

EuroMeet 2013 Norway

The quintessential TR experience... You come as guests and depart as friends... that was the theme of the 2013 Norway EuroMeet.

This was an experience that will be very very hard to eclipse. Apparently it took the core team of three couples ably led by Tom Berve somewhere around four years to plan and organise this weekend and the tour that followed it... a journey surrounded by some of the most spectacular scenery to be found on planet earth.

They also delivered not just one but a whole collection of interesting and challenging roads that would surely have satisfied even the most adventurous amongst us. From the start the whole event was planned to keep away from any major towns.

While this may not be so difficult in Norway, compared with the rest of Europe, it certainly made the driving most enjoyable as, in many places, the sight of a hundred plus TRs roaring past probably made up a significant proportion of the traffic for the whole day.

The weekend really started heading from the ferry terminal in Oslo where most visitors arrived to "Valdresporten", about 120km (75miles) north

of Oslo where everyone gathered together for a lunch and coffee stop.

From there to the Radisson Blue hotel at Beitostolen, the "official" start of the weekend was another 105km (65miles) northwards of clear road away from speed cameras and the like as the true flavour of Norway unravelled. Some relatively intense competition was to be seen at the go-kart/soapbox downhill racing across the road from the hotel during the afternoon.

The next day all headed further north-west over some spectacular roads including a short excursion up to Dalsnibba, a mountain top eyrie, an amazing viewpoint at 1475m (4840ft) that overlooked all the surrounding

countryside including the ultimate destination for the day way down at sea level.

This was the Union Hotel at Geiranger nestled into the head of the fjord of the same name that has been a popular tourist destination for almost 200 years and is now recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Everyone settled in for the next two nights after a TR briefing and a very interesting presentation of the history of the hotel and surrounding area from the current manager of this historic family owned and operated establishment. Many also enjoyed viewing the collection of excellently restored vehicles representing the earlier transport to this remote location.

Saturday dawned with a covering of light mist that, rather than detracting from what was all around us, just complemented the already unique scenery. The journey today took the fleet of over 100 TRs along Norway's "Golden Route" north from Geiranger, up the Ornevegen zigzag (Eagle Road), across the plateau sharing the road with cattle and sheep wandering in the misty conditions and finally down to Eidsdal for the ferry across Norddalsfjord to Linge.



Then the highlight was the famous Trollstigen (Trolls's Ladder) road (9% and 11 hairpin bends). This is a route that would be hard to beat... anywhere! Unforgettable! And, to top it off, do it all again driving back to Geiranger in the opposite direction.

Saturday evening hosted the more formal aspects of the event, the main dinner followed by presentations to out hosts by representatives of all the TR groups present. This was also goodbye to some who were not continuing on the tour and had to leave very early the next morning.

On Sunday morning the tour began with a climb back out of Geirangerfjord taking in a short deviation around Knuten (The knot), a piece of the original road built in 1882 that loops over itself. This day saw more great scenery including a section along Gamle Strynefjellsvegen, a loose metal handcrafted road between east and west Norway that dates back over 100 years with walls of guard stones.

This route is across a mountain plateau heading above the tree line at up to about 1100m (3600ft) passing lakes and summer ski fields. Where

there were trees, they were in full autumn colour, spectacular against the rugged mountainous terrain. A steep descent followed leading to a stop for an enjoyable lunch at a small hotel in a peaceful spot alongside the lake at Hjelle...back to a somewhat warmer 45m above sea level.

From Hjelle through the small town of Stryn and then along the Gaurfjellet National Tourist Route with more great sights before arriving at the Kviknes Hotel at Balestrad on the shores of Sognefjord after a long day of over 300km (186miles).

This hotel has history that goes back to 1752 and since 1877 it has been run by the Kvigne family. The main building is an outstanding wooden structure and is graced with a interesting collection of artworks and antique furniture.

Another great evening starting with Siguard Kvigne, the current manager giving a short history of the hotel and the surrounding area. This included early film clips of a visit by Kaiser Wilhelm II and his extensive entourage, both on land and moored in the fjord, in 1914. On Monday the route started with a double ferry ride across

Sognefjord to Vangsnes for a closeup look at a 10.5m high statue overlooking the fjord of Fridtjof, a legendary figure that Kaiser Wilhelm II gave to the area in 1913.

A little later a stop to look at an fascinating boat and engine museum "Kristianhus" presented by Kristian Otterskred, a retired local mariner and engineer.

On again with more scenery, a deviation for a welcome warm lunch at Stalheim Hotel before another interesting descent through a tunnel and back to the main route.

The next stage was a little different... into a 7km (4.4mile) tunnel with a roundabout in the middle of it before crossing the huge new 1380m



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Von TR-ler geführtes Hotel inmitten der Rostocker Heide, ca. 20 Min. von der Ostsee und Rostock entfernt. Die Empfangshalle, das Ess- und das Kaminzimmer sowie 9 Zimmer und Ferienwohnungen inmitten des großen Parks sind Orte der Ruhe und Geborgenheit. Hier gilt es auch, kulinarischen Genüssen zu frönen. Die Hausfrau bereitet Ihnen aus Produkten eigener Jagd und Landwirtschaft Menüs zu.



(4527ft) long and 201m (660ft) high Hardanger suspension bridge opened just a month before.

The next two nights were at the Ullensvang Hotel at Loftus. This is yet another historic establishment dating back to 1846 and is family owned and operated with the fifth generation currently at the helm and was also a great location to enjoy.

The touring from here included more tunnels, a visit to a mountain farm way up above Hardangerfjord and a visit to the Hardangervidda Natursenter. This was view the museum, enjoy lunch, watch and feel a quintessential 5 screen panoramic video reminiscent of Cinerama and, yes, even to watch the goats eat the grass on the roof.

Another highlight of the whole tour was the opportunity to drive up the Old Mabodal road. It is a great drive clinging to the side of the mountain, a road that has now been replaced by a series of spiral tunnels but was specially reopened for the TR tour.

On Wednesday morning the tour set

out for Haukelisetter on the last part of this unforgettable journey for a farewell lunch. Again the route covered some great roads up and over some mountain passes that have, for the more conventional motorist anyhow, been replaced by tunnels through the mountains.

The lunch venue had a great view over the adjacent lake and fed us well before the sadness of farewell to all the wonderful people... as we departed remembering many friends that we would look forward to meeting again sometime in the future.

Overall, a rather special and amazing adventure in a part of the world not so well known... particularly to our wee team of two from New Zealand. The roads were great but with just the odd aberration, to get the immediate attention of a well known diesel powered TR6 in a minor (?) saga of "bump, thump, sump, dump".

A very special thanks to all the people who made this experience possible. They welcomed everyone to their very special part of the world and gave us all a remarkable journey through what



must be one of the most beautiful countries on the planet.

**Robert Johnston,
Auckland, New Zealand**

P.S.: If you would like to learn more about the locations referred to above just search Google... they are just about all there in spectacular detail.



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