale tell the story of geologic forces that move continents, build and erode mountain ranges and reveal over a billion years of sedimentation records.

Park system's across North America provide access to these amazing places. Intrepid explorers around the world are thankful.





A yucca in White Sands NM, Tree remains at Mt. St. Hellen's and a petrified desert called Hell's Backbone in Utah. Face page: Horse Shoe Bend and the Colorado River.









Right: Antelope Canyon. White Sands NM and The Petrified Forest Facing Page: Carlsbad Caverns NP. Next page: the Shafer Trail in Canyonlands NP.







Previous page: Mesa Arch in Canyonlands, NP Utah.
Above: The Navaho Trail in Bryce Canyon, NP
Facing Page: Canyonlands, NP as seen from Dead Horse Point State Park.











Top left & Bottom right: White Sands of New Mexico. Top right: Utah Ranch. Bottom left: The Yukon's "Littlest Desert".
Next pages: Antelope Canyon, AZ. and Monument Valley at Sunrise.







Cliff Palace in Mesa Verde, Colorado. These were granaries of the Anasazi . They were built 1500 years ago and occupied until about 1200 AD. No one knows for sure why they left. Left: a ladder leads to one of the many ceremonial kivas.



White Sands New Mexico and flowers in Death Valley in 2005. It had been 100 years since the flowers bloomed there. 89









Monument Valley and Double Arch in Arches NP





Facing page: the Goosenecks cut by the San Juan River in the Four Corners Region.
Top: Oahu. Bottom left: California road. Bottom right: Hubbard Glacier









Left: Lake McDonald. Above right: Montana ground cover Bottom right: Trail of the Cedars, Montana. 99
Facing page: Trail of the Cedars, Montana

