

Trip 2 – Episode #14 – On to Austin. But First, a Silly Mission

As we travelled north of Lake LBJ, we discovered Texas Hill Country. You'd never believe we were in Texas.



It was beautiful and surprising. But that's not why we were there.



We were there because a few weeks earlier, when we were in Memphis, we ate on the rooftop patio of a restaurant called Alfred's on Beale. We got talking to our server and told her about our travels. She told us she was from Texas. We said we would be going to Texas. We asked where she was from. A town called Round Rock, north of Austin, she said. We asked what was in Round Rock and she said "Round Rock Donuts. They're famous." We told her we'd go and check it out. And so, almost a month later ...



It was kind of like the donut version of Webbers (the burger place on HWY 400 where there's always a line-up).

And, like Webbers, they have a history. They've been in business since 1926!

Since we'd driven all that way, we had to make it worth the trip. So we bought a box of donuts (glazed, lemon-filled and éclair) and I bought a tee shirt. Because why not? The donuts were very fresh, still warm, very gooey and quite delicious.



(Two beautiful young women in long gingham dresses, with name tags that indicated they were with the Church of Jesus Christ took this photo. Then we took one of them for them.)

Having completed our silly mission, we turned back toward San Antonio (where we had planned to be several days earlier before Charles' Boxing Day Breakdown).

But since Austin was between Round Rock and San Antonio, we decided to stop in for an overnight visit. We definitely could've stayed longer.

Austin's got a lot going on, but in COVID times, we're trying to avoid crowds and especially indoor crowds. So we restricted ourselves to outdoor explorations, which left us lots to discover.



The Colorado River goes right through Austin, and the city makes the most of it, with walkways and parks on both sides. And people really use the outdoor spaces.





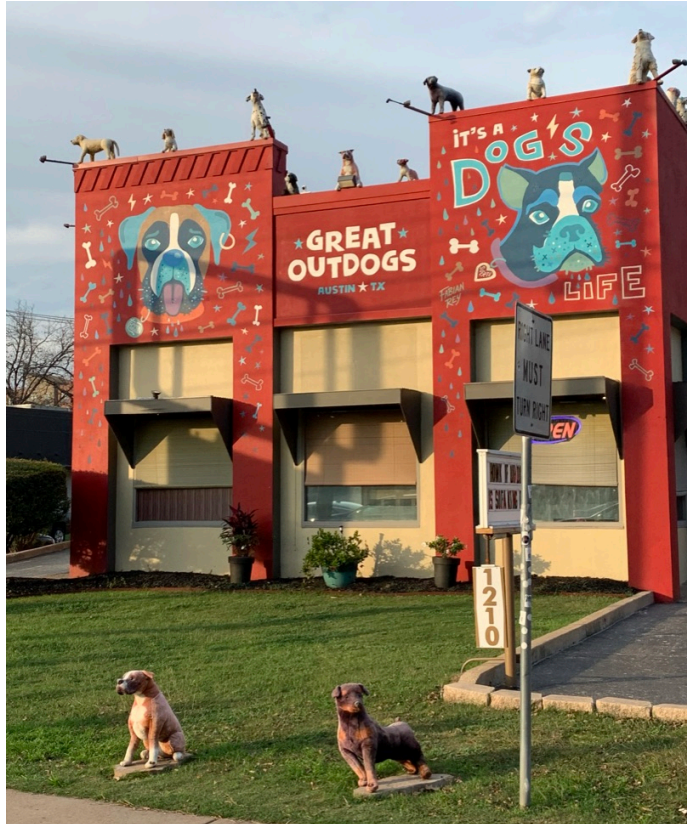


It was a really nice walk,
and we admired the people
of Austin who really took
advantage of this parkland.

From what we saw of the city as we drove around, it seemed fun and eclectic with interesting buildings, art and people. And a healthy love of dogs and other animals!







The neighbourhood our campground was in, Barton Springs, was particularly interesting, with an abundance of fun food options, all within walking distance.





We settled on the Barton Springs Picnic – where there were a bunch of food trucks – even one for dogs!





It was a fun atmosphere with some interesting characters – and dogs.

And although there were lots of enticing options, neither of us could resist the pull of the Lobster Roll.



Also very close to our campground was a gorgeous sculpture garden. The Umlauf Sculpture Garden featured the work of Charles Umlauf. His parents were Germans who had emigrated to the US early in the 20th century and suffered much discrimination during WWI. His mother encouraged his natural artistic talents. But then he was orphaned when he was quite young and he struggled to make his way. Eventually he gained recognition and established himself as a sculptor of renown. He became a professor of art at the University of Texas in Austin and taught there for 40 years. He and his wife left 168 of his works to Austin and the city then created this park and museum adjacent to his home. It was very peaceful and beautifully laid out.







With any luck, we'll
try to pass through
Austin on our way
back east, and
COVID-willing,
we'll explore more
of this vibrant city.

But it was the day
before the end of
2021 and we were
San Antonio bound.

And this time, we
were determined to
get there!

