Natural beauty of Sedona radiates with wonder

By Kathryn Reed

SEDONA, Ariz. – It's as though the rocks are evolving before my eyes. Shadows come and go. The sun is setting. A little more vibrant red; now a little more pink. Sky changing colors.

Mesmerizing. Breathtaking. Captivating.

Sedona, while well known for its vortexes – or spiraling energy, is a feast for the eyes. Everywhere one looks red rock creations sprout from the landscape. It doesn't matter if one feels the energy; taking in the beauty is a moving experience.

Exquisite rock formations are everywhere in Sedona, including outside the condo where we stayed. Photos/Kathryn Reed

While much of the area is in the Coconino National Forest, it's hard to think of it as a forest coming from Lake Tahoe. But it is an outdoor paradise.

We spend the first of three nights watching the sunset from

the airport. Throngs of people are there before we arrive. The temperature is dropping as the sun fades behind the mountains.

Mother Nature’s show deserves a standing ovation.

We are here for a few days after being at spring training and in Scottsdale the first part of this mid-March week. My sister, Pam, has secured us a condo at her Sedona Summit timeshare. This is her first time Sedona, while mom had stayed in this Arizona town before, and Sue and I had made day trips in the past.

Nothing is on our agenda except to hang out and look at red rocks. A little pool time, reading, relaxing, mixed with those rocks fill our days.

One morning we head to the old mining town of Jerome. At one time it was the fourth largest town in Arizona – that was in 1899. By 1929, the population was 15,000. Today a few hundred people call it home.

Copper is the main mineral pulled from the hillside land. A scar remains on one side of the mountain. At the Jerome State Historic Park it’s possible to look down a shaft that is about 1,900 feet deep. The Audrey Shaft is lined with concrete for fire protection.

Once a mansion, the focal point of the state park is now a museum below the main part of town.

Jerome is built into a hillside. Streets are narrow. A tiny visitor center on Hull Avenue is a good first stop for getting a map that designates historic buildings and businesses.

We take a different route back to Sedona that leads us past some of the more recognizable rock formations like Bell Rock, Courthouse Butte, Cathedral Rock and Chapel of the Holy Cross.

It’s easy to make this a driving a tour, hiking expedition, or leisurely stroll. The church that in 1956 was built into the

rocks is worth getting out to explore – no matter your beliefs.

And make sure your battery is charged. Kodak moments are everywhere.

One morning Sue and I venture off on the Centennial and Girdner trails that are walking distance from the condo.

Sedona turned 100 in 2002. It got its name from the first postmaster's wife – Sedona was her first name.

Along the red dirt trail are magnificent vistas, with rock outcroppings in the distance. More immediate are blooming cacti, gangly pines and shrub brush. We share the trail with a mountain biker and hikers. The hikers tell us if we descend into the canyon, come out the wash, and hit a road we will make it back to the condo in several hours.

We opt to turn around. The pool is calling.

Another afternoon is spent meandering through the shops at Tlaquepaque. Artwork of all kinds fills the adobe buildings.

Nearby is Ken's Creekside Café, where we have an early dinner. While no water is running in the creek, the view is still peaceful and relaxing. We all enjoy our meals and fun cocktails.

Sedona is one of those places that is good for all ages. It's about a two-hour drive from Phoenix. Spend a day, or spend several, there is plenty to do.

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