

# Wednesday Notes, April 3, 2024

Looking at the world through Clyde Butcher's lens



LUCY TOBIAS

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Hummm. Color or black and white. Well, why not combine both and see what happens.

Historic Spanish Point in Osprey, Florida has done just that, partnering huge black and white photographs by Clyde Butcher with their historic landscaping showing off in full spring color. It works.

Clyde Butcher: Nature Through the Lens opened November 11, 2023, and runs through August 31, 2024. Butcher, a Missouri native, graduated with a degree in architecture from California Poly State University. A tinkerer at heart, Bucher made a pinhole camera to help him render architectural models in photographs.

All that changed after he visited a showing of black and white photographs by Ansel Adams at Yosemite National Park. Butcher turned his lens towards nature and never looked back, leaving the architecture field in 1970 to focus on his color and black and white photography.

In 1986 Clyde and Niki's son Ted was killed by a drunk driver. They found solace in Big Cypress National Preserve in the Everglades. The vast wild landscape soothed their grief and opened new avenues for creativity. Clyde destroyed all his color work and turned to black and white only. He purchased an 8"x10" view camera and an enlarger. And a tripod entered the picture.

The most often seen photo of Clyde shows him standing waist deep in the swamps of the Everglades, his view camera up high on a tripod. Something deeply moving happens

when a large camera is used to capture nature. Almost like looking at layers of being in a microscope. Every leaf, every ripple of water becomes crisp, with a depth simply not possible with smaller cameras. Like this:



Indian Key Pass, 1997, Clyde Butcher

Or this:



Casey Key 5, 2014, Barrier Island, Venice Clyde Butcher

Or this:



Myakka Oak 20, 2014 Clyde Butcher

[Historic Spanish Point](#) is part of [Marie Selby Botanical Gardens](#). Members of Selby have free admission to Spanish Point. Once home to the Palmers, the grounds have historic structures, wide easy to walk paths, an historic boat works that continues to build boats, butterfly garden, small café, daily boat tours, whew! Lots.



View from the Cafe, Spanish Point, Osprey Lucy Tobias

Their address is 401 North Tamiami Trail, Osprey, Fl. Phone: 941-366-5731. Open every day of the week from 10 am to 5 pm. See website or call for all admission fees.

On my visit this week, I gravitated to the Sunken Gardens, with a pond and Greek columns and a great view of Sarasota Bay.



Sunken Gardens Historic Spanish Point Lucy Tobias

Sitting next to the pond was a young man, pen in hand, writing in a journal. Perfect place for inspiration.

Walking on their pathways is a step back in time. Flora and fauna are old. Tall trees bend towards each other. The smell of tangy salt air blows through the trees.



Walkway at Spanish Point, Osprey, Florida Lucy Tobias

I sat, soaking it all in and remembering advice from my newspaper photographer days. Newly hired to be the chief photographer at the Islander newspaper on Anna Maria Island, I'd just finished a walk through of the darkroom with the departing photographer. The darkroom was easy. Part of my job would be doing a full page essay each week, photos, text, and that worried me.

“But what subjects am I going to do each week, haven’t they all been done?” I asked.

He turned, nodded, and said: “You are right, there is nothing new under the sun.”

“I’m doomed!” I wailed.

“But” he said, and this is the biggest BUT you will hear today, “But no one has yet seen it through your eyes.”

And there you have it. Go to Spanish Point. See the world through Clyde Butcher’s eyes. The view is astonishing.

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What a Wonderful Sight to

How Wonderful to embrace Spring time andNature!!

Anna Davis

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