



Two Perfect Days - in Redding



By James Affleck, MD

HOW ABOUT AN OVERNIGHT trip to Redding?

WHAT?

Yes, 96001 has become a destination.

Turtle Bay Exploration Park (www.turtlebay.org), a 300 acre campus of multiple features, which was started in 1990 with seed money from the McConnell Foundation and the City of Redding, interprets the interaction of humans and the environment in that stretch of the Sacramento River.

Its crowning achievement is the Sundial Bridge, a suspension pedestrian bridge spanning the river, designed by Spanish architect and engineer Santiago Calatrava.

At a cost of \$23 million, it is a stunning cable-stayed structure with an inclined 217-foot pylon. The deck is made of glass and granite (go back at night for a spectacular view, as it is lighted from underneath). The tip of the pylon actually functions as a sundial casting its shadow on the north bank of the river with stones placed counting the hours of the day.

Calatrava, probably the most crowd pleasing architect since Frank Gehry, designed the 2004 Greek Olympic stadium and is now focusing on luxury apartment towers in spiral forms - the latest, "Twisting Torso," in Malmo, Sweden. His structures begin as sculptures and are then engineered into functional forms. An exhibit, "Sculpture into Architecture," runs at the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art until March 5.

The McConnell Arboretum across the river is well labeled and has gardens depicting many climatic regions. The Museum contains permanent and traveling exhibits (when we were there, colorful live frogs from around the world were on display), including a large art gallery with traveling shows. Elevated walks over the wetlands take you to Paul Bunyan's forest camp with woodsy play equipment for the kids, timber and ecology exhibits and nature talks featuring live raptors, plus an enclosed butterfly garden.

Now for the important stuff: food. If you reach Redding around noon after a three-hour drive from Sacramento, head straight for Buz's Crab before tackling the park. Behind a very serious seafood market is a hoot of an informal dining room serving all forms of seafood, mostly fried. The clam chowder comes in a paper bowl.

The owner claims that his was the first restaurant in the country to have a website (www.buzscrab.com). Staying at the Best Western Hilltop Inn puts you not only one freeway off ramp from the park, but contains C.R.Gibbs American Grille (www.crgibbs.com).

This is a cut above anything you'd expect from a small town - the tortilla soup was a stand-out.

Now, don't forget to go back to the Sundial Bridge for that night view and a stroll to work

off whatever excesses you may have indulged in. On the way home, stopping in Williams for lunch at Granzella's (follow the billboards) will get you drinks served in Kerr Mason jars and most inventive pizzas. A full deli/specialty market there offers Angelini cookies (Italian version of Mexican Wedding Cookies) to munch on during the rest of the trip.

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