

Cloud formations add drama

One subject that has always excited me is clouds. How often does a dramatic cloud pattern catch your eye and you find yourself staring skyward, oblivious to the surroundings? We've all marveled at constantly changing cloud formations nudged across the sky by gentle winds.

Clouds come in a variety of shapes, textures and colors. They can be huge and billowy-white or soft and wispy. They can be bold and dramatic, even frightening at times. Capturing them on film is truly exciting and will definitely enhance your photographs.

How to better photograph clouds? First, learn to "see" them. Look for constantly changing shapes and patterns. See how clouds can become a colorful palette as the sun descends toward the horizon.

Notice how a receding black storm cloud serves as a sensational backdrop for foreground objects being lit by the rays of an emerging sun.

Enjoy foggy, misty days, too. Some of the very best mood-filled pictures are shot in this type of weather.

Once you "see" the clouds, how do you enhance your photographs of them? Begin with a good sense of composition by using a low horizon line to accentuate the clouds and give your shot a feeling of spaciousness.

When shooting white, puffy clouds against a blue sky with color film, use a polarizer filter. Position yourself at a 45-degree angle to the sun and rotate your polarizer until you see maximum blue.

The result will be an impact-filled photograph showing the

photography

Monte Nagler

white clouds contrasted against a rich, deep blue sky.

Add spice to your cloud pictures by using colored filters such as orange or red. Used at sunset, these filters with color film (slide preferably) will present you with truly dramatic results.

Black and white film "sees" white clouds and blue sky as an almost identical tone. Thus clouds become lost in the finished print. But filters in yellow, orange and red values will achieve cloud/sky separation for you.

A yellow filter will give you normal cloud/sky separation. Orange produces more. And a red filter renders a blue sky almost black, producing very striking results. A polarizer will also darken the sky in black and white photography.

Traveling by air? Clouds from above have a character all their own as they appear like a bed of fluffy cotton. Just set your camera at a fast shutter speed to eliminate vibration and the shot is yours.

Be on the lookout, also, for sunbeams bursting through clouds. Underexpose slightly and you'll capture them on your film.

It's the dramatic cloud patterns that give impact to Monte Nagler's recent photograph of Stonehenge, taken on his trip to

the British Isles this summer. Imagine this picture without the clouds and you'll "see" the difference.

Oz favorites created from sand

Dorothy, Toto, the Tin Man, the Scarecrow and the Cowardly Lion are coming to Twelve Oaks Mall.

They're coming from a giant sandbox filled with 70 tons of sand, and they're going — where else? — to the Wizard of Oz.

The Wizard of Oz favorites will be part of a massive life-sized sand sculpture that will take three full weeks to build in Twelve Oaks' Center Court. Artists from Sand Sculptors International, holders of all current world sand sculpture records, will carve the display as center onlookers watch.

Sculpting in the giant Center Court sandbox began Aug. 23 and will run through Sept. 10.

"We're hoping people will come every day and watch as the sculpture takes shape," said Philip Morosco, Twelve Oaks general manager. "Half the fun is watching it being built. This is something that has never been done before in this area."

The total sculpture will cover an area 35 feet long and 16 feet wide.

THE WITCH'S CASTLE will stand 12 feet high and cover about 103 square feet.

The Emerald City of Oz opposite the castle will cover about the same area but will stand 15 feet high.

Both will be three-dimensional and detailed on all visible sides. Sand sculpture artists will use foreshortening techniques to give the illusion that both buildings are off in the distance.

Between the two buildings, life-size sculptures of the Oz characters will skip, arm-in-arm, through a field of flowers.

"Remember how Dorothy clicked her heels together and said, 'There's no place like home'?"

Morosco said. "We think that after seeing this phenomenal project and visiting our unique stores, visitors will agree that there's no place like Twelve Oaks, either."

The sculpture will be principally designed and sculpted by Todd Vander Pluym, who has been creating sand sculptures around the world for more than 40 years.

AN ARCHITECT by training, Vander Pluym has used the basic design principles of support and arches to win more than 160 sand sculpture championships, including four world championships and six U.S. Open championships. His creations are known for their precise detail and life-like figures.

What makes the sand hold together? The same thing that works on the beach — water. The sculptors use sand that is rich in grit and clay. They mix the sand with water and add it bit by bit to the sculpture as they work.

Since the Oz sand sculpture will remain in Center Court through the end of October, that may mean that Dorothy never gets home to Aunt Em. In fact, after 10 weeks of romping in Center Court, she might just decide that there's no place like Twelve Oaks, either.

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