



Some say the view from U.S. Route 60, where the steep road crosses Salt River Canyon, is the most dramatic in the state — keep in mind, Arizona is home to another canyon, one that can be seen from outer space. Whether it's best or not is debatable, but there's no doubt the state's lesser-known gorge is spectacular. That's why we gave our photographer more than a year to capture its beauty.

ANOTHER GRAND CANYON

A portfolio by **SHANE McDERMOTT**

Preceding panel: Cibecue Creek, a major Salt River tributary, joins the river at the bottom of Salt River Canyon. "I made this photo in early spring," photographer Shane McDermott says, "but I didn't know it was Cibecue Creek at the time. I wanted to hike up the creek, but the debris from the spring runoff was too big and the water was too deep and fast. I got about two-thirds of the way to Cibecue Falls before turning back."



Above: The brown water of the Salt River winds around one of the river's many bends. "This was my very first trip to the canyon, in the fall of 2014," McDermott says. "This vantage point isn't far from U.S. Route 60, but it's tricky to get to. That whole trip, the skies were just awesome, and I photographed numerous nice rainbows."

Right: Lichen-covered hoodoos rise from a hillside overlooking the river. "I found these using Google Earth," McDermott says. "To reach them, I had to go past the hoodoos, then back up and around, before following a tiny dirt track to a mesa where I could access them. I camped up there for a couple of nights."



The Colorado isn't the only Arizona river with a Horseshoe Bend, as McDermott discovered. "I consider this one of the 'gem' finds from this project," he says. "This was at sunrise, and the light made it so dynamic. I explored this whole area, including beating my way through tamarisks with a machete to get to the orange cliffs on the left side of the photo."





A placid pool along a small Salt River tributary reflects surrounding saguaros and rocks. "I think this creek runs year-round," McDermott says, "because I photographed it in late spring, when it was very hot. I stayed there for two days, swimming and making photos."

"I'm a sucker for big vistas," McDermott says. "I made this shot about 7 miles from U.S. 60. I liked how the dirt road followed the river around the bend."



Left: McDermott made this photo while he was on his way to the canyon from Globe. "I was going down U.S. 60, watching the clouds and hoping for a rainbow," he says. "When I saw this, I stopped and ran across the highway. The saguaro in the foreground caught my eye, so I backed up a little to adjust the shot and incorporate the saguaro into the composition."

Above: On McDermott's final trip to the canyon, in May of this year, he finally made it to Cibecue Falls. "I'm so glad I didn't see photos of this before I visited it," he says. "I wanted to discover it for myself — not just set up my tripod in everyone else's holes. The big overhangs close to the waterfall give a sense of being deep in the canyon. I'd love to do it again when the water is clearer, but I still think it's really cool." [**AH**](#)