

# Is That So?

By EUGENE BURNS  
Ranger-Naturalist

Del Monte Lodge, Pebble Beach, Calif.—"If someone were to step up and say: 'Look, Mister, you've only got one more short drive to make in your lifetime. Any place in the wide world? For sheer beauty, which would you choose?'"

That was the proposition put to a group of world-wide travelers last night. As you might know, the answers were many. Here are some:

"I'd head for the Columbia river highway—the old road, from the Vista House to The Dalles, and make it in spring so's to get the apple orchards in bloom along Hood River."

"Me for Hawaii. Take the road past Koko Head, the Blowhole, and back by way of the Falls—stopping there for my last look; either by moonlight or by early morning light so's I'd get the full color of the water off the reefs."

"Nothing can surpass the road from Colombo to Kandy, Ceylon, past elephants dragging logs, monkeys in trees, beautiful gardens..."

"Up the Fraser in British Columbia and across to Jasper..."

"Well, I'd make mine in Tahiti, the drive around the island, Tropical flowers..."

"I'd just want to sit it out alongside the Grand Tetons reflected in Jackson Lake..."

"What about the south rim of the Grand Canyon, particularly when a thunderstorm, with lightning flashing, is pulling through below you?"

"Franconia Notch, New Hampshire, when autumn foliage is in full glory... Nikko Park, Japan, in cherry blossom time... Chuchanut drive when the sun is setting behind the San Juan Islands... the Palisades along

the Hudson... Amalfi-drive in Italy... Island of Capri... up Mount Victoria, Hongkong by twilight..."

But because we are in Pebble Beach, 120 miles south of San Francisco, the topic kept coming back to our own 17 mile drive from Pacific Grove, along the ocean side, to Carmel and down Big Sur-way to San Luis Obispo.

**Death Valley Drive**  
And surely, each reader could add a spectacular drive of his own—such as the looping road



between Moscow and Lewiston, Ida, or the desolate magnificence of the Death Valley drive. But mainly, I think these favorite drives would contain ingredients such as these: mountains or cliffs mixed with ocean or mountain lakes. In short, land and water making a dramatic connection, backed up with plenty of trees and if game is added, so much the better.

Of these requirements, this 17-mile drive which hugs the ocean side of Monterey peninsula has them in abundance. Care to take a spin with Samuel F. B. Morse, member of the dot-an-dash clan, who knows just about every square inch of this territory. And why shouldn't he? He owns most of it and has lived here "the better part of my life, and I'm going on 72."

As we drive, he points out the startling white sand: "It couldn't be any whiter, could it? Unless you made the water off there a darker blue and that's impossible because it is already purple, except where it creams up on the wet sand, and there offshore in the reef, see, it's green..."

Many Photographs  
As we drive past a point with a lone, twisted, gnarled old cy-

press silhouetted, he says: "That tree has been photographed and painted by more people than even that famous canal in Venice. Beautiful tree, isn't it? Painted picture of it myself, too."

Past a hundred or so barking sea lions, basking in the sun on an island 100 yards offshore, he says: "Here, you take the glasses. That old bull there, I'd say would go right around 3,000 pounds. Lots of solid meat under his hide." Morse should know: he used to run cattle.

"We're lucky," he says, and points offshore where a grey whale is spouting. "They are on their way south now, to Baja, California. Warm lagoon there, ideal for calving..."

A herd of deer, great twisted pines, California poppies, water dashing wildly against rocks, white sands, seaweed, sea otters, sardines, cormorants, cypresses, pelicans, tiger sharks, monarch butterflies... and an incredibly beautiful stretch of rugged shoreline with not one piece of advertising, not one building to disturb the view... and, he says, "I've turned down \$50,000 for a shoreside acre—turned it down because this is one stretch of our 1,100 miles of gorgeous west coastline which must remain completely unspoiled and kept that way forever."

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