

Switzerland 2007

If the weather god plays along!

Background/preparations

The club tour of the Free-Bikers Sonthofen is an integral part of the annual activities. Every year we have to think about it anew: Where to?

Since for me personally Switzerland - in its entirety - is the most beautiful thing there is in the Alps, I have always had the desire to plan a club tour to Switzerland. But unfortunately Switzerland is also known for the fact that it is quite expensive there!

So I started a search in the various Swiss motorcycle forums for a cheap place to stay in Switzerland. I found it in the Töff-Forum (<http://www.toeff-forum.ch>). Already after 2 hours I got the decisive answer:

„Mir sind mitem Forum scho mehrmals in Meiringe ide Jugi gsii. Häsch Brünig, Grimsel und Suschte grad um de Egge und dHerberge isch super. Netti lüüt wo sich echt mega fill müe gänd mitem ässe usw. <http://www.simons-herberge.ch/> das isch dHomepage... 32.- mit Zmorge, händ amig es super Buffet. Znacht choschtet 13.-, isch grad so guet wie im Reschti eifach chasch naaschöpfe“

Since Meiringen is simply ideal as a starting point, I immediately sent an e-mail and promptly received a confirmation - BINGO!!!

So off to Switzerland!

More precisely: To the Bernese Oberland! (For me the most beautiful region of the whole Alps!)

Date 7 - 10 June 2007 (the Corpus Christi weekend - as usual!)

Finally 8 riders (Karin and Gü, Mäggi and Toni, as well as Werner, Remo, Reinhard and Stefan) contacted the club, who wanted to ride with Petra and me. 14 days before departure Reinhard dropped out for professional reasons and we started with 6 motorcycles and 9 people - sorry 7 motorcycles and 10 people to Switzerland, because Hannes wanted to accompany us to Meiringen and then to the Lake Geneva.

The weather forecast was very mixed! Sunshine, thunderstorm, rain etc. - take your pick!

What the heck - let's go!

1st day, the 7th of June, outward journey Sonthofen – Meiringen

Start was - as always - at 9 o'clock. The weather was dry, but the clouds covered the mountains.

First we went via Altstädten to Fischen and up to the Riedbergpass (1420 m) via Hittisau and Lingenau to Alberschwende and Dornbirn. From there to Au in Switzerland. Here we had to stop for gas and made a short arrangement whether we should take the planned route through the valley to Altstädten and then to Appenzell, or the somewhat longer but much more beautiful one



via St. Anton, the Ruppenpass (1003 m) and Trogen. The more beautiful variant was chosen and we also went up to Oberegg and on to Appenzell in a wonderful rush of curves.

From there finally via Urnäsch to Bächli and Hemberg, where lunch was served in the restaurant Hörnli (highly recommended because of the price/performance ratio!).

Then we went on to Wattwil. Over the Rickenpass (794 m) we reached the lake of Zurich in Rapperswil. After the lake, we turned right and then left again and the path led us

up to the saddle (932 m). As we wanted to go to Arth am Zuger-See I followed the signs to Zug and was promptly wrong! After 3 km we reached the Ägerisee and turned back. Via

Steinerberg (with wonderful views down to the left onto Lake Lauerzer) we reached Lake Zuger, which we drove along the southern shore and then reached Lake Lucerne at Küssnacht. At the entrance to Lucerne a short photo stop and we were ready to go on. But as my passengers expressed the wish for a coffee break I turned off directly after the Reuss bridge and we parked the motorcycles. The old wooden bridge over the Reuss, which burned down years ago and was rebuilt, is simply beautiful! We crossed it and sat down on the other side of the river for a coffee.



After this pause, we should continue. Everyone got on their machines and was ready to go. Unfortunately not Stefan! Nobody knew what was going on and we stood 10, 15, 20 min in the heat and "sweated away". It turned out that Stefan had lost the key for his helmet lock! He went back and searched again, but in vain.

Hannes said goodbye to us here, because it took him too long. He drove directly (via the motorway) to Lake Geneva to meet some friends.

But we had no choice but to drive to the next gas station (which was not reached until Hergiswil) and look for suitable tools to "free" the helmet. Fortunately he has a flip-up helmet and a small Allen key solved the problem.

Then we went on, along the Vierwaldstätter lake, towards Sarnen. Although it looked a lot like rain, luckily it stayed off! Via Sarnen and the Sarnen lake we reached the Lungern lake and the Brünig pass (1008 m) and finally Meiringen our destination.



The Simons-Hostel was quickly found and the rooms could be occupied. The rooms are simple and rustic and offer little comfort, but are - by Swiss standards - very affordable! Here we still met Fred from Frechen (near Cologne), who wanted to go on the two day trips with us (I had arranged this with him beforehand, after he had contacted me via my homepage).

For dinner (13 Francs, that's almost 9 €) we had sliced meat, rösti and salad, as well as a small dessert - everything tasted very good. In addition, Stefan returned the favour for the "sauna" in Lucerne with a "cool round".

Day 2, 8th June - Day trip "Highlights" of Switzerland!

After breakfast we could start at 9:15 am. 4 passes with more than 2000 meters altitude were on the program and the weather was playing along! From Meiringen we went first to Innertkirchen and then up the wonderful route to the Grimsel Pass (2165 m). Past the Räterichsbodensee and Grimselsee we went up to the top of the pass - simply a wonderful motorcycle route!!!

At the top we wanted to go further up to Oberaarsee, but unfortunately the small road was closed due to construction work! The 6 km long private road (toll-free) is open from the pass summit on the hour for 10 min and the return trip is also possible on the half hour for 10 min - so it is necessary to adjust the schedule accordingly (we had done so - that's why the tour starts at 9:15 am!) in order to be able to enjoy this charming side trip with wonderful views of the Oberaar glacier, the Finsteraarhorn (4274 m) and the Lauteraarhorn (4042 m).



Rhône glacier and the Furka Pass road. Arrived in Gletsch we turned right and reached Ulrichen. There the road branches off up to the Nufenenpass (2478 m). As usual on my

Since we could not treat ourselves to this delicacy, we went straight down to Gletsch. The clouds in the north closed up a little bit and we made our way further.

The path downhill offers great views of the



tours, "free driving" was the order of the day again. This proved to be very successful, because then everybody can decide for himself whether he wants to drive up comfortably or quickly. Everybody gets his money's worth and doesn't have to wait for others or

be rushed (depending on that).

After the photo stop at the top of the pass we went down to Airolo - also here "free riding". I myself took it easy and enjoyed the scenic impressions.

In the valley I met the others again and we could go up to the St. Gotthard pass (2108 m). For this we used the old Tremola route, which with its 24 tightly superimposed hairpin bends - mostly cobbled - demands good riding skills! However, the route is simply a MUST if you are travelling in Central Switzerland!



After the stop at the top of the pass we went down to Andermatt.

Here I had a "special" experience even then:

I had to fill up with gas and so I stopped at the gas station at the entrance to the village. A few bikers from Austria were still in line and then I wanted to fill up. I took the nozzle and wanted to fill up - nothing happened. Then the young gas station attendant came, took the nozzle away from me again and filled up with another Austrian who belonged to the other group. Then I - again nothing. He asked whether I wanted to pay in cash or by credit card - credit card my wish. "Then you must enter your PIN here". "But that's not possible with a German card!" "The Germans always cause problems!" A lot of back and forth and I suddenly wanted to pay cash! Petra asked him, if he doesn't like Germans - NO he didn't like! "We're going back on Sunday." "Yes, but the Germans are always here!" Let's go. He looked at me strangely when I wanted to fill up the tank myself, but he let me go. 41.20 francs had to be paid (the Pan-European has a big tank!) He took the change from the cash register and wanted to give it



to me. Thereby (intentionally?) a part fell on the floor. I picked it up and he gave me the rest, no not quite(!), he wanted to keep the tip! But as I didn't agree with that, he reluctantly gave me the rest of the money as well. Okay, I will avoid this gas station on my future tours in Switzerland, by the way, I can advise all other German motorcyclists to do the same! Because if someone doesn't want my money, I don't want to force it on him! From Andermatt we went down to Göschenen (1106 m). Here the small but nice road branches off up to the Göscheneralp

(1797 m). A detour that can only be recommended to everybody. Also the others enjoyed the beautiful - lonely - ride up and with a cup of cappuccino the previous impressions could be processed. Afterwards we went up to the Göscheneralpsee for a short while - a wonderful view in a magnificent high mountain landscape!



the Reichenbachtal to the Schwarzwaldalpe / Rosenlauri. At the end point (Schwarzwaldalpe) we decided to visit the Rosenlauri glacier gorge. A path of about 500 meters over steep steps, wet from the spray, leads through the narrow gorge, where the meltwater from the Rosenlauri Glacier flows and where the walls are partly 70 to 80 meters high. Simply gigantic! An impressive natural spectacle! After this detour we finally went back to Meiringen and a nice day came to an end in a comfortable round!

Back to Göschenen we went on to Wassen. Here the road branches off to the Sustenpass (2224 m). Also - like the other passes of Central Switzerland - a wonderful motorcycle track, on which it is simply fun to "surf curves"!

After a short stop at the top of the pass, it was downhill again. Passing the Steingletscher and over great curve combinations we reached Innertkirchen again. From there we didn't go back to Meiringen directly, but shortly before we turned left into



3rd day, 9th June - Day trip "to the Bernese Oberland



We continued leisurely along the shore road to Interlaken. From there via Wilderswil into the Lauterbrunnen Valley. The path led us left to Grindelwald. We stopped at the entrance of the village and stared fascinated at the gigantic north face of the Eiger!

Through Grindelwald the path then led us to the foot of the upper Grindelwald glacier. Here the road for public transport ends. A continuation of the journey is only possible with post busses.

After this stop we went down again to the Lauterbrunnen valley, which we followed in the direction of Lauterbrunnen. There, the Staubbach Falls plunge over a vertical drop of almost 300 m into the valley - one of the highest waterfalls in Europe! In the Lauterbrunnen Valley itself there are a total of 72 waterfalls!

On this day I wanted to show my passengers the beauty of the Bernese Oberland - for me simply the most scenic part of the entire Alps!

So we started at 9 o'clock and after a short drive we reached the lake of Brienz. Photo stop!



We followed the valley to Stechelberg and then returned to Interlaken. From there we first



went up to Habkern - a track with great curve combinations!

At the entrance of the village a small road branches off (in a right-hand bend) straight ahead (signposting "Bort"). The road is very narrow and if you meet a car, you should be careful, but it offers wonderful views down to Lake Thun and the magnificent mountains of the Bernese Oberland. After a few kilometres - to the right - Beatenberg is signposted. This was our next destination. Before Beatenberg, however, we allowed ourselves a

break and enjoyed the landscape. On the left hand side there were many paragliders, which took advantage of the thermals to fly high.

Then we continued on to Beatenberg and over a - also very small - toll road to Sigriswil. Impressive views of Lake Thun accompany the route. In Sigriswil we then turned north, following the signs for "Schwanden". A little after Meiersmaad, there is a turn-off to the right towards "Horrenbach". We followed this and reached Eriz via "Berg und Tal" (literally: up and down! The route is really a roller coaster ride). From here on the road is much wider again and the rest of the way is made for motorcycles again! A coffee



break interrupted the "wild chase" and then we reached the Schallenberg (1167 m). After the top of the pass we went on to Marbach and Escholzmatt. This route is very popular with motorcyclists and so we met again many other bikers, which was not the case before. Then the last "highlight" was the Glaubenbüelenpass (1611 m). The route is still quite wide until Sörenberg, but then it becomes narrow again and you have to be careful of oncoming traffic. Partly the road was humid, although we hadn't had rain until then. Up to the top of the pass the rule was "free driving" again and everybody could tackle the route according to his own ideas. Downhill we had to be very careful, because we met some motorcyclists or groups of motorcyclists who did not stay on their side of the road and one or the other encounter almost went wrong! Especially on such a narrow road you should stay "on your side", otherwise accidents are pre-programmed - unfortunately not everybody takes this to heart!

Arrived in the valley we passed the Lunger Lake and a photo stop above the lake was made. During this stop a lot of FIAT 500 drove down into the valley. I did not know that there are still so many! Countless of these small vehicles drove past us waving and honking and enjoyed the tour together.

After this intermezzo we finally drove over the Brünigpass (1008 m) back to Meiringen.

There the roads were very wet and the rain had probably stopped only minutes before - break before correctly timed!

By the way, we had a lot of luck with the weather that day anyway, because we were not even caught up by the rain. In the news afterwards, however, I noticed that exactly on this weekend there were some storms in the Bernese Oberland, with numerous floods.



The weather god was kind to us!

In the evening came another "special" experience!

We had gone for a walk on the first evening and chose a restaurant for the last evening in Meiringen. The choice was a pizzeria right next to the station. The ambience was promising and the prices were high (13 - 14 € for the pizza!), but that's the way it is in Switzerland.



So we had ordered a table for 10 people and went to eat expectantly.

After we had taken a seat it took a while until the waiter took our orders for drinks. Only after he had brought the drinks, he also gave us the menu. Also this order finally worked out and we waited for the food. It took a relatively long time, but finally it came! Big plate, small pizza! In addition a broad hard edge, which required the strong use of the knife

. But

the food was very good in taste.

After we were finished and wanted to leave I gave the waiter a sign that we wanted to pay. It took a little longer again, but then he put the total bill in front of my nose and signalled me that we should settle this among ourselves.

"You can share equally." We told him that we wanted to pay each one separately and he told us (you have to call it that way!) that he would come back when he had time again! When he came, I complained that the wine that Werner, Petra and I had drunk would only cost 18.50 francs and not 22 francs according to the drinks menu. He then corrected this by hand.

It still took a while until everyone could finally pay.

Not only I, but also all the others, had a very bad impression of this pizzeria and can only advise other Meiringen visitors against it!

As they say: often, appearances are deceptive!



4th day, the 10th of June, return journey - Meiringen – Sonthofen

In the morning we had to pay the bill and thank for the good hospitality and reception and then we could start!

Before we said goodbye to Fred, who had kept up very well with his Honda CBR 600 in spite of his lack of experience with the passport - my appreciation!

Shortly before 9am we drove - in bright sunshine - back towards the Grimsel Pass (2165 m).



Then down to Gletsch and there left to the Furka pass (2431 m). Uphill the road is still quite wide and very easy to ride, but downhill it is quite narrow and the steep slope on the right side awakes bad feelings! Afterwards we came back to Andermatt and finally drove up to the Oberalp pass (2044 m).

After a short break we continued via Sedrun and Disentis to Chur. Shortly before Chur we had lunch break. There I met some friends from the Swiss Chopper Forum

(www.chopperforum.ch). A short talk to say

goodbye and the rest of the journey home could follow. Via Chur I went on to Landquart.

There a building site confused us! Straight ahead was blocked (although a traffic light would

have allowed us to continue). We were guided to the right for a few kilometers, then under the highway to the other side of the road and back again! Pass the driveway and continue to the next roundabout. There again on the opposite side and finally away from the expressway again. We arrived exactly on the other side of the previously mentioned traffic light and had, however, due to the "skilful" traffic routing, about 6 - 7 km of detour behind us! Okay, let's go! Via Maienfeld and Balzers we reached Vaduz. From there via Feldkirch and Götzis to Dornbirn. Here we turned right and finally reached Hittisau via Bödele and Schwarzenberg. After refuelling we said goodbye to each other and then drove back to Sonthofen.

Conclusion:

It was a wonderful weekend and it was great fun again to drive the Swiss passes and enjoy the beautiful landscape!

Magnificent landscape!

Wonderful winding roads!

Pure fun!

Addition:

Many thanks to Fred and Mäggi, who kindly provided me with their photos.