



UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL: GRIZZLY BEARS ASPEN AND CYPRESS

Aspen and Cypress were born in the backyard of a taxidermist's home. He also owned two tigers, several black bears, three mountain lions and Aspen and Cypress' parents, who had just birthed another baby. But the man had a fatal stroke. His wife and family did not want the responsibility, so it fell upon local authorities to find homes for all these animals. Fortunately, a friend of Dean and Prayeri's who owns Tiger World in North Carolina came to the rescue. She asked if we could take any of the animals. We agreed to take the two young grizzly sisters, who were living in a ten foot square cage on concrete.

We helped pay for the deceased man's funeral and sent money to pay for the bear's first class airline tickets to Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport. After many months of effort, homes were formed for all the animals.

Our two bears arrived in good condition but were ready to stretch their legs, so we released them into their new habitat. They burst out in utter exuberance, running and playing all night and into the next day. To this day, over two years later, they seem to be perpetual motion machines. Even on hot days, they are in and out of their pond playing with each other and with toys. Even in winter, they are still active. Apparently they don't believe in hibernation.

Every Saturday at 3 pm, they perform in the Wonders of Wildlife show, chasing us and belly flopping into the pool. Both bears calmly take grapes from our mouths even while they are in the water. Aspen is a light golden color; Cypress is chestnut brown. Their birthday is August 1st, 2007. They are expected to live twenty five to forty years. Our continued closeness to them should keep our relationship strong and enduring all their lives. We're sure you'll enjoy them on your next visit to Out of Africa.