

Austria 2004

Neukirchen am Gross Venediger / Oberpinzgau (Hohe Tauern)

Holiday report of: Ronald Smeets and Amy Debeij.

Period: 24/07 t/m 07/08 (2 weeks).

Accommodation: Ferienwohnung Venedigerblick, Fam. Scheuerer.

Sat, 24/07 – Travel day:

We left at 06:15u in the morning. The first few 100 kilometres not a single problem. At the *Moselbrücke* near Koblenz we had our first break and switched driver. I had driven the first part of 200km, now it was my girlfriends turn. The weather was still OK, cloudy and sometimes a few raindrops ... At the parking lot at the *Hockenheimring* another break again: right at that moment all the Formula 1 cars went on the track for their pre-qualifying training on the Saturday morning! What a sound, delightful racket :-)

From that moment the misery started .. listened to the news about the traffic jams for a moment: on both the A5 towards *Karlsruhe* as on the A6 towards *Heilbronn*, traffic jams .. one (A5) was somewhat longer, the other (A6) a little shorter, but the whole route to Ulm would then be a little further ... so it doesn't really matter. So via Karlsruhe then: 30 minutes traffic jam in total. Tanked just past Pforzheim, 500km over with. Detail: at the tank station we were stopped by the Polizei for a (person-) check; all papers and ID cards were checked as well as the trunk of the car ... the reason was that lately a lot of drugs were coming into Germany from Holland again .. apparently we fitted the 'profile', hahaha :-)

Up until the Austrian border no problem .. the freeway near *Füssen* wasn't nearly finished, so we had a nice drive through the country ;-). After the border tunnel we switched rider again so my girlfriend could drive the last part; it was more or less just throwing her in the deep end, since she had never driven in the mountains before. But she wanted to and we could always switch back ...

The weather became a lot worse ... heavy downpours .. but that didn't matter much; luckily it wasn't warm and we were sitting dry ...

After not even 5 minutes that we went on the road again: traffic jam !! Ai .. 45 minutes of standing still and driving again, standing still and driving again ... and what happened: past *Reutte* a sort of 'festspiele' was going on and because of it there was a little bit of traffic chaos there ... oh well ... The picture shows how it was in the traffic jam there ...



Rain and traffic jam! Can it get any worse ? ;-)

At 18:30u we finally arrived ... almost 1½ hours later then planned .. in Neukirchen. Luckily we could find our pace of residence immediately. Beforehand we quickly went to the Billa in Fügen (the start of the Zillertal), buy some food ... We were received warmly and we were happy that we had finally reached our destination after our long journey.

Sun, 25/07 – Rest day:

The first day we slept in because of the long trip de day before. In the midday we watched a great formula 1 race on TV. Before and after the race we made 2 short 'spaziergangen' near our holiday home and around the village. In total still nearly walked for a total 3 hours ... At night we went out for dinner at the *Dorfstube'n* in Neukirchen. Also made some pictures of the holiday home. The weather during the day was fine, dry all day, only the clouds were hanging low.



Our ferienwohnung



A beautiful evening picture of the Hohe Tauern ...

Mon, 26/07 – Travel day:

In the morning first to the Spar Markt en de Billa to buy some food and drinks. Afterwards went to buy the Salzburgerlandcard, and good that we did. After the holiday I calculated it:

For 2 SBL cards we paid 88 euro and in total we saved nearly 130 euro thanks to it!! (So 88 euro, instead of 218 euro!)

That makes a difference ...

Our first tour was the one to the *Krimmler Wasserfälle*.

The car was parked in the village *Krimml* itself, since the 4 parking lots next to the leading road were as good as full. Luckily there was a small parking lot in the village where we found some space. Then first to the cash register, then on to the lower waterfall (also see picture). Very overwhelming violence of nature, those waterfalls!



They indeed were very impressive ..

Then we walked up all the way to the upper waterfall over the well built, but sometimes very spicy and steep, up going walkway. Afterwards walked on for a moment, and via the '*Alte*

Tauernweg descended on the other side of the waterfalls. In contradiction to the way up – which was very busy – we saw a total of precisely 2 other people :-). The Alte Tauernweg is over 4000 years old and was built by the Celts. In 1985 they restored the whole path. A very beautiful, sometimes steep, woodland path ... Total time of this trip: 3 hours including the brakes.

The weather was again good enough, until 17:00h it stayed dry and the sun came through once in a while. After 17:00h several rain showers.

Tue, 27/07 – Do things day:

The weather wasn't going along, during the day several rain showers and the clouds were hanging low. So today a 'do things day' and make use of the Salzburgerlandcard. We visited the *Mineralien und Heimat museum* in *Bramberg* and went swimming in the swimming pool of *Mittersill*. Both were fun to do and especially the museum was interesting. So we managed to pass the whole day ...



Face in stone ...

Wed, 28/07 – Travel day:

Finally, the weather is getting better, the clouds are a lot higher again (around 3200m), the sun is shining, so today we had a travel day again. Our goals: the *Frühmesser* (2233m.) and the *Wildkogel* (2224m.).

With the *Wildkogelbahn* to the mountain station and from there first towards *Ghf Wolkenstein*, further to the top of the *Frühmesser*. First over a broader supply road and then over a well worn out path.

From the *Frühmesser* in north-east direction (partly steep) decent over loose stones to the *Herrensteig Scharte* (2028m.) and here walked back around the *Frühmesser* to the mountain station of the *Wildkogelbahn* (good small mountain paths past the flank of the *Frühmesser* and through alp meadows). We continuously kept a nice view of the *Kitzbüeler Alpen* (With *Grosser Rettenstein*) as well as the high tops of the *Hohe Tauern*.



View of the tops of the Hohe Tauern, partly shrouded in clouds.

Upon arrival at the mountain station and time to spare we decided to climb the Wildkogel itself. The road signs said: 45 minutes to the top ... well, being a little sportive, in a good 30 minutes we had reached the top. Looked around for a nice bit and then back to the Wildkogelbahn at an easy pace. First drank a Cola at the present restaurant and sat in the sun, viewing the high tops of the Hohe Tauern with a map in our hands.



The beautiful evening red clouded sky

In total today still walked a good 4 hours. Made some nice pictures in the evening.

Thu, 29/07 – Travel and Do things day combined:

Today a combination of a mountain trip and an 'attraction'. By foot walked up from *Schiedhof* (near Neukirchen) past the *Untersulzbach wasserfall* and then further on via the *Knappenweg* to *Schaubergwerk Hochfeld*. Here we had a tour through the old copper mines.

The fun part of the waterfall was that we were there at the right moment, the sun's position was just right, so that we saw a beautiful rainbow! The tour through the copper mines took about 1,5h and was very interesting and captivating. Wandering around merrily through deep, dark, sometimes wet and narrow mines (which often weren't high either, so I definitely had to bend!), and then climbing up for about 60 metres via stairs. We received explanations about how the mine came to be and about the working conditions (and trust me: people there had a hard time!).

Including the tour we walked for about 3½ hours. The weather was fine, a lot of sun, very warm in the valley. In the mine it was chilly



The sun rays through the trees with a view of the waterfall ...

Fri, 30/07 – Travel day:

We had gotten the taste and were going strong. It was going well, the weather was cooperating, so why not: made an energetic climb trip in the surroundings of the *Weiss See* (at the recommendation of forum member Anne, who was very enthusiastic over this!). Planned is going around the lake and the climb of the *Medelzkopf* (2761m.).

With the *Rudolfs bergbahnen* up to the Weiss See. Then descended by foot to the northern dam and crossed it. Then the fun climb started past a steep wall with the help of 'drahtseilen' and 'leitern'. The picture shows my girlfriend in action :-)



This is what we do it for ;-) .. nice easy climb, well marked.

Then it went further a little less steep up, towards an Ombrometer at about 2500 meter height, over many snow plates.



The beautiful Weiss See and the Medelzkopf (left)

Next a nice descent, again over a lot of snow back to the lake. Seeing as it still wasn't noon, we went back up towards *Kalser Tauern* (2515m.) by foot; one of the few glassier free passages to Ost-Tirol. Over a few steep snow fields we reached somewhat tired the mountain pas. We climb further up though rocks towards the mountain station of the chair lift that comes there.

Here we see many tourists that don't really know what they're doing there. They can't walk more than a 100m since it then goes steep up or down on all sides or there's a lot of snow lying there (and with open shoes and sandals that's hard to do ;-)).

My girlfriend got really exhausted during the last climb to the Kalser Tauern and let the last climb to the Medelzkopf for what it was, so I got myself ready to climb the final top on my own. Over enormous blocks of rock, sometimes as high as me, I carefully climbed up (I didn't want to end up between the big blocks). Steinmännchen and markings helped me find my route through the large field of blocks of rocks. Once in a while I also needed to cross some steeper snow fields and sometimes I just had to stop to find my reorientation again to get an overview of some kind. After about 45 minutes of hard work, I finally reached the top of the Medelzkopf with total fulfillment. I wrote a message in the Gipfelbuch and of course left an Alpenfreaks Flyer behind!

After about 10 minutes I went back to my girlfriend who was waiting down there. Again I needed to find my orientation and find Steinmännchen. Calmly and concentrated I descended again through the huge rocks.

Since the last trip down was at 16:00h and we didn't want to miss it, we took the chair lift back down. For a little part back to the Bergbahn by foot and our adventurous trip was over.

Sat, 31/07 – Car trip and Do things day:

What walking and climbing concerns, we did it a little more calmly, and let the car do all of the work; we went to the *Gross Glockner Hochalpenstrasse* this day.

We still did a lot again that day:

We visited the *Wild- en Freizeitpark Ferleiten* for example; walking around for an hour through the park. Boh, all the animals had it so very warm! Afterwards we went up the hochalpenstrasse. At the mautstelle we received a booklet which said what things to see and to do were along the hochalpenstrasse. We made a selection from those. We walked around on a *naturlehrpfad* at rasthaus Piffkar (about 30 minutes), visited the museum '*Alpine Naturschau*' and drove the car up to the highest point, de *Edelweiss Spitze* (2571m.) (a fun adventurous drive that was!).

After that it was already around 16:00h and we drove on to the *Franz Josefs Höhe* and parked the car there. Many tourists were already on their way home then ... but we made a short trip via the *Gamsgrubenweg* to the *Hoffmanns Hütte* (2444m.). The Gamsgrubenweg is broad path with 6 little tunnels (length between the 100m en 300m) and completely redone anew (until 2002 this was 'gesperrt' for a long time).

Slowly the sun began to set. The Gross Glockner was to be seen clearly all this time (no clouds) and I was able to take some beautiful pictures. On our way back from the hut to the parking lot it was especially quiet. There were only a few strollers in the neighbourhood. So we had the luck of getting to see Murmeltieren who came to have a look! (they were at a distance of only 10m – 15m).

After that my girlfriend drove the way back, and after 19:00h we were back at the mautstelle Ferleiten. On our way home we went out for dinner in Mittersill at the Chinese.

Tired but satisfied we were back in our apartment around 21:30h ...



The setting sun gives beautiful pictures ...

Sun, 01/08 – Rest day:

After 4, one after the other, busy days, we decided to just do nothing on the Sunday ... although, I did watch the DTM race on TV and we played some games (Yahtzee en Rummikub). During the evening we made some pictures of the surrounding area. The weather was again great around 25 degrees, clouded yet sunny.



They grow out of the grass ... and no, it isn't effects!

Mon, 02/08 – Do things day:

It rained a little bit in the morning and the clouds were hanging low. But we did think the weather would clear up later in the day. So we quickly thought of something that was located a little further. We decided on the *Liechtensteinklamm* in the neighbourhood in of *Sankt Johann* in *Pongau*. After a drive of about 65km we reached the already full parking lot where, with a little luck, we found a space.

The klamm was very beautiful, but unfortunately a little bit on the busy side (a lot of people there). We had fun for an hour walking through the schlucht and taking pictures. Unfortunately the route through the schlucht comes to an end at the waterfall; we had to take the same route back, which gave a lot of fuss in terms of passing people (it wasn't exactly wide in certain spaces). But well done to all of the people that built all those bridges and such in the schlucht!



Liechtensteinklamm

All in all very much worth it!

Because we still had time left we drove to the neighbouring *Alpendorf* and there we took the cable railway (*Alpendorf Bergbahnen*) up and made a small trip to the *Buchau Hütte*. The weather was considerably better and we had a nice view of the 1000m lower located valley of Sankt Johann. Ate some tasty Käsebrot at the Buchau Hütte and then went back down using the cable railway and went back home.

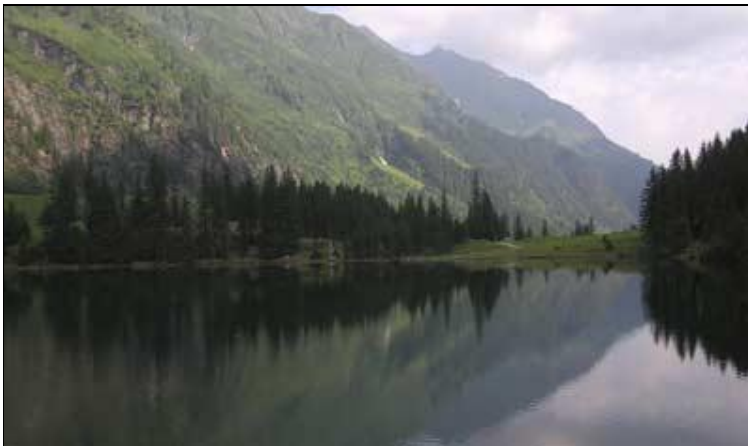
Tue, 03/08 – Travel day:

Again a nice day to make a tour. This time to a less of a tourist place: the *Hintersee* (area Felber Tauern). We drive over the *Felbertauernstrasse* but after the 3^e short small tunnel we make a right towards Hintersee.

We decided to make a roundtrip: *Hintersee – Trassensteig – Nassfeld – Hintersee*. The Trassensteig is partly a climb with a steep passage over 100 height metres with long drahtseil passages and 2 small. In total we have to bridge about 800 height metres. First we climb up slowly, than through shrubbery a little steeper up until we reach the climb passage. First we follow the short ladders and then in turns we climb up with the help of steel cables. After this fun – upon itself not an all too difficult – climb we need to go up even more until we reach a fork in the road. Here we go down again through a big alp meadow with several water streams and a bigger stream: *Nassfeld*. After a short second climb we descend again towards Hintersee.

After a reasonably long journey of nearly 5 hours we go back 'home' satisfied ...

The weather was great, the clouds were hanging a little lower, but still above the 2500m. When the sun broke through it became very warm. so the clouds were very welcome!



The mountains beautifully reflect in the Hintersee

Wed, 04/08 – Do things day:

Great weather, warm and dry. This day we bombarded to a day *Salzburg!*

We got up early since it was still a 2 hour drive and we wanted to enjoy the day and do and see loads of things. Left at 07:45h and just before 10:00h we were standing in the middle of the old part of the city (parked near *Siegmunds Tor*). Because we could also use the Salzburgerlandcard as the 'Salzburg card' for 1 day, we travelled the rest of the day with public transport. In Salzburg we did the following:

- Visited *Stiegl's Brauwelt* (beer brewery). Very much fun to get to know something about one of your favourite drinks ;-). Plus, I can't refrain from saying it: 2 consumptions afterwards, so drank 2 tasty Stiegl beers and received 2 bottles as a parting gift!
- Visited *Schloss und Wasserspiele Hellbrunn*. Here we received a tour past the Wasserspiele of the castle. Apparently the castle lord use to find it quite amusing (for his own fun) to 'entertain' his guests with all kinds of 'water jokes' (were mostly the guests had to suffer – and us as well!!). Very great fun and amusing, and on such a warm day, absolutely no problem with getting somewhat wet :-)
- Went to the *Europapark* afterwards (shopping mall) to buy a few cd's that aren't put out on the market here in the Netherlands and ate tasty at the Interspar for little money.
- After dinner went up the *Mönchsberg* and walked around up there for an hour or so. From a height beautiful view of the city.

Around 19:30h we left the city again and around 21:30h we were back home.

Oh yes, our route to Salzburg: via *Mittersill – Pass Thurn – Kitzbühel – Sankt Johann in Tirol – Lofer – Salzburg*.



View of the Salzach of Mönchsberg

Thu, 05/08 – Travel day:

Since the weather was still alright we took advantage of it. It would be our last mountain tour of this holiday. It also wasn't such a long trip, but it was a very beautiful one!

This tour we also climbed 2 tops again: *Konigsleiten* (2315m.) and *Falschriedel* (2420m.). The area where these tops are located is on the border Salzburgerland / Tirol, near the Gerlos pass.

We left early because we expected 'gewitter' in the afternoon ... during the whole tour we kept an eye on the weather and we saw thunderclouds come up above the tops of the Hohe Tauern. We were still able to make the whole planned tour. We were back down at 13:00h and around 15:00h it suddenly became very humid, directly after which a few lightning flashes and some thunder followed :-)

Now back to the tour ...

From *Almdorf Königsleiten* we took the chair elevator up to about 2100m and from there walked over a well worn out path, sometimes a little steep, but without difficulties to the top of *Königsleiten*. From there we descended a bit again to the *Sattel Scharte* after which the climb to the top of the *Falschriedel* followed. This climb was well worn out and only in the upper part a little steeper and over a few small rocks. We go back the same way we came, so again with a climb in between.

This last tour was very beautiful with a very nice view of the Hohe Tauern and also the changing weather was beautiful to watch. But we were very glad that we left on time in the morning so that we were back in time.

After the tour we also visited an old ruin in the neighbourhood (*Ruine Hierburg*). Than we went to the store to do our last groceries.



Our company towards the Sattel Scharte



Ruin Hierburg

Fri, 06/08 – Rest day:

Our second real rest day ... slept in nicely for a trip back the next day. This day we really did little, except walk in to Neukirchen for a while, filled up the car, fed the deer's and went out for dinner in the Dorfstube'n . Said goodbye to the hostess and host afterwards and went to bed around 22:15h ...



My last meal in Austria this year ...

Sat, 07/08 – Travel day:

Contrary to the trip here, we hardly had any 'problems' this day. We left at 07:00h and at exactly 19:00h we were home again. No traffic jams, only some slower driving once in a while because of a heavy downpour. But it was very humid again ... Luckily we did keep a track of the news on traffic jams; we drove back via Heilbronn because an emergency storm around Eichelberg (Stuttgart) had created a traffic jam of 15km long .

Around 6:15h I was able to take this beautiful morning picture:



Morning glory in Neukirchen.

- END -