



Route 66 Travel

A report from the Route 66 travel as it all happens. This is a travel from Chicago to Santa Monica following the Route 66 (as much as possible) depending on the road conditions and practicalities. Route 66 runs very much in parallel with I-44 and I-40 or very close and therefore it is more practical sometimes to do the Interstate roads.

Route 66 was officially named in November 11, 1926 and starts in Chicago, Illinois and ends in Santa Monica, California. It runs through the following states, Illinois, Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California. The total length is 2400 miles. Route 66 is also known as the "The Mother Road".

In summary we have done 3400 miles, with detours, over the 17 days. The experience is positive although some travel days was too long in distance. It is our recommendation that 200 miles is a good days driving distance, allowing ample time for spontaneous detours and sights. Travelling west was very good as the weather improved throughout

the journey. The time of the year was good with the tourist season being to an end, but all the sights where still open.

We rented a SUV Cherokee Jeep, good for 4 people and luggage. The Jeep Cherokee was rented from Holiday Autos (Alamo provided). We stayed at the Red Roof Inns most of the time but for California we chose Best Western. Red Roof in proved to be a very good choice as they are not so expensive, close to R66 and had surrounding restaurants for breakfast and dinners.

Petrol varied in price from low \$1.30 to high \$2.18 but overall it came down to about \$1.50 per gallon. That is not expensive!

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Day 1.

10th of September 2002

Pick-up at 8.45 for the airport. Despite morning rush we had no problem in reaching Terminal 4 in good time. Offloaded our suitcases and joined the “Cattle Class line” for the Chicago check-in. Changed strategy and went over to the “Business line” and in less than half hour we were in the terminal. Shopping before departure was WH Smiths for books and Boots for “medicals”.

Continued the wait for departure had a late breakfast (read lunch) to buffer the late afternoon lunch onboard the flight. The food on the plane was very tasty (chicken Taka or Salmon) but the meal before landing was not up to the normal acceptable standard. Landed in Chicago local time 15.00 (03.00 pm). At touch down most people clapped hands? A smooth Customs and Baggage handling took us to the street for the Rental Van (Alamo/National).

We rented from Holiday Auto who have the car (SUV) supplied by

Alamo. None of the rental agreement preparations, in UK, worked out so lot of filling in of documents at arrival. It all took a while before we were ready to select the car. A nice feature was that Alamo allowed us to choose any of the SUV's. Good selection and we picked a JEEP SUV, spacey and with a good engine.

With a little rain and the temperature in the 80s we left the airport on I-190 and joined the I-90/94 traffic for Michigan Avenue and the Grant hotel. We arrived at the hotel three hours after landing, not bad at all.

A very smooth trip that ended with a meal at the Savoy Bar & Grill before “hitting the sack”

Day 2.

11th of September 2002

The Memorial Day of September 11, terrorist attack. All the television stations are all devoted to 9-11 the people that has been involved. Cities are holding services across the country in memory of those that died. New York does have a very tight security set up, with snipers on roof tops and police on highest alert. Same security care may also apply to Chicago but we have not seen anything of it. It is all tragic with 9-11, but why does it all have to become commercial? T-shirts, post card, baseball caps etc.

What a glorious and nice day. Sun shine through out the day and about 78F daytime and warm evening. It could not have been better for a day of sightseeing in

the Windy City. Early start of the day with a real American Breakfast at the Savoy Bar & Grill followed by a long walk from Michigan Avenue down to the Navy Pier. The first part of the walk was the Wabash Avenue North with its interesting Chicago Loop running on top of you. Nice old buildings are surrounding the Avenue. It was an interesting walk through the area of Business Buildings and Big Hotels with the new architecture. A worthwhile walk giving you an inside look of a big city.

The party divided itself for individual exploration in the afternoon. J&A

went for a boat ride from the Pier down the waterways of Chicago and so the City from different perspective. This was followed by a 3D Virtual Reality tour at the Pier that explored the town further using high tech presentation features. Next on the agenda was the Sears Tower. The tallest building in the world presented itself nicely allowing views to span over 4 States. In good weather this is a must activity.

R&L took the free Tram ride that goes around the City from the Pier to the Michigan Avenue North. This part is called the magnificent mile and devoted to Plazas and Department Store. Lunch at the Shopping Mall, 4th floor, at the Plaza holding Nordstrom (the store with live piano music as a gimmick). Back South on Michigan to the Jackson Street crossing which is the end of Route 66. A signpost is in place. The Savvy Traveller store can be found in this area – south from Jackson. This store holds books and maps on Route 66. A nice map was obtain

that showed the Old Route 66 in relation to the Interstate network. The map takes a view from Santa Monica in California to Jackson Street and its attachment to Grant Park. Continued to the Museum Campus housing the Field Museum. A very nice view over the Navy Pier, Lake Michigan and Chicago Skyline, from its North entrance, can be seen. A dinosaur named SUE and the exhibit around it was fascinating.

All of us back to the hotel for an hour of rest. We selected an evening dinner at the Millers Bar and Restaurant, Wabash Avenue. Best Ribs in town, they say. After dinner we went by foot to the Water Front Fountain in the Grant Park for a nice colourful presentation of water and the Chicago night sky. The party divided itself with J&A taking off to the House of Blues for some music. R&L walked back to the hotel stopping at the Irish Pub, Kity O'heary at the Hilton Hotel corner.

Day 3.

12th of September 2002

Another marvellous morning! After a heated discussion about our bills (they had a Jack Jones assigned to our room) and we did not want to pay his bill. All things sorted out and we left the hotel at 9.45 am for I-55. We decided not to drive the R66 bit in Chicago – traffic consideration.

Our destination for the day - Springfield, Ill – the capitol of Illinois and Abraham Lincolns home town.

The first part was on I-55 with R66 running parallel with it. A clear indication was the telephone poles from the old days still remaining on the road side. After a roadside coffee break, close to Gardner,. We drove further South to Bloomington and took the alternate I-55 route. At the end of the Alt. I-55 we connected to R66 and continued it until Springfield. A very nice and easy trip with very little cars and long nice stretches of road. Made a turn-off for Funk's Grove and its Rail ticket House. McLean was on our stop list but we missed it as this is a small town with not many houses. Next was Atlanta, an old town with a preserved centre devoted to the old days of R66, for lunch at the Country Aire Restaurant.

Drove further to Lawndale, Lincoln, Broadwell, Elkhart, Williamsville and Sherman before the arrival in Springfield. Our first stop was Sheas with Mr. Sheas love for keeping the memories of R66. He has one of the most fascinating collections of memorabilia. The collection is in a small Garage housing thousands of things from spanners, signs, pumps etc. He has also an authentic gas station on the site. Great!

Then it was time to find the hotel located by I-55. Checked in and left within half an hour for the Abraham Lincoln Tomb, Korean and Vietnam Memorials. An impressive site for the public to visit.

Went to the Outback Restaurant, which is south on the Dirksen Parkway and had nice meal before ending the day. In summary a very relaxing day with J driving about

230 miles along I-55, R66 and the Avenues and Parkways of Springfield.

Day 4. 13th of September 2002

"On the road again" says the song! That's us going South for the next stop at St. Roberts in Missouri. The day started with a R66 breakfast at the famous Cozy Drive (an Icon place now operated by the daughter in law of the original owner) on South 6th Street in Springfield before heading South on R66 on the alignment from the 1930s until we reached turn for Road 180. Road 180 took us to Carlinville, with its nice Main square. Carlinville is an Old town, on Road 4, which is the R66 with the old alignment from the 1920s. The square is very picturesque taking us back in time. We had an excellent coffee break at the coffee shop, located next to the Main Square on Road 4, giving us a flashback of a 1950s dinner place. Norman Rockwell's pictures come into mind.

Continued on the old R66 passing Gillespie, Staunton, Livingstone, Wordon and Edwardville before reaching Chain of Rock Rd that joins the I-270 taking us North of St. Louis over the Mississippi River. A mighty river to cross! Followed I-270 to the I-44 junction then West on I-44 and with stop for lunch at the Fenton turn-off. Good BBQ sandwich lunch at the Bandana's. Back on the R66 road again to St. Clair and further to the Maramec Caverns in Stanton. The

caverns are full of magnificent stalactites. These most impressive caves are covering miles of tunnels and having its own river. Jesse James used these caves as hideout in the early 1870s.

The transformation from the flatlands of Illinois with its Corn and Soya crops to the green bushes and rolling hills of Missouri is quite a scenery change. Parallel with the change is the temperature and humidity increase.

Despite running short of time we took the R66 further down South passing cities like Sullivan, Bourbon, Cuba, Fanning and St. James before getting on I-44 and continued passing Rolla for St. Roberts.

About 210 miles on the road in perfect weather ending with a 86F at arrival. Day ended with a dinner at Ruby Tuesday Restaurant on 161 turn-off from I-44. Nice dinner

Day 5. 14th of September 2002

Oklahoma City greeted us with a severe Thunderstorm with lightning's going both horizontal and vertical over the sky. Gusty winds that was horizontal and a massive amount of rain that created flooding. Water up to the hubcaps! Visibility almost none! It lasted half an hour in its worst phase. This all happened when we changed from I-44 to I-40 for the hotel located in that junction.

Mostly driving during the day (about 300+ miles) after setting out

from St. Roberts and good breakfast at Cracker Barrel Store and Restaurant. Nice natural food in a Country Store environment. We used the I-44 for the first part of the day. Basic reason is that R66 runs along with it and R66 was not in the best shape. Re-joined R66 at exit 72 shortly after Springfield (another one) on I-44. R66 is in a modern state with 2-lane traffic on either side with open fields with cattle on large farms. Open landscape with a nice overcast that kept the temperature down to about 75F. This part took us down to Carthage. Carthage is a remote and quiet town with the Town Hall and Main Square in the middle. Outside was local stands with fruit and vegetables for sale. Antique shops surround the Main Square. Had our morning coffee at the corner Café. Nice café display / reflecting the 50's. Met all sorts of nice people during the short break. I assume we somewhat stand out.

Drove through Joplin without stopping although driving through gave us rough idea of its state in the current days. Decided not to have lunch but continued on R66 to Bristow and stopped at junction I-48 and R66 for lunch at a small dinner (K S Korner) and very fresh food. Cowboy hats and jeans seem to be approaching us! Guests with hats on when eating.

Took on the road again and followed R66 down to Tulsa passing places like Vinito and Claremore before getting in to Tulsa. Running short of time didn't give us time to explore Tulsa so we went further on the old R66 for Bristow filling up the tank. 13.5 gallons and US\$ 17.85, that's not a costly deal.

Continued on R66 and re-joined I-44 at junction R177 for the drive to Oklahoma City. That was tricky, as maps and roads do not agree. Evolution of the Highways one might call it. We managed with frustration and then straight into the Thunderstorm approaching I-40 and our hotel.

Dinner that night Short Smalls OKC at Junction I-40 a exit 145. Another one of those franchises (Americans now how to present) and still a good meal.

Day 6.

15th of September 2002

The Thunderstorm discontinued over night and we walk up yet another fine morning. Breakfast at Denny's next door – the got good senior meals (I guess children's portions). Set aim at the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum, which we reached about 9.30 in the morning and just at opening time. This museum is devoted to the Western image of United States and has a very nice layout and display of art and the rugged and romantic spirit of the frontier. Fantastic museum with an impressive display of details from the Western life and culture. Stayed until 12.30 and then continued to the Oklahoma City National Memorial as a remembrance of those that was killed in the Oklahoma bombing in 1995. It is located between NW 4th and 6th Street and Robinson & Harvey Avenue.

Continued from the National Memorial to the Bricktown. Bricktown is in the centre but somewhat a restaurant area than being something of the if old Oklahoma. Nice to have seen it but no harm if missed would be the verdict. Continued further to the Oklahoma State Fair Ground and the Annual Fair. Among the Americans it seems to be the tradition to spend time on the Fairground at least once a Year. Everything from livestock, music, eating, trading and home cooking seems to be covered. We spent about 2 hours to walk around and enjoy the atmosphere.

Back to the hotel for a short break and then out for an Italian meal at Zio's Italian Kitchen at 2035 S Meridian Avenue. Good meal and service.

A very good day! No rain and not so hot. Tomorrow it is Amarillo of our next stop over. It was nice to have 2 nights in the same place and with that the reward of having a relaxed sightseeing.

Day 7.

16th of September 2002

We are in Texas! Suddenly after coming from nice farmland in Oklahoma we see the great plains of Texas. It was quite a change. It been a travel for over 220 miles starting with getting up on I-40 with the intention of rejoining R66. We found it difficult, as the map did not agree with reality.

We finally managed to get on R66 at junction 115 for the continuation

to Clinton, passing Bridgeport, Hydro and Weatherford.

A couple of things can be noted during today's travel. It seems that all the places we passed is full of churches. Large arrays of different congregations were present in those places. That, all those places has fallen victims of I-40 that replace Road 66. Houses, stores, hotels etc. has been left to rot away by time. It must have been difficult for those that were hit. Thirdly, you think of all the people that during the depression in the 30s that went west, just so that they could earn a living. Those settlers did really help building California. What a hardship travelling, with everything they owned, with old and less functional motorcars over such long distances.

Clinton has a very nice R66 Museum located in the beginning of the Main Street, going through the town. It is a must place to see as it very nicely describes the R66 from the beginning until today, how the Road came about, being built and replaced. Easy 2 hours was spent on the museum followed by a Carl Jr hamburger across the road. 4 Harley Bikers turned up and they had started in Chicago as well. They came from Finland (Åbo) and bought bikes in Chicago and heading for Santa Monica. They planned to be away for a month. They had no idea how they would get the bikes back to Finland. The easy approach was that it would sort itself out at the end of the trip.

From Clinton it was either Road 66 or I-40. It was like a light switch (on / off). Passed Elk City, Sayre and Erck before reaching the Texan boarder and Texola (near the

boarder – a town that really got hit by R66). Then into Shamrock (Irish town) with many Irish names being visible on various buildings.

After Shamrock, the light switch syndrome again, before reaching our hotel at I-40 exit 71. We passed Groom on route. It has a large Cross on display and it is visible from I-40. It is said to be the tallest in the Western World. Then continued travel from Shamrock to Amarillo, which is the town to explore tomorrow.

Had dinner at Tacos Garcia, at Roos Avenue. Not bad considering it was standard Mexican food in an American way. Best Margaritas so far!

Day 8.

17th of September 2002

Amarillo was hot and very sunny today. Reached 97F by the end of the day with a light wind and humidity of about 26%. That means "cotton type" heat - feels like warm cotton.

Started up with breakfast at the Cracker Barrel Store / Restaurant in Amarillo and then down to Amarillo Live Stock Auction at 100 Manhattan of 3rd Street. This one of the largest Auctions in Texas selling over 100000 heads a year. It was nice rubbing the elbows with the cattle dealers. A very friendly bunch of cowboys greeting you with a "Howdy" and speak with Texas accent. Starts at 10.00 (on Tuesday) and last until 17.00. Cowboy jeans, boots and hats are standard dress code, except for us.

Most of them started the day by eating apples (cartons of apples) in the reception) using their small pen-knives. The fast fast fast talking Auctioneer started up with rapid speed and with finger signs from helpers controlled the bidding.

Had a good conversation with an old-timer (age 74) who had 5 ranches (3 in Amarillo and 2 in Oklahoma). Cattle heard on one ranches is about 350 heads. This man came to Amarillo in 1941 and started to work n 1942 on the I-40, doing cement work surfacing the road. He worked with cement for many years until his shoulder gave up. He was 14 when he came from Kansas and hasn't left since. His farms are handled by him and 3 hired hands.

The Route 66 Antique area at 6th and Georgia stood next on the list. All of us thought that this was not anything for us so we left fairly quickly. It was more of a tourist trap. I am sure that it is different I high season. Turned the wheels towards R1541 taking us south to Palo Duro Canyon, about 20 miles driving, for an impressive impression when arriving. A beauty spot. The ring road took us down into the Canyon for a scenic drive.

Returned to Amarillo and the Westgate Shopping Centre for a quick lunch. We all did some shopping. Stunning good prices on some products.

Next on list was the American Indian Culture Centre. Interesting but not a highlight. A reflection on this is that Indians seems not to get the grants so that they set up museums in a proper way. This was for people by people – read

Indians. We still had a good time in this place. The museum American Quarter Horse Heritage Centre I-40 East at Quarter House Drive was paid a visit. It is a museum dealing with the history of the American Quarter Horse breed. These are horses used by cowboys and the military over the years. The museum gives the history of horses in general as well. Good ending of the day.

Dinner at Cracker Barrel – in absence of other eating places pleasing all of us – Cracker does. Tomorrow is all about getting out of Texas for New Mexico.

Day 9.

18th of September 2002

Albuquerque in New Mexico greeted us with the rain, two black bears in town and bank robbers in the City. Apart from those things New Mexico had its first snow for the season. When we started it was close to 97F and when we arrived it was 45F. Quite a drop in temperature. Anticipation of temperature was set to a different level. What's tomorrow gone a be like?

Fascinating trip today! We set sail on I-40 for the Cadillac Ranch (10 Cadillac's buried nose down in a field at the same angle as the Cheop's pyramids)! It is west on I-40 between exits 60 & 62. We have heard about for a long time and it was nice to have a chance to see the field. It is a landmark in USA.

During the travel we pretty much followed the R66 as much as we could. Most of the trip was on I-40 as R66 been closed or was running on the same tracks as I-40. Travel was in trailing winds and cross winds in most of the places as we where crossing the large ever ending landscape of flat land. A general note is that most towns, small or large, have a water tower (with the town name on) and one or two or more grain silos. Like always, the whole interstate 40 is full of billboards seeking for the tourist attention.

Our second stop for the day was in Adrian. Adrian is the mid point of Route 66. We had a great coffee at the Midpoint Café locate in Adrian at Route 66. Excellent stop and we met the Finnish HD group again. The mid point distance is 1137 miles in either direction – Chicago or Santa Monica.

Continued the journey towards Tucumcari for lunch, recommended by the owner of the Midpoint café. The place recommended was the Del's dinner situated on the left coming from the east to the town and at the first set of traffic lights. Nice place for a good not expensive lunch. Most enjoyable! Continued further via Santa Rosa to Clines Corners for a quick coffee before reaching Albuquerque. Clines Corner has a huge souvenir shop. It was cold, rainy and windy. I know, because I filled up the tank. Petrol was costly US\$ 1.58 per gallon. It was about 20 cents higher than in other place. It can be assumed it was because of the remoteness.

Used Route 66 to access the Hotel. Route 66 took us through the town

- new part and old part of the town – before reaching the hotel off exit 155 on Interstate 40.

Time changed an hour back so we gained some time. Had dinner at Mimmo's Ristorante at 3301 Corrs Nw Avenue. Had a nice meal with some good wine (hence no wine available yesterday). We are talking compensation today! Plan for tomorrow includes a trip to Santa Fe rather than spending time in Albuquerque. Santa Fe is said to be the New Mexico best tourist attraction.

Day 10.

19th of September 2002

Let's just start with the eating aspects of the day. Breakfast at the Village Inn, just across the street, lunch in Santa Fe at the Carl's Gosp'l Café close to the Plaza and dinner at Mimmo's (had dinner in this place yesterday). It was nothing spectacular in the eating, but a good solid day of filing up the stomach.

Took off in the morning via Route 66 (pre 1937 alignment) to Santa Fe. The Route 66 runs in parallel with I-25 so its quite easy to follow. We passed Bernalillo and Algedone Before getting into the Indian reservation San Pueblo Felipe. Tiny Indian Village across the Rio Grande. The bridge over the river, gave us a chance to take some nice photographs. We saw a beaver swimming down the river (Rio Grande) under the bridge. That event gave us a special feeling.

Continued further to connect with I-25 towards exit 284 taking the Old Pecos Trail to the centre of the town parking next to the St. Francis Cathedral. Spent 2 hours in the city but did not get impressed – it is a town for the American tourists. The town must be full of spenders during the high season. Prices extremely high on ordinary tourist trap “things”. It was hard to accept this, as attention had not been paid to the origin of the City. Liked Santa Fe and the Railroad and the history of the town in general and the upkeep of old buildings etc. It was all commercial in general. Although, with this reflection in mind we still enjoyed the visit.

We took a detour, on the return to Albuquerque, by going to Cochiti Pueblo dam and the lake. A dam build to reserve water giving it a status of picnic and recreation area with boating. The dam was well constructed to melt in with the scenery of the landscape. Having seen it we went straight back to I-25 to go south and then turn-off for Route 66 straight into Albuquerque, on 4th Road. No stops before returning to the hotel via Central and Coors Avenue. Town was full of film people shooting for a TV series. Trucks everywhere.

A couple notes worthwhile to remember! The Indian reservations are really reflecting the poor status of the American Indians. The Indians has be assigned small, low standard villages that do not match with the commercially driven Santa Fe town. Every house in the Indian villages was doing cooking, based on our quick tour, in clay ovens looking like large beehives. All of them fired with wood.

The road to and from Santa Fe is spectacular with the flat land, prairie type land, and with the Mountains surrounding it all. You have an unlimited view that allows you to see the weather shifting from North to South or West to East. For us, the day was just great with lots of sunshine but not so hot. Temperatures reached 50 – 67 F. Arizona is next.

Day 11.

20th of September 2002

A long travel day due an unforeseen detour in which we lost a good deal of time. But, it turned out to be a positive experience. We set out from Albuquerque on the 4th street going south on the R66 alignment. It was hard to find as the directions was not the best. We turned north to early and ended up on a dirt road for about 30 miles into the desert and finally hitting a dead end. We saw the connecting I-40 but we had to return to the I-25 and then continuing further south to R-6 (we should have done it in the first place). Had positive sighting of Coyotes crossing the dirt road and then stopping and posing for us.

The first part prior to lunch, was passing through Indian reservations. Once again, struck by the previous noted poorness but also finding that each of the reservations have a Casino (Gambling) set up for those Indians. The US government has a funny idea on how you support the Indians! In most of the cities, small towns and villages, in all “Indian” states, pawn shops seems to be in hundreds! This further confirms the

attitude towards the Indians. All is now stuck in our minds for ever.

We passed Mal Pavis Lava beds before stopping in Grants for lunch at the 4B's Restaurant. A very good lunch with well prepared food. Next interesting point was the Continental Divide where rivers either run back inland or continue to the sea. That point is shortly after exit 47 on I-40.

Drove through Gallup but did not stop. The inspiration did not hit us. We do not why! Back to I-40 and the enormous flatlands, desert and prairie when having passed the boarder to Texas.

It is a fantastic journey from Albuquerque to Flagstaff. It really blows your mind! We approached Flagstaff, passing Painted Desert, seeing the Humphrey's Point (elevation 12665 ft) in the horizon. Cruising along and then getting closer to Flagstaff and its green surroundings. The hotel is located on exit # 198 on I-40. Came in, not so late, due to gaining 1 hour with the change of time zone. Dinner at Outback – a restaurant next door to the hotel.

Day 12.

21st of September 2002

Early morning call 08.00 - Panic as we had to find a Laundry place, which we did. Left the laundry for fast cleaning and pick-up at 15.00. Worked fine and had a very good service. Probably the best customer of the day.

J&A went to Grand Canyon for a helicopter ride in the Canyon. Can only be described as fantastic. Return from the Grand Canyon through the Painted Desert in the evening. J&A came in about 21.00 for a late night dinner at the Outback. They were extremely enthusiastic over the day.

L&R took a day off and relaxing with a stroll in the Flagstaff city. Starbuck helped out in serving a good cup of coffee (not the water representing an American cup of coffee). Started the day by picking up a car at the Airport for the stroll in the City. A little bit of shopping before we went to the Meteor Site. That is the site where a meteor landed about 50,000 years ago. A very nice visit east of Flagstaff (about 2 ½ return trip). Continued to the Lowell Observatory (a major centre for astronomical research). Had walk around but had to leave quickly as the place closed at 05.30 PM.

Dinner at Outback! Early dinner as we had basically no lunch – except for Starbuck and a SUB.

Flagstaff is a wonderful City that know how to look after the visitors. It is a different to any other City and also a point where the "Big Trains" does pass. We are talking big (long) – 1 mile comes easily into mind. According to information they say it is one train every 5 minutes. Moderation from side say every ½ hour. One of the extremely long trains contained military trucks, tanks, hospital cars and jeeps all camouflaged in desert colours. Is this a build up for Iraq? What a sight!

Another great day in full sunshine! America has been nice, as all the bad weather has turned up on the east coast after we left it. The forecast is exceptional for the next 7 days. Just before those 7 days ending we would be in LA.

Day 13.

22nd of September 2002

A lazy day today. Took a trip down to Sedona located on R89A South from Flagstaff, about 25 miles. You approach Sedona by going down in the Oak Creek Canyon. The Canyon is a beauty spot! Driving is down the Canyon side on a zigzag road down to the bottom of the Canyon. Just north of Sedona is the Sliding Rock State Park. This is a place with sliding rocks in the river. Popular for sun bather and kids to slide down the rocks in the river. It was hot!

The city Sedona welcomes you with spectacular views of large Red Rock formations surrounding it. We spent time in the tourist trap area full of stores and restaurants all lined up on the main pass way through Sedona. After having had lunch and done some window-shopping time to move on. Went down the R179 for to see the Bell Rock and Courthouse Rock (two enormous formations). Came across an Outlet Plaza (small but of no value) for a quick stay.

A nice lunch at the Orchards at L'Augerge which seems to be a good hotel as well.

Returned back the same we came so that we could have a straight

look on what we had in the mirror travelling down to Sedona. Returned the extra rental car in the evening and then out for dinner – don't know where and when at the time of writing. It seems we are going for Italian food today.

Soaring temperatures again in the upper F90th. Flagstaff is a nice centre point for explorations of all sorts of Wood terrain, Canyons, other Cities but we think the best is Grand Canyon and Oak Creek Canyon down to Sedona. You could easily spend a week exploring the neighbourhood areas.

We have a medium travel day tomorrow, on the way from Flagstaff to Las Vegas. This will be a detour from R66 – but needed. Will we make fortune – follow the story tomorrow!

Day 14.

23rd of September 2002

Travelled from Flagstaff following the I-40. After a couple of miles, leaving Flagstaff, smoke came visible. It escalated quite a bit and formed a large cloud of smoke. It most likely a fire that just started. The last we saw of it was a pillar of smoke a very large cloud, seem to be uncontrolled.

It should be noted that today is the "First day of Fall" and noted by all the TV statons.

Left I-40 on exit 139 following the Old Route 66 to Seligsham and further to Kingsman which connect with I-93 that goes to Las Vegas. Seligsham is small tourist place – a

very nice one with restored shops reflecting R66 in the 50ties. The place is also devoted to old cars (1950's era) and with an old gasoline station. The road continues, with some nice nature and other places to stop by. Had lunch in Kingman at 3300 E Andy Devine Av. – The Kingman Cookery. The best hamburgers! Everything fresh.

From Kingman it is I-93 with a travel of 100 miles. Hoover Dam (Boulder Dam earlier name) is just 20 miles before Las Vegas. We went on the tour and had an historic outlook on the building of the dam and also viewing of the generators. It was heat in air! Left the Hoover dam and found it to be F 111 (41 C). When arriving at the Hotel Paris the temperature was down to F 106 – getting cool?

The drive from Kingsham to Las Vegas is a fantastic scenic drive. It does not repeat itself anywhere in the world – fabulous drive! The State Police was on the alert and they had a roadblock that we had to pass. Lot of cars was on search so they let us through without stopping us.

Had inner at the Le Paris, in the evening, and a stroll down the Strip.

Day 15.

24th of September 2002

Not much to say! Las Vegas, the Strip is something else. Can only been seen and experienced by being there. No comments on the city. We had warm weather, day

and night, and a lot of people strolling, eating and gambling. Walked most the day between the hotels. Ending the day with a nice dinner. It been a nice days rest from the travelling.

Hotel Le Paris can be recommended.

Did we win anything – the answer is no.

Day 16.

25th of September 2002

We set out with no preconceived thoughts of what we would see during our Death Valley detour. Took the I-95 North towards our first stop – Indian spring – for gasoline and water. We noted the highest gasoline price of \$1.85 which is the highest so far. It went to about \$2.12 by the end of the day. Lowest on the trip has been about \$1.32.

The trip today was remarkable in many ways. The nature presented itself without trees – all the way! All desert landscape with or without cactuses. High peaks surrounded all the valleys. Up on 5600 feet and down to the lowest point in US - 85 metres below the sea level. The highest temperature for the day was F112 (record on the trip). All day temperatures were in average about F104.

Stopped for lunch stop at Beatty before turning into R374 and Death Valley. Beatty is an interesting town that lived out of mining (gold, silver, copper) until 3 years ago when all the mines closed and the

population decreased from 3000 to 1500 almost overnight when miners and families moved out. Tourism (food and drinks and casino) is providing work and income today. The military have a number of sites – no knows what they do! The waiter said she did not know but we do see some flashes during nights. Apparently, there are military testing going on. Once again, we did see trucks transporting desert tanks.

The Death Valley is fabulous, breath taking, fantastic and one of the nature's splendour. Driving down the valley is fascinating. Death Valley is a National Park providing all the service that can be expected. We picked up the Visitor Guide before entering the area. Had some facts and figures and gave details on how to behave in the Valley.

By he time of Death Valley the car showed 3000 miles on the meter. We are now into the 4000 mark.

We turned into R127 leaving Death Valley for the continuation on I-15. Stopped and an interesting place, Shoshone, for coffee an a little bit of history. Shoshone is a very small place, with a museum (Chamber of Commerce) and the Café Crowbar. Nice place to visit. Close by is, just south, a place with Hot Springs.

Turned west, towards Barstow, on I-15. This is the main road that connects LA with Las Vegas. We have seen quite a lot of roads and this one takes the price of being in need of roadside cleaning. It is unbelievable how must junk there was on the shoulders. Stopped at Ramada Inn in Barstow for the night and had dinner at Sizzler –

good steak and wine (only \$9.25 a bottle). By now we rejoined the R66.

Day 17.

26th of September 2002

Early morning start towards Santa Monica and the end of R66 by taking the Old Route 66 road towards Los Angeles. This one runs somewhat parallel with I-40. Followed the map for R66 but noticed that the map gave us wrong directions. No harm done, just a detour, and we got hold of Foothill Boulevard. The Foothill is the R66 that we followed for a while but got very tired of the slow moving traffic. Decided to change plan and we took I-10 that ends in Santa Monica. Arrived shortly after lunch and checked in at the hotel on Santa Monica Boulevard.

The Route 66 is now completed after we have driven about 3450 miles (with detours) from Chicago to Santa Monica. It has been a very joyful trip, with smooth driving, fantastic weather, and interesting views, getting to know a bit of US Modern History. We have seen and met people from all the States we been in and everyone has been helpful, kind and pleasant.

The conclusion of the trip is celebrated with a nice dinner in Santa Monica and later confirmed with a picture at the end of R66.

We are now to continue on Highway 1 (Pacifica) to Hearst Castle, the coast line to Carmel and Santa Cruz, further to San Francisco where A&J travel further

to North Carolina and L&H travels to Palo Alto before the four of us return to Europe.

But before travelling we will have two days sightseeing in LA and for L&R to meet with Annika, another highlight, which we look forward to.