

## Addicted to Sea, or to Mountains?

by Michael Lohmar

When asked about their personal favorite vacation, people seem split on the question.

I guess the majority will immediately answer, the sea: sunbathing, relaxing, easy living or just indulging into the luxury of a fancy 5 star hotel with a great sea view is what I'm going for.

Yet others might answer, we always go for the mountains! We like the fresh air, the hiking and the seasonal activities like skiing in winter.

And far less will tell you, that they are going for culture and/or history.

Yet I believe that folks splitting up on different interests is a definitely a good thing.

Just now I have to confess that I do not really fit into one of those groups.

It all started slowly for me with the usual trips to sunny spots in a southern country, where I'd stay for two or three weeks.

But very soon I found out that this is not enough for me. Doing one or two trips discovering the surroundings, strolling over to a weekly market and visiting a historical building is nice, but not enough - for me.

It's just and plainly the pure adventure of something new every day, mixed with the chance to meet new people from different cultures and, first of all, to interact with them, is what keeps my fancy.

Give me a new country, a vehicle and most importantly someone to talk with, and I'm happy.

Now as sad it might be, all of the bigger trips offering this seem to also always be a question of time, money and effort to plan.

In brief, nothing you can do every few weeks.

Knowing this was also looking for an easy escape out of this problem. By being generally interested in motorbikes, the question of a friend about taking a trip together soon ended in the investment of a motorbike.

Since about 10 years now --- I was late coming back to it --- it has been a passion of mine to ride my bike, whenever possible, wherever the mood of that day will lead me. As a consequence I experience the surroundings, scenery, cafes and lovely spots closer up, sort of like a big map in my head, and mostly just start without planning anything.

But surely with the bigger trips come the things that last longer.

Together with my friend and both of our wives we were used to taking at least one longer trip (usually four to five days) into the Alps. Crossing a few countries (one a day) and burning down a few hundred (mostly two or three thousand) kilometers in between.

Once, we made a really long trip, crossing the French Sea Alps down to Monaco and Nice, enjoying things like the Grand Canyon du Verdon and riding lots of passes/mountains like the Col de l'Iseran, Col du Galibiere and finally and most importantly, the Col de la Bonette, the highest paved road in Europe.

Besides all this natural beauty ... this is the one single situation which always comes up in my mind when I remember that trip ... was a very enjoyable chat on top of the Col de l'Iseran with some British guy riding a very beautiful, restored Royal Enfield who arrived a few minutes later than me, as I had easily passed him climbing the pass due to having plenty more HP.

So if you now ask me again ...

ARE YOU ADDICTED TO THE SEA? ...

I will answer you ... ADDICTED ... ME?

Perhaps, Maybe, but then in just one, single specific way!!

Not to the sea, that's for sure, nor to mountains necessarily ...

Just to the adventure of experiencing something new each day!!

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