

## Friday, May 4<sup>th</sup> – Day 13<sup>th</sup>

07:30 a.m. – „We'll get up at our leisure and we'll take our time because a breakfast buffet comes with our room“ Susie had written in the itinerary. And what is written that's the deal !

It was raining but we did not care because there was pleasant 68 F and we were on vacation ... whatever ! And then ... raindrops left bubbles on puddles ... and my father always said that it is a mark for short raining. In the afternoon should be nice weather according to his rule ...

08:40 a.m. – breakfast buffet in the dining room of the hotel. You could load on your plate whatever you wanted ! And we loaded ... ☺ Scrambled eggs, boiled eggs, bacon, muffins, waffles warmed up in a jumping up toaster. And juice and coffee. And Pepsi for Dan of course. Good breakfast is the best start to the new day ...

Sipping coffee Susie specified that day's program : „First we will visit the Missouri Botanical Garden. It is a nice place with a lot of beautiful parklands and features. Then we will go to the Anheuser-Busch Brewery to take a tour around this plant. Maybe there would be some taste ☺. And from the brewery we will visit the Gateway Arch, the dominant feature of Saint Louis. In conclusion of the day we will have dinner in a shi-shi restaurant in the Little Italy quarter.“

09:45 a.m. – „Let's go to the botanical garden !“



After about a quarter of an hour ride by Toyota we reached our destination. Missouri Botanical Garden.

(<http://www.mobot.org/> ;  
<http://www.mobot.org/hort/tours/tourintro.shtml>)

Susie bought tickets and we came through the entry hall to the gardens. It was a bit cloudy, sprinkling, about 77 F. The air was

humid and there was a pleasure to breathe, we liked it ! It was sort of magic to walk there. The gardens were fairytale ! They were so neat, really shi-shi, improving by many sculptures. Ah what amount of flowers, bushes, trees, pretty cut lawns, pools, fountains and creeks we could see there !!! It was something special for our eyes, noses and ears ...

We started our tour visiting a parkland in the tradition of English. We could see there a lot of flower beds of all kinds of pansies and irises and many and many feet of perfectly trim hedges. And then we strolled through garden in the American tradition of a similar look.

Afterward we set our feet in the heaven, we entered the Japanese garden ... It was unbelievable ! It was almost unreal world ! Beautiful, wonderful ! There were flowers, bushes, conifer trees of different heights even unknown for us trees with strange blooms ... And all those plants were so sensitively put in a magically shaped landscape with small hills, pools, gurgling creeks, small falls and also with a big lake with bays and islands. We walked down nice sidewalks winding through all those beauties and around typical Japanese wooden constructions too. There were wooden bridges spanning the streams, small wooden arbors to sit and rest, the special pier along a bank of the lake. And all those items fit perfectly together and created the genuine dreamland ...

And in addition to that we could see and hear songbirds and admired a family of Canadian geese floating across the lake. We could stay there forever ... in peace and quiet. Only sitting in the arbor, listening to burbling springs and singing birds and overlooking that everything ...

Even the rain had stopped and also the sun decided to show us its face and peeped out of clouds to make our sense of satisfaction perfect.

But what could be done we had to continue our sightseeing tour. And what could we see then ? The Chinese garden ! And again we enjoyed that Asian harmony between the Nature and man-made landscaping. Tastefully built wooden shelters, over stones running creeks, water lilies, bonsai. Beauty and peace. The place for rest and meditation ...

But we did not have a lot time to meditate ... a tropical dome was awaiting us, another miracle of nature. A damp and sultry air inside ... and creeks, small lakes, palm trees, bananas, orchids, reeds and every other tropical vegetation all sorts, colors, shapes and heights. So we delighted in it and enjoyed it our best. With all our senses. Really all including a taste. For explanation ... about in the middle of our sightseeing tour of the tropical world we spotted an old man, a member of a maintenance crew, who picked such blue-black berries, they looked like gooseberries, from a trunk of one tree and ate them ! And of course ... our curious boy Dan immediately went up to him and questioned him about those berries and whether they were actually edible. That good man without any word reached out for a few other ones and gave them to Dan and told him that they were really edible and that tree is the only one in the world which had its fruit right on its trunk. And Dan, my good friend, turned to me : „Mirek, try it also. It's good !". What could I do ? I have to be brave and tasted one also ... and hoped I would survive it ☺. Fortunately it was really good, yes something like gooseberry. „Yes, it is good, Dan, but thanks that one is enough for me !".

Dan revealed our Czech origin to the old fellow who surprised us by his words that he had had the Czech roots also. The world is too small for Czechs ☺.

Yes, then he added his another roots came from Irish.

**01:15 p.m.** – coffee and Pepsi in the garden restaurant, then we had a short tour of African sculptures and ... good bye the botanical garden !

**02:00 p.m.** – we got to another Saint Louis sight ... and it was the biggest American brewery Anheuser Bush, no less.



The brewery was consisted of beautiful old edifices, built from millions of red bricks.

One part of that brick imperium is used for an informational office and mainly for the brewery museum with all the trimmings including brewery horses, old brewery wagons and trucks and of course the all products of the Anheuser Bush brewery. In the second section they still work using the most modern technologies sensitively put in those old buildings and product their world-famous beer.



And all that what we could see during about two hour tour was ended by sitting with glasses of Budweiser. And it was great ! (*I am a good boy ☺*) Even some souvenirs for our friends back in the Czech Republic were bought there.

**03:30 p.m.** – from the brewery we headed for the mentioned dominant feature of that town of jazz, the Gateway Arch.



You can see this miracle of the building industry from a big distance already because it is a giant ferroconcrete arch. Its body has a trilateral section and it is hollow inside where they operate lifts in either its ‚legs‘ and on the top of that arch, which is 580 feet high and the same number a span of its legs at the bottom is, so on the top they run a lookout and a restaurant. On the underground of that structure is situated a museum of history of the United States from the first settlement up to the present. And the link between past times and nowadays ... it is the main thought of this construction, this Arch. Without past times would not be the present time even the future ...

What we could add to that sight. It was the very interesting and very impressive experience and it was worth visiting it. Even we were only ground and underground visitors (*there were long lines to both of the lifts*) we liked it immensely and we would have that imposing arch in our minds forever.

Then we took a short walk to Mississippi and allowed our eyes to feast on looks on the Arch from the riverside.

06:15 p.m. – dinner in a restaurant with Italian cuisine. Yes, it was the genuine Italian **MAGGIANO'S** *ristorante* ! It was something cool ! Even in a restroom they had paper towels with their logo ...

We say nobby, Zuzanka says shi shi. ☺

We had never eaten in such restaurant like that before. Really. And food ? Delicious, scrumpcious, fantastic ! And what huge portions they gave ! We had Fettucine Alfredo, Broccoli (*traditional fettucine noodles tossed with broccoli and garlic in a creamy alfredo sauce*) and even if we had that portion split in two plates for me and Hana it was enough for both of us and we had eaten our fill. It was great !



(<http://www.maggianos.com/default.asp>)

08:00 p.m. – back in our apartment. Dan tapped cans with ,XX' beer, and we had a rest watching TV. Yes, we were chatting too and then we went to beds.