



ILLUSTRATION BY JOE KOTULA

space—for an “out-of-this-world” vacation **By JOHN B. STEVENSON**

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and ask you to take pictures of them floating in space with the ship in the background. They do the same for you before returning to the ship.

It is more than 54 hours since liftoff. You were in your seat earlier for a mid-course correction; you are now strapped in again for the landing. The ship has been turned so that it is falling tail first. You look out a port and can see the moon's horizon looming up.

You are falling nearly 7,000 miles an hour when the rocket automatically turns on. The thrust of the motor decreases as the ship nears the moon's surface. You can see that you are below the level of a nearby mountain range when, *thump*, the dish-like feet of the landing gear touch and the motor shuts off. You've soft-landed on the uneroded, airless surface of the moon.

You unfasten your belt and stand up. You have weight again, even though it is only $\frac{1}{6}$ normal. Your ship is on a lunar plain which is crisscrossed with tire and tractor tracks. It has been cleared of crevices and small craters.

Moon-Tel Room and Bath

You see an electric bus approaching. It has an enclosed airtight passageway on one side. One end of this passage can be raised so that its door end can be brought flush against the door of the ship's air lock. Thus all doors can open without any loss of air.

The moon hotel is very much like an earth hotel except that it is airtight and made out of lunar masonry materials. You bathe, and your space suit is taken, washed, and serviced. You have your first moon meal on the top-floor observation dining room, where you can look out at

the great man-made wonders of the moon.

You see the landing clearing, the return launch pad, the rocket propellant factories, nuclear and solar electric power plants, agricultural domes and cave entrances, astronomical and radio observatories, residential areas where the people who work in these facilities live, and an industrial area where certain types of products can be made at a lower cost than on earth because of free solar electric power, perpetual vacuum, low gravity, and richer lunar deposits of raw materials.

Later, you talk to some of the dedicated pioneers who live here. You find they enjoy living under artificial conditions where they control the climate and never have bad weather. The $\frac{1}{6}$ gravity is ideal for people with leg ailments and heart conditions.

Sight-Seeing by Leaps and Bounds

Dressed in your space suit, you leave the hotel through an airtight revolving door. After you push it a quarter turn, it stops for a few seconds so that the air can be pumped from the right quarter into the left. Then the brake is released, and you revolve the quarter you are in to the outside vacuum.

A short walkway leads to a pass between two cliffs and then into a park where the natural lunar landscape is preserved, except for a network of footpaths used for short hikes.

When walking these paths, you can take bounding steps five feet high and 20 feet long because of the low gravity.

But this is only the beginning of your lunar sight-seeing. A huge nuclear bus takes you on a

three-week trip all the way around the moon over trails which were blazed by explorers in nuclear electric tractors during the early '70s. On your excursion, you see the man-made sites, mining areas, and lunar oddities of nature.

After a bon-voyage party at the hotel, it's time to return to the earth. Your Nova third stage has been serviced and refueled. It lifts off and ascends into a low mountaintop-skimming orbit around the moon. You can see a network of vehicle trails crisscrossing over crater floors and lunar plains. You pass over the Russian community and those of other nations.

In two hours you have completed $1\frac{1}{2}$ orbits around the moon and are strapped in for the firing which makes the ship leave the moon and go into orbit around the earth. After 70 hours and one mid-course correction, you are in your seat again and the ship is at the closest point of its return orbit, grazing the upper layers of the earth's atmosphere. Your seat is swiveled around so that your back is toward the nose of the ship.

Re-entry begins. You feel the force of multiple gravities, and you can see the wings glowing red hot. Then the ship bounds back into space for one more smaller, cooling orbit. When it re-enters the second time, the pilot keeps the ship up in the thin layers of air until he is in a glide path going east across the Gulf of Mexico.

When the speed is reduced to subsonic, a jet intercepts the ship and tows it back to the Cape. It lands on a sea ski in the Banana River, and a motor launch picks up the passengers. The third stage is towed to a landing ramp near the Nova launch complex—where it is made ready for its next voyage to the moon.