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: 2026.06.10

Bishop Castle, Rye, Colorado



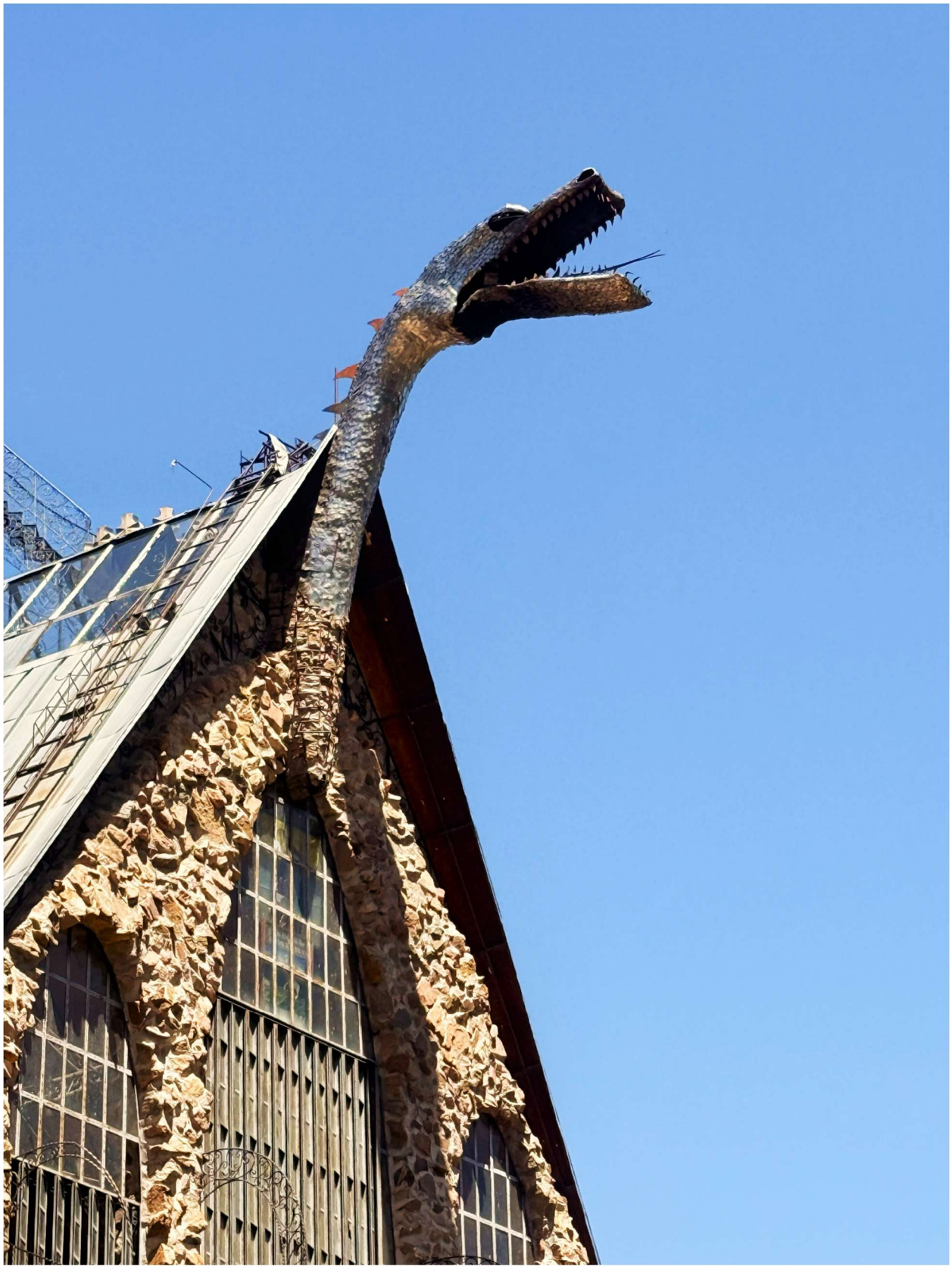
Head west out of the tiny town of Rye, Colorado, and take CO-165 -- a winding, two-lane highway that climbs into the Wet Mountains in San Isabel National Forest, just southwest of Pueblo, Colorado – and after 15 miles or so, you'll see a couple of small road signs alerting you of upcoming congestion due to a roadside attraction.

Then, on your left, at about 9,000 feet of elevation, there's a stone archway, and rising above the trees, the top of a rough stone tower. It looks crazily out of place.

This is Bishop Castle. *From 1969 until 2019, this monument was constructed one stone, one log, one weld at a time, by one man, James Roland Bishop, aka "Jim Bishop, the Castle Builder*." [https://thebishopcastle.com/]



The tower of Bishop Castle is 160 feet tall.



That steel dragon head must weigh a lot!



Multi-levels, arched windows, steel catwalks



Nothing plain or boring about the interior either…





… especially The Great Hall!



In 1959, Jim bought the 2.5-acre lot at age 15 for $450. Within the next few years, he built a rock cottage as a place for family getaways. People commented that it looked like a castle and that gave him an idea, *and he **ran** with it!*

The website listed on page 1 -- and the Wikipedia article on “Bishop Castle” -- can tell you the full story if you are interested.



One of many sprial staircases that Jim welded



More crazy catwalks and The Dome



I drove up here expecting an isolated structure amid peaceful mountain forest, and on most days, I would have been right. However, this was Rocky Mountain Race Week, and Bishop Castle must have been one of their designated stops.





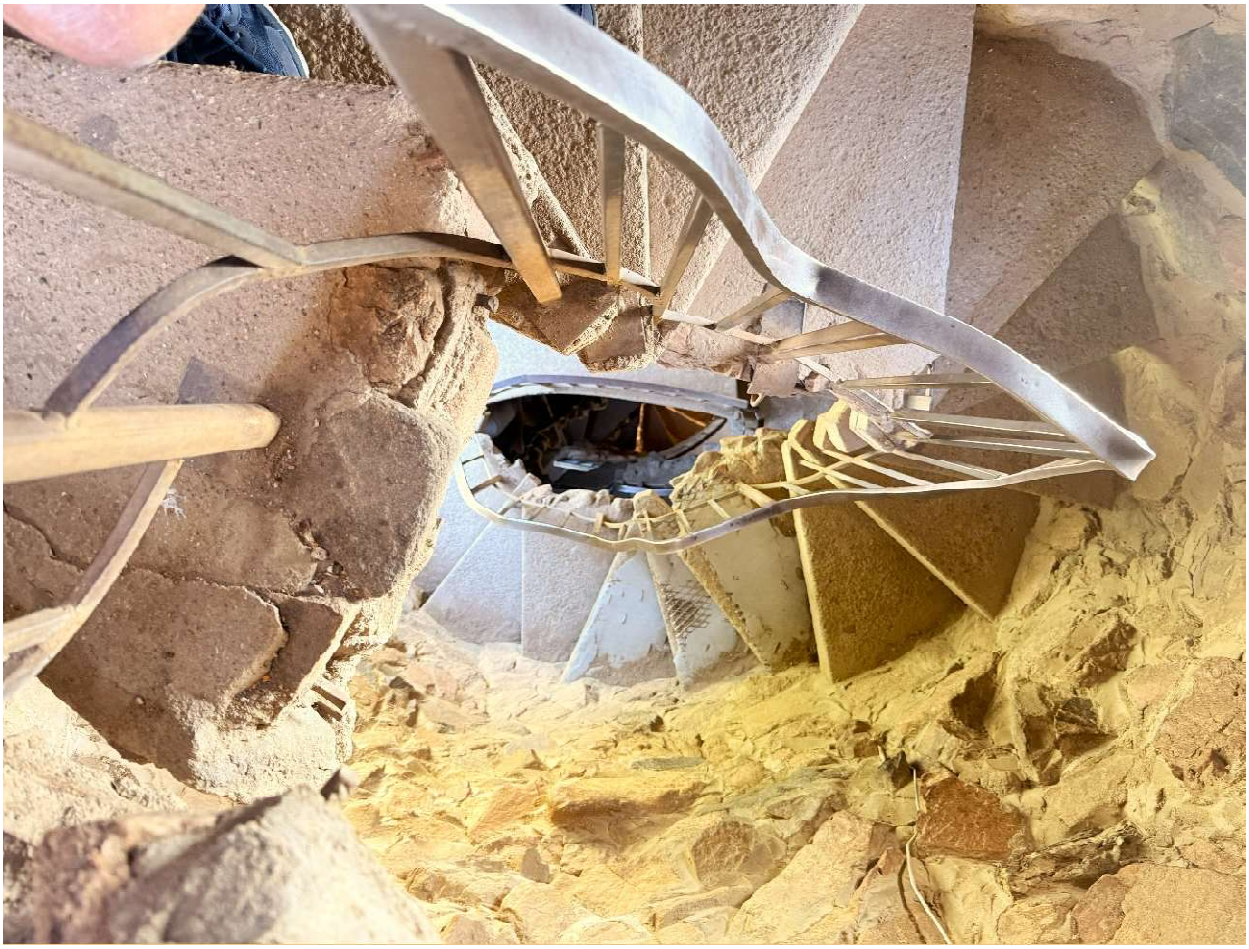
Souped-up cars -- some classic, some new, some ridiculous -- were parked on the shoulders of the road for 200 yards in each direction. People were everywhere, inside the castle and out, and gathered around the front archway, which had obviously been designated as the Rubber Zone. The ashpalt was jet black with rubber peeled off the smoking tires of numerous rowdy cars. The air had a haze to it, and the smell of burnt rubber permeated the gate area.



That did little to diminish the cool atmoshpere of the castle, though. The crowd inside was more vexing. As you know, I prefer photos without people, and those were tough to get.

The kicker, though, was the traffic on the spiral stairs. I

was up at the top full level and had made up my mind to climb the tower, but it involves a tightly-wound spiral staricase that – unlike the others (see below) -- *had no handrail!* There was only the wall to hold onto, and the downbound traffic had already claimed that. I bailed. Those see-through catwalks were unnerving enough.



There were a couple of shacks on property, for snacks, t-shirts, and such. There was also a pen with chickens and maybe a couple of goats in among the trees. I stayed for about an hour. Great place. The more you study it, the more amazing it is.

[At the time of this posting – July 9th – the Aspen Acres Fire has been burning in the Wet Mountains for a couple of weeks. A recent post said that, so far, the castle had not been harmed. I, for one, hope it stays that way.]

Jim Bishop, I salute you! Long may your legacy stand!

