

Front Range Sunsets Provide Unique Visuals

By Irv Sternberg

Over the years I've had the opportunity to observe the sun rising over the Atlantic and setting in the Pacific and, of course, in Colorado and other parts of the country, too. Watching the sun rise and set can be exhilarating or disappointing. I've experienced both.

Years ago while visiting the Jersey Shore, we set an alarm clock to wake us up pre-dawn so we could watch the sun come up, seemingly out of the Atlantic Ocean. The view was clearly visible from our oceanfront room in Atlantic City. We knelt on the sofa, its back to the large window, and waited in the dark. Then the night sky began to lighten—from indigo to gray, then a pale pink. Finally, the glowing orb we'd been waiting for started to rise out of the ocean, slowly at first, then more rapidly, growing all the time. And just when it appeared it would emerge in its full glory, a bank of clouds suddenly dropped a dark gray curtain over the stage—and the sun disappeared. But, growing up in New Jersey, I had seen sun rises in previous years and was convinced that, weather permitting, there is no more spectacular sun rise than those on the ocean.

Back in the 1990s, when we were taking occasional drives to Las Vegas, we encountered an unusual event. We observed two sunsets within a few minutes of each other. The first occurred as we were heading south on I-15 shortly after leaving Utah. We saw the sun dip behind a hill to the west. Then, on a rise, we saw the sun again—and watched it disappear once more behind a hill. Two for the price of one.

On a visit to San Francisco, we drove to the shore after dinner to view a sunset over the Pacific. We found a stretch of beach adjacent to the highway, settled down and waited for the sun to say farewell for the day. The skies were clear so we were not disappointed. There she was, like an actor preparing to leave the stage where she had performed all day, boldly and brilliantly. Now she was fading fast, descending on the horizon and, finally, sinking into the Pacific in a final, slow and majestic departure. I felt like applauding.

Living in Denver for the last 47 seven years, most of the sun rises I've seen are unspectacular but occasionally, between the rooftops of my neighbors' homes, I observed a rosy harbinger of a great day ahead. As for the end of the day, the multi-colored sunsets along the Front Range warm my heart and leave a peaceful feeling. When the sun dips behind Mt. Evans or any of the adjoining mountains, the entire Front Range is seen in sharp silhouette—a string of dark, jagged peaks from Pikes Peak to Longs Peak—thrust against a still light-colored sky. The effect is uniquely magnificent! It's my favorite view of the Rockies. I truly love the sunsets in Colorado.