

Tahoe paddle exposes lakefront architecture



Sue and AJ paddle from Cave Rock to Zephyr Cove.
Photos/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

GLENBROOK – While normally it's the natural beauty that is so captivating when paddling on Lake Tahoe, last weekend was a bit of an architectural tour.

What I didn't know until last Sunday is that Lake Tahoe has dinosaurs. There are two of them calling a stretch of beach between Cave Rock and Zephyr Cove home. I have pictures to prove it.

Some of the houses are obscenely sprawling and a bit garish, while others are exquisite and fit into the natural environment. A couple that jutted out on the rocks had such low decks that in a normal or high water year it would seem like the lake would be practically inside the structure.

Many come with their own beaches. Nevada and California have

different rules about what is public property. In California, the public has the right to be on the land up to the high water mark. Not so in the Silver State. That is why paddlers must be cognizant not to stop unless they have permission.

Some people had erected little light posts on the rocks as indicators for boaters navigating at night.

While plenty of people want to regulate piers, buoys, what can be built on the shoreline and the windows in a home that can be seen from the lake, we thoroughly enjoyed the view of these houses, their docks, boats bouncing in the water, and chairs with perfect views of Mount Tallac and the gorgeous sunsets we've been having.

It's good to see people enjoying their part of Tahoe. And from our vantage point, they were taking care of their property. The only thing I wouldn't like if I lived there is how close the houses are to one another.

I had to wonder if this stretch of Tahoe water is more pristine than in South Lake Tahoe, where I spend the bulk of my time, because there aren't as many people in the water. All those swimmers at public beaches aren't running to the rest rooms. Could that problem mixed with the continual warming of Tahoe be adding to the murkiness of water by public beaches? Plus, there aren't as many regulatory agencies in Nevada. This stretch of Tahoe water was so pristine it reminded me of what the South Shore was in the late 1980s.

An advantage of the low water level at Lake Tahoe is boats are less likely to be near the shore, which makes for an even more enjoyable paddle.

Most of the activity we saw was from people playing on shore or in the water. So many rocks are exposed or barely submerged that at times it looked like people were standing on the water as they stood on a boulder.

Even in a canoe we needed to have our eyes peeled for rocks more than 100 yards from shore. The lake is that low. Other times we could see at least 20 feet to the bottom.

The overcast sky made for interesting lighting on the lake, causing the water's colors to change from cobalt to teal to aqua.

AJ was happy to finally get out at Zephyr Cove. This was her first time in the canoe. We already bought her a lifejacket since now we know she has no problem being paddled around the lake like a princess.

While she enjoyed the lake water, we imbibed on a Zephyr Zombie. Good, strong, but definitely didn't duplicate the original Rum Runner of Camp Rich.

When we started the lot at Cave Rock was full, but they let us launch. Paddlers do so at the beach, not the boat ramp. Had we parked there it would have cost \$10 being from California. Nevada residents pay \$8. Sue could park the truck on Highway 50. We had to pay \$1 each as walk-ins.

By car it is 2.2 miles from Cave Rock to Zephyr Cove.

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