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The Art of Place: Notes from Where You'll Love beautifully ruminates on the essence of 92 places in 9 regions across Europe, the United States, and México. Gafford investigates and focuses on cultivating and appreciating a deeper sense of "terroir": personal meaning, recognizing local architecture, people, and geography that distinctly shape our experiences and emotions within each location.

The Art of Place: Notes from Where You'll Love stands apart from typical travel guides; it favors exploration and introspection about a place over bucket lists. The narratives, paired with a local photo taken by Wayne and a satellite map, are of places you will love--but also are of places to *be in love.* Gafford asks the reader to fall into a deeper perspective of place…and see what it reveals.


05
Lago de Bacalar

Lago de Bacalar,
Bacalar, Quintana, Roo.
January 1, 2020

Outrageously clear, Lago de Bacalar is known as The Lake of Seven Colors. Its limestone bottom allows sunlight to reflect shades of crystal blue water from bright turquoise to deep indigo, depending on the depth. The clear water is no accident. Here, the oldest life forms on earth continue to filter the fresh water: cyanobacteria and stromatolites. Cyanobacteria, also known as blue-green algae, contain internal membranes that photosynthesize light into oxygen. Oxygen oxidizes organic matter which is dissolved into simple compounds, resulting in clear water. Stromatolites are the fragile, living fossils formed from the sedimentary remains of cyanobacteria, which can be viewed underwater from a safe distance. They create habitat for algae-consuming organisms, further clearing the water. The lake is a natural phenomenon emerging from underground cenotes formed by collapsed limestone bedrock. The water levels rise shoulder-height in the middle of the lake. The Mayans, in the same waters, succumbed to the conquering Spanish and fended off relentless pirate attacks.



Wayne Gafford's debut book *The Art of Place: Notes from Where You'll Love* is a testament to Gafford's lifelong love of travel, culture, and photography. After 20 years in the federal government crafting analytical reports, innovative initiatives, budgets, meeting agendas, and international conference presentations, he started his second career on his own creative terms in February 2022. His love for photography started in 5th grade after winning a KODAK instamatic camera on a morning game show produced at a local NBC affiliate in San Diego; his passion now comes full circle with *The Art of Place* and other projects currently in development. Gafford graduated from San Diego State University with a major in English and a minor in Creative Writing, and from Marymount University in Arlington, Virginia, where he graduated with a Master's in Education and credentials as a teacher. Wayne not only brings a deep appreciation for teaching and details, but also a uniquely personal way of revealing "The Art of Place." He is also adept in the kitchen, as attested by his wife Jeanne, adding another essential dimension to their creative life in Palm Springs, California.