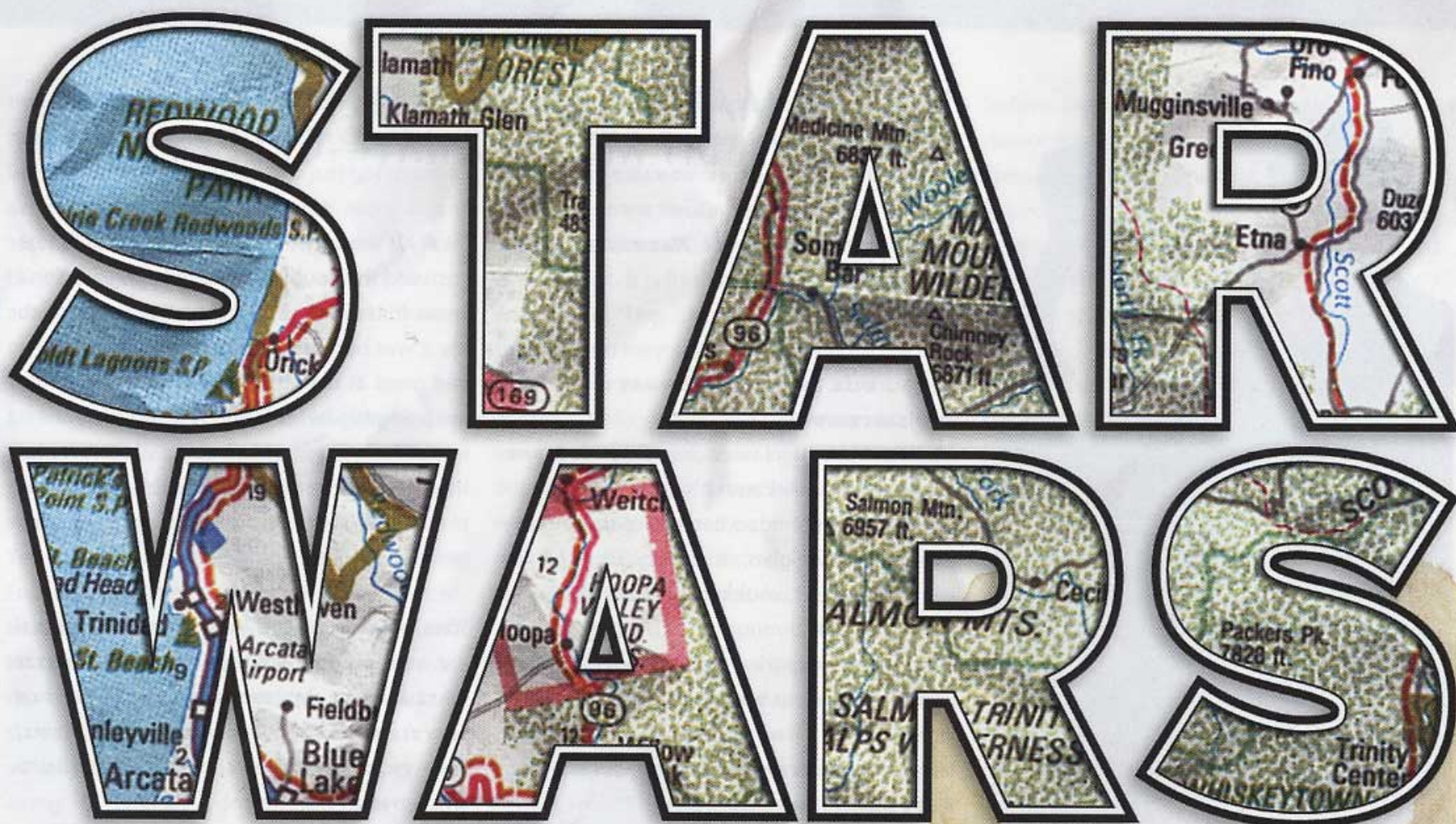




Road Trip

by Dr. David West Reynolds
Expeditional Assistance by Scott Chernoff
Droid Wrangling by Chris Ossorio

FROM THE DESERTS OF DEATH VALLEY AND ARIZONA TO THE FORESTS OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA AND BEYOND, IT'S YOUR OFFICIAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRAVELOGUE THROUGH THE U.S. SHOOTING LOCATIONS OF THE CLASSIC STAR WARS TRILOGY!



DESCENT INTO DEATH VALLEY Tatooine, California

TUNISIA may be the best-known Earthly location for the filming of *Star Wars'* desert planet Tatooine, but California is the site of more than a few of these exciting locales—not to mention the forests of Endor and a whole range of *Star Wars* historical points of interest.

"I thought they shot all the Tatooine locations in Tunisia," you say. Yes, well, they tried to, but it didn't quite work out. Back in 1976, George Lucas struggled to get the desert shots he wanted for the original *Star Wars* film in Tunisia. The production fought rainstorms, sandstorms, malfunctioning droids, and a land-speeder that just didn't look like it was hovering, among many other difficulties, and when time ran out for the expensive location shoot, there were still a few shots that would just have to be taken care of later. These would be "pick-ups" inserted and blended into the Tunisia footage to create a seamless cinematic vision of Luke Skywalker's home planet.



Archaeologist
Dr. David West Reynolds



Droid Wrangler
Chris Ossorio



Star Wars Insider's
Scott Chernoff

It was very late in the production schedule when these pick-ups were finally tackled. *Star Wars* was set for release on May 25, 1977, and in spring of that year, the Tatooine sequences were still incomplete. The needed pick-ups would have to be accomplished on a

minimal budget, and that ruled out a return to North Africa. In the end, Lucas approved plans to shoot in a truly exotic environment which was only a day's drive from Los Angeles.

Most of the U.S. Tatooine locations lie within one of the harshest regions in the civilized world—the fantastic barren desert land in Southern California known as Death Valley. This is the site of one of the world's highest recorded temperatures of all time (134 degrees

F), a furnace-like environment created between two mile-high mountain ranges in a depression that sinks to 282 feet *below* sea level. Within Death Valley are rock formations of many types and colors, and among this rich geologic diversity were quite a few sites that could double effectively for the Tunisian version of Tatooine.

The Death Valley pick-ups were accomplished piecemeal: Lucas himself supervised some of them, and his old USC colleagues (and *Star Wars* second unit photographers) Carol Ballard and Robert Dalva directed most of the others. Production assistant Miki Herman recalls that most of the work was done in about a week, with the crew splitting up when necessary and roaming all over to get the needed shots.

As usual, Lucas seemed to have a knack for choosing exceptionally talented people, even for this rushed project, and several of the Death Valley *Star Wars* crew have gone on to major successes in entertainment and feature film. Ballard is now a director (*The Black Stallion*, *Fly Away Home*), Dalva is an in-demand editor (*October Sky*, *Jumanji*), and Miki Herman stuck with Lucasfilm to work on projects such as location scouting for *Return of the Jedi* before she became producer of the *Droids* cartoon series.



THE STAR WARS ROAD TRIP

Long-time *Insider* readers may recall my archaeological journeys to North

Africa to track down and visit all the Tatooine filming locations (*Star Wars Insider* #27, 29, and 35). I knew all along that a few Tatooine shots had been filmed in Death Valley, but I didn't realize quite how many *Star Wars* locations the legendary California valley held until I examined the Lost Cut of *Star Wars* with Lucasfilm's then-film archivist Tim Fox (*Insider* #41). As we reviewed copies of the original dailies from *Star Wars*, Tim observed that the two alternate numbering systems that ran in-between the perforations of the 35mm film revealed whether each bit of film had been shot by a British or American crew—finally settling for certain which of the Tatooine shots were filmed in Death Valley.

This was the genesis of the *Star Wars* Road Trip. As the *Insider's* Investigative Archaeologist, I could not rest until every Tatooine location had been rediscovered. Tim Fox and I examined every desert shot in the film for which I had not already located the filming site in Tunisia, and with this list I prepared a new set of notes and reference stills. The hunt was on.

In summer of 1999, the *Insider's* Baron Administrator Jon Snyder approved this latest and last "damn fool idealistic crusade," and set me up with the infamous Rebel editor Scott



Chernoff as expeditionary companion. I met up with Scott in Los Angeles and took a look at the van he was preparing for the journey. "What a piece of junk," I couldn't help observing, perhaps a bit too loudly.

"Give me a break, it's a rental," Scott shot back. We stopped to pick up Scott's cohort, a Corellian smuggler named Chris Ossorio—who would serve on this mission as both co-pilot and droid wrangler—and off we rocketed for Death Valley. (See Scott's sidebar on page 71 for more on our exploits.)



BANTHA CANYON: Desolation Unknown

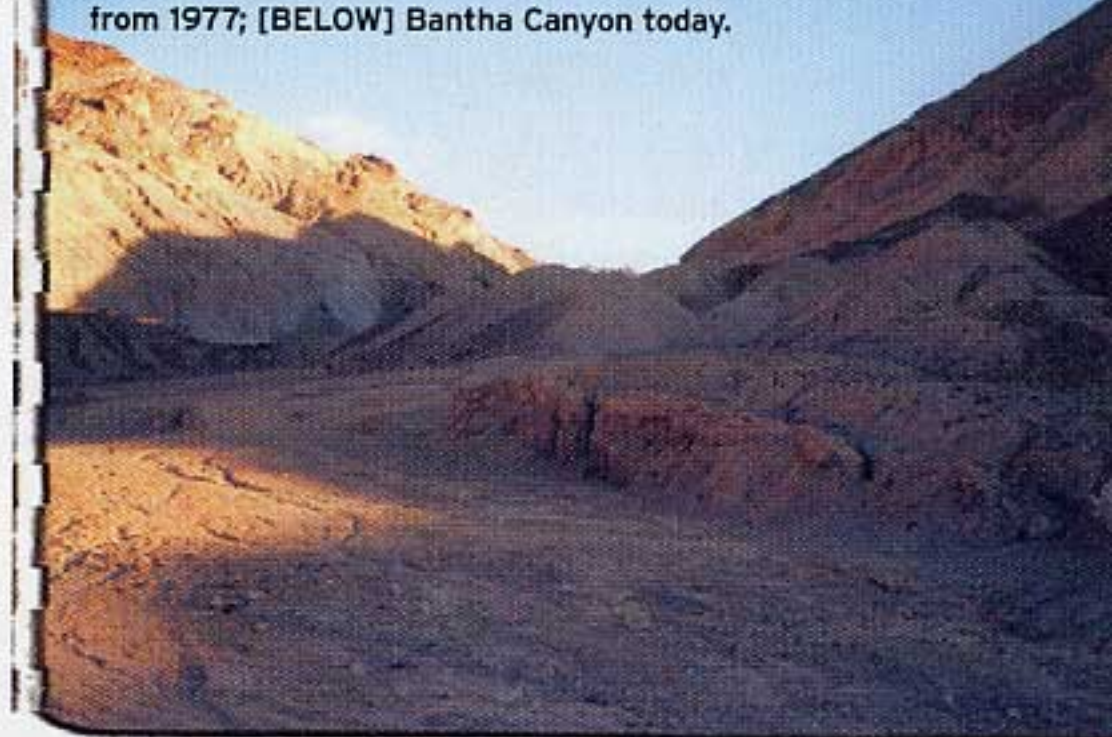
The Tusken Raiders filmed in Tunisia had no mounts. Yet as Ralph McQuarrie's fantastic production painting had shown from the beginning, Sand People were inseparable from their banthas, and in spring 1977 the production was finally preparing to capture one on film.

Bringing the bantha to life was quite an operation, and would take some old-fashioned movie magic. Talented artist Leon Erickson created a completely realistic bantha costume (using yak hair among other materials) fitted for a trained African elephant named Mardji, who was trucked in for the shot from the theme park Marine World Africa in the Northern California town of Vallejo. This costume took the bantha concept art and transformed it into a totally believable creature with distinctive spiral horns.

Mardji had been trained to tuck her trunk up into her mouth, and with the costume in place she became a real bantha. The enormous, heavy costume was a bit uncomfortable, and Mardji tried to shrug it off a few times, but it was clear as they put the ensemble together near the Furnace Creek Ranch (the Death Valley hotel and motel where cast and crew stayed) that the whole thing was going to work.

It looked all the more fantastic when the

[ABOVE] Mardji the elephant in a behind-the-scenes shot from 1977; [BELOW] Bantha Canyon today.



living bantha walked off its truck and up into the canyonlands for the needed pick-ups. The elephant trainers donned costume designer John Mollo's detailed and convincing Tusken Raider garb, and with these last ingredients the place became Tatooine. The Sand People ran and leaped upon their monstrous mount, the cameras rolled, and the crew racked up a great success.

So—where was Bantha Canyon? The bantha shots in the film are so brief as to be almost completely devoid of the clues I usually use to find locations, like distinctive rock formations or horizons. We would need more information.

Fortunately, a good archaeologist has contacts within even the most wretched hives of scum and villainy, so I paid a visit to ILM to look up my old friend Alex Ivanov. Alex is the peerless photographer who shot so many of the items in the Lucasfilm Archives for the *Star Wars Visual Dictionary*, and now Alex had turned up an old binder full of hundreds of unpublished stills from the original production of *Star Wars*. Within this treasure trove was a whole sheet of never-seen images from the bantha shoot. This was exactly what I needed.

With these photos in hand, we checked in at the ranger station in Death Valley, where the old *Star Wars* shoot is the stuff of legend. Completely undaunted by my bizarre request

The View of Mos Eisley is none other than one of the most spectacular and well-known vistas in all of Death Valley...

for Tatooine location assistance, Ranger Charlie Callagan took a close look at the ILM stills and the rest of the research kit, responding with a great deal of help and guidance. Thanks to Ranger Callagan, we knew the area to hunt, and that was somewhere in a place appropriately called Desolation Canyon.

A broad wash flows out of Desolation Canyon, the flood-silt hardened like concrete under the unrelenting sun. The three of us fanned out, and it wasn't long before we were clearly in bantha country. Chris spotted the cracks and crevices seen in the ILM stills, which reveal the place where the bantha was placed for the long shot from Luke's macrobinoculars. The key to finding the site of Miki Herman's famous bantha still was the presence of a few mountains visible on the horizon. I finally spotted these and kept moving until the other features appeared and lined up—and even after 22 years, the same erosion patterns were still clearly visible. This was a perfect match, and Bantha Canyon was located.



THE VIEW OVER MOS EISLEY SPACEPORT:
Dante's Inferno

When Ben Kenobi looks out from the bluffs into a spectacular valley and warns young Luke Skywalker that Mos Eisley is a rough town, he is actually looking at a location about 7,000 miles away, which means that even retired Jedi must have pretty sharp eyes. The valley in which Mos Eisley appears is one of the Death Valley locations 6,790 miles away from the bluffs in Tunisia, a background plate shot with the spaceport added by matte artist

P.S. Ellenshaw.

We knew we'd get this one pin-on, since you can drive right to it: the view of Mos Eisley is none other than one of the most spectacular—and well known—vistas in all of Death Valley, an overlook known as Dante's View. So the challenge here was to get the time of day to match the original shot. Judging from the shadow angles, I estimated that the sun would be at the right elevation shortly after dawn.

We arrived early and stood looking down about a vertical mile to the deadly salt pan of Badwater at the bottom of the valley, lethal to almost all forms of life. Slowly the huge shadows of the mountain range withdrew as the sun rose (just one), and at about 8:20 A.M. (about 40 minutes after sunrise), we were looking at the Valley of Mos Eisley.

And so was R2-D2. We had brought along this handy Astromech droid courtesy of Don Post of Don Post Studios. Our R2 unit was one of Don's licensed replicas, but you'd have to have eyes about as sharp as a Jedi's to tell the difference between this one and the ones made for the films. We positioned the robot for his tourist photo at the overlook, and as you can see from his expression, he was very happy to be there.



ARTOO'S DUNES:
Hot Stovepipe

The biggest surprise from examining the film codes on the Lost Cut was the discovery that several of the shots from the scene in which R2-D2 and C-3PO part company after leaving the escape pod were not shot in

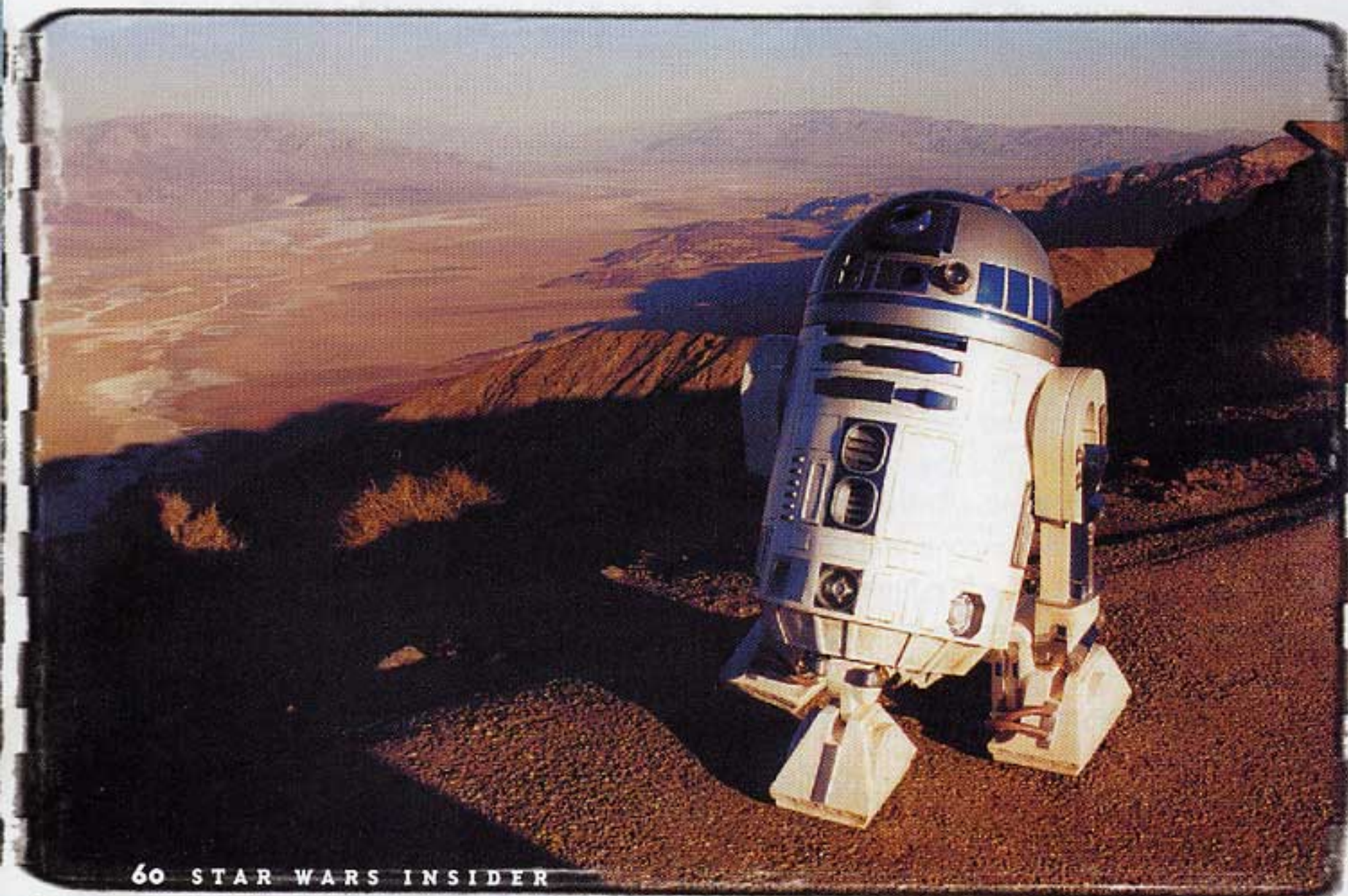
Tunisia. The Death Valley inserts are intercut seamlessly, but they are there. The prize among them is the view of Artoo's destination, which Threepio dismisses as "much too rocky." Artoo rolls away on the sand toward a mountainous horizon, in a shot which provides a nice visual transition between the dunes and the rocky location where Artoo will soon encounter the Jawas. This one had enough clues to track down for sure—there are only so many sand dunes in Death Valley.

With the original shot's time of day estimated as late afternoon, we had enough time to not only locate the exact site, but also haul our droid out to re-create the original shot as closely as possible. This turned out to be easier said than done.

The sand dunes, in an area of Death Valley called Stovepipe Wells Village, were filled with vegetation, but there was a clear area toward the middle which would look better.

We didn't expect the dunes to still look the same, since they are aeolian in formation (wind-deposited) and would surely have shifted randomly over the last 22 years. But to our amazement, the twin-peaked high dune visible in the shot was still there. The surrounding dunes had shifted only a small amount, as the wind patterns had stayed the same over the decades. As we staggered across the desert with the droid, wondering why we hadn't learned from production shots of the original *Star Wars* crew and brought a stretcher on which to carry Artoo, the mountain horizon came closer and closer in line with the high dune, until we were standing on Tatooine again.

We set up the droid, carefully coming in from behind to hide our footprints, and suddenly, there was the exact original shot—better than 70mm, this was real life, and almost too much to believe. This was what the *Star Wars* Road Trip was all about, and we marveled at the scene with satisfaction.



[TOP] Ralph McQuarrie's production painting of the approach to Mos Eisley; [BOTTOM] Mos Eisley as it appeared in *Star Wars*; [LEFT] R2-D2 revisits the Mos Eisley overlook, 23 years later.



ADDITIONAL DEATH VALLEY LOCATIONS: *Sandcrawler Station, Landspeeder Lake Bed & Artoo's Arroyo.*

Unfortunately, despite our best efforts, we could not obtain a full-size sandcrawler to re-create the shot at "Sandcrawler Station," where the Jawas carry the captured R2 unit toward their vehicle on the horizon. But this shot was also filmed in Death Valley, with the sandcrawler painted in by Ralph McQuarrie. Kids from Death Valley Elementary School doubled as the Jawas, as proud local lore still recalls. The kids were excused from school to become Tatooine scavengers for a day. "They loved it," recalls Miki Herman, who supervised the Jawas' wardrobe and equipped the troupe with the right gloves. "The kids were thrilled. They had trouble walking in the costumes, but they thought it was really neat."

Other shots filmed in the Death Valley area include the three landspeeder traveling shots, in which you can see the whole vehicle against a moving desert background. These were filmed on a dry lake bed near Death Valley, and the work was not easy. The main difficulty was getting the craft to look like it was hovering, and it took several tries to get it right.

George Lucas contacted his old USC friend Bob Dalva after a few earlier attempts had not been successful. "George called me four or five weeks before the movie came out," Dalva recalls, "and asked me to see if I could make it work." Dalva agreed to give it a try, and served as director-cameraman for the new day-long shoot. "The landspeeder for this shot was built around a three-wheeled car, and it went pretty fast," he remembers. "It had a plastic mirror attached at an angle underneath, on the side you were shooting, and in theory the mirror would reflect the ground under the car to make it look like it was floating."

Dalva had to figure out how to make the mirror work not only in theory but in practice. The earlier attempts saved him a lot of trouble experimenting.

"I had the benefit of looking at the footage shot by three other people," he notes. "I said, 'OK, let's make the mirror longer than the vehicle, in front and in back.' I felt that what was happening was that you perceived the line of the mirror since it was a straight line down from the front and back."

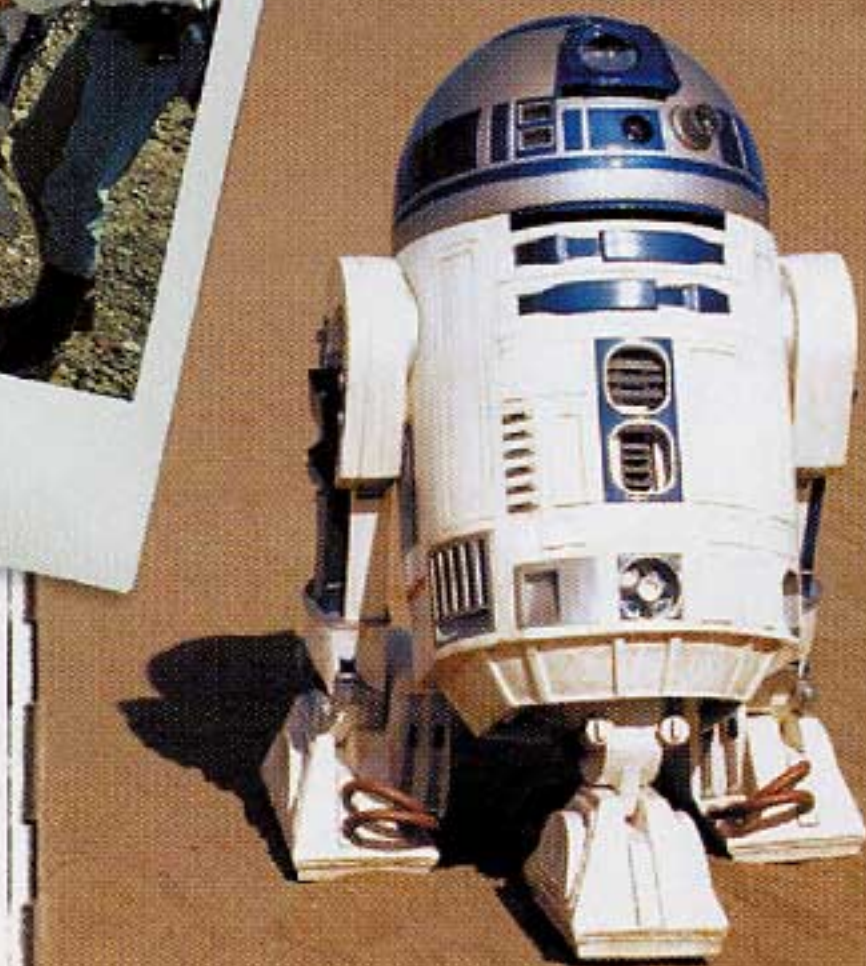
The necessary changes were made, and Dalva and his crew went out to the dry lake. "I shot a take as the vehicle went around us 360 degrees. Then the guys went out to clean the mirror, and I said, 'No, don't clean it, let it be dusty. Otherwise it looks too sharp, it doesn't look real.' I also had them tip the mirror out more. The camera was quite low, and it seemed to me that you shouldn't be seeing the ground move so quickly right under the vehicle, since what you saw should be farther away."

Dalva's concept worked very well, and solved the problems that had been plaguing the shot. He shot with sun angle carefully in mind, to get a distinct black line shadow under the landspeeder. This shadow was then increased optically, but that was a simple enhancement compared to making the wheels disappear.

There had been other suggestions on how to float the uncooperative landspeeder. "John Dykstra [the film's special photographic effects supervisor] wanted to hang the vehicle from a helicopter, and then optically remove the wires somehow," Dalva recalls. "That seemed incredibly dangerous. It was fun problem-solving and getting the mirror to work." Dalva also worked out a shot in which the wheels of the speeder were hidden by the foreground—a shot modified in the *Special Edition* to make the landspeeder look more like it was hovering.

Miki Herman got a chance to appear in the film for the landspeeder shot of Luke and his droid heading out into the Jundland Wastes in search of R2-D2. "Someone else doubled for Mark Hamill," Herman recalls, "since he had just gotten into his car accident before we went out to shoot. I ended up standing in for Threepio. They had Threepio driving the speeder in this shot, and I couldn't see anything. It was an English sports car, and I was doing the clutch

R2-D2 revisits the same dune he crossed when he separated from C-3PO in the original *Star Wars*.



and the gas." Miki's brief experience gave her an appreciation for all the other situations C-3PO had gone through in the film. "I have a great deal of admiration for Anthony Daniels," she says, "to have been screwed into that biscuit box and do all that he did."

Bob Dalva's landspeeder shots had finally raised the standard for the hovering vehicle, and by this new standard one of them seemed like it could still be improved. For this last one, [second unit photographer] Tak Fujimoto went in and did one more shot, of Luke driving the speeder alone. This one included Mark Hamill, who had just recovered from his accident, and with this, the landspeeder photography was complete.

There's one more famous *Star Wars* location in the California desert: the canyon in which Artoo is ambushed by the Jawas starts out in Death Valley. Halfway through the sequence, the location shifts seamlessly to Tunisia, but the shots where you see the droid rolling along on smooth ground all took place in California. The opening shot of the sequence provided the perfect establishing view of the little droid all alone in a big canyon, and made use of the handy remnants of an abandoned 1930's-era roadway, one of the few outdoor locations where the Artoo unit could actually roll without difficulty.

The location of Artoo's Arroyo is one we left for readers to find—it remains at large, somewhere in Death Valley. Also out there in Death Valley is the Tatooine pathway Threepio and Artoo walked to Jabba's palace in *Return of the Jedi*. See Scott's sidebar for the prize that awaits the first *Star Wars* archaeologist to follow in our footsteps on the quest for *Star Wars* locations.

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STAR WARS ROUTE GUIDE

Here are specific directions to the Star Wars Road Trip locations. For the purposes of this article, we've chosen to begin the journey in Los Angeles, but you may want to vary your entry point and route based on your location. Whichever way you choose, be prepared for a lengthy journey. Bring plenty of water, munchies, and music, because as Queen Amidala put it, "We'll take the long way."

LOS ANGELES, CA

» **CHINESE THEATER/HAMBURGER HAMLET:** 6914/6925 Hollywood Blvd. Start your journey with a nice lunch at the Hamburger Hamlet at 6914 Hollywood Blvd., where George Lucas first watched the lines across the street at the Chinese Theater (6925 Hollywood Blvd.). At the Chinese, check out the cement footprints of George Lucas, Harrison Ford, R2-D2, C-3PO, and Darth Vader.

From the Chinese, you can also take a stroll down Hollywood Blvd.'s legendary Walk of Fame, where you'll find sidewalk stars for a host of Star Wars notables. Special effects master Dennis Muren was the most recent member of the Star Wars team to be honored; you'll find his star in front of the Guinness Museum of World Records at 6764 Hollywood Blvd. You'll see silent film actor Harrison Ford's star at 6667 Hollywood Blvd., in front of Musso & Frank Grill, but the Harrison Ford of today has yet to find time for his own Walk of Fame ceremony; similarly, Samuel L. Jackson is also due for a star here soon. Continue walking east down Hollywood Blvd., to the corner of Hollywood and Vine, and head south on Vine to find the stars of Alec Guinness and Billy Dee Williams close by each other. Guinness' star is at 1559 Vine, on the southwest corner of Vine and Selma Ave.; Williams' star is at 1521 Vine, next to a mini-mall driveway just north of Sunset Blvd.

CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE »

RESOURCE NUMBERS

Automobile Association of America — roadside assistance in CA: (800) 400-4222

DEATH VALLEY

Death Valley National Park Visitors Center: (760) 786-2331

Furnace Creek Ranch (Death Valley motel): (760) 786-2361

YUMA

Yuma Convention and Visitor Bureau: (520) 782-2567

ROCKEFELLER FOREST

Humboldt Redwoods State Park Visitors Center:

(707) 946-2263

CRESCENT CITY AREA

Redwood National and State Parks: (707) 464-6101

MODESTO

Modesto Convention and Visitor Bureau: (209) 571-6480

MARIN COUNTY

Presidio National Park Visitors Center: (415) 561-4323

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Hollywood Chamber of Commerce: (323) 469-8311

Universal Studios: (818) 777-1000

Chinese Theater: (323) 464-6266

Disneyland: (714) 781-4565

ALTHOUGH We only had enough fuel to make it to Death Valley, the ultimate *Star Wars* Road Trip would encompass a whole universe of *Star Wars* locations and points of interest in the western United States. Take a look at the map and the route guide (beginning on page 63) to chart your course, based on where you prefer to start. We've provided one that starts in Los Angeles, but whatever route you take, these are the places you'll want to hit:



CRESCENT CITY/SMITH RIVER & ROCKEFELLER FOREST: Endor Splendor

George Lucas had long envisioned a visit to Kashyyyk within the *Star Wars* saga, which would feature tribes of Wookiees living close to nature within deep forests. The projected expense of creating dozens of complex and detailed Wookiee costumes cut the furry tribe down to pint-size, and thus were born the Ewoks. Next came the task of locating their home planet, which Lucas envisioned as a world of massive trees.

"There are only a few places where really large trees still exist," recalls *Return of the Jedi* producer Howard Kazanjian. "We considered Hawaii, but we knew we needed redwoods from the beginning, and so we were

almost forced to shoot in Northern California. We scouted extensively to find a location we could control, where we could lock the gates at night and have the forest to ourselves."

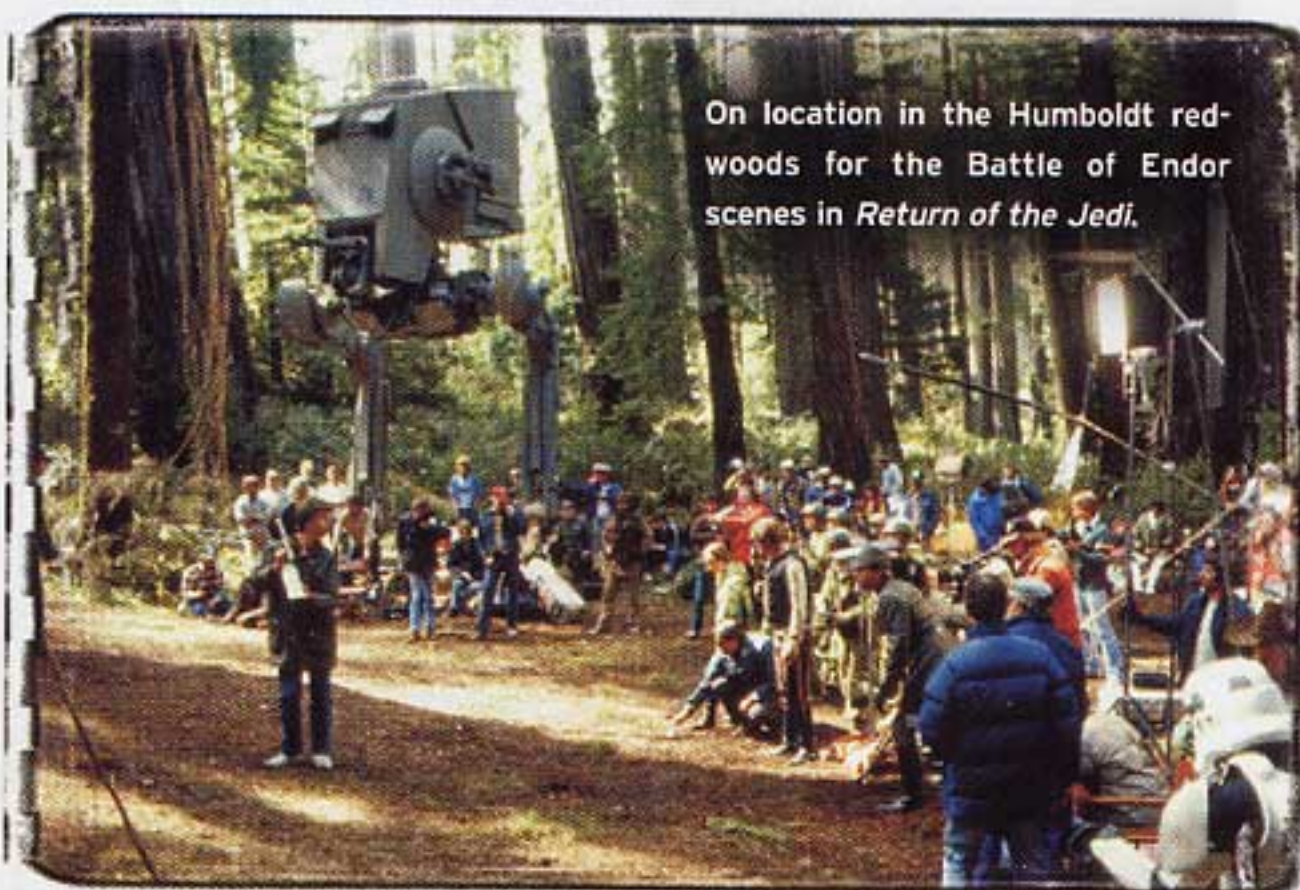
The location scouting fell to multi-talented Miki Herman, who had become unit production manager on *Jedi*. "I scouted every redwood forest from Santa Cruz to British Columbia," Herman remembers. "It was a grand fun job. The redwoods are incredible." One of the best places she found was Rockefeller Forest, south of Eureka near the Eel River. "It was very beautiful. You see the light filter through the trees in cathedral groves. It is very awesome, a spiritual experience. It's primordial, so special."

But while Herman said that Lucasfilm sent "small crews" to Rockefeller Forest, and much of the Ewok village was shot on soundstages in London, finding a larger area to stage the Battle of Endor proved a bigger challenge.

"My job was to find a grove we could have a battle in," Herman recalls. "Naturally the parks were not thrilled about that. So I had to go look for private property, and to talk to the lumber companies. I

needed to find a place that was accessible, appropriate, and that would eventually be harvested. They would mark dead trees we could have explosions in, that they didn't care about."

The site eventually found was roughly 100 miles further north of Rockefeller, about 10 miles south of the Oregon border. The forest used for filming was just outside of Crescent City, on private land owned by Rellim Redwood Co. (now known as Stimson Lumber Co.). The lumber company calls this particular patch of land "The Smith River Tract," because it's not in any specific town, although it is just southeast of the town of Smith River, in an area of the Smith River National Recreation Area known as the Jedediah Smith Redwoods State Park. The most specific marker is Morrison Creek. But don't bother looking for the specific land on a map—the land is private and not accessible to the public. Nevertheless, the surrounding state park, as well as the nearby Redwood National Park, provide plenty of Endorian opportunities.



On location in the Humboldt redwoods for the Battle of Endor scenes in *Return of the Jedi*.



STAR WARS ROUTE GUIDE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 63

» **THE LOT:** 1041 N. Formosa Ave. From the Chinese, take Hollywood Blvd. west three blocks to the first major boulevard, La Brea Ave. Turn left, heading south on La Brea for about one half mile, to Santa Monica Blvd. Head west (it's a right turn) on Santa Monica Blvd. for 2 short blocks, then you'll turn left (heading south) onto Formosa Ave. The Lot is at the southwest corner of Formosa and Santa Monica, with the main entrance on Formosa. There are unfortunately no public tours of The Lot, where pick-up scenes were shot for the original *Star Wars* in 1977, when the location was known as the Samuel Goldwyn Studios. Still, you can drive by the main gate and gaze upon the land that was once the Cantina.

» **20TH CENTURY FOX STUDIOS:** 10201 Pico Blvd. From The Lot, continue south for four blocks on Formosa to Melrose Ave. Turn right on Melrose, heading west for about one mile to Fairfax Ave. Take a left on Fairfax, heading south for roughly two-and-a-quarter miles to Pico Blvd. Turn right, travelling west on Pico Blvd. for about two-and-a-half miles to the main gate. As with The Lot, there are no public tours of the Fox studios.

» **VILLAGE/BRUIN THEATERS:** 961 Broxton/948 Broxton Ave., Westwood Village. These theaters were the simultaneous sites of the world premiere of the *Star Wars Special Edition* on January 18, 1997. From the Fox lot, continue west on Pico for about one-and-a-quarter mile to Westwood Blvd. Turn right, heading north on Westwood Blvd. nearly two miles. Veer left

(northwest) on Broxton Ave. You will quickly see the two theaters on opposite sides of the intersection of Broxton and Weyburn Place.

» **ILM'S ORIGINAL HEADQUARTERS:** 6840 block of Valjean Ave., Van Nuys. From Westwood Village, turn around and head south on Westwood Blvd. a couple blocks to Wilshire Blvd. Turn right, heading west on Wilshire. Stay in the right lane, because within a quarter mile you will be entering the 405 freeway north. Stay on the freeway for approximately 18 miles before exiting at Sherman Way west. Follow Sherman Way west for just over a half mile to Valjean Ave. Make a left on Valjean, heading south. You are now in what we call the industrial district. Feast your eyes on all the warehouses. One of them was once ILM. (Records indicate the address was 6842 Valjean, but this address does not currently exist—there is, however, a 6843.) OK, so there's not much to see, but the vibes from the first X-wing blast-off are still strong.

The grove eventually selected for the battle site had a lock and a gate just as producer Kazanjian wanted. ILM sent about half a dozen of its own people to redwood areas nearby to shoot background plates and the Steadicam footage for the speeder bike sequences. This shooting was completely harmless, and so could be carried out in a wider range of locations than the eventual battle scene. Additionally, Lucasfilm and Rellim Redwood worked out a unique arrangement that called for Lucasfilm to donate the location fees to the Rowdy Creek Fish Hatcheries on behalf of Rellim.

Shooting Endor took extraordinary preparation, but as usual the production had top talent ready to meet the task. "We went in

there a year in advance and planned out everything we would need," recalls producer Kazanjian. "We had to know exactly where the Ewoks would be running and chasing. We knew we needed a number of paths, uphill, downhill, and so on. The floor had to be rock and root-free. The Ewok actors wore little shoes shaped like feet, and they couldn't see very well. There had to be no tree roots in the way, so the Ewoks wouldn't trip and fall. So all of these pathways were designed and graded in

"And then we attended to everything else that was needed. Where there weren't enough ferns in the existing area, we brought them in. We moved 20,000 ferns, as well as some small trees. We placed all these, then we let the rains come for one full year and turn it natural before we came back to shoot."

Kazanjian's crew also brought in a few fake redwood trunks of about 25-foot circumference, which were no more than about 30 feet tall, to fill out the forest where necessary. The last addition was the full-size AT-ST scout walker, and finally, the Northern California location had become Endor.

The bunker location seen in *Return of the Jedi* has now been logged and completely destroyed, and since 1983 the number of surviving redwood forests has dwindled further—deforestation occurs at a very high rate in the United States as well as in the world's rainforests.

But Endor's primeval beauty still remains in a few special places. Miki Herman recommends that those seeking red-

woods and the Endor experience make their way to Pamplin Grove, a site near Eureka which is owned and protected by the Nature Conservancy. "There are places all around the Eel river," she adds. "That feeds the most gorgeous places—there's an alluvial field fed by floods, and it's very beautiful. Just drive up the redwood highway, the highway of the giants."

—David West Reynolds / Scott Chernoff



*YUMA, AZ:
Third in Tatooine
Trilogy*

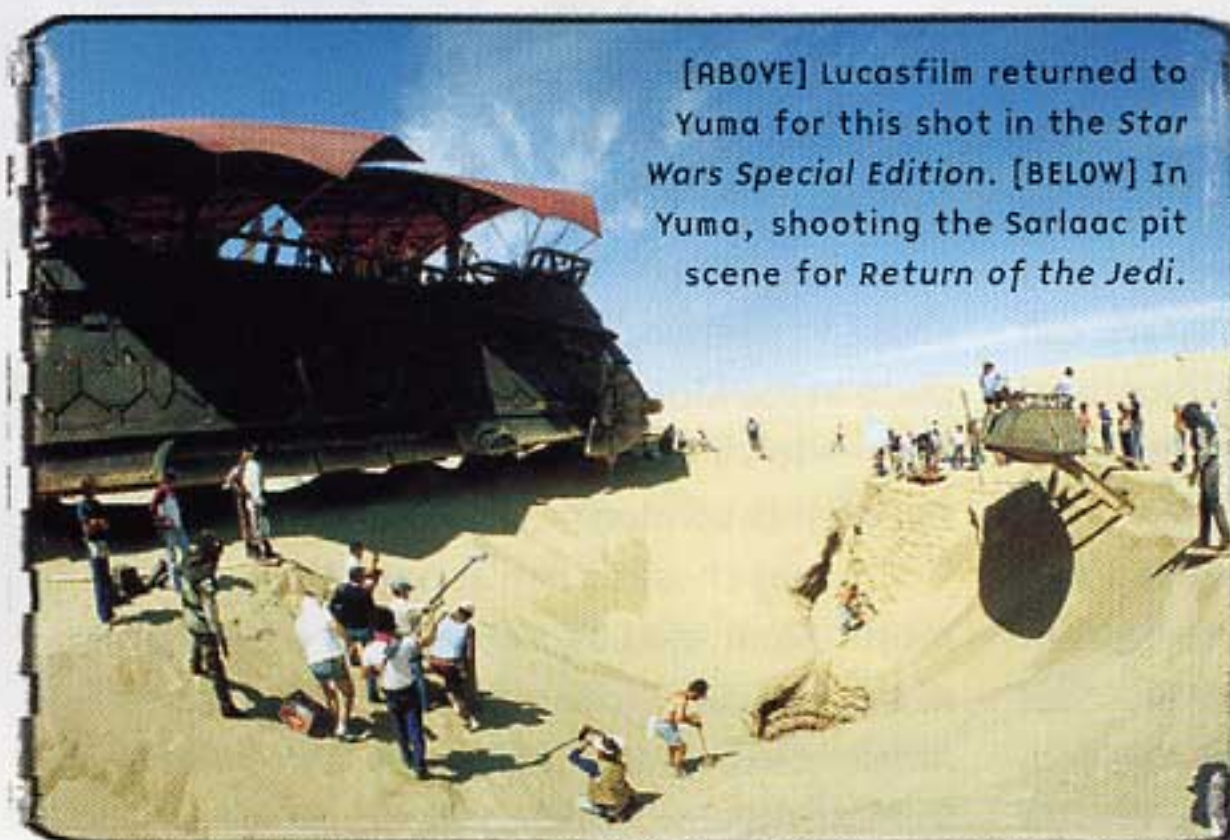
In addition to Tunisia and Death Valley, the planet Tatooine was also re-created outside Yuma, Arizona, for *Return of the Jedi*—and then again for new desert footage in the *Star Wars Special Edition*. The location of both Jabba's sail barge, and the Tatooine Dunes of the SW:SE, was a place called Buttercup Valley.

"We needed a very large dune area for *Jedi*," producer Howard Kazanjian recalls. "Our first choice was not the U.S. or California. We sent [production manager] Robert Watts to several places in Spain, and we considered Saudi Arabia. But for the largest real dune areas, those in Buttercup Valley are among the best in the world."

The Yuma dunes have a long cinematic history, having appeared in dozens of films, including *The Sheik* with Rudolph Valentino,



[ABOVE] Lucasfilm returned to Yuma for this shot in the *Star Wars Special Edition*. [BELOW] In Yuma, shooting the Sarlaac pit scene for *Return of the Jedi*.



» **UNIVERSAL STUDIOS/EGG FACTORY:** 3900 Lankershim Blvd./3855 Lankershim Blvd. After the original ILM location, head out to the sites of Lucasfilm's first (and only) two Los Angeles offices. The first was on the lot at Universal Studios, which of course offers its famous Universal Studios Tour to the public. Across the street from the Lankershim entrance to Universal will soon be the Red Line subway station, which is being built on the former site of the Egg Factory office building, where Lucasfilm's offices moved in 1979; you can take a look as you drive into Universal, but there's not much left of it to see. From ex-ILM, backtrack and retrace your route back onto the 405 freeway, heading south. Follow the 405 south for about two-and-a-half miles before transitioning to the 101 south, toward Hollywood. Follow the 101 south for roughly six miles to the Lankershim Blvd. exit. Make a right off the freeway, which will actually take you west on Cahuenga Blvd. for one long block before you again

turn right, this time heading north on Lankershim. Stay right, because the entrance to Universal will be on your right. Take a right and follow the hill up to Universal.

MODESTO, CA

» **GEORGE LUCAS PLAZA:** Here's where the first long stretch of the road trip begins. From Universal, exit from the Universal Center entrance/exit, and follow the signs to the 101 north. Follow the 101 north for approximately two miles before transitioning to the 170 north. Continue north on the 170 for about six miles, when it will automatically merge into Interstate 5 north. Follow the 5 north for roughly 61 miles before transitioning to Highway 99 north, toward (and beyond) Bakersfield. You'll be taking the 99 north roughly 215 miles to Modesto. Exit at Paradise Road heading northeast for about four-fifths of a mile to 17th St. Follow 17th for another fifth of a mile until you hit Five Corners, which is the

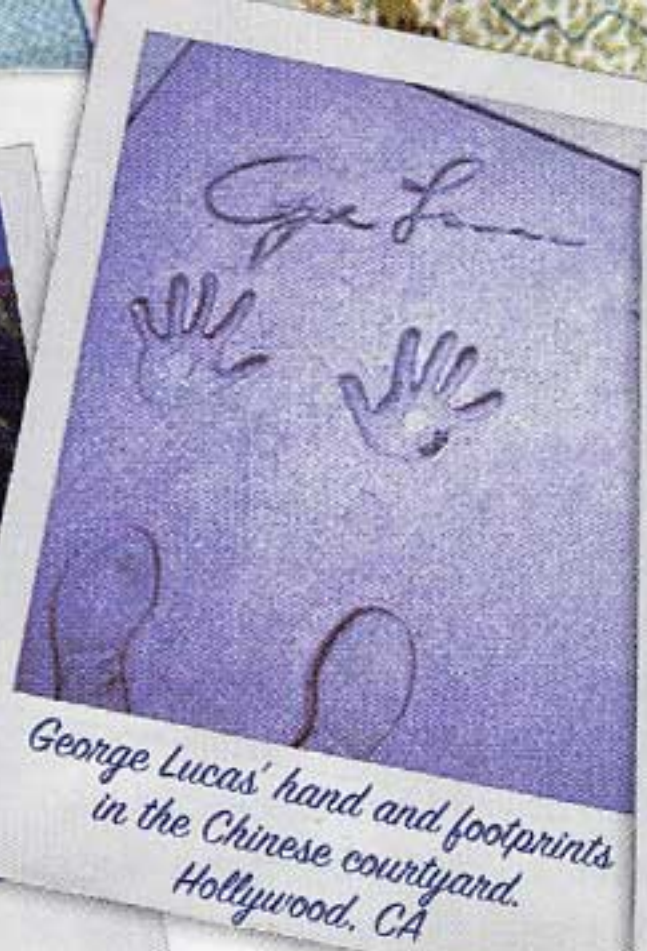
intersection of 17th Street, J Street, McHenry Ave., Needham Street, and Downey Ave. Look for the Denny's at 110 McHenry Ave. as your landmark. Or, you can just look for the bronze *American Graffiti* statue. Cruise around town—especially in what the city has dubbed the "American Graffiti Cruising Loop" on 9th and 10th Streets between G and K Streets—and feel like you're a part of movie history. While not in the film itself, these are the streets that a young George Lucas cruised, with those experiences inspiring *American Graffiti*.

SAN FRANCISCO, CA

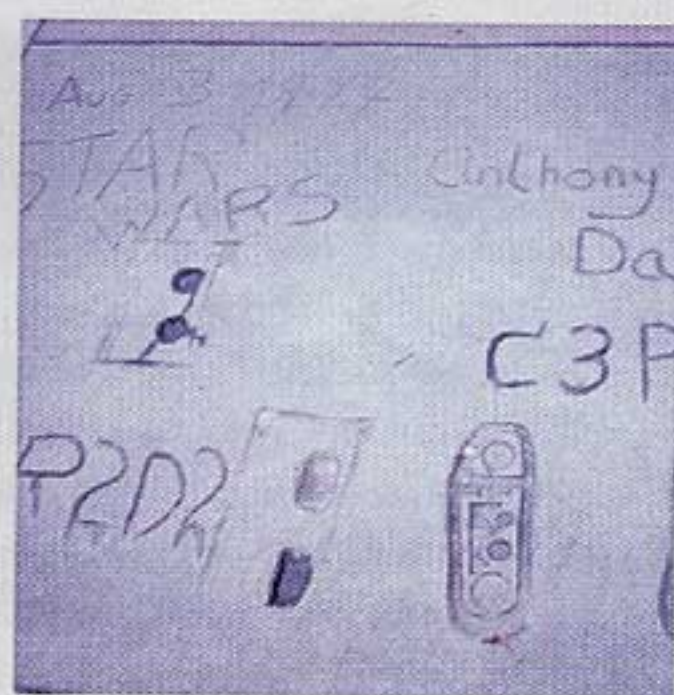
» **THE PRESIDIO:** The future site of ILM is much cooler than the original Van Nuys site, since the Presidio was originally one of America's oldest U.S. Army bases. From Modesto, take L St. to the entrance to Highway 132 west. Follow the 132 west for roughly 25 miles, then hop onto Interstate 580 north. You'll follow the 580 north up toward (and



Hamburger Hamlet
Hollywood, CA



George Lucas' hand and footprints
in the Chinese courtyard.
Hollywood, CA



Look sir, droids! Famous imprints
outside Mann's Chinese Theater.

The Hamburger Hamlet is still there, so you can take a seat by the window, gaze at the Chinese, and recreate the moment Lucas first saw massive lines for Star Wars in 1977.

three versions of *Beau Geste*, many Westerns (including *The Train Robbers*), *Stargate*, and many more. The location has huge vistas that go on for miles. Still, the terrain was not without its challenges. "The sand dunes would shift every day," Kazanjian remembers. "The view was different every morning we showed up. A thirty-foot dune could disappear in a day."

In 1996, Ben Burtt traveled to Yuma with producer Rick McCallum; while McCallum supervised the shooting of stormtroopers for the new *Special Edition* scenes, Burtt directed the shooting of similar footage in Imax format for his Oscar-nominated film *Special Effects*. "We also shot some footage for *Young Indy*," Burtt says, adding with a smile, "which is typical of Rick McCallum, getting the maximum production out of every possible opportunity."

But the Yuma dunes are a "very hostile location," Burtt notes. "With temperatures of 105 degrees, you can shoot in the morning and afternoon, but not in the middle of the day."

Surprisingly, the Buttercup Valley dunes are not actually in the state of Arizona, but rather are about 10 miles across the border in California, according to Martin Espinoza of the Yuma Convention and Visitor Bureau, who adds that the 15-minute drive from downtown Yuma to the dunes is so short that, "We call them ours." The Yuma Chamber of Commerce also has plenty of information on the cinematic use of the dunes.

Still, if you make the trip to Yuma, you will not find things quite as they were when the *Jedi* crew arrived in 1982. The Stardust Motor Resort Motel, where the crew stayed, was torn down a decade ago, and a Fry's

Groceries now stands in its place on 4th Street, just off Main. There's nothing left of Jabba's sail barge, nor any suits of stormtrooper armor abandoned in the sand. And the dunes themselves are sure to look quite different, says Espinoza, explaining, "The sands change every day." But the dunes were Tatooine twice, and the vistas are truly grand and impressive.

—DWR/SC



LOS ANGELES, CA:
Cantina Arena

There are many points of interest to the traveling *Star Wars* fan in sunny Southern California, including the only studio lot in the United States where any *Star Wars* shooting was done. It happened late in the game in 1977, after principal photography for the original film had been completed at England's EMI Elstree Studios. At the same time Lucas assigned crews to film pick-up shots of Tatooine in Death Valley, he also chose to re-shoot some of the shots that took place in the Mos Eisley Cantina, including most of Greedo's close-ups and some new creatures not used in London.

Lucas chose to film at one of Hollywood's most historic studios, a 13-acre lot then known as the Samuel Goldwyn Studios, right off Santa Monica Blvd. on Formosa Ave., across the street from the still-in-operation Formosa Café, which



STAR WARS ROUTE GUIDE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 65

through) Oakland, covering about 66 miles before you get to the Bay Bridge. Take the 80 west to cross the Bay Bridge; there will be a \$2.00 toll. Stay on the 80 for over a mile after you're done with the bridge, exiting at Van Ness Ave. and heading north. Stay on Van Ness, taking in the streets of San Francisco; the street will not only veer westward and become Lombard St., it will also soon turn into the 101 Freeway north. Just before you hit the Golden Gate Bridge, exit at Lincoln Blvd. or Park Presidio Blvd. and follow the signs south to Presidio National Park and the Presidio Army Museum. The Presidio also has one of the most beautiful golf courses in California, worth checking out even if you don't play. Call (415) 561-4661 for tee times. On your way up Highway 101,

you can also stop off at Petaluma and see the downtown streets where *American Graffiti* was actually filmed in 1972.

ROCKEFELLER FOREST, CA

OK, now you're headed for Endor. From the Presidio, get back on the 101 Freeway north and cross the Golden Gate Bridge; there is no toll going in this direction. You're in for a beautiful drive through the redwoods—you'll be heading north on the 101 Freeway for roughly 200 miles, straight into the heart of Humboldt Redwoods State Park. Exit the 101 at Mattole Road, heading west, and you will be on the southern edge of Rockefeller Forest, former playground of the Ewoks. WARNING: If you see an Ewok, do not feed it.

CRESCENT CITY, CA

While Rockefeller Forest hosted some small *Return of the Jedi* crews, the Battle of Endor and speeder bike chase were shot on private land known as the Smith River Tract outside of Crescent City, about 12 miles south of the Oregon border. From Rockefeller Forest, return to Highway 101 and head north for roughly 96 more miles. The motel where the *Jedi* crew stayed, the Ship Ashore Resort Motel (now a Best Western) is located at 12370 Highway 101 North. But you'll really want to visit the Jedediah Smith Redwoods State Park, which is a few miles north of Crescent City on Highway 199. This is the area where the Endor Battle was filmed, although the land used for filming, near Morrison Creek, was private and thus inaccessible to the public. Still, the surrounding splendor is nothing if not Endorian, and the beauty of the redwoods will not disappoint.



ILM north, to Marin County, in 1977.

Also in the Valley are sites of the two original Los Angeles offices of Lucasfilm, which first was housed at Universal Studios. In September 1979, the company moved across the street to a building known as the Egg Factory at 3855 Lankershim Blvd., a move heralded in a memorable announcement recreated in Steve Sansweet's powerhouse book *Star Wars Scrapbook*.

Unfortunately, the Egg Factory building has been demolished to make way for a currently-under-construction subway station, the Universal City stop of L.A.'s Metro Red Line.

Just over the Santa Monica mountains, in Century City, is the huge studio lot of 20th Century Fox, the studio that produced the first *Star Wars* movie and has

distributed all four. Slightly visible from the Pico Blvd. main gate is the Fox lot's mighty centerpiece: a giant *Star Wars* mural that stands 45.5 feet high and 106 feet wide. Unfortunately, tours to the public are not offered. Nearby, in Westwood, Mann's Village and Bruin theaters were the simultaneous sites for the world premiere of the *Star Wars Special Edition* in January, 1997.

Across town, on Hollywood Blvd., is Mann's historic Chinese Theater, where all four *Star Wars* films (and the *Special Edition*) played—and where fans, inspired by 22-year-old documentary footage of crowds at the theater for the original *Star Wars*, started lining up six weeks



between 1 and 3 p.m., when the lighting is similar to that in the movie. Bring water.

» **FURNACE CREEK:** This is where the food and lodging is. From Stovepipe Wells, follow Highway 190 another 25 miles or so (after about the first five miles, you will again meet the end of the road and be forced to turn right in order to remain on the 190). Look for the hotel and motel, pull up, and have a sarsaparilla.

» **DESOLATION CANYON (SANDCRAWLER STATION):** From Furnace Creek, continue south on the 190 for a very short distance, to the turn-off for Badwater Road. Continue south on Badwater for about three miles. After the turn-off for Golden Canyon, and before the turn-off for Mushroom Rock, you will see an unmarked dirt-road turn-off on the left (west) side of the street. Although it is unmarked, it is not easy to miss. Follow this dirt road, and when it forks, follow

was immortalized in the 1997 film *L.A. Confidential*. Originally established in 1919 as Jesse D. Hampton Studios, the lot was briefly known as United Artists Studio before becoming what was commonly known as simply the Goldwyn Studios in 1938.

In its heyday, the lot was home to stars such as Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks, while Marilyn Monroe and Frank Sinatra both shot pictures there, too. Before *Star Wars*, there was already a distinguished list of movies filmed on the lot, including *Wuthering Heights*, *West Side Story*, *Some Like It Hot*, *Guys and Dolls*, *The Thief of Baghdad*, and Errol Flynn's *Robin Hood*. Children of the '70s and '80s may find it comforting to know that most of the classic mid-period Sid & Marty Krofft television shows—including *Dr. Shrinker*, *Sigmund and the Sea Monsters*, and *ElectraWoman and DynaGirl*—were also filmed there.

The Goldwyn studio again changed hands in 1980 (it seems to be the lot's lot in life), when Warner Brothers purchased it to use as an auxiliary to its main headquarters at the

Burbank Studios, which it then shared with Columbia Pictures. The lot then became known as Warner Hollywood, renting out its stages to various productions and serving as the base for the studio's sound department. (The *Insider's* own managing editor worked there as a production assistant on a short-lived Fox sitcom called *Monty* back in 1993-94, but that's a story probably best left untold.)

Yet if you're travelling to L.A., don't look for the Warner Hollywood sign—in December 1999, the property was sold yet again, this time to a new company called BA Studios, which planned to rent its facilities to independent film producers. The new owners now call the site simply The Lot. But whatever it's called, it will always be notable as the home of the U.S. branch of what Kenner eloquently dubbed the Creature Cantina.

Besides the studio, Southern California was also the original location of Industrial Light & Magic. In fact, most of the special effects in the original *Star Wars* were produced at ILM's original headquarters in the L.A. suburb of Van Nuys in the San Fernando Valley. Lucas moved

DEATH VALLEY, CA

This is it, guys and gals: the long haul. But a big payoff. From Crescent City, head back the way you came, south on Highway 101 for about 65 miles to Highway 299 East. Follow the 299 east for about 95 miles to Interstate 5 South. Follow the I-5 south for about 150 miles to Interstate 80 east, then after two miles heading east, you'll merge onto Highway 99 south. You'll be taking the 99 south right back through Modesto, ultimately covering roughly 400 miles before you finally switch freeways again, this time joining forces with Highway 58 south, right after Bakersfield. Take the 58 south for about 50 miles, then transition to the 14 north. Take the 14 north for roughly 90 miles, then merge onto the 190 north. Then it's just a quick 15 miles to the point where the road ends and you must turn right (south) to remain on the 190. After that, it's about 35 miles until you're at the outer edge of Death Valley National Park. Phew!

» **STOVEPIPE WELLS (ARTOO'S DUNES):** Once you're inside Death Valley National Park, you've still got about 45 miles to go before you reach the dunes. After you pass the general store (you can't miss it—there's only one), look for the sign says "POINT OF INTEREST 1/4 MILE," and try to park across the street from it, on the dune side of the road. Head for the dunes and keep walking in a northwest direction. Look for the area with few shrubs and veer a little north. Artoo's dune is about three-quarters of a mile from where you parked. The best way to find it is to use the photos in this issue. Line up the peaks on the horizon so that they are in the same configuration as those in the background of the photo (page 61), and pay particular attention to the location of the highest peak and the spiked peak in relation to the highest dune—the spiked peak should appear to the left of the highest dune. Even if you don't pinpoint the specific dune used in the film, you will still feel strongly as though you are on Tatooine—especially if you show up



before Episode I opened last May. The Chinese is especially legendary because George Lucas often cites the moment he saw the massive lines there for *Star Wars* in its opening week in 1977—which he

spotted while eating across the street at the Hamburger Hamlet—as the moment when it first dawned on him that his movie was a hit. The Hamburger Hamlet is still there, too—so you can take a seat by the window, gaze at the Chinese, and re-create the moment.

Of course, the Chinese is a major tourist destination not only for its unique design but also for the famous handprints and footprints of celebrities in the cement courtyard. Among the many timeless stars immortalized in concrete at the Chinese are George Lucas, who left his imprint along with Steven Spielberg on May

16, 1984, to celebrate the release of *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*. Harrison Ford also became part of the Chinese's foundation on June 4, 1992, when his *Patriot Games* was coming out. But *Star Wars* fans will likely get the biggest kick out of seeing the footprints of R2-D2, C-3PO and Darth Vader—the trio put their feet down on August 3, 1977, during the original *Star Wars*' historic run there.

From the Chinese, you can also stroll down Hollywood Blvd.'s legendary Walk of Fame, and see the stars in the sidewalk for Billy Dee Williams, Alec Guinness, special effects master Dennis Muren, and Harrison Ford. Well, sort of. It seems that the Harrison Ford on the Walk of Fame is actually a silent film star of the same name. Born in 1892, this Ford starred in such silents as *Little Old New York* with Marion Davies. Meanwhile, our Harrison Ford was long ago selected by the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce for inclusion on the Walk of Fame, but the busy actor has yet to carve the time out of his schedule for a dedication ceremony, so he does not have a star yet. Ditto Samuel L. Jackson, who was selected for the honor in 1998 but, like Ford, has been too busy making movies to show up yet; indeed, a study in the

trade paper *Variety* recently named Jackson the most prolific actor of the '90s, with 36 films under his belt for the decade. —SC



MODESTO: Hometown Hero

Modesto is proud of George Lucas—so proud they created a plaza and erected a statue in honor of his first blockbuster, 1973's *American Graffiti*. George Lucas Plaza, established July 11, 1997 (*Insider* #35) to honor the hometown hero and the film that immortalized his youth there, is located at an intersection where a young Lucas used to "cruise" with his friends—experiences he would later draw on when writing *Graffiti*. Ironically, the classic film was actually filmed further north in Petaluma (after the crew were kicked out of San Rafael after only two nights), although Modesto remains the heart and soul of *American Graffiti*. Plus, Modesto is notable not only as Lucas' hometown but also as the city where he first experimented with photography, writing, and filmmaking. —SC

STAR WARS ROUTE GUIDE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 67

the fork to the left. The dirt road will end, and you will be in Desolation Canyon, just like the Tusken Raiders. The Death Valley Visitors Center in Furnace Creek has a new map to Golden Canyon modified to include Desolation Canyon, so stop in if you need more help.

» **DANTE'S VIEW (MOS EISLEY OVERLOOK):** From Desolation Canyon, reverse back up Badwater Road and return to the 190 south. Go south about 11 miles on 190 and look for the turn-off for Dante's View. Follow the road up the hill for 13 miles and park. Dante's View is panoramic, so to pinpoint the same view that Luke and Ben had, use the signs as your markers. There is more than one sign than says "Dante's View," but there is only one that is long and horizontal, and reads "A Manual for Man" with a detailed map of the region. If you're facing that sign, you're looking out at the same view of Mos Eisley that Luke and Ben did (sans the matte painting of the city itself—the matte incorporates the squiggly salt stream, turning it into the road to the wretched hive). If you're looking to recreate the view with the same light conditions, be there about 40-45 minutes after sunrise. (For us, this was 8:20 a.m. on October 22, 1999.)

» **DRY LAKE BEDS (LIKELY LANDSPEEDER LOCATIONS):** The dry lake beds are located on the

outer edges of Death Valley. On the way in, you'll pass through Owens Lake Bed, or you could imagine a landspeeder cruising alongside you on Panamint Flat Dry Lake or Searles Dry Lake (see map).

YUMA

» **BUTTERCUP VALLEY DUNES (CA):** From one Tatooine to another. From Dante's View in Death Valley, return to the 190 and continue south another 19 miles to Highway 127 south. Follow the 127 south for 82 miles to Interstate 15 south. Take the 15 south for about 125 miles to Interstate 215 south. Follow the 215 south for roughly 21 miles, and then hook up with Interstate 10 east. Follow the 10 east for about 75 miles, then transition to the 86 south. Keep on the 86 south for about 85 miles, then hook onto Interstate 8 east. The Buttercup Valley Dunes are about 40 miles east down the 8. Exit Grays Well Road. The dunes should be clearly visible on the south side of the road.

» **DOWNTOWN YUMA (AZ):** This town will come in handy when you want to eat or sleep—just as it did for the *Return of the Jedi* cast and crew in 1982. From the dunes, continue east on Interstate 8 for about 13 miles. Before you know it, you will be face to face with the magic of Yuma, where the crew for the code-named movie "Blue Harvest" (really *Jedi*) stayed during shooting. Unfortunately, the motel where they stayed, called the Stardust Motor Resort Motel on 4th

Street near Main, was torn down to make way for Fry's Groceries.

DISNEYLAND - ANAHEIM, CA

As long as you'll be passing right by it on your way back to L.A., you may as well stop roughly 30 miles south of L.A. at Disneyland—and top off your *Star Wars* road trip by riding Star Tours to your heart's content. The Magic Kingdom is also home to *Indiana Jones and the Temple of the Forbidden Eye*, a ride that is a must for any Lucasfilm fan. (Remember to call ahead to find out which attractions are in service before you go.) From downtown Yuma, take Interstate 8 west for about 170 miles to Interstate 805 north. Follow the 805 north for about 11 miles to Interstate 5 north. Then hang on the 5 north for about 90 miles to Disneyland (to go straight back to L.A., continue another 30 miles north on the 5). Disneyland is located on Harbor Blvd. in Anaheim, between Katella Ave. and Ball Road. Due to major freeway and road construction due to park expansion at presstime, the following directions are subject to change; tune to 1500 AM on your car radio, or call Disneyland at (714) 781-4565, for the most up-to-date information. From the 5 north, exit on Katella Ave. and turn left. Continue on Katella until you reach Clementine, then turn right. Follow Clementine to Friedman Way, and turn left at Friedman. Follow Friedman across Harbor Blvd. and straight into the parking lot entrance. Once you're in the park, zip down Main Street USA and hang right at Tomorrowland. Star Tours is the first ride on your right. —Compiled by Scott Chernoff



After a long Star Wars road trip, why not take a Star Tour in Anaheim?



MARIN COUNTY & SAN FRANCISCO:
Home Base

Just north of San Francisco, across the Golden Gate Bridge, lies Marin County, home base for Lucasfilm. Skywalker Ranch houses Lucasfilm, Lucas Licensing, and Skywalker Sound, while ILM's current headquarters are also located in Marin. In 2003, ILM—along with Lucas Learning, LucasArts, Lucas OnLine, and THX—may move into the historic former Presidio Army base overlooking the bay (*Insider* #46). Completion of the Letterman Digital Center is scheduled by 2004, and plans call for at least 15 acres of the natural site to be preserved as open space.

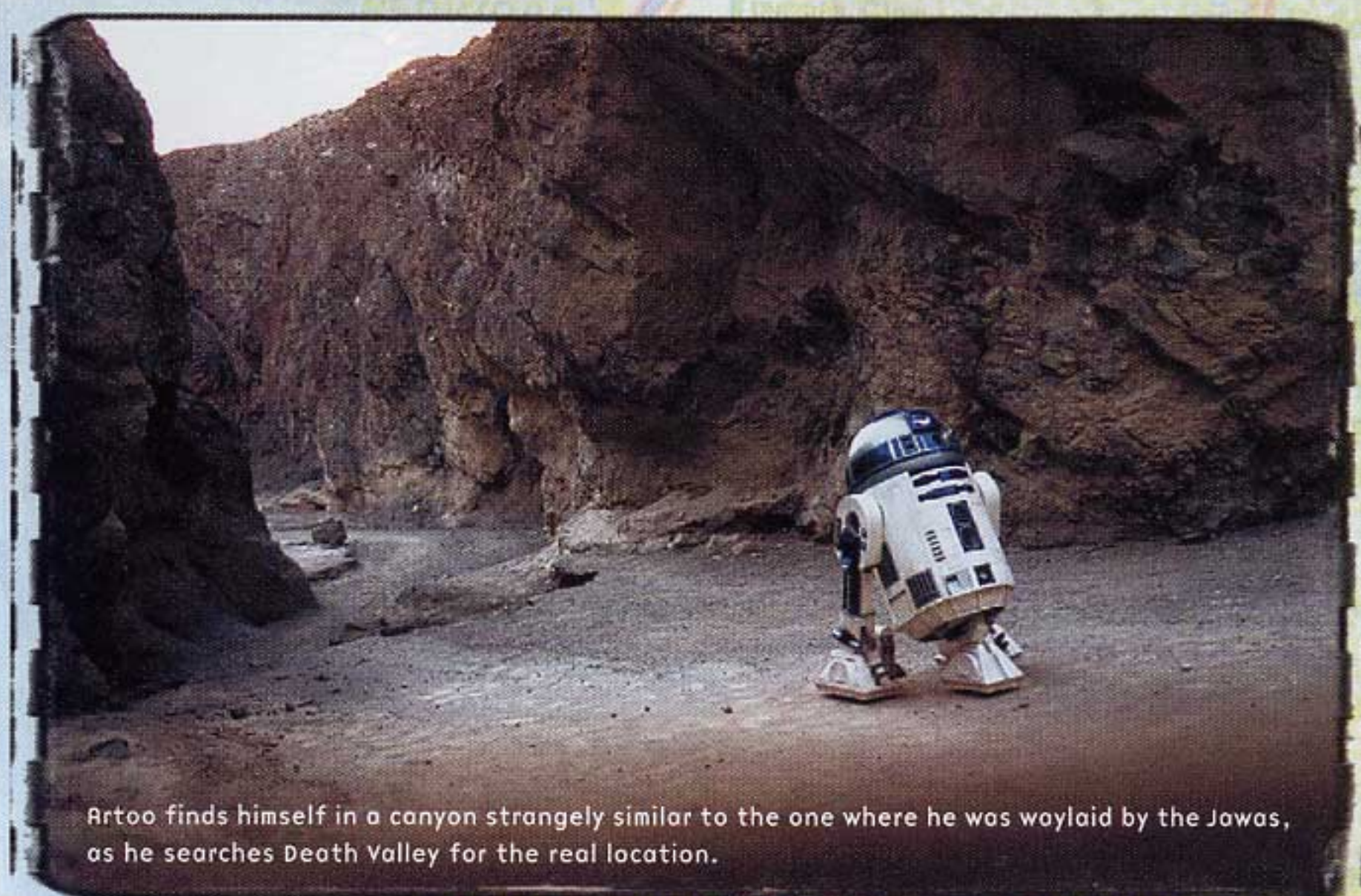
Fans of Lucas' first feature, *THX 1138*, might also want to check out the subway stations of Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) in San Francisco, where many scenes were shot in 1970 before the stations were completed. Other *THX* shooting locations included the Marin County Civic Center and the Lawrence Livermore atomic energy laboratory.

George Lucas is famous for drawing inspiration for his fantasy films from the real world around him, and a number of these inspirations can be seen in Marin County.

For instance, the Native Americans who once lived in the redwood forests of Marin were the Miwoks, whose name got tweaked to Ewoks. Also in Marin is a certain establishment where they apparently train young practitioners in espionage—or at least that's what you might think when you pass the Bothin Youth Center, possible origin of the name of the Rebellion's Bothan spies. The town of Bodega Bay just up the coast was the site of Alfred Hitchcock's famous film *The Birds*, but if you pronounce "Bodega" sideways, it becomes Dagobah, the swamp planet home of Jedi Master Yoda.

And just as Yoda spoke of how the Force "surrounds us," it seems that so too does *Star Wars*. Indeed, for those dedicated and hardy enough to hit the road and make the journey, there is still plenty of *Star Wars* still to be seen. Drive safely, and may the Force be with you. ☺

—DWR/SC



Artoo finds himself in a canyon strangely similar to the one where he was waylaid by the Jawas, as he searches Death Valley for the real location.

I WENT TO DEATH VALLEY and all I got was this Amazing Treasure!

ANNOUNCING THE *INSIDER'S* STAR WARS ROAD TRIP CONTEST!

I've made a lot of road trips in my day, going everywhere from Vegas to, um, Vegas, but the journey takes on a whole new flavor when you've got R2-D2 in the back of the van. Suddenly, it becomes a mission. And suddenly, wherever you go, you're popular. Because you're with the droid. Single men sometimes try to use puppy dogs to gain girls' attention in the park. But let me tell you, when you've got R2-D2 with you, folks flock. He's a babe magnet. Wait, scratch that—he's a *people* magnet. The look of surprise and delight on park visitors' faces when they saw the droid was an unexpected yet totally understandable part of the trip.

The fact that we got Don Post back his Artoo in one dusty piece (albeit at two in the morning) was a minor miracle, especially given the fact that not everything on the trip went exactly according to plan. Like hitting the road 12 hours later than scheduled, leaving the camera in L.A. (we bought a new one on the way), and the aforementioned lack of thought regarding the carriage of Artoo. But between David's archaeological savvy and preparation, Chris' enthusiastic piloting and geological knowledge, and Artoo's adorable cuteness, we managed to pull everything off. Almost.

The only hitch in our plan was the buried treasure part. We thought it would be a great idea if we chose a spot where a scene from *Star Wars* was shot, and buried some kind of treasure for the first fan to find it and dig it up. We would provide a detailed treasure map for readers to find the prize. Jon Snyder, Dan Madsen, and I went to great trouble to put together a really awesome collection of *Star Wars* stuff, and wrapped it all up in plastic to protect it from the elements.

I'll keep most of the treasure secret, but let's say one of the things was a letter certifying you the winner and guaranteeing you a free *Star Wars* Celebration Podracer jacket if you call us with a secret password. Yup, secret password—it was *that* cool.

But when we got to Death Valley, reality sunk it. We remembered that, well, Death Valley is kind of a national park, and they don't really take kindly to people digging the place up and burying stuff. In fact, it's pretty much illegal. Breaking the law—and printing photographs of us doing so—was bad enough, but when we went to the Death Valley ranger's station and got help from the friendliest man on earth, Ranger Callagan, we knew we couldn't bury the treasure there. Which was especially a bummer since we had been carrying it around with us all day.

But the treasure can still be yours for the taking—if you find the location known as "Artoo's Arroyo," the canyon R2-D2 rolled down before getting abducted by the Jawas. If you, my fellow fan, have the gumption to take the *Star Wars* Road Trip for yourself, your mission is to find Artoo's Arroyo. You must photograph it and prove to Dr. David West Reynolds' satisfaction that you have found the exact location and that your photos are new (by holding up a clearly visible copy of a current newspaper). The first person or group to find Artoo's Arroyo (and document it) will win the entire treasure (which is still sealed and unopened) and have their names printed in the *Insider*. Send your entries to: ROAD TRIP CONTEST, c/o *Star Wars Insider*, P.O. Box 111000, Aurora, CO 80042. ☺

—Scott Chernoff