

Kaunertal Glacier Road

a tour into the first snow

Every year on 3 October, a club outing of the free-bikers Sonthofen will take place, and like every year, the question: Where to?

And this year is no exception. Already in August and early September my suggestion to the club members to think about where to go this time and to make appropriate suggestions.

Werner, my wife and I were then on the 09.09.06 to Samnau and over the Arlberg Pass. On the Pillerhöhe we met other motorcyclists from the Varadero Club who wanted to continue into the Kaunertal. I said to Werner: "That would be something for the club ride. I myself was up there only once - zig years ago!"

At the next club evening it was all about defining the goal of the tour. My question for suggestions went nowhere. So I said: "How about the Kaunertal, costs 10 € toll, but goes up to 2750 m and directly to the glacier.

I got some photos and a video film from an acquaintance from the internet (was one of the drivers of the Varadero club) and it looks quite good! - It would be something!" As there were no other suggestions, we decided to go to Kaunertal on October 3rd. Unfortunately, the weather forecast thwarted our plans. On Sunday, 01.10.06 it still said: "On Tuesday it was unsteady with partly heavy rain and noticeable cooling down! Since I myself was tied up until late at night on Monday, I talked to



Pillerhöhe, 08.10.06

my other board members on Sunday and we postponed the tour to Sunday, October 8, 2006. On Tuesday morning the sun laughed at us and there was no sign of rain for miles around! Only in the late afternoon, around 16:30 o'clock the bad weather came, but then all the more violent. We could have done the tour to the Kaunertal valley, but on the way back we would have been hit by rain.

On Friday, 06.10. there was a club evening again and I asked who would come along on Sunday. It should be 6 motorcycles! Erwin from Bad Schussenried contacted me and agreed to participate. On Sunday morning at 10:00 am there were 6 motorcycles, but two of them from Bad Schussenried. Erwin had brought along a friend. But two club members of the Free-bikers Sonthofen had cancelled at short notice - it was their own fault!

So we first drove from Sonthofen to Hindelang and up to the Oberjoch. The traffic was heavy as expected. Therefore only moderate joy could arise up to the Oberjoch. The track, when it is free, is just great to ride. One bend after the other. Once a year an oldtimer-racer takes place here (this year from 13. - 15.10.) Also due to the Tannheimer-Tal the traffic volume did not decrease and I already thought that at the Gaichtpass many tin cans would hinder our progress.

But suddenly, after Nes-selwängle the track was clear and down to Weissenbach there was not a single car in front of us - beautiful! Through the Lechtal, over Stanzach we went up to the Hahntennjoch. At the beginning of the pass road a cold breeze was already blowing towards us and up on the top of the pass, which we reached after the wonderful and above all traffic-free curves, it didn't get warmer! Erwin's friend said goodbye to us here, because it was simply too cold



Gepatschspeicher, 08.10.06

for him. The rest of us drove down to Imst and on into the Pitztal. There over Arzl and Wenns the further way led us up to the Pillerhöhe. I always find the view up here brilliant and almost always stop there. So also this time. Down into the valley to Kaunerberg and from there left towards Kaunertal. At the toll station the demanded 10 € paid and on we went. Before I told my passengers: "Free ride up to the top. I want to take some more pictures and everybody can drive up as he wants. I'll meet you up there." No sooner said than done! So we drove up, each for himself. First to the Gepatschspeicher, which is framed by snow-covered mountains (down to 2200 m there was snow) and gives a picturesque picture. Also the further way up over numerous hairpin bends is simply beautiful. Not only the road but also the landscape is simply a dream! At the top of 2750 m we enjoyed the sunshine on the terrace of the restaurant - in a T-shirt! Because here it was clearly warmer than before at the Hahntennjoch! The skiing had already started and we watched the few winter sportsmen and women enjoying the first snow and the young winter season.

After lunch we drove back downhill to Prutz. There we stopped for a short refueling stop and continued towards Landeck. Shortly before the village we turned right after Fliess and reached the recently newly asphalted and developed mountain road up to the Pillerhöhe,



Kaunertal-Gletscherstraße, 08.10.06

which had already been used for the outward journey. Via Wenns and Arzl we drove back to Imst and from there over the Fernpass towards Reutte. At the entrance to the Berwanger valley two more club members said goodbye to us, who went directly home due to the advanced time. There were only three left!

So the three of us drove - as planned - to the Berwanger Valley in Namlos. There we had a coffee break and then we went on to Stanzach and Weissenbach. Then over the

Gaichtpass and the Tannheimer Tal, as well as the Oberjoch and Hinderlang back to Sonthfen.

The weather enjoyed us the whole day with bright sunshine and so it turned out in retrospect that the shift from October 3rd to 8th was absolutely right!
I can only give everyone the tip: Off to Kaunertal! Despite the 10 € toll, it is simply a scenic experience that one should allow oneself from time to time (although the road surface left a lot to be desired)!

The whole tour here again as sketch (total length 340 km):

