

Mary's Trip To Memphis

By Alex Paterson

Mary and her Key worker Liz Watt planned this trip with military detail. From getting Mary her first passport and sorting out the ESTA visas, nothing was left to chance. Mary had list of what she wanted to do and see in Memphis. The main event was visiting Graceland, the home of Elvis Presley.

The holiday started early on Saturday 21st November, painfully early at 3am at Mary's house. After a short drive to Glasgow Airport, they parked the car and checked in.

This was Mary's first experience of the process of boarding the plane, but she breezed through it. Mary was keen to try the in-flight entertainment, movies, music and that button overhead which if you press it magically summons someone with a Smirnoff ice.

9 hours and 40 minutes later they arrived in New York. They then had an internal flight to catch to get to Memphis, so that meant getting the bags off the plane and going through the check in process again. People couldn't have been more helpful in making sure Mary was ok going through this process.

After another 2 and a half hour flight to Memphis they collected their bags and headed to the hotel. They both arrived at the hotel having been travelling for 24 hours when taking into account the time difference. A relaxing day followed then the main event to get to Graceland.

The budget allowed Mary and Liz to get access all areas to the complex. Mary said she thought the mansion would be bigger. Elvis's home is actually quite small. In saying that it took 9 hours to get around everywhere. Each room had its own period and told a different story of Elvis's life and success, Mary and Liz both had audio loops on so they could hear the commentary in each room.

The most impressive room held the gold records and his suits. The Jungle room and studio are both iconic rooms in their own right.

The rest of the week was spent in downtown Memphis exploring the area. Mary discovered a Walmart store and would have happily stayed in there for a week. The hotel was still some distance outside the main centre so getting taxis was a problem. Everyone has their own car and drives everywhere. In true Mary style they decided to hire a Chauffeur who picked them up and drove them everywhere for the week. This turned out to be a great idea as they saw places which they normally wouldn't have seen.

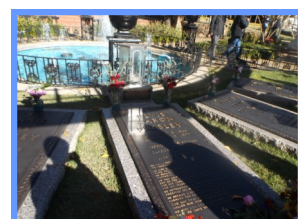
Mary's trip in numbers: 8350 miles travelled on 4 planes, 2 time zones, 40 hours travelling.... and 1 Chauffeur

They both landed back in Glasgow a week later exhausted but with fantastic memories and with Mary having achieved her lifetime ambition.

Mary wants to thank Liz and everyone who voted for her Graceland trip at the Participation event in the Summer and TRFS for making her dream a reality.

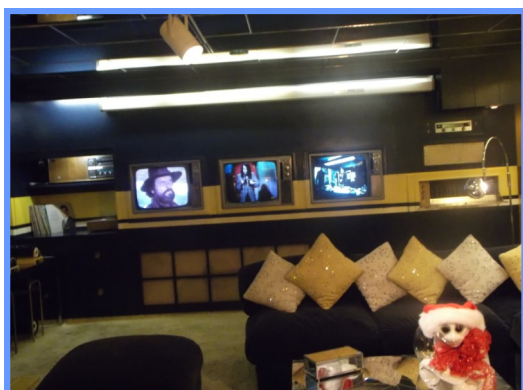
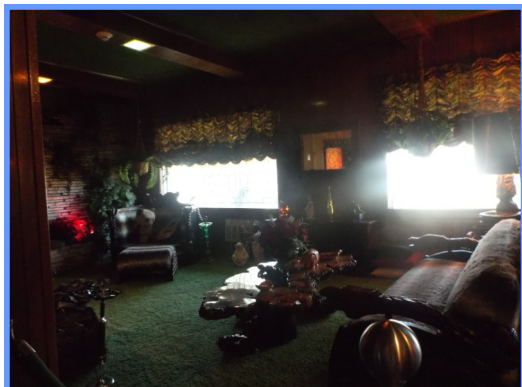
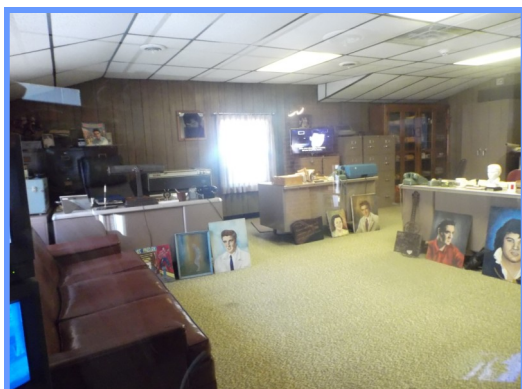
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