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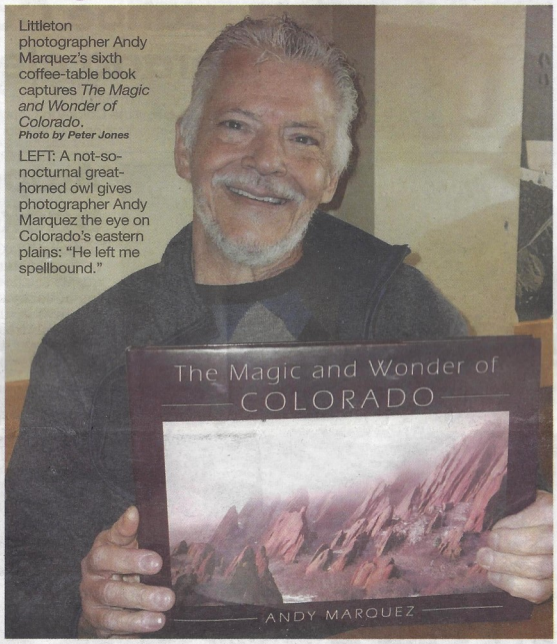
Littleton photographer captures 'Magic and Wonder of Colorado'



Littleton photographer Andy Marquez's sixth coffee-table book captures *The Magic and Wonder of Colorado*.
Photo by Peter Jones

LEFT: A not-so-nocturnal great-horned owl gives photographer Andy Marquez the eye on Colorado's eastern plains: "He left me spellbound."

Marquez's latest book puts focus on Rocky Mountain beauty

BY PETER JONES
NEWS EDITOR

Getting the right light is half the battle in taking photos of nature, according to Littleton-based photographer Andy Marquez.

"Getting that moment when it's at its best—90 percent of the time, it's in the morning or toward sunset," he said.

Take Marquez's end-of-the-day shot on Colorado's Mount Evans.

"When you get up there, your view of the sunset is blocked at that point," he said. "The sun was starting to set. We had seconds to get back to the switchback and take that shot, but boy did it come out good."

The photo taken near Evergreen is one of about 80 that comprise the photographer's eighth book, aptly titled *The Magic and Wonder of Colorado*. In pictures snapped everywhere from Littleton to Mesa Verde, the New York-born Marquez ventures to capture the allure of his adopted home state through images representing the cycle of a year.

Longs Peak, Red Rocks, the

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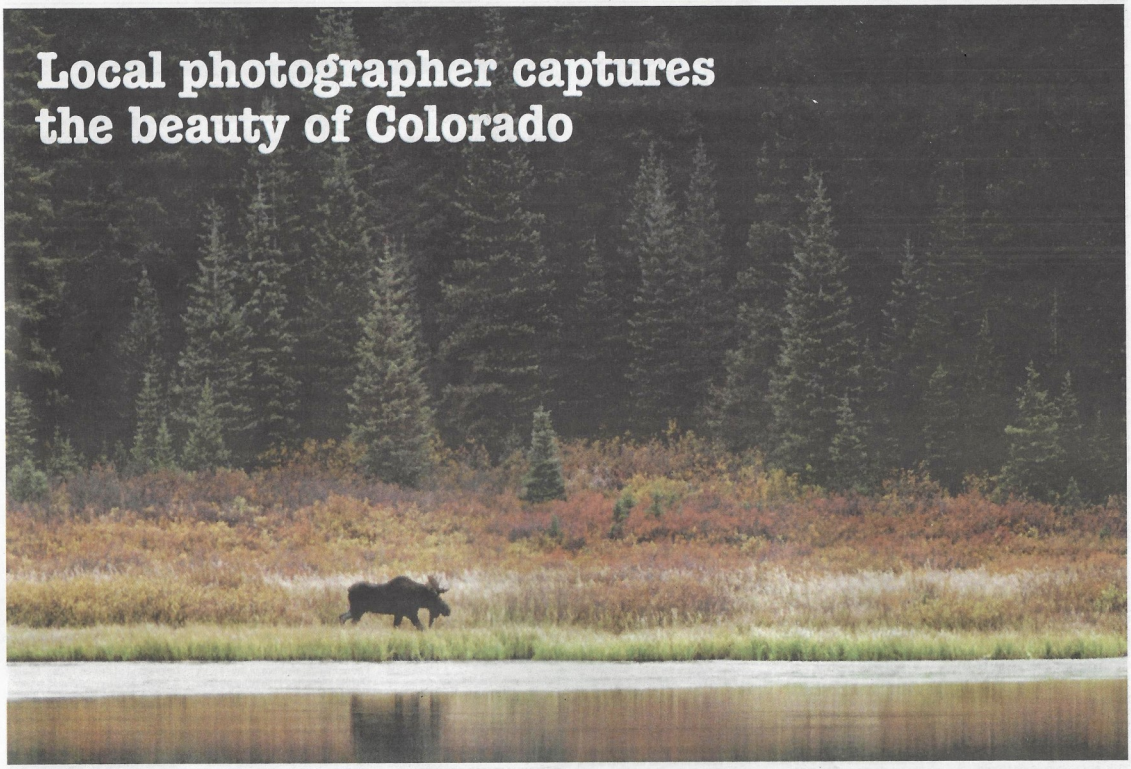
Local photographer captures the beauty of Colorado



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Great Sand Dunes, Rocky Mountain National Park, the Sangre de Cristos, Red Mountain Pass and Pikes Peak are among the attractions featured

"It's the beauty of the mountains, everything in Colorado that's gorgeous and wonderful," he said. "It's all film. I hate digital. I think it's a feel-good book."

For the first time, each image is accompanied by a four-line verse of Marquez's poetry, each line purposefully consisting of eight syllables (at least in most instances).

The book opens, for example, with a sunrise shot of Chatfield Reservoir.

Once the darkness of night subsides,
Chilling air creeps above zero.
Rising mist brings light unexpected,
Soothing the soul with humble grace.

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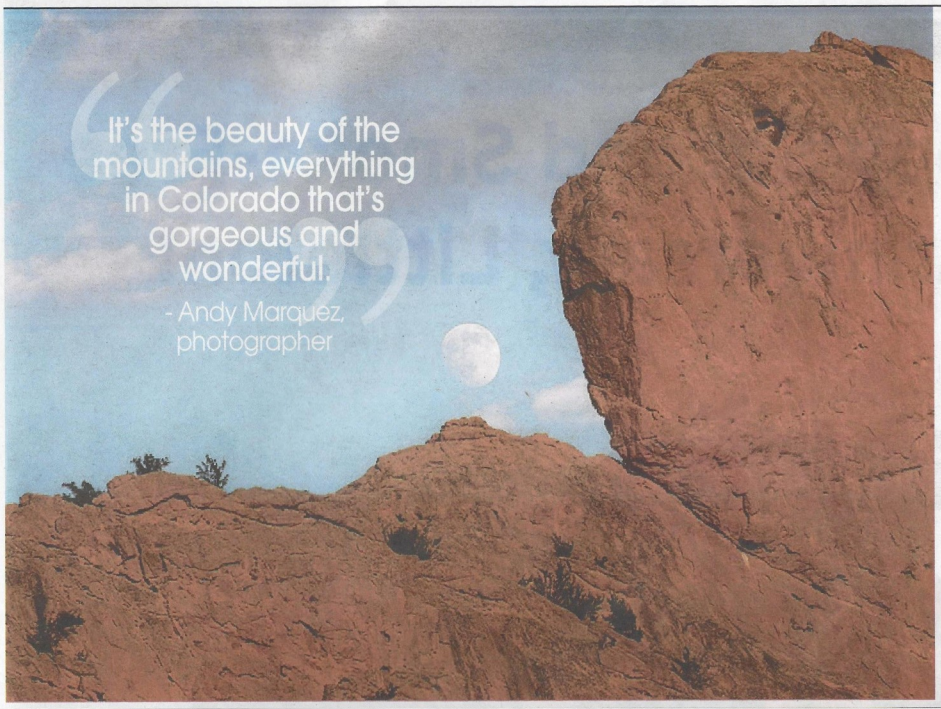

FACING PAGE: A moose photobombs at Piney Lake: "It's he who walks in solitude, a place where spruce are plentiful."
LEFT: Garden of the Gods in Colorado Springs. Note the bear face in the rock formation: "This isn't just a late-day nap. It's been said he sleeps all the time."
BELOW, LEFT: Photographer Andy Marquez's favorite photo in the book: A cold morning in Chatfield State Park
BELOW, RIGHT: A rainbow in rural Douglas County: "As hope was fading, here it came."
Photos courtesy of Andy Marquez

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"I love that shot," Marquez said. "That was a 5-degree morning down in Chatfield, a lot of ice. I wasn't even expecting the sun to come up. I was just trying to get foggy shots."

Sometimes wildlife takes a prominent role, such as the shot of an owl staring into Marquez's camera on the eastern plains.

"I call it 'Spellbound,'" the photographer said. "I used to walk at night a lot. A couple of times, I've had owls kind of swoop down. They're huge. They spread their wings at you."

Sometimes the wildlife shows up as more of a photo bomb than an intended subject, such as the moose who walks through Marquez's shot of spruce trees next to Piney Lake.

It was one of the rare shots for which the photographer forgot to bring his tripod.

A surprise turned up in a photo taken at Garden of the Gods—what appears to be the face of a bear "etched" in stone in the foreground of a moonrise.

"I didn't even notice that when I took it," Marquez said. "My editor said to me, 'Do you see the bear face? Look carefully—eyes, nose, mouth."

Marquez, who has taken photos on six continents in 30 countries during a career spanning more than three decades, says the Colorado mountains are near the top, in more ways than one.

"In Switzerland, it was cloudy and stormy. I didn't get to see much of the peaks," he said.

The Li River in China is another of the photographer's favorites.

Marquez is largely a self-taught photographer, his only formal training being a two-semester course that was part of his journalism major at the University of South Carolina.

He says some of his eye for photography may have come from a near-death experience he had many years ago during a three-day coma, a result of his then-undiagnosed diabetes.

"I did see the light they talk about. I know that for sure," he said. "I think I've been able to see the light better. I'm talking about the light in the sense of what you see every day. I can see within a minute of light being at its best."