
Stop 6. Nashville

Arrival datetime: Tuesday April 9, 3:00PM
Sites visited: Parthenon, Wild Horse Saloon, Fort
Nashborough, Printers Alley
Accommodations: The Opryland Hotel
States traveled: Kentucky, Tennessee

Construction on Route 65 cost us at least 25 minutes. We followed a cattle-carting truck at 10 miles an hour for so long Michael lost his appetite for steak.

Jennifer's Mother had been to Nashville before and recommended that we visit the Parthenon. We arrived there at about 11:30AM, wondering as we drove what it was doing there. The story we learned is that the citizens of Nashville viewed the city as a seat of learning, so at the time of their Centennial they built a Parthenon to give credence to the image.



The Parthenon of Nashville.

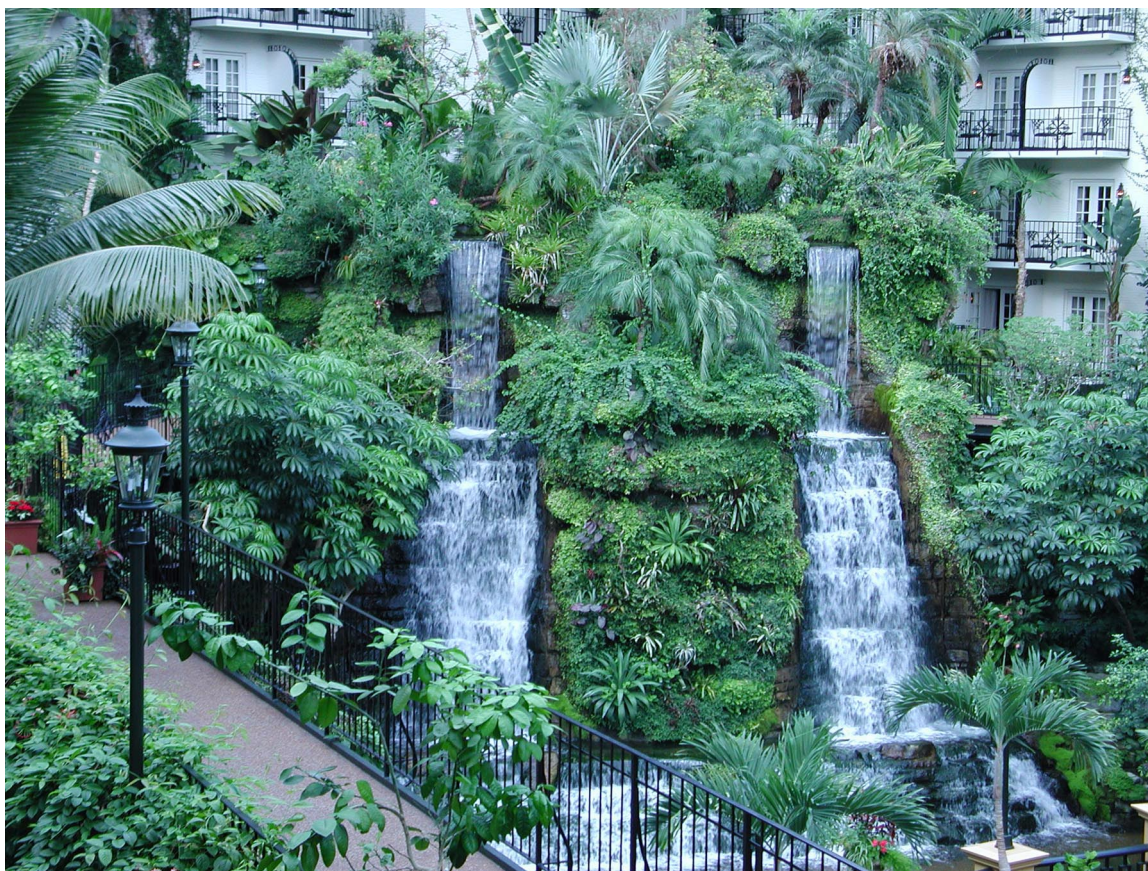
We then sought entertainment downtown, stopping first for lunch at the Wildhorse Saloon. The place must hold a few thousand people but we were one of only four lunch tables. We watched country music videos, admired the

cartoonish statues of horses, and listened to the waitress explain the pros and cons of the various nightspots nearby.

We wandered around downtown for a bit. The only thing very interesting we saw were a few restored buildings depicting the original Fort Nashborough. General Nash, for whom it was named, died in 1777 in the Revolutionary War, before the fort was even built.

We headed for Opryland. We knew in advance that the Grand Old Opry would not be in session, as it was not a weekend. We just hoped that there was something else to do in that neighborhood, because otherwise we would end up back downtown, and that neighborhood did not look incredibly hospitable.

Were we rewarded. The Opryland Hotel made us feel like we were back in a National Park. Multiple atriums the size of football stadiums housed thirty foot waterfalls and tropical forests. One was completely devoted to nature, an indoor forest with flowering plants divided only by walkways and occasional benches for quiet contemplation. The others were peppered with shops, restaurants, bars, and fast food places. There was a virtual island that offered boat rides on the



One of many waterfalls inside the Opryland Hotel.

surrounding moat. A square fountain in the middle of the island had about fifty separate spouts. Each spout was individually programmed to shoot water straight into the air at different intervals in time to classical music. The finale was a 100-foot geyser that lasted for a full minute then disappeared in less than a second. A similar fountain show in a lilypond setting sent water streaming through colored lights and gas-fueled fires. We had drinks at a circular bar that rotated to give equal display time to the lilypond light show, two thirty foot waterfalls, and one smaller, but wider waterfall that emptied into the same carp-inhabited pool. We had dinner with a view of the indoor forest then spent a few

hours listening to a local rock band on the island. We did not miss the Grand Old Opry for a minute.

As Michael's recent bout with lymphoma had been his fourth recurrence, just being on our trip had already made us feel like we were living in a fairy tale. He was diagnosed in 1995, had a bone marrow transplant and experimental vaccine in 1997, had an apparently isolated node removed in 1999, had radiation on another apparently isolated node in 2000, and had chemotherapy requiring hospitalization in 2001. We were living a dream just by being healthy and in shape and able to travel. The whole Opryland adult Disneyland experience made our fairytale

that much more surreal. We lingered through the morning. We worked out in the weight room, purchased breakfast to

go from a cart in the lobby, and ate on our veranda overlooking some waterfalls.

Miles traveled: 113
Departure datetime: Wednesday April 10, 10:30AM
Departure weather: Sunny 62°