

28.04.

Dear ones left at home!

To say farewell is all the time very hard and breaking loose this time was indeed something special for me. One intends to know the every day routine, but something New is unaccustomed, one has respect but also a feeling of adventure is winging in.

A long lasting dream becomes eventually true and I will start this journey with Betsy.

I am also quite sad though to leave my children and grandchildren behind. When will I see my dear family again?????

Day of departure

Actually it was meant to pack all my goodies in a way so the two seats in the back of Betsy would stay empty. But according to one's wishes and the reality is a big difference. No panic, there is still plenty of room for Erika's luggage.

Betsy's tank is full, everything found its place otherwise and off we go towards Grosser St.Bernhard. The GPS is programmed and a nice voice is directing us the right way to our first destination, the camping site in Turin.

Although Technology has its malice and the GPS is as good as one is programming it.



Travelogue 28.04 – 3.05.08

Filled up with diesel and drinking water from Langenthal(of course some bottles of Hasli-beer as well) I started my trip on the 28.04.08 at 11° clock in Langenthal. In Liebefeld BE, my companion Erika was waiting to join me for one month.

After a quick stop in Köniz to say good bye to my daughter Michelle and her boyfriend Dave, we left about lunchtime, it was slightly raining though. We were heading in direction Grosser St.Bernhard to reach Turin before getting dark.

Because of snowstorms the road over the mountain was closed. Anyhow it was quicker through the tunnel and we were hoping that the weather on the other side would be more to our liking. Our hopes were for the birds! A grey, cloudy and also some rain awaited us there. Nevertheless we found our camping site Villa Rey, Turin without a problem (thanks to Emmi GPS). The skyline of Turin is really admirable.



Erika had nearly a heart attack when she saw the kitchen. To avoid that she started to arrange it differently, so from now on each utensil found its place.



24.04.08

While walking around in Turin we met Erwin a tourist guide on pension who showed us, free of charge, some interesting buildings and shops in Turin, “Wienercafe”, the best Gelateria (Ice cream shop) just to mention a few.



30.04.08

Our first HIGH LIGHT. As VIP guests we were invited to an unforgettable “PALMER” LIVE CONCERT given by my son and band at the Taurus club. Secret hint (christening of CD in December 2007)

As you can see on the picture, the WELCOME of the band was more than to be wished for, full of enthusiasm, so much though that some jeans of a groupie went independent.



1.05.08

Drive over the Tenda- Pass, direction San Remo by beautiful weather and magnificent right and left bends. Arrival in San Remo. Camping site with ocean view.

2.05.08

On the move, ride by bus and by train to Monaco. The driver would have won the first price of Monaco at any time and put Michael Schumacher in the shade!!!! A ride on the nostalgic train made it possible for us to visit several objects of interest, except the private rooms of the monarch. Unfortunately, Erika only found the Porsche and not its driver (Play boy), Casino, Cathedral, Grave Gratia, Palace of the monarch).

Tired but happy about what we achieved today, we enjoyed our first supper (Spaghetti + Tomatoes sauce) by a magnificent view onto the Mediterranean.



3.05.08

Our plan to leave the camping site at 9°clock was delayed by a man from Holland, who had blockaded our place and still took a shower with the utmost patience. But also that did not get us down.

The drive along the Côte d'Azure went smoothly, like I predicted, without any traffic jam.

The view we experienced along the well known coastline was breathtaking and the day ended at the camping site "Des Mures" in Port Grimaud at the beach front. Thanks to the beautiful weather, I put on my shorts.



4.05.08- 8.05.08

Port Grimaud / St. Tropez:

We put on our walking shoes early in the morning and marched to Port Grimaud(harbour) .By boat we approached St.Tropez where all the richness of the world comes together in form of huge yachts. One realises very quickly that the money is dealt out wrongly when you enter various shops along the quay. (A pair of jeans will cost you the proud sum of 1400.-Euro)



5.05.08 Drive to St.Marie de la Mère

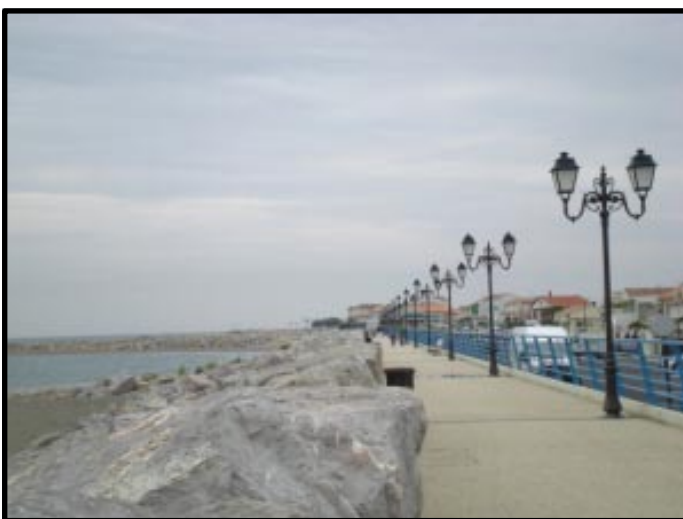
With Emmi's help we had no substantial problem to find the way to the Camarque .Even through the centre of Marseille it took us little time. All of a sudden, (please fear go away) Betsy lost on power and a warning lamp of an engine problem flashed up. And now? A short look at the sensor of the Turbocharger showed that the pipe came loose.(562)I fixed it and Betsy was the old self again. At a crossing, just next to us, we were amused to be greeted by a small dog in full uniform on a big motorbike(105).



6.05.08 St.Marie de la Mère

As we approached the village, four legged inhabitants of this region welcomed us. To our astonishment, there were two legged ones too.(Had to be anyhow)

(Stylistic life) Beach and surroundings



7.05.08 Drive to Argelès sur Mer

At our first stop in Aigues Mortes we were fascinated by the good up-keep of construction works of the Romans. Although Erika was more interested in the diversity of sweets which were presented at shops nearby (142)



8.05.08 Argelès sur Mer

Strolling along the beach on a sunny day. CEO working hard to keep the homepage up to date.



9.05.08 Drive to the Pyrenäen

Just before 7^oclock, the first raindrops which fell onto our roof tent have woken us up out of a deep sleep. Oh no, we don't want to pack up a wet tent!!! Up and about, really in a hurry we did what had to be done!!!! But, where is the breakfast, kitchen already packed, that means not even a coffee!!!

Don't panic, while Erika bought a baguette(bread) at the shop, she also organized hot water.

So in the end we had at least something warm in our stomachs.

During the drive to the Pyrenäen the rain became stronger and stronger. We had to forget our off-road plan altogether. By pouring rain we shifted Betsy over a stretch of 700km, to Zamora near the border of Portugal. (The rain seems to follow our route!)

11.05.08 Drive to Porto.

At least the day started dry. On our way to Porto the sky cleared up in the far distance and the temperature increased by a few degrees. The nearer we approached the destination, the better weather we had, exactly like we longed for, for quite some time. The searching to find a nice place at the camping site was also successful. To our joy, the CEO let us stay in the upper class for the night. There we met a friendly Portugal family in the neighbourhood. Of course, the conversation was held in French.



12.05.08
Sightseeing in Porto



13.05.08 Drive to Lissabon
A stop in Fatima, north of Lissabon, in Cascais, Camping bedded in a sand dune.

14.05.08 Sintra
By bus and perfect weather we headed to this historic town. Whilst sightseeing of this place, a heavy down pour surprised us. Not dressed for rain at all, we got soaking wet in the end.

15.05.08 Lissabon
Sightseeing by bus. Heavy downfall forced the driver to break up the visit to Lissabon.

16.05.08 Lissabon + Drive to Sesimbra
Thanks to better weather we were able to repeat the visit to Lissabon.

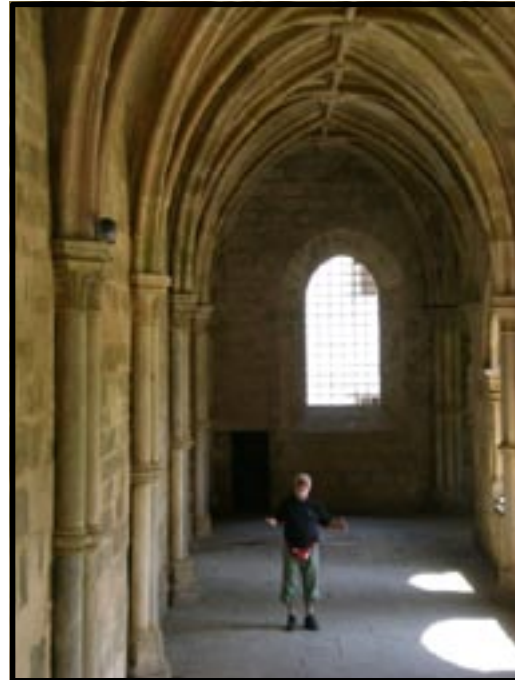




17.05.08 Drive to Algarve

On our way to the Algarve we visited the ancient town Evora with its 30 churches. The cathedral and the convent are 700 years old, very impressive.

Returning towards the Atlantic we passed long fields of trees, from which bark is taken off and is manufactured into cork for wine bottles. Night camp in Porto Cova.



18.05.08 Algarve

In Albufeira , we managed to find the most beautiful camping spot so far. In other words, a five star hotel couldn't be better! That's the reason we'll stay here for 4 days. From this point we explored the near surrounding by bus and landed eventually at "the end of the world"(South- West part of Europe, Cap St.Vincente) A trip by boat took us along the most interesting coastline.

Back at the camping site we discovered that the neighbouring campers were from Berne. Very friendly and soon we were in deep discussions. Their son Dimitri and their daughter Fiorina touched our hearts. On Tuesday evening we sat together and had a barbecue, also people from Manchester were joining us. The party went on until well after midnight.





22.05.-23.05.08 Sevilla

The capital Andalusien with its 710000 Inhabitants is worthwhile to be seen. It's got lots of interesting buildings, ancient and modern.

23.05.08- 25.05.08

After the habitual drive in the sightseeing bus.

When the journey ended the headphones were handed over to an orange tree. Through Sevilla, (SMS Fan post can also be answered during the drive), we were driving back to the coast where we spotted a fantastic camping site in Punta Umbria, directly at the beach front. We stayed for 3 days, the last three days for Erika, because her holiday came to an end here.





As usual, we had that before, it started to rain while we were setting up our home. Our delicious piece of meat we wanted to grill had to wait too. A lovely, cosy restaurant in the park was just what we needed now. The restaurant was crowded with domestics, and for us to choose something from the card was really difficult. There wasn't a big selection of food and on the other hand we didn't know what it was anyhow. The waiter called the lady at the reception to do the translation (she was able to speak a little English.) At the end of it we were served with a delicious meal, Calamari and a tasty fish soup (speciality of the house). We really enjoyed it very much.

In the mean time my hair grew quite a bit though. It took me a long time to convince Erika to cut my hair before she flies off. Eventually she did it! Bravo Erika, well done, not bad at all when you think, you never did it before!



Thanks to the Internet connection at long last, I was able to send the up- dates to Steve. On Monday, the roof tent was folded the last time as a team. Soon after that task I took Erika to the airport in Faro, where she boarded at 16.20 via Mallorca to Zürich. The journey together came to an end. You were a fantastic companion, always in a good mood and one step ahead. It didn't take you long to understand what camping is all about! We were an ideal team, even in bad moments (rain and cold weather) we made the best of it. Many thanks for the lovely time and one never knows, perhaps we'll see you one day in the sunny South Africa.

26.05.2008

Drive to Gibraltar

UP-DATE of the first 4 weeks.

Milage done so far	4500km
Diesel consumed	approx. 540Litres
Set-up + pack-up tent	16 times (easy if one has help)
Break- downs	1 (it did happen once before while I was still at home though)
Accidents	None
Nearly accident	1 (Erika warned me just in time, otherwise I would have knocked over a biker)
Swearing	I think it happened once, twice or even three times. To my knowledge, excusable!!!!
Weather	Rather cold and wet, as domestics assured us that ugly weather like that happens very seldom in May.
Impressions + Experiences	Many beautiful ones, apart from the weather, no bad ones
Highlights	Towns like Porto, Sintra, Lisbon, Evora, Sevilla,etc...Also the Algarve is very interesting to visit, as travelogues and pictures confirm it

From now on there is no co- driver anymore!!!!

There is no road along the beach to get from Faro to Gibraltar! I had to make a detour via Sevilla and sleep over once more at the camping site in Dos Fernandos (nothing special to look at though) The tiny cat was still around and meowed in a way I couldn't bring it over my heart and shared my supper with her.(At the previous stop here with Erika, I was strongly forbidden to feed the cats who were straying around.



I stopped in a small town called “Cadiz” to have my usual afternoon tea! Cadiz must have played a big role in the History of Spain. There is an enormous place called “Placa de Espania” which dignifies the importation of the Constitution of Spain in 1812.



The ancient part of the town is significant with its beautiful, narrow alleys which look all alike, so much alike that I had to ask for direction several times until at long last I found my way back to the car. (A German tourist gave me an excellent hint which brought me back to Betsy) In spite of that I still went shopping for groceries.



Once more, the big problem in Gibraltar was to find a decent parking. The signs are very poor in most instances and therefore I couldn't even find the INFO for tourists.

At the border to Gibraltar, an English custom officer denied my inquiry about a camping site in this region. Alright then, I thought I quickly turn and go back where I came from. It is easier said than done!!! That border must be the best guarded one in the whole Europe. It cost me over an hour to get out of there. Stayed over approx. 10km north of Linea de la Concepcion



27.05.08-28.05.08

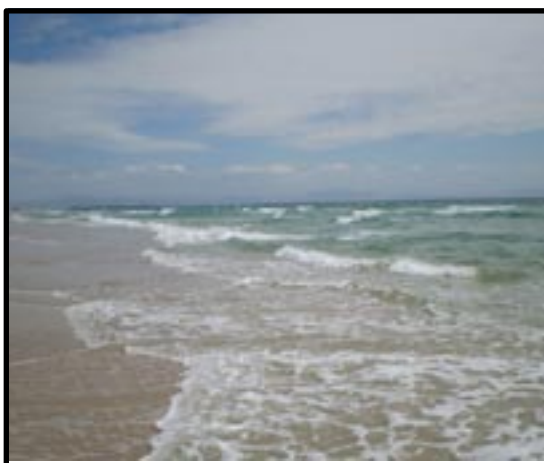
It was time to work on the updates and prepare the photo gallery to be sent off to Steve.

29.05.08

Drive to Tarifa

30.05.08

This is the most southern part of Europe. I was taken aback to see a sign which read "Africa 15km". In fact, one can see the Continent in the far distance. (It was somehow difficult to seize it with the camera)



The camping facilities are very nice here, directly at the beach front. On top of it, I have here free connection to the Internet, wireless and in a bar. (The signal just makes it to the bar!!!!)

A cow tried to impress me with its hydropathic treatment (Kneippkur) in the nearby swamp.

I will spend some time in this region to repack Betsy and to meet (hopefully) other off- roaders to cross the channel (Gibraltar) to Africa and to enable the drive through the Africa continent in a convoy.

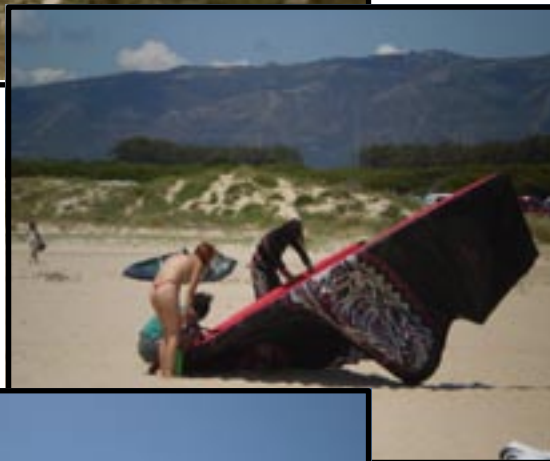


31.05.08- 10.06.08

Long stay at the camp in „Rio Jara“ in Tarifa. Reason: My sleepapnoe was defected and had to be sent to Basel to be fixed! Without it I won't leave Europe (Hansruedi you know what I mean) That gave me enough time to repack Betsy and to keep up with my dialogue and pictures for the homepage.

Impressions of the region:

The beach at Tarifa is known worldwide for its kite surfing. No wonder, the beach is several km long, a constant wind is blowing, coming in from the Atlantic towards the Mediterranean! The kite is stabilized through the hollow space which is pumped up, but as you can see it can also be done without it. That's only for hard guys and of course girls are wrongly placed here.



Also gliders equipped with a motor showed up in the sky.

The constant wind is also used to produce electricity, as one notices it on photos, hundreds of wind generators are doing the job.



It looks as if Spain pays a great esteem on alternative, renewable energy. Therefore most camping sites are established with Solar cells to convert the energy of sunlight into its process of supplying hot water.



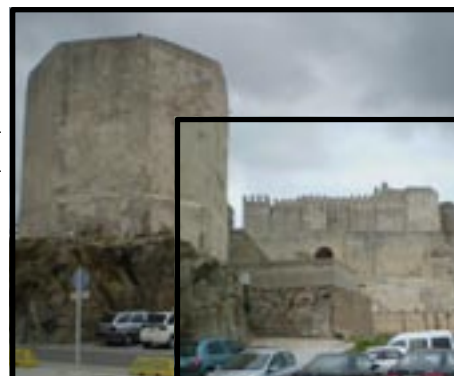
In the morning when it is still quiet one finds even horses which are sun tanning, what else would they do anyhow, sand is uneatable!!!!

If one has a closer look, one notice's two unpleasant details, the front legs are chained together and thousands of flies settled on their backs.

In Tarifa the Atlantic encounters with the Mediterranean.



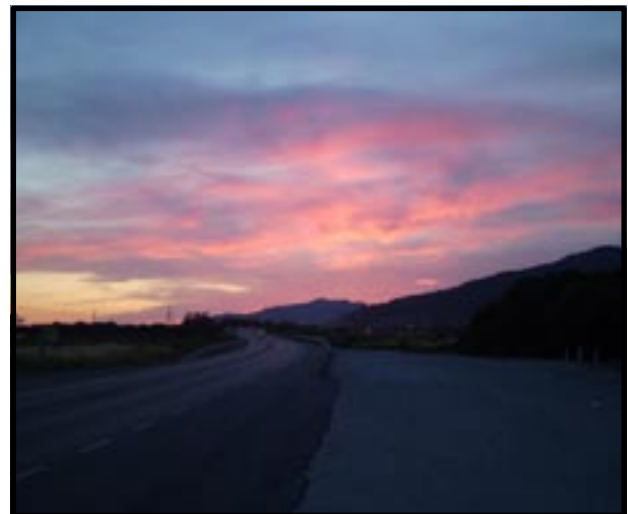
Very often one discovers mortal remains of medieval fortresses along the beach, which were built at that time to avoid intruders from invading into the country.



After a long walk on the sandy beach, a beer wouldn't have been bad, a Hasli- beer from the "Quelle" Langenthal would have just made my day! Unfortunately the ones you get in this region are sub- standard Serveza's. Sorry Greg, but I allowed myself to wear a Hasly- T-Shirt in spite of it. The "Old Dear" has had its days! (I only can recommend it)



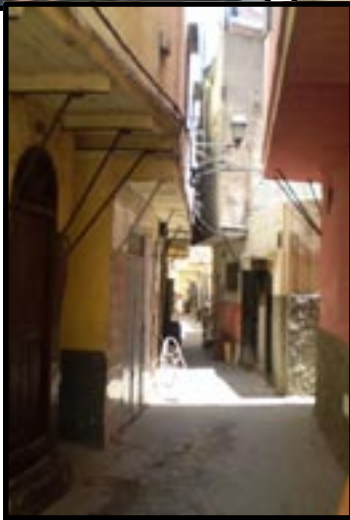
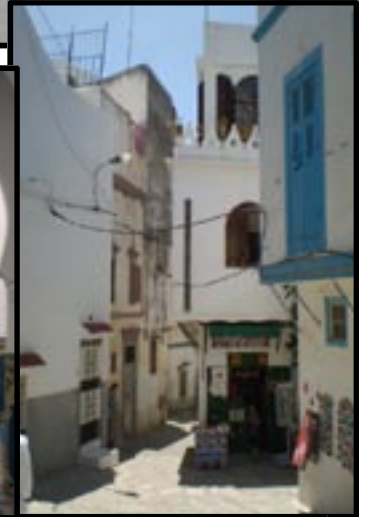
During an evening walk I came across a bar near the camping site. I met a bright, young Spanish guy who gave his best at entertaining passers-by with his Spanish songs. Although we had a language barrier we understood each other perfectly. A fantastic sun set rounded off that evening.



Slowly, but surly it was time preparing myself for the African Trip. I studied the map of Marokko and the facts about the country, what is worthwhile to be seen etc, and of course I also glanced through all the hints I received from friends back home who visited Marokko before.

Because of my"breathing apparatus, which is still at the customs in Sevilla, I decided to pay a days visit to Tanger, the North town of Marokko. That gave me a first impression on the continuation of my journey.

Tanger got its shaping from various classes of people over the century which gives it a special character.



Here still the story about my “breathing apparatus”. I sent it off on 30.05.08, lunch time, at the post office in Tarifa. I asked for the quickest way (service) 20 hours, which cost me 54.50 Euro. On 2.06.08, still no apparatus in Basel. My enquiries at the post office were alarming. They actually thought that the 20 hours service meant, the parcel should only leave Spain within that time. It only arrived 6 days later in Basel after the customs took 3 days for clearance. At least, the Swiss efficiency sped it up now and RESMED mended it straight away. It left there the same day and was sent off at 15.30 in the afternoon by DHL (special delivery) All well!? But only as far as Sevilla, about 150km north from where I stayed.. They received it on Friday at 8.45am, that meant it took only 18 hours from Basel to Sevilla. What a record! But the misery began at the clearance at the custom office, what ever the reason! Still no “Schnufely(breathing apparatus) by the 10.06.08. And on top of it, the truck drivers who deliver goods etc were on strike from the 9.06.08, because of the Petrol increases. The question came to my mind
“Do I ever make it to Africa”???