

Trip 2 – Episode #22 – And Now For Something Completely Different – Part 2

After we passed the Marfa Prada, we thought we'd seen all the quirkiness there was to see before arriving at our next destination.

Wrong again.

A little bit farther along the highway, we saw what looked like a giant toy airplane balloon. Then we realized it was a blimp. But what was a blimp doing in the middle of the desert?



Some of you may have guessed what we found out when we did research. It's a border patrol blimp drone. Yup. They're tracking down illegals with a blimp drone. Well, probably cheaper than a wall. And cuter.

We finally left Texas (after much more time than we had anticipated) and crossed into New Mexico.

Shortly after crossing the state line, we discovered the town of Hatch. Home of the annual “World Famous Chile Festival”!

And when it comes to chiles they aren’t fooling around.

All through town, there were shops and stalls selling chiles.



The festival attracts 30,000 visitors every year! Why? Apparently, Hatch chiles “offer an ideal balance of heat and sweetness”. Being wusses, and unable to tell a good chile from a bad one, we didn’t actually try any Hatch chiles.

So we can only go by the claims.



But that’s not all that was different about Hatch. We suddenly started noticing these large characters around town.







They were apparently bought by one couple, to promote various businesses they owned in Hatch - in particular, their BBQ restaurant, Sparky's.



At one point, there was a movement in the town to get rid of the oversized characters (apparently, for some, the giant pig was the last straw). The couple fought back, putting a "Save the Pig" tee shirt on the giant pig, and gaining enough support that the town council eventually voted in favour of keeping the characters. Whew!

Also seen in Hatch...



Jim said, from his vantage point in the van, he could see that the plaques on the ground bore the names of the unborn babies. We couldn't quite figure out who would put the names of the "innocent victims" on these plaques, but never mind.

This was all in advance of our actual quirky destination...



Yes, there is actually a town in New Mexico called Truth or Consequences.



Also known as T or C, the town, which had been called Hot Springs, won the unusual name in a contest. In 1950, Ralph Edwards, the host and owner of the concept for the radio show "Truth or Consequences", announced that he would broadcast the show from any town that would change its name to Truth or Consequences. Hot Springs applied and was chosen. And so, on one day every year thereafter, the show Truth or Consequences was broadcast from the town, Truth or Consequences. They have an annual Fiesta Day, which Ralph Edwards attended for many years. (They also have a park named after Ralph.)

A little like Marfa, T or C surprised us in a variety of ways, with an obvious sense of humour, some throwbacks to earlier times and some interesting looking shops.







There were very few restaurants or stores open in town. We were there on a Tuesday and places were generally only open from Thursday to Sunday. Not sure if it was because of COVID or just the way things roll in T or C.

Fortunately, the T or C Brewing Co. was open.



The barkeep informed us that they didn't serve food, but we could order food from the Mexican restaurant across the street, and as soon as it was ready we could pick it up, bring it back and eat it there with a nice T or C brew. Which we did.



After lunch, we continued our tour of downtown T or C.









If we'd known there was a Charles Motel & Spa, we would've stayed there.



But we'd already booked at the Riverbend Hot Springs and RV Park. Fortunately they had one spot left into which Charles fit perfectly.



It was pretty great. Right beside the Rio Grande River (We meet again! But this time, we don't dare to cross it).





To make it even more perfect, the pool that we settled into had one of Jim's favourite things: Hammocks! We stayed for a long time.



While we were bobbing in the hot waters, we noticed a hang glider approaching. We experienced no envy.



As Jim *points* out, it was a lovely, relaxing evening.



And the next day ... a totally different adventure!