

Heading West to Desert Tower

Saturday, April 15th

If you take I-8 near San Diego you pass through many miles mountains. On the western side of them, overlooking the desert floor below, is Desert Tower.



Desert Tower

I'd glimpsed the tower on the way in to San Diego and thought, "what the heck was that?" Then Sandra mentioned it when we went on the Goat Canyon hike and I made a mental note of the exit. On Saturday I decided to stop in!



"Bert Vaughn of Jacumba built the stone tower in 1922-23 to commemorate the pioneers and road and railroad builders who opened the area. In the 1930's W.T. Ratcliffe carved the stone animal figures which lurk in the rocks surrounding the tower, creating a fantasy world of surprise and strange beauty. This remarkable sculptural assemblage is one of California's exceptional folk art environments."

As in typical crazy-person-builds-neat-monument it has since been filled with piles of stuff and turned into a tourist trap. Worth a visit!

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View from the Tower

Certainly leaving lush San Diego to head into this seems like a genius plan.



Boulder Park

Heading West to Desert Tower



Surprise



and Strange Beauty

I was baking in my motorcycle armor so didn't spend too much time scrambling among the rocks. Less than an hour after stopping I headed out and drove the lovely, long, undulations of I-8 as it slithers down the mountains and then out into the wide open desert.



Scooter by Imperial San Dunes

On the western border of California, near Yuma, are the Imperial Sand Dunes. The highway cuts right through them, you look up and suddenly there are enormous sand dunes rising on either side. Shortly before reaching here I ran short of fuel and had to stop and fill up with my spare can (better planning would have avoided this). I stopped only briefly at the dunes, in the rest area surrounded by highway and sand. Then it was on to the first of many Airbnb's as I began to explore Phoenix as a possible place to live.