The Flyin' Solo VanLife on the Highways and Byways of North America
RICK'S ROADS
Ride Along and Enjoy the People, Places, and Who Knows What

BLOG POST: 2025.09.18
Windows Area, Arches National Park, Utah



"Crossing the street" from Canyonlands NP, Maxx and I found ourselves at the entrance roadway into Arches National Park. I lost count of how many times I have been here, but this time I would not even be glimpsing the iconic Delicate Arch, let alone hiking to it.

On this visit, I wanted to suck the marrow out of the Windows Area. I had checked it out once, but it was long ago and the pics I took got corrupted before I could upload them to my laptop. A couple of other times, I punted on it because the parking lot was full.

Today, though, it was my *focus*, so no punting allowed. As such, I ended up parked up on the dirt shoulder on the exit road. No spaces were available – midday on a gorgeous September 18th, so duhhh – and there were already a few others parked there.

Windows Area also features Double Arch (photo, next page), which, somehow, I had not seen before. I don't know how I missed it, but WOW, it is beautiful! I snapped a few pix on the walk to the overlook, then some more from the overlook proper, and then I realized that people had hiked to and up into it. I had to follow.



Double Arch



Double Arch

There was one guy – the one looking way too much like Kokopelli in the page 2 photo -- who had made his way up onto the narrow ledge at the base of the arch and had established it as My Spot. It was no easy feat to clamber up that almost-vertical rock to get there, so I guess I can't blame him. I would not have been inclined to leave that spot anytime soon, either.

But then his buddy scrambled his way up there too, with the aid of an outreached hand from the Arch Lord himself. They sat up there like a couple of cockatoos, until, after only a couple of minutes, the second guy's wife (I'm assuming) said to come down.

Well, this is where I figured out why Arch Lord was so hesitant to dismount. Going up had been tricky, but coming down was going to be downright treacherous. Upbound, you have tiny fingerholds to complement your tiny footholds. Downbound, you are either a biped, with no hand assistance, or an on-your-butt slider having one horribly uncomfortable, bumpy, tailbone-tormenting slide.



It seemed like nothing good was going to come out of this, so I stepped forward, reached up as high onto the rock as I could and pressed my extended hands against it to create a small shelf as a foothold.

The second guy came down first, and he gratefully accepted the aid. Arch Lord, though, did not want to sink to that level. He got up on his own, thank you, and he'd be just fine getting down on his own. I didn't move my hands.

He inched by them towards the arch. Nothing there. He inched back the other way. No chance.

Finally, he stepped onto my shelf and down to the better foothold a bit below it. No hint of a thank-you, more like a screw-you-for-humiliating-me. This might have irked me a tad, except he slipped as he took the very last step, and went down on his butt. The only thing injured was his pride, so, Arch Lord, screw you for humiliating yourself.

While there, I surveyed the rock face and saw an ascent route that was feasible and tempting, but I had seen enough of those descent efforts and sensibly turned away. Time to go back across the parking lot (still full) and see those eponymous Windows.

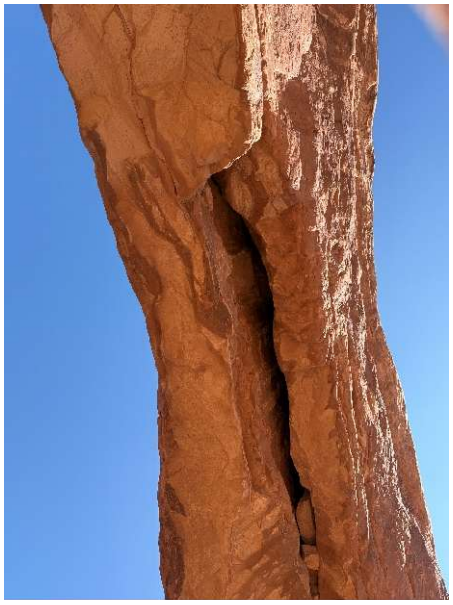


Arches are quite amazing when you think about them. Common sense says to me that rocks would erode from the outer edge inward. The extremities would wear away first and work their way down. So, when I see formations like the one above, I force my imagination into ultra-high time-lapse speed.



In the 2002 movie *The Time Machine*, there is a brief time lapse sequence in which the landscape transforms over 800,000 years. In it, a river carves a deep canyon and a wall of rock erodes into an arch. [https://youtu.be/hs-yasBwQZY?si=wjUMbTW0Z2kfSEZD]

I pictured that here at The Windows. Millions of years of water and wind wore away the weaker/softer areas of rock until they wore a hole clean through it, while the denser rock endured.



If you look closely at the photo on page 1, you can see the tiny shapes of many people crowding up into the one on the left (which I will cleverly call Left Window)(above). The trail leads right up to it, and in a few easy steps, you can be looking straight up at that big crack. It's a popular place to sit and chill.

Photography purists, who would rather have nobody in their shots, aren't so happy about it. That's where Right Window comes in handy. It's not as easy to climb into.



The crowd at Left Window



The non-crowd at Right Window

Besides the two official “windows”, this side of the area has a more vertical feature called Gunsight Arch.



That photo of it is misleading. I like the idea that the stone steps took you right through it, but there is actually a significant gap between the two.



You can, however, hike through the gunsight and look back at the Windows through it, just as if it were a … hmmm… gunsight?





And the more you look at it, the more impressive that smaller opening gets.

The woman in the hat climbed up to it and posed for her partner – the slightly older man who we will assume was her illicit lover.

I had to headslap myself for not snapping the shot too. Standing tall, she took up less than half of the height of the hole. That photo is compelling on its own, but having a handsome woman in it for scale wouldn't have hurt. I could claim she was posing for me.

And why didn't I climb up there after she came down? I should have, you're right. Add that to my lifelong List of Regrets. It's pretty low on the list, and maybe I'll rectify that next time I'm here.

With just a few hours of daylight left, I rolled onto one of my favorite roads, the Colorado Riverway, to my Site For The Night, Fisher Towers.

Both have been documented several times already, so I'll finish this post off with a few photos of them instead.





