



WASHINGTON

THE WEST

# THREE MOUNTAIN HIGH

BY TOM HAINES /// GLOBE STAFF



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EAST OF SEATTLE, A CHALLENGING DAY IN THE CASCADE RANGE

ORTH BEND — In the weeks before we were to hike three mountains in a day, my friend Brent Frei, a large man who talks the same, carried out an intimidating “drip marketing” e-mail campaign.

One morning, I opened my inbox to find photos from an 8-mile training hike Brent had taken on a mountain frequented by many Seattleites looking for a quick fix of the Cascades: “To the top of Mt. Si in 1:15. Mt. Rainier salutes in the distance.”

On another afternoon, he sent a report of a hike up Mailbox Peak, 5 miles east of Si: “Tree roots provide helpful stair steps straight up the 20-50 percent grade but in spacings that could not pass code in a land occupied by 10-foot-tall humans. The trees nearly lean flat against the hillside despite pointing straight up.”

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Mark Albedyll at the second summit, with snow-capped Mount Rainier reigning over the Cascades. Brent Frei leads the way for the writer and Albedyll.



PHOTOS BY KRISTIN IMIG/FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

NEVADA

## BLAST ZONE

DON A DOSIMETER AND TOUR A KIND OF COLD WAR MUSEUM

BY DAVID SWANSON /// GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

MERCURY — The Nevada Test Site does not rank among the Las Vegas area’s top tourist attractions.

The scenery is raw, with bony mountains providing most of the topographical personality. Save for the occasional Joshua tree, there’s little vegetation any taller than knee-high. And the only way to visit as a civilian is once a month on a big tour bus — one that I escaped for only a few minutes of a 250-mile expedition lasting more than eight hours.

Besides, how many tourist attractions can you name where you are required to wear a dosimeter, a gadget to measure any nuclear radiation you might pick up?

“If we get a reading you will be notified,” said John Spahn, a retired worker and guide, who handed me a plastic badge embedded with the device. “I carry a dosim-

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## LET VEGAS MEET YOUR APPETITES



SCOTT FRANCES

Joël Robuchon at the MGM Grand is the chef’s first US restaurant.

HOW’S YOUR LUCK? CHEAP SHRIMP, PENNY SLOTS, OR CAVIAR PARFAIT

BY BETH D’ADDONO /// GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

The giddy roller coaster of highs and lows makes Vegas an irresistible destination. Here anything is possible — after all, the Eiffel Tower is across the street from Bellagio and gondoliers make tips in the desert. The Strip is a fantasy world, where living on the edge is not only encouraged, but expected.

In a town where nongaming revenues have finally caught up with the gaming kind, rock star chefs, over-the-top accommodations, and big ticket entertainment give the 38.9 million annual visitors plenty of ways to blow through any winnings. If what happens in Vegas stays in Vegas, for gamblers that includes their money, to the tune of about \$8.2 billion last year.

For the down and out, it can be a town without pity, but if you’re on top, living large is what it’s all about. Not

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