



I went on a mission to find something, “Baton Rougian.” Just what that may be escaped me, but I thought the first line of attack might be to find some genuine nature to photograph. Not as easy as it sounds down here.

I asked the client. “Oh I would go Downtown, to the casino, ‘Belle of Baton Rouge.’” she said. “There’s that place there, arbortarium...no arbortari..” “Arboretum?” I offered. “Yes, that’s it. That’s were I go when I want to take some pictures.”

A little more discussion, and she said “Yeah, I would never go outside.” “Oh, so it’s an indoor arboretum?” “Oh yes, it’s just too hot to be outdoors!”

Okay, scratch that. I’m not going to a casino to take pictures of trees under glass, and try to pass that off as Baton Rougian!

My first destination, given that all I have so far seen is highways and hotel, was the Waddill Wildlife Refuge. Wrong! Closed Sunday and Monday, so that’s out.

Next up? “BREC Frenchtown Road Conservation Area” a few miles further east. Oops! Strike two! There is a rather permanent looking sign explaining that Louisiana is closed (as far as I can tell) until further notice. You can call or visit some offices, during very proscribed hours, to request permission to visit.

Oh well. At least along the way, I found much to admire about nature in Louisiana. It is certainly hardy. Despite all the indignities mankind seems to hurl at it, it just keeps slogging along. There is an air about things here, everything seems so... **verdantly disheveled**.

There were plenty of interesting views along the way, but given the prevalence of signs proclaiming, “Posted!” “No Trespassing!” “No Parking!” I decided discretion is the better part of valor after all. More so than in any of my foreign travels, I feel I cannot say for sure that the locals and myself share a common idea of civil behavior and other such norms. I do not mean to impugn the Baton Rougians, but I am not really in Baton Rouge, after all, but actually out of the corporate limits, in the backwoods (in a sense) and this is their turf, after all, so I just slink off.

Now, back at the hotel, after an hour or so of searching for nature, outdoors, that’s open... I gave up. I bought a screw-top bottle of Pinot Grigio (no corkscrew) and settled down to rest and catch up on news, etc.