

Aus dem Leben eines EVO-R



or
A modern Pilgrims Diary

Inhalt

1	Preface	4
2	Spieglein, Spieglein an der Wand ...	5
3	A good excuse	9
4	Vous savez, je suis blonde	10
5	Do stupid things faster	11
6	Reaching the plain, at last	12
7	Riding 225 km in one day	14
8	Without wife men are at a loss	15
9	Es gibt unendlich viel Hoffnung, nur nicht für uns	17
10	What are „Caracoles“	18
11	The end of the world	19
12	The plain of the Ebro	20
13	A velomobile on the „Camino“	22
14	Again 200 km	23
15	No quiero que un ciclista muere en mi pueblo	25
16	Getting “famous”	26
17	We’ve made it	28
18	Starting the reverse journey	29
19	Roller coaster on three wheels	30
20	Taking the low road	32
21	Costa verde at it's best	34
22	A shortcut to paradise	36
23	Too tired to talk	38

24	This is neither Spain nor France	40
25	Une voiture un peu comme Tintin	42
26	Getting lost, almost	43
27	Talking to a horse	45
28	Lunch where Mitterand used to eat	46
29	Little Horse is winning	48
30	Homeward bound	50
31	Rückblick auf 4000 km mit dem EVO-R	52

1 Preface

(Stolen without permission from Stuart at „Yellomobile.net“. I hope he will give me his consent when I get hold of him.)

In the deepest, darkest recesses of the velonaut brain there is a seed of madness. It is the seed of speed. It is the need to go faster, for speed at all costs, for absolutely unreasonable amounts of velocity.

It was not always so. We all started out very practically – choosing our new machine to commute in comfort, or its protection from the elements, or its stability, or its year round abilities, and of course its aerodynamic properties which allow us to do more, with less energy.

But that was back in the beginning. We all wrote our checks with trembling pens in trembling hands and submitted our order after long and torturous deliberation. This was followed (for most of us) by a long and torturous wait for the machine to be built. When at last we proudly beheld our shiny new addiction in all its splendour, we quietly vowed to protect it like a child – our lovely little time machine.

First, a ride round the block to set our mind at ease, a week to become accustomed to the enclosure, a month to get used to people looking at you like a madman (or woman), two or three more to gain recumbent muscles and feel one with the machine, and then – the speed. You didn't notice the change but it's been happening all the time – the way your heavy vehicle now whizzes by ultra-light upright racers, the way you don't feel the wind anymore, the way you can now coast forever, and the way the brick wall of max speed has magically transformed into something soft as a pillow – something that can be pushed and negotiated with. That's where the madness begins...

You didn't realize, but it has taken that long to break down all of the accepted 'knowledge' about human power and machines. Sure, you realized that you would go a bit faster in a velomobile because of something called aerodynamics but it isn't until you become one with the machine that you suddenly realize you are doing something... superhuman. You have the power to propel yourself faster than you ever believed possible. And once that belief is broken, well, there are no limitations anymore. You've found that the only thing chaining you to the past was your past view of reality. And all of that has been swept away by the seed of speed.

Once you accept your madness, you find yourself subtly transported into the future and are blissfully free... to dream again.

2 Spieglein, Spieglein an der Wand ...

Spieglein, Spieglein an der Wand wer ist die Schönste im ganzen Land? Ich bin es! Ohne jeglichen Zweifel. Beyss hat mich in einer Sternstunde entworfen und gebaut. Er hat die ästhetische Idealform für das Velomobil gefunden und es wird nie etwas Schöneres geben. Ich betone, die ästhetische Idealform, nicht die praktische Idealform. Aber davon später. Bei der Namensgebung war er nicht so begnadet. Was soll EVO-R, warum nicht EVA. Alle haben schönere Namen als ich, MILAN, STRADA usf. Aber ich bin die Schönste! Ich habe, bzw. hatte etwa 50 Schwestern. Alle genau so schön wie ich. Die eine, mit oliv-farbenem Teint, ist bis zum Nordkap gefahren. Die anderen sind über den Erdball verteilt und werden behütet und gepflegt wie kaum ein anderes Velomobil.

Ich bin als Jüngste lange zu Hause bei Beyss geblieben, bis entschieden wurde, dass mein Platz in der Schweiz bei Dynamik sein wird. Dynamik wollte mich zuerst selbst abholen. Zum Glück hat ihn Elmar davon abgehalten. Dynamik hätte das sowieso nie geschafft. Elmar hat mich in seinem Bus sorgsam südwärts gefahren bis an die Schweizergrenze. Dort wurde ich feierlich meinem neuen Besitzer übergeben. Natürlich nicht ohne die schreckliche Geschichte vom unvorsichtigen Velomobilmfahrer, der bereits die erste Kurve verpasste und in einem Waldtobel sein Ende gefunden hatte. Können diese Menschen uns nicht besser Sorge tragen.

Beinahe wäre mir das gleiche Schicksal beschieden gewesen. Mit mehr Glück als Verstand sind wir bei der ersten längeren Gefällstrecke an einem entgegenkommenden Holztransporter haarscharf vorbeigedüst. Nachher gab's eine längere Pause. Mein Besitzer musste sich wohl bei einem Whisky oder so vom Schreck erholen. Nachher ging's dann gemütlich und vernünftig weiter bis zum Haus von Dynamik, wo ich ein warmes und trockenes Plätzchen im Studierzimmer bekam.

Mein neuer Besitzer meint, ich sei zwar die Schönste aber nicht unbedingt die Praktischste. Tja, was erwartet ihr von einer Schönheitskönigin? Die machen bei Regen ja auch nicht unbedingt eine gute Falle. Ich sei gefährlich, meint er. Dann soll er mir Sorge tragen und schön langsam fahren. Wollte er nicht. So wurde mir eine Hinterradbremse verpasst. Zusätzlich bekam ich neue Vorderräder mit Kühltürmchen, damit man nicht nach jeder Passfahrt auf meinen Naben Spiegeleier braten kann. Dann wurde mein schönes Top halbiert, damit man sich weniger wie in einem Sarg vorkomme. Die Aerodynamik stimmt zwar immer noch recht gut aber jetzt wird man bei Regen ein bisschen nass. Hab's ja gesagt, eine Schönheitskönigin ist nichts für Regenwetter. Ein Schlumpfgetriebe musste auch eingebaut werden, denn dort wo der Dynamik zu Hause ist, hat's tonnenweise Berge.



Rheinschlucht bei Versam

Nachdem alle meine vermeintlichen Schwächen ausgebügelt waren ging's los auf so eine Art Mini-Tour-de-Suisse. Dem Rhein entlang den Bergen entgegen, über den Oberalppass, über die Furka und dann das Wallis runter. Und da kurz nach Münster ist das Schreckliche passiert. Mir wird jetzt noch schwindlig wenn ich dran denke. Die Strecke war bolzengerade mit etwa 5% Gefälle. Im Nu hatten wir auf 70 km/h beschleunigt, denn schliesslich bin ich nicht nur wahnsinnig schön sondern auch wahnsinnig schnell. Die Leute sagten später, ich sei ab wie eine Rakete. Nach dem letzten Haus hat es uns dann erwischt. Ein Windstoss von rechts, ich kippe leicht nach links, eine Steuerkorrektur und ich kippe leicht nach rechts, wieder eine Steuerkorrektur und dann ging alles sehr schnell. 200 m sind wir auf dem Asphalt geschlittert. Es war eine Ewigkeit. Auf einem Rasenstück sind wir dann schliesslich zum Stillstand gekommen. Eine nette Frau meinte, Dynamik hätte sicher einen Schock und müsse ins Spital. Der wollte aber nichts davon wissen. Weitergefahren wird! Dass aber meine ganze linke Seite zerkratzt war und sogar ein kleines Loch abbekommen hat, darum kümmerte sich niemand.



Nach 200 m
Rutschen auf
dem Asphalt

Spieglein, Spieglein an der Wand ...? Ja das war einmal. Seit dem Zwischenfall am Furkapass wohl nicht mehr. Dabei war es gar nicht meine Schuld. Ein Leben lang hat sich mein Besitzer mit Dynamik befasst, aber von Aerodynamik hat er keine Ahnung. So träume ich halt im Studierzimmer von Dynamik von vergangenen schöneren Zeiten. Draussen ist es kalt und nass und das ist ohnehin nichts für eine Prinzessin.

Heute ist ein Paket für mich angekommen. Ich werde vorsichtig auf ein weiches Bett gehievt, Scheinwerfer werden angeknipst und ich werde operiert. Da die Operation nicht länger als 8 Stunden dauern sollte, hat Frau Dynamik kein Veto eingelegt. Sie ist überhaupt sehr grosszügig mit mir. Fährt ja selbst auch so ein dreirädriges Modell, allerdings ohne Draperie. Soll damit das Tal des Todes durchquert und die Anden überwunden haben. Davon kann unsereiner nur träumen.



Operation mit Karbon und Harz

Nach 8 Stunden stehe ich wieder auf meinen Rädern. Meine Blessuren sind verheilt und jetzt geht's zur Kosmetik. Und das dauert bei einer Schönheitskönigin halt ein bisschen länger. Schliesslich sind wir das unserem Stande schuldig. Nach zwei Wochen stehe ich wieder in makelloser Schönheit im Studierzimmer von Dynamik und werde von allen bewundert. Sogar Elmar ist kurz vorbeigekommen. Auf die Frage, wer sich im Allgemeinen so eine Schönheit wie mich zulege, meinte er lakonisch: "Ja das sind Leute in reiferen Jahren, die sich ein Stück Jugend kaufen".

Es wird Frühling. Die Natur erwacht und auch die Menschen und ihre Pläne. Vielleicht stimmt das mit dem Stück Jugend halt doch ein bisschen. Südwärts, weit südwärts soll es gehen. Aber zuerst müsse noch einiges an mir optimiert werden. Als ob ich nicht schon schön genug wäre. Das ideale Velomobil sei nicht dasjenige, das beim Kauf perfekt sitzt, sondern dasjenige, das nach allen Änderungen, die man eingeführt hat, perfekt sitzt. Ist ein bisschen wie bei der Partnersuche. Nur dass man hier die Änderungen an sich selbst vornehmen muss und nicht am Partner.

2000 km sollen es sein, fast bis nach Santiago de Compostela. Ohne Eile werden wir gemütlich der Rhone entlang gleiten, dann das tiefblaue Meer zur Linken bis wir die Türme von Barcelona erblicken und schliesslich über die Hochebene von Nordspanien rauschen. Ein wahrer Traum. Doch bei aller Gemütlichkeit, sowas braucht Kondition. Und anstatt sich selbst vorzubereiten, verwendet Dynamik die ganze verbleibende Zeit, um mich vorzubereiten. Da werden Tubeless-Reifen angeschafft, die Lenkstummel der Panzerlenkung verlängert und gekröpft (soll viel bequemer sein) und eine Scheibe ins Top eingebaut, damit man die Rotlichter besser sehe (als ob Dynamik sich je um Rotlichter gekümmert hätte).

Kurz vor dem grossen Termin hat es dann doch noch für zwei Proberunden gereicht. Einmal um den Neuenburgersee (100 km) und einmal um den Genfersee (300 km). Die zweite Runde sei vor allem für mich gewesen, um zu sehen, wie meine Schönheit in einem Hotel aufgenommen wird. So eine dumme Frage. Hätte ich ihm gleich sagen können. Bei meiner Schönheit und Eleganz finde ich wohl eher ein Hotelzimmer als er.



Hotel „les Cygnes“ in Evian les Bains am Genfersee

Und dann kam der Grosse Tag. Kaiserwetter, wie es sich für eine Prinzessin geziemt. Dem Südfuss des Jura entlang durch Kornfelder und Weinberge. Was gibt es Schöneres. In vorsichtig schnellem Tempo flogen wir der Calvin-Stadt Genf entgegen. Wobei das mit dem „Fliegen“ galt nur wenn's bergab ging oder bestenfalls in der Ebene. Bergauf naja, Dynamik hätte vielleicht doch ein wenig trainieren sollen. Auf alle Fälle haben wir Bellgarde recht spät erreicht und gerade noch das letzte Hotelzimmer ergattert. Apropos Hotelzimmer: spät abends während ich mich von den Strapazen des Tages erhole, kritzelt Dynamik unverständliche Zeichen in sein Tagebuch. Das machen die Menschen so, wenn sie alleine reisen. Ich habe mir diese Blätter geschnappt und werde sie Stück für Stück da reinstellen. Wer weiss, vielleicht interessiert das jemanden.

Hier die erste Tagebuchseite, die ich gefunden habe. War etwas schwierig zu entziffern. Dynamik war wohl ziemlich erschöpft von den ersten 140 km. Und warum es auf Englisch sein muss, weiss ich auch nicht.

3 A good excuse

Bellegarde, 10.5.17

To start a journey of three weeks all on your own, leaving your beloved wife, the cats and the garden behind, that needs a good excuse. Fortunately my grandson in Lugo (not far from Santiago de Compostela) provided the excuse. He will have his first communion end of Mai and I promised him, that I will come to the celebration and that I will make the journey with the velomobile.

Yesterday I have set the velomobile in perfect running condition. I have even mounted extra fast tubeless front tires. The rolling resistance is said to be 15 % lower. This means that from the 2000 km I have only to pedal 1700 km.

Now I'm sitting in a lovely hotel room in Bellegarde. I just got the last available room in whole Bellegarde. I don't like to imagine what would have happened, if the room would have been taken by someone else. It's raining outside.

The first 140 km are behind me but there are still 1860 km waiting. The journey from Montalchez to Bellgarde was wonderful. The sun was bright but not too hot. I followed the southeastern fringe of the Jura with all its vineyards and picturesque old villages. In Aubonne, where I stopped for coffee and cake, an elderly lady wanted to know everything about my contraption and about my journey. As I told her, that I was heading towards Santiago de Compostella, she exclaimed "Ah, vous devez aller chez les Petites Seurs, ils ont des chambres pour les pèlerins". It was tempting but I continued and reached the Lake Geneva in Nyon. Along the lake my velomobile was almost flying. In Geneva I assumed that I have just to follow the Rhone River and it will be downhill right to the sea shore. That was a mistake. Between Geneva and Bellegarde the Rhone squeezes through several gorges. They are nice to look at but the road climbs several mountain ridges before it reaches Bellgarde. But tomorrow it will be only downhill, I suppose.



Geneva with its "Jet d'eau"

4 Vous savez, je suis blonde

Übrigens das mit dem "Fliegen" dem Genfersee entlang (auf der ersten Tagebuchseite) ist glatt übertrieben. Bestenfalls 40 km/h haben wir gehabt und dabei ging es noch 0.5% abwärts. Dynamik sollte sich ein Präzisions-Inklinometer einbauen lassen, dann würde es weniger Legenden über Maximalgeschwindigkeiten beim Velomobil geben. Hier nun die versprochene zweite Tagebuchseite:

Voiron, 11.5.17

A river always flows downhill. But the road along the Rhone River seems to obey different physical laws. Today I had to climb a total of 1600 m on only 115 km. How unfair. The road went mainly through forestry area and was really romantic. My velomobile seems to excite a lot of interest. In a remote village a car driver stopped me, just to have a chat about my vehicle. In Aix-les-Bains an elderly lady wanted to know everything about my strange contraption. In exchange she showed me the best bakery in the town.

As two pieces of apple tart with hot chocolate were hardly enough for the remaining part of today's journey, I had to add a second course in a "Brasserie", consisting of fried potatoes with two glasses of white wine. They say you have to drink sufficiently on bicycle tours. And I guess even more, if you have three wheels.

The road from Aix-les-Bains to Voiron leads through the fairylike "Domaine de la Chartreuse". Already the name should have warned me. These Chartreuses have always been built in remote areas with difficult access. Today this area is known for excellent climbing opportunities (site d'escalade).

Parc Naturel Régional de la Chartreuse



Voiron is a very nice town with a medieval centre but no hotels. So I'm lodging a bit outside of the town centre. The hotel is a bit too modern for my taste but the evening meal was excellent and at a good price. Except that they put the decimal point on the wrong position. There was a lot of confusion about that and the waitress apologized for the big mistake with the excuse, "Vous savez, je suis blonde".

5 Do stupid things faster

Mich soll's ja nicht kümmern. Ich bin nicht blond. Ich hab nur einen goldenen Mantel. Aber wenn Blondinen selbst - wie auf der letzten Tagebuchseite - Sprüche über Blondinen machen, dann hat es weit runter geschneit. Mittlerweile habe ich auch die dritte Tagebuchseite gefunden.

Crest, 12.5.17

A trip with a velomobile is something special. If the road is sloping just a little bit and if the tarmac is smooth you have nothing to do except proper steering. You are flying through the landscape as pushed by a magic hand. But if the road gets only a little bit steep, all the magic is gone and you are crawling at pedestrian speed. But there is nothing to get upset about. The crawling part is where you have time to watch the birds and the flowers and above all, to drink water. Some people say that singing helps a lot. I haven't yet tried out that.

Today's trip had plenty of both, mountains and plains. I left Voiron and - using small roads along the Isere River - reached Romans towards lunch time. Here I found the loveliest cafe with the most original advertising for cafe drinking.



Advertising for cafe drinking

The weather god was a bit unkind in the afternoon. I carried on on small roads southwards but when the lightnings kept coming closer, I decided to seek shelter under the roof of an old washing house in Monteleger, where a bunch of elderly men were waiting. They had to give up their bowling session and were now very keen to tell me which way I have to take. That's why I ended up in Crest today.

Arriving in Crest the rain had stopped and the sun shone bright again. Crest is a lovely medieval town of some importance, at least in medieval times. It is built against a steep hill with the highest defence tower of France. Many of the cobble stone roads from medieval time still exist. I'm glad that modern roads are a bit smoother. Otherwise I would never make it to Spain.



One of the many narrow and steep lanes leading to the Château de Crest

6 Reaching the plain, at last

Naja, das mit der Gelassenheit am Berg (auf der gestrigen Tagebuchseite) ist ja auch ein bisschen schöngeredet. Geärgert hat sich Dynamik darüber, dass ich so schwer bin. Hätt er halt ein bisschen weniger essen und dafür ein bisschen mehr trainieren sollen. Hier also die versprochene vierte Tagebuchseite:

Nîmes, 13.5.17

The day started with a climb of more than 400 m. I tried the "singing" but all the birds stopped their lovely music. So I went back to drinking water in order to entertain myself. On top of the pass the view over the Rhone valley was gorgeous. Far away I could - with a little bit of imagination - make out the Roman theatre of Orange. And this was my next stop.



Roman theatre of Orange

While I was enjoying a crêpe with marmalade and whipped cream just beside the Roman theatre some photographers couldn't get enough pictures of my velomobile. They told me, they will send the photos to a bicycle magazine and that I should get a copy too.

The afternoon was a real treat. The road from Orange to Nîmes is mostly flat with only a few minor hills. And – in a velomobile - if you don't brake too much on the downhill part you can climb the next hill with very little effort. Thus I reached Nîmes already at 5 o'clock and had covered 140 km. Nîmes is really worth a visit. The old town is like a maze of hundreds of small lanes. Everything is well kept and clean. I found a lovely restaurant. The food was excellent but the plates were rather small, at least not as big as my hunger.



Maison Carrée in Nîmes

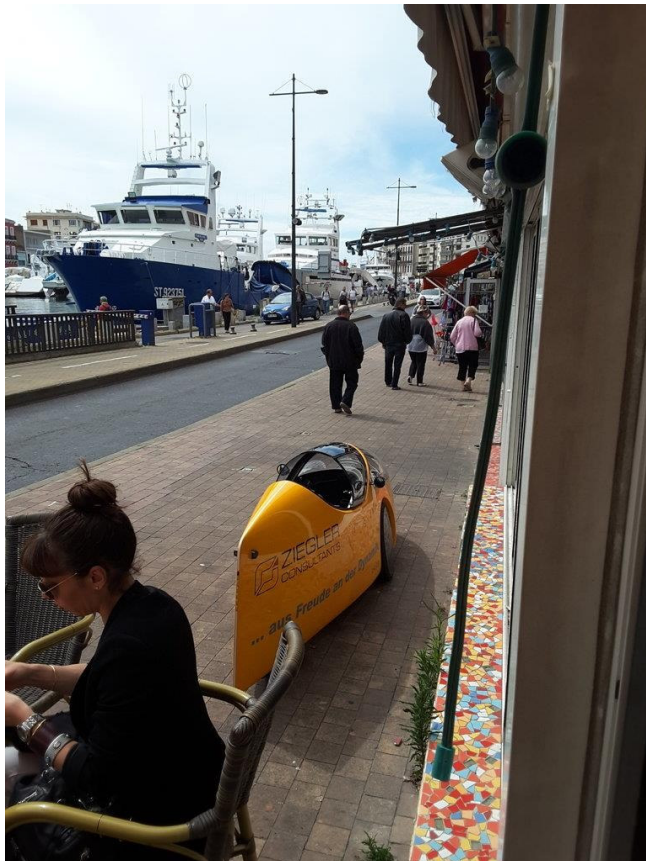
7 Riding 225 km in one day

Distanzangaben von Velomobilfahrern sind in der Regel zuverlässig. Problematisch wird es erst bei Geschwindigkeitsangaben. Vor allem bei Durchschnittsgeschwindigkeiten. Ich hab mir erlaubt, im Garmin-Gerät von Dynamik etwas zu stöbern. Durchschnittswerte von 30 bis 40 km/h? Hab ich nirgends gefunden. Der beste Wert lag bei 25 km/h. Dazwischen gab's auch Tage mit 15 km/h (bezogen auf die reine Fahrzeit). Da war wohl ein Pass dabei.

Leucate, 14.5.17

Riding a velomobile requires specific skills, especially on French roads, where they have a roundabout every 5 km. The main goal is to minimize energy loss. As soon as you see a glimpse of a roundabout, stop pedalling. To continue would be a waste of effort. Then you enter the roundabout at moderate speed. The first critical point is the centre of the roundabout. Keep it at your left side. If you are too fast, there is no much harm done as there is plenty of leeway. The next critical point is the curb stone edge at the right site of your exit. Here you won't have any leeway. If you are too fast you either hit the curb stone with your right wheel, which might be the end of the journey or your vehicle topples over and you hit the curb stone with your right shoulder, which is not much better.

Today I had really plenty of these roundabouts. I started in Nimes at 8 o'clock. The hotel owner gave me a big bottle of Badoit water because he liked the way I was travelling. The sun shone bright and the air was fresh and above all the road was level and smooth. With the new roundabout technique I reached Sète before lunch time. Sète was as charming as ever. So many times I have been here, with and without bicycles. And it's always a treat to sit in one of those street cafés along the canal enjoying a French meal and the mediterranean sun.



In a street café in Sète

The second part of today's journey brought me from Sète to Narbonne. The beautifully laid out bicycle road follows the sea front and gives wonderful views to the beach and the dark blue sea. After some 30 km I had to change to the old main road. This had the advantage that this way I could cross all these old villages that make the charm of the South of France. It's important not to rush through these villages. First you want to savour these picturesque villages and secondly you have to find your way between all the potholes in the road. So an average speed of 10 km/h is completely sufficient. Don't get irritated by the honking of the car drivers. They do that out of admiration (I guess) and it's only meant to encourage you.

Towards 4 o'clock I reached Narbonne. As it was still quite early I carried on towards Perpignan. Here the terrain started to be a bit more demanding. The ascents were steep and the descents were a bit too steep to just let it run, especially with the nasty side wind. In Leucate, after 225 km, I found a nice hotel close to the sea shore but nobody at the reception. This is not very encouraging, especially at 8 o'clock in the evening. After 10 minutes waiting some guests appeared and upon my inquiry about a room the 15 year old daughter of the family just made a few phone calls, got hold of the owner and obtained all the instructions of how to get a room. It seems that the owner preferred to spend the evening at the bar of his favourite restaurant.

Leucate is on a natural dam that forms a big lagoon. They have a big harbour full of sailing boats and good restaurants. And this time the quantity was really sufficient.



Harbour of Leucate

8 Without wife men are at a loss

Übung macht den Meister. Nach 6 Tagen Intensivtraining hat auch Dynamik die 200 km Marke geknackt. Ist auch gar nicht so schwierig mit einem stromlinienförmigen Wunder, wie ich eins bin.

Portbou, 15.5.17

Now I've made it. I have reached Spanish territory after 6 days of pedalling. So far I've covered 800 km but there are still 1200 km left. There is a good chance that I'll make it to Galicia. I'm sitting in a quiet cove-like harbour called Portbou. The waves are gently rolling onto the shore. Everything is quiet and peaceful except the boss of the restaurant. He is

furiously shouting about in a mixture of Spanish and French, probably the local dialect. As far as I got it, his wife didn't appear to help him and so he is a bit at a loss. It's a perfect comedy. One of the guests took care of me and brought me a glass of white wine and there is hope that I will get an evening meal too. Anchovies as entree and alitas de pollo con patatas fritas. Meanwhile the missing wife has appeared and things are going smoothly. And I got my anchovies and the alitas. They were a bit difficult to disassemble but tasty. When finally I asked the big boss for a desert he put three mini-madeleines in my hands. When finally I paid the bill he came with a bottle of wine as a present for good clients.



Harbour of Portbou

When I started this morning I saw the Pyrenees with snow white caps towering in front of me. I decided to cross the Pyrenees where they are really low. And that is where they put their feet into the Mediterranean Sea. But even there it's still quite demanding. You have to crawl over every single toe. Next time for sure I'll take a boat.



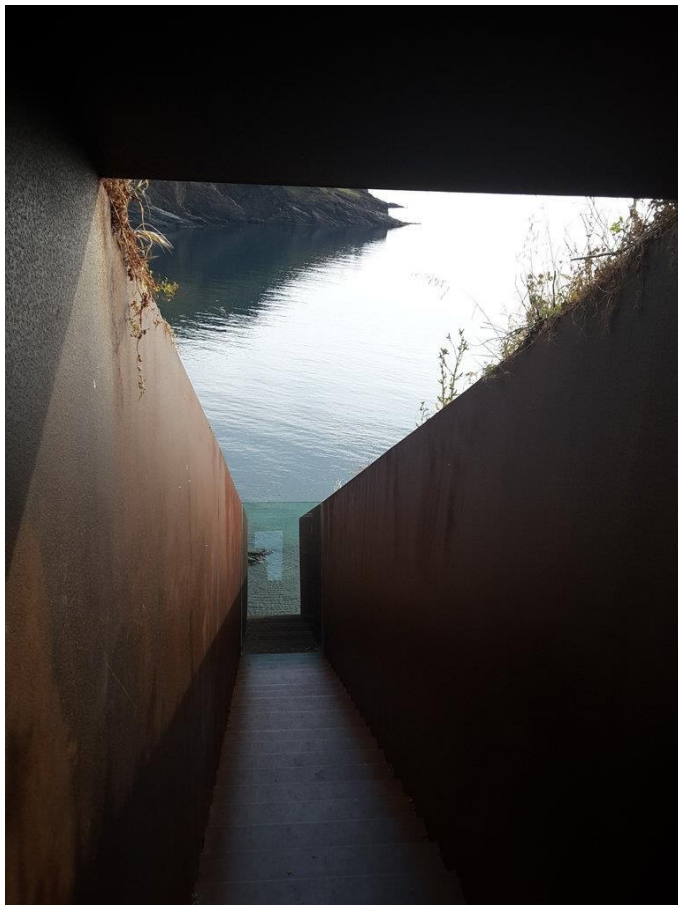
Lunch in Banyuls-sur-mer

9 Es gibt unendlich viel Hoffnung, nur nicht für uns

Wer mit mir unterwegs ist, kann sich wohl kaum über mangelnde Beachtung beklagen. Wo immer wir auch aufkreuzen bin ich der Mittelpunkt. Wer das nicht mag, sollte nicht mit mir kommen. Nun zur nächsten Tagebuchseite:

Sabadell, 16.5.17

In Portbou, where I found the lovely hotel of yesterday, I came across an inscription commemorating Walter Benjamin. In this house he came to death after 7 years of exile in different places of Europe. The actual circumstances of his death have never been cleared. I didn't know who Walter Benjamin was. So I checked in the Internet. And there I found the photo of the Walter Benjamin Memorial. I have seen this photo 10 years ago in a newspaper and I couldn't forget it. This memorial shows in an impressive way, how it must feel when there is no hope left.



Walter Benjamin Memorial in Portbou

Here I was in Portbou by pure chance and stumbled over a treasure of art work. It's a staircase in a steel tunnel leading to nowhere. On the last page of his diary Walter Benjamin cited Kafkas words "Es gibt unendlich viel Hoffnung, nur nicht für uns". Back in the hotel I shared my enthusiasm for this memorial with a motorbike rider and suggested, he should visit this unique piece of art. "Och nee, jetzt hab ich die Motorradstiefel schon an" he said dryly.

Today's journey brought me from Portbou to Sabadell. It started with a few heavy ascents over the last few toes of the Pyrenees. Then the rugged landscape changed to a lovely fertile plain. I didn't mind. In Hostalric, a medieval town on a rock, I stopped for a short snack. There was huge interest for my contraption and the owner of the bar filled all my bottles with fresh water.



A short stop in Hostalric

My first plan was then to pedal to Barcelona. As this would have been a little detour, I decided to go directly to Sabadell. I reckoned that it would also be easier to find a hotel room in Sabadell. How wrong I was! I guess all the conference people, who couldn't find a room in Barcelona, are booked in in Sabadell. Eventually I got my room and a wonderful evening meal.

10 What are „Caracoles“

Heute ist mein Besitzer ein bisschen an seine Grenzen gestossen. Er wird im Tagebuch natürlich nichts Derartiges vermerken. Kommt doch am späteren Nachmittag so ein Rennradler mit einem ultraleichten Carbon-Renner, will alles über Velomobile wissen und das bei Tempo 30 und erst noch auf Spanisch. Dann kommen die ersten Steigungen. Der Rennradler ist sehr freundlich und begleitet uns ganze 30 km. Wenn's mehrheitlich bergauf geht ist das natürlich ein bisschen unfair. Ich glaub wir waren noch nie so sportlich unterwegs am Berg.

Cervera, 17.5.2017

Today I have reached Cervera. It's not a particularly interesting town, it was just halve past six and time to look out for a hotel room. And I did find one with a wonderful ambiance. With the evening meal I had more difficulties. They use here a very strange sort of Spanish. I think it is called Catalane. As I didn't have any idea what all that meant, I just pointed on the first item of the menu card, which were "caracoles". The waitress looked at me a little bit bewildered. Then she started a nice drawing which showed a snail. No, that was definitely not what I wanted. Finally I settled for a pizza and Russian salad. That at least looks the same in all languages.



Ascent to Cervera

Cervera is built on a huge rock. They do that in order to make it more difficult for tired cyclists. Cervera has also a famous university. After the succession wars at the beginning of the 18. century they installed a huge university after they have closed down four others.

The road from Sabadell to Cervera was quite demanding. It crosses several mountain ranges and therefore there were many ups and downs, physically and mentally. In one town I even got Police escort. They were afraid that I would get involved in an accident and escorted me - with blue light - out of town. On another occasion I got Police escort on a large overland road. It seems that I haven't seen the sign for "autopista". Never mind.

Now it's only 900 km to Lugo. If my Lamburini SM (sin motor) behaves as good as it has done so far, I should make it.

11 The end of the world

So eine Frechheit! Da fahren wir gemütlich an allen Lastwagen vorbei, die wohl schon seit Stunden im Stau von Barcelona stecken. Ruft doch einer aus seiner LKW-Kanzel runter: „No tienes coche?“ War wohl neidisch. Wenn man so schön schlank ist wie ich, kommt man halt schneller vorwärts. Nun zur nächsten Tagebuchseite:

Tardienta, 18.5.17

Today I have reached the end of the world. I landed in Tardienta. I am sitting in the railway restaurant and had quite a nice meal. It is a station, where the trains don't stop anymore. The city has a "tanateum" and a big deserted factory. Doesn't look very inviting. But I got a room in the guest house. For 20 euros. Don't know how they can do that.

But the day was great. Mostly flat. The morning was quite sunny but at twelve a clock it started to rain, time for a stop in a bakery. They had the real "chocolate caliente" where the spoon stands in the chokolade, it's so thick. The couple at the neighbouring table were engaged in crossword puzzles. In came a neighbour with baggy trousers that covered most of his shoes. "No son un po pequenos?" said the man with the crossword puzzle. The rest of the conversation I could not fully understand but it sounded like a big apology.

As the rain had stopped I continued on the road. The ride through the plain at the foot of the Pyrenees was very enjoyable. I covered a good distance but at four it started to pour down again. I could just save myself in a welders shop. The owner saw me coming, opened the big door and closed it behind me. How glad I was to be in the dry, while outside a hail storm was pouring down. There was a lot of interest for my "coche piranha" as they call it here. Among heaps of metal I suddenly discovered two cats. They obviously enjoyed this atmosphere and had also taken up the colour of dusty metal.



Seeking shelter in a welders shop



The welders cats

12 The plain of the Ebro

Gestern war nicht so mein Tag. Bei Regen verlier ich oft den Durchblick (wie man ja im Bildchen oben gut sieht). Schönheiten sind halt nicht für Regenwetter gemacht. Aber welches vernünftige Wesen geht bei Regenwetter hinaus. Aber lassen wir dieses Thema. Gucken wir uns lieber die nächste Tagebuchseite an.

Logrono, 19.5.2017

Today I started quite early as there was no chance of getting any breakfast in my hostel. I truly enjoyed the ride over this flat land with the sun slowly rising on the eastern horizon. It's not that they have no mountains at all; they have mesas, flat land on different levels. Sometimes you have to climb one of these steps but then you can let it run.



Ebro valley; not far from Logrono: a dream for a velomobile

The villages and towns I passed through were not tremendously attractive, so I didn't stay long, only for some hot chocolate and cake.

Towards 6 o'clock I reached Logrono. Logrono is a huge town with lots of industry. But the historic centre is really lovely and full of life. Street performances and people singing and shouting. I found a good hotel in the historic centre and a restaurant with white table cloth. And the meal was excellent.



Cathedral of Logrono

13 A velomobile on the „Camino“

Für den Pilgerweg bin ich eindeutig zu zart gebaut. Und wohl auch zu schön. Das hat Dynamik zum Glück sehr bald eingesehen. Auf dem Abschnitt mit Schotter ist er sogar ausgestiegen und hat mich geschoben. Soviel Fürsorge! Dafür hatten wir einen triumphalen Empfang in Burgos. Pilger bekommen das sicher nicht. Nun zur nächsten Tagebuchseite.

Burgos, 20.5.2017

Today I was among pilgrims. I started in Logrono, and as the police don't like me on the autovia or autopista, I opted for the real camino. It looked quite good in the beginning. The pilgrims were ever so friendly, but when the paved road turned to gravel, I felt sorry for my Lamborgini SM. I took therefore smaller roads from village to village. But these villages have usually been built on top of a hill, which meant a lot of climbing.



"El camino" the pilgrims road to Santiago de Compostela, shortly after Logrono

From Najera to Belorado I had a good road and I could make good progress. After Montes de Oca however the road climbs quite heavily and I had to resort to the lowest gear for about an hour; time for birdwatching or singing. As it was getting late, I started to doubt, whether I would ever reach Burgos.

The nice part with a velomobile is that you get most of the energy you put in in the way up back on the way down. The 20 km from the summit down to Burgos I didn't have to pedal at all.

Looking for a hotel in Burgos with a velomobile is quite a challenge. But Spanish people are so helpful. A young couple advised me to take the pilgrims hostel in the outskirts of Burgos. As I didn't look too enthusiastic about this proposition, the young lady added, that there is also a very nice hotel in the historic centre. "Oh no", the young man added, "The pilgrims hostel is the right thing for him". Finally I found a decent hotel not far from the cathedral.



The cathedral of Burgos

14 Again 200 km

Ein fantastischer Tag. Überall werden wir bewundert. Überdies haben wir heute wieder einmal 200 km geschafft. Kein Wunder, es hatte ja auch keine Berge. Und zum Schluss haben wir noch alte Bekannte von meinem geistigen Vater und Erbauer getroffen. Ich denke, das steht auch im Tagebuch von Dynamik.

Leon, 21.5.2017

Today it was flat as flat can be, but ideal for my velomobile. As the temperature was rather low I had the top on. This way my Lamborgini SM is sort of a "Coupé de Ville". With the top off it's a "Cabriolet". As "Coupe de Ville" it is really fast, but also very sensitive to crosswinds. And actually it is no wonder. The shape of the EVO-R is almost that of a perfect wing. And if the wind doesn't flow parallel to the main axis, you are bound to have heavy forces across. It's simply Bernoulli's law. But it's also very dangerous. In the afternoon the crosswinds were so heavy, that I doubted that I would reach Leon safely. Then I had the "brilliant" idea to take the top off, strap it on the tail and ride as Cabriolet. The effect was astounding. At the same speed the crosswind sensitivity was much lower. But of course I had to pedal a bit harder in order to reach the same speed.



Between Burgos and Leon, near Villaherreros



Sahagun, Arch of San Benito

In Sahagun I made a short stop for hot chocolate and cake. There I met also a history student group from Florida with their Professor. I'm sure if these students show the same enthusiasm for history as for my contraption on three wheels, their professor can be very proud.

At 6.30 pm I reached the centre of Leon. It was time to look for a decent hotel. Usually I steer right to the point of highest attraction, a cathedral or so, and then I drive circles of increasing diameter to see where they have affordable hotels. This worked fine also in Leon. When I had safely stored my Lamburgini SM in the hotel wardrobe, I was introduced to an elderly gentlemen with the words "Siehste, das ist der junge Mann mit dem Velomobil". The elderly gentlemen (about my age) was a friend of Mr. Beyss, the father of the Beyss sons, who have developed and produced the EVO-R velomobile I own. We had a long chat over a cold beer and he certainly will tell his friend Beyss, that the stuff his sons are producing is pretty reliable.

Leon's historic centre is a dream. It's one of the things you must have seen before you die. Especially the "barrio humedo". I couldn't find out whether it got this name because the houses were wet or the throats of the inhabitants.



Cathedral of Leon

15 No quiero que un ciclista muera en mi pueblo

Ich bin immer noch stolz auf mich wegen gestern Abend. Da fährt man quer durch Spanien und wird sofort erkannt. Hoffentlich hat der Kollege von Beyss den Gruss auch ausgerichtet. Wie dem auch sei, gucken wir uns doch die nächste Tagebuchseite an.

Ponferrada, 22.5.2017

Now I am sitting comfortably in the hostel "Virgen de la Encina" in Ponferrada where I got the last and the best room. In front of me a glass of white wine and some tapitas. Freshly washed pilgrims are passing by on their way from the pilgrims hostel to a decent place to eat. The backdrop is formed by the Templers castle. Isn't that happiness at its best?



Ponferrada with its
Templers Castle

The Templers castle dates back to the 12th century. One of its main tasks was to protect the pilgrims. After many fighting und restructuration it fell into decay. The walls have been sold as building material and on the lawns they played football. At the beginning of the 20th century its value has been rediscovered and restoration began. And the pilgrims come again.

This morning I left Leon, this wonderful town, and headed westwards. I wanted to be very smart and chose the most northerly route, where the mountains are not so high. Small winding roads led me through remote villages and barren landscape. It was utterly interesting but I didn't make any progress. Until a cyclist told me that I should not take these roads. "No quiero que un ciclista muera en mi pueblo" he argued and sent me to the "ruta antigua" over the Manzanal. And this was a tough climb.



We've made it: Porta de Manzanal

On the way down to Ponferrada I passed a group of young racing cyclists. One of them tried to keep up my speed. But to no avail. I am glad that I didn't meet them on the way up.

16 Getting "famous"

Seit heute gehöre ich zur "Prominenz". War ja auch langsam Zeit, bei meiner Schönheit. Eine ganze Schar von Fotografen hat mich umringt und geblitzt. Und dann ist ein Artikel in der Zeitung von Ponferrada erschienen.

Lugo, 23.5.17

This morning I had a delayed start in Ponferrada. First I got involved in a pleasant discussion with a pilgrim couple from Aachen. They were truly interested in my contraption on three wheels. They even offered me their breakfast cake, which I certainly would need during the day. Then a young woman from the local press asked for an interview and suddenly a whole group of photographers was standing around me and my exotic vehicle. Finally I left Ponferrada under a storm of flashlights.



The timplers castle in Ponferrada

The day was sunny and the road was flat. What more do you want. In Villafranca the landscape changed dramatically. Here you enter the valley of "Val Carce".



Villafranca del Bierzo

It's wild scenery and the road is slowly climbing to the famous El Cebreiro. Here I felt that the two weeks training were quite a benefit. Sure it took some time but steadily I gained altitude until I reached the 1200 m pass to Galicia. Instead of making a stop on this famous spot I rushed down and postponed the lunch break. I really wanted to reach my final destination, the home of my eldest daughter in Lugo.

Just 50 km before I reached Lugo I had my first puncture. In spite of the self-healing ability of tubeless tires the left front wheel kept losing air. So I replaced the tubeless tire with a traditional one and off I went. Probably they didn't put in sufficient "self-healing" milk. At 8 o'clock I had reached Lugo. Just in time for a wonderful evening meal in the house of my daughter and my son in law.

17 We've made it

So jetzt haben wir nach 2000 km das Ziel erreicht. Ohne jegliche Panne. Auch ohne jeglichen Kurvenschaden. Es scheint, dass Dynamik doch etwas gelernt hat. Auch in Lugo wurde ich von der Presse empfangen. Einen ganz hübschen Zeitungsartikel hat die Reporterin über mich geschrieben. Im August soll es dann weitergehen, hab ich gehört. Aber zuerst werde ich mich mal ein bisschen erholen.

6 **Lugo**

JUEVES 25 DE MAYO DE 2017 **EL PROGRESO**

Un jubilado llega a Lugo desde Suiza en un coche movido solo con pedales

► Armin Ziegler emprendió el viaje hace dos semanas
► Este ingeniero hizo una media diaria de 150 a 200 kilómetros

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LUGO. Hacía muchos años que el ingeniero civil Armin Ziegler, de 65 años, soñaba con hacer uno de sus asiduos viajes desde Suiza a Lugo—donde viven su hija Daniela y sus nietos—en un velomóvil. Es decir, un coche de 25 kilos de peso, movido a pedales en el que solo iría él y su ligero equipaje.

Quería hacerlo pero no tenía tiempo. El pasado mes de enero, Armin Ziegler vendió su empresa de estructuras de construcción aerodinámicas a sus trabajadores y, ya jubilado, comenzó a planificar esta aventura.

Una aventura que temía no concluir al principio—dado que nunca antes había hecho un viaje tan largo en este vehículo—pero

que, en cuanto llegó a Barcelona, la vio más viable. Entre otras cosas, porque su hija le prometió que iría a rescatarlo desde Lugo si desfilaba en algún momento. No hizo falta. Armin Ziegler mantuvo

su disciplina diaria de hacer entre 150 y 200 kilómetros a una velocidad media de 40 kilómetros hora. Al final, llegó el pasado martes a Lugo, después de dos semanas y tras hacer 180 kilómetros en su

última etapa, desde Ponferrada, en nueve horas. Así fue cómo Armin cumplió su objetivo: llegar a Lugo desde la ciudad suiza de Neuchâtel en el velomóvil para asistir a la Primera Comunión de

su nieto Andrés. Atrás dejaba ciudades como Nîmes y Montpellier, en Francia, o Barcelona, Logroño, Burgos y León, ya en España.

«Generalmente, fui siempre a una media de 40 kilómetros por hora pero podría ir a 60, incluso a 100 cuesta abajo, lo que pasa es que eso ya es algo peligroso. Por lo demás, en terreno llano, podía llegar a hacer 200 kilómetros diarios», cuenta el jubilado, quien añade que nunca se resintió de agujetas.

IDEA. Armin comenzó a tejer la idea de comprar este vehículo hace tres años. Hasta entonces, había recorrido miles de kilómetros en bicicleta. «Comencé a hacer bicicleta a los 40 años. Llegué a hacer rutas de 500 kilómetros. Recorrí Argentina en tandem y también Islandia y la costa oeste de Norteamérica pero mi idea era tener un vehículo a pedal, bien protegido y que no ofreciese resistencia al viento y lo encontré en una empresa alemana, Biwss», afirma.

Hasta el momento, Armin había probado el coche en tres ocasiones, en viajes de 200 kilómetros (uno de ellos, alrededor del lago de Ginebra), pero este era su primer viaje de larga distancia. Ahora, el velomóvil se quedará en Lugo dos o tres meses hasta que emprenda una nueva aventura: viajar a Málaga y, desde allí, coger un barco que lo lleve a Génova para volver después, por Italia, a Suiza.

Armin Ziegler, dentro de su velomóvil, al lado de la catedral. ALBARQUEIRO

La cantera de Santiago niega que reciba lodos

Lugo, 24.5.2017

Today I woke up in a familiar room, the guest room of Daniela and Chema. No preparations for another day on the road. Just relaxing and looking back at the last 14 days. It was a wonderful time. I wasn't always sure that I would make it to Lugo. 2000 km, in the beginning it seemed rather weird.

A journey of this sort brings so many nice and interesting encounters. With a vehicle as I have used, you get so much attention, so many encouraging smiles and so many funny remarks. Like the lorry driver near Barcelona who shouted angrily "No tienes coche?" "I am sure he has been waiting already for hours in the traffic jam while I could pass all these lorries on the hard shoulder. Or the youngster who explained his brother, that this is a "coche pirana". Most people along the road smiled and made "thumbs up" signs. Some stared as if they had just seen an alien flying by.

After all it wasn't as hard as I have expected. Except on a few uphill sections in the beginning of the journey I always enjoyed this trip. Now I am leaving my Lamborgini Sin Motor in Lugo. This way I have a good excuse to repeat the journey in the reverse direction.

18 Starting the reverse journey

Mein Dornröschenschlaf im äussersten Winkel von Nordspanien hat nun endlich ein Ende. Ich werde zwar nicht wachgeküsst, doch werde ich schön poliert und bekomme als Dreingabe noch neue Bremsklötze fürs Hinterrad. Original Shimano, kosten ein Vermögen. Die Reifen (Tubeless, Pro One) bleiben drauf. Die werden schon nochmals 2000 km halten, meint Dynamik. Daniela, die Tochter von Dynamik macht noch einen kurzen Ausflug mit mir und meint ganz begeistert: "Da muss man ja gar nichts tun, das läuft ja von selbst." Dann ging's los, nordwärts an die Küste. Das Weitere kann man ja im Tagebuch von Dynamik nachlesen.

Tapia de Casariego, 13. 8. 17

The first communion celebration of my grandson gave the good excuse to drive with my velomobile from Switzerland to Spain and of course two month later also the excuse to drive it back. Thus, today I set off in Lugo in a North-Easterly direction. That's where Switzerland is located, when you are in Lugo. I have chosen the road along the North coast of Spain because there it shouldn't be too hot. The disadvantage however is that this road is a bit like a roller coaster, always up and down.

Starting in Lugo I followed the Miño river to Meira, where the Miño is supposed to have its sources. Then, after climbing a pass of just 650 m (luckily they are not as high as in Switzerland), I rushed through the wild gorge of the Rio Torto towards Vegadeo. In Vegadeo they had a big festival with Galician music (bagpipes) and I had a lovely lunch (bocadillo de pollo).



The road along the Rio Torto

Because everybody had warned me, that hotel rooms are difficult to get at this time of the year, I didn't stay too long and headed towards Tapia de Casariego a little village with a nice port. The first hotel already had a free room and I even got the pilgrims discount. Did I look that tired?



*The port of
Tapia de
Casariego*

No, it was my bike. Halve of the staff came out to have a look. The owner asked how much weight it can take. Not knowing what he was getting at, I said 120 kg. "Oh, then I can try it out and you can make a picture", he exclaimed. I felt so bad but I had to disappoint him. He might have gotten into the velomobile but for sure he would never have gotten out again.

19 Roller coaster on three wheels

Hätte Dynamik heute einen Wunsch offen gehabt, er hätte sicher alle Berge von Nordspanien ins Pfefferland geschickt. Ist ja auch halbwegs verständlich. Zehnmal von Meereshöhe auf 200 m hochkraxeln und dann beim Runterfahren noch bremsen bis die Trommeln heiss werden. Das ist ja nicht gerade das, was man sich für eine Velomobiltour wünscht. Die Tagesleistung war auch entsprechend mager. Distanz: 95 km, Mittlere Fahrgeschwindigkeit: 15 km/h. Im Tagebuch spricht er natürlich nicht darüber.

Soto di Barca, 14.8.17

May be I should have listened to the suggestions of Google maps. If you enter Lugo to Neuschâtel Google maps suggest the road over Cebreiro, Manzanal, Burgos and Biarritz. As if O Cebreiro and Manzanal on its own were not high enough. But the road along the coast is a different category. It's always steep up or steep down. A velomobile is definitely not the ideal bike for this road. Never mind, I have lots of time and I get many encouraging thumbs up.



A downhill section through rain forest of Northern Spain near Luarca

The weather is fine and the scent in the forests I am passing through is fantastic. I had a small lunch (chocolate caliente y arroz con leche) in Luarca, where my velomobile was the main attraction for the kids.



Future velonautas in Luarca

The afternoon was again steep up and steep down. In Soto di Barca - after only 100 km - I decided to call it a day and found a wonderful palace. Just the right thing for my tired legs. They have a spa with sauna and all other accessories. What else could you wish for?



*A decent hotel for tired legs
in Soto di Barca*

20 Taking the low road

Heute war die Stimmung doch schon viel besser. Gemächliche Anstiege und dann am Schluss eine einzige lange Abfahrt, auf der meine Fähigkeiten voll zur Geltung kamen. Dynamik muss halt nur die richtige Route wählen. 120 km Tagesleistung und bereits um 4 Uhr ein warmer Platz neben dem Billardtisch ist ja nicht zu verachten.

Ribadesella, 15.8.17

Sometimes the longer road is the easier one. Instead of taking the coastal road I took the inland road that leads from Soto di Barco over Lugones to Ribadesella. This road has a smooth ascent, follows several valleys and - this is the nice part of it - has a smooth descent through the gorge of the river Sella. There the scenery is quite impressive. The river Sella seems to be an Eldorado for canoe people. Hundreds of canoes and kayaks were floating through this gorge while I was rushing down on the road with my threewheeler.



Canoeing on the river Sella

At four o'clock I was already checked-in in a nice hotel in Ribadesella. My first task was to find a bicycle shop, as one of my tubeless tires kept loosing air. Not dramatically but steadily. Somehow this self-healing liquid seems to have evaporated. I had self-healing liquid with me but no tools to unscrew the w valve. With the help of the friendly lady in the bicycle shop, who gave me access to all the tools the chief bicycle mechanic (who didn't show up on this particular day) had in store, we got everything right.



The beach of Ribadesella

Ribadesella has the nicest harbour you can imagine. An unspoiled old town and a beautiful waterfront. In the twenties (of the last century) quite a few Spanish people, who had made their fortune in Cuba, have built their "holiday chalets" here.



A "Holiday Chalet" at the waterfront of Ribadesella

21 Costa verde at it's best

Heute stand offensichtlich "Tubeless Tire Testing" auf dem Programm, wobei der Test nicht ganz fair abgelaufen ist. Erstens war's der Reifen, der schon bei der Hinfahrt Luft verloren hatte und wohl schon eine gewisse Beschädigung aufwies und zweitens hatte der Reifen auch schon 3000 km auf dem Profil. Ich bin nicht so sicher, ob Dynamik dem Tubeless-System treu bleiben wird.

Santander, 16.8.17

Today was again a roller coaster day. But it was nevertheless a wonderful day. The sun was shining and the blue sea and the green forests were a real treat. This "camino norte" is really something special.



Playa de Santolín

In the afternoon I had a minor problem with my tubeless tire. The one I had filled with self-healing milk. The pressure had dropped from 8 bars to 4 bars and that was the reason I was so slow, I guess. So I took off the wheel and pumped and pumped. Wizzzzz and halve of the bus shelter was painted white. But then it stopped to spray, which means that the self-healing milk was working properly. But 4 bar are not enough. I pumped again up to 8 bars, with the result that it wizzzzzzed again but this time halve of the forest was filled with a milky spray. It seems that the life time of this tire has expired. So I changed it to a traditional tire and tube system and now it is working fine.

On the last summit before Santander a whole bunch of people were cheering when I had reached the top. So I took it as an invitation for a refreshing beer. I got my beer and a free Spanish lesson.



*Last summit
before Santan-
der*

Now I am in Santander, a big and lively city with a big port. Unfortunately they have accidentally burnt the old town centre in the forties of the last century, so there is not a real old town, as one would expect.



*Centro Botin
Santander*

22 A shortcut to paradise

Entweder sind die Berge zu steil oder die Städtchen Nordspaniens zu hübsch oder beides zusammen. Mit 80 km Tagesleistung bei einer Durchschnittsgeschwindigkeit von 15 km/h schaffen wir's nie zurück in die Heimat.

Castro Urdiales, 17.8.17

Today was the tour of the medieval towns of northern Spain. I started in Santander and reached Laredo right at lunchtime. It was a good idea to stop here. Laredo is a real marvel with a most beautiful old town centre, built on a rock. Of course Laredo is better known for its wonderful beaches. After an extensive lunch break with a visit to the fortifications and to the peluqueria I carried on towards Castro Urdiale



Harbour and beach of Laredo

But before I reached this second marvel I got stopped by the police. Not for any infliction of speed limits - it was going uphill. The policeman was just interested in my vehicle. While we talked about my contraption and the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela he explained to me, that there is a church not too far from San Vicente de la Barquera, somehow southwards in the mountains, where they keep a splinter of the cross. And this church opens its doors only in the Año Santo. And as in Santiago all your sins will be forgiven. It's too bad that I have forgotten the name of this church. Because that seems to be a shortcut to paradise.



Between Liendo and El Pontarrón

At five o'clock I reached Castro Urdiales, the second marvel of a medieval town. Time to find a hotel. As usual, they kept telling me that everything is booked out and that I would not find a single room in this town. All rubbish. After the third trial I got a small oblong room in the third floor of an old house close to the port. It's too bad that the window opens to a light shaft and not to the port. Never mind. You can have everything in life, but not all at the same time.



Lighthouse of Castro Urdiales

23 Too tired to talk

Heute war's wieder mal hübsch gebirgig. Entsprechend kurz fiel die Tagesetappe aus. 115 km mit einem Schnitt von 16 km/h. Auf den Berg-Etappen ist Dynamik immer froh wenn Pilger auftauchen. Dann hat er eine gute Ausrede, die Fahrt zu unterbrechen. Beim Bergabfahren interessieren ihn die Pilger komischerweise viel weniger.

Ein Velomobil hat übrigens einen Riesenvorteil beim Parkieren in Parkgaragen. Bauhöhebedingt kann man unter der Schranke reinfahren und auch wieder unter der Schranke rausfahren. Bezahlen muss man so nicht, es sei denn, der Garagendrache wartet bei der Schranke.

Zarautz, 18.8.17

Another sunny day dawned over Castro Urdiales. A steep climb from sea level to 350 m altitude was waiting for me. From the top you could see the whole coast line up to the French border (I guess) and all the hills that were still waiting for me. Slowly but steadily I was approaching the big city of Bilbao. On this road I met many "real" pilgrims, i.e. pilgrims with a heavy backpack and a long wooden wanderstock. I often stopped when I met a pilgrim and we had so many nice chats. Michael from Mannheim was especially interested in my contraption. "Hat aber nen Motor", he said. On my negative answer he replied disappointedly "So ein Stress." Little did he know how much "stress" was still waiting for him on his pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela.



Pilgrims on the Camino Norte between Castro Urdiales and Bilbao

Usually big cities are rather a pain for a cyclist. But still it is always worth to pay at least a visit to the historic centre. There in Bilbao, at around midday, I got chocolate caliente and a cruasson in a street café. At the neighbouring table another cyclist with a heavy loaded traditional bicycle slumped into a chair. In the intent to cheer him up a little bit, I started to talk to him. But his only answer was "I am too tired to talk". Well I guess he got something totally wrong about bicycling.



A dream of a road (Spanish north coast between Getaria and Zarautz)

Bilbao is huge. For more than two hours I was driving through industrial suburbs until I reached the open country again. Winding roads along wild rivers and eventually the coast. Luckily the road did not climb again on the last 20 km but followed the coast line until Zarautz, where I found a nice hotel and a good but expensive place for my EVO-R.



20 Euro for one night

24 This is neither Spain nor France

Heute Abend beim Aperitif für die Gäste war ich (EVO-R) wieder einmal die Hauptfigur. Da konnte nicht einmal der Banker von London, der gerade seine Anteile verkauft hatte (oder wurde er rauskomplimentiert?) und jetzt scheinbar nach einem französischen Finanzinstitut Ausschau hielt, mithalten. So etwas wie mich hatten sie noch nie gesehen. Alle wollten sie mich aus der Nähe bewundern und stiessen aufs Wohl von Dynamik und auf seine 4000 km an.

Saubion, 19.8.17

This morning I woke up in Spain and ended the day in France. But that is - according to the people here - all wrong. I am in the Basque country. And in honour of this I had a typical Basque evening meal called "Axua avec pomme de terre" (hached veal with lots of tomatoes, paprika and other things and of course potatoes). And it was really good.

In Zarautz



From Zarautz to San Sebastian I followed a narrow valley with a dark river. The water was almost stagnant. Good for me because this way I had not much climbing. San Sebastian is much smaller and also much nicer than Bilbao. The town centre with its scenic harbour and sandy beach is really worth a visit.

The next stop was Bayonne with its wonderful cathedral and its medieval town centre. I could have spent hours in the small lanes of the old town. When I came back to my velomobile, an elderly lady inquired, whether this type of bicycle might be good for her back problems. I offered her a free ride but she didn't dare.



Cathedral of Bayonne

This evening the hunt for a hotel room looked - for the first time during this trip - a bit critical. After endless phone calls the lady at the tourist information eventually got me a room in a lodge type holiday resort. The owner has created a paradise with small lakes, some artificial hills and a few tent-like wooden huts. I have a terrace overlooking a lake and on this terrace I have a swing. With a bit of imagination you can see lions and tigers crawling through the forest.



Les Echasses, Saubion

25 Une voiture un peu comme Tintin

Heute ging's richtig flott vorwärts. 130 km mit einem Schnitt von 24 km/h. Und das trotz der kurzen Fahrradweg-Einlage. Ich hab's ja schon immer gesagt, Fahrradwege sind für Fahrräder gemacht und nicht für Velomobile. Sonst hiessen sie ja Velomobilwege. Ich kann mich mit Baumwurzeln, auch wenn sie mit einer dünnen Lage Bitumen kaschiert sind, einfach nicht so richtig anfreunden.

Biscarosse, 20.8.17

When I stepped out on the terrace this morning I thought I was dreaming. The water in the lake at my feet was steaming and the small island in the middle of the lake disappeared and reappeared. The sun had just reached the top of the trees and gave the whole scene a mysterious glow.



Echasse in morning light

The land between Bayonne and Bordeaux is completely flat, so I could make good progress. With the hard top on I could reach speeds of 40 to 45 km/h. But I preferred the cabriolet feeling and had the hard top removed for most of the time. This way I was certainly a bit slower but I was still too fast, as I found out today. A car that just had passed me stopped about one kilometre ahead of me. The driver jumped out of his car, opened the trunk and tore out his photographic equipment. But at the time he was ready for the shot of his lifetime I had already passed him. So he had to repeat the same procedure again but giving himself a longer time lapse. And this time it worked fine.

In the afternoon I tried a few bicycle routes but this was not very successful. They are often a bit bumpy. Furthermore with a velomobile you feel a bit out of place. "Real" cyclists think I should use the road as any decent car does. But on the road the motorists think, I am holding them up and I should use the bicycle lane. You can't get it right with a velomobile.

By the way, the nicest description for my velomobile came from the lady at the tourist information desk in Capbreton. On the phone she explained the receptionist at the other end of the line: "Je vous envoie un monsieur avec une voiture un peu comme Tintin." Tonight Tintin will sleep in Biscarosse with the waves of the Atlantic Ocean as background music.



The beach of Biscarosse

26 Getting lost, almost

Dynamik scheint alle Zeit der Welt zu haben. Mit Tagesetappen von 120 km muss man sich ja nicht gerade überanstrengen. Und dabei hat es gar keine Berge mehr, die man als Ausrede brauchen könnte. Alles an und in mir läuft perfekt. Nur der Schlumpf knurrt ab und zu. Aber wenn man dem einen kurzen Kick gibt, läuft er wieder absolut geräuschfrei. Weiss nicht ob das von Herrn Schlumpf auch tatsächlich so vorgesehen war.

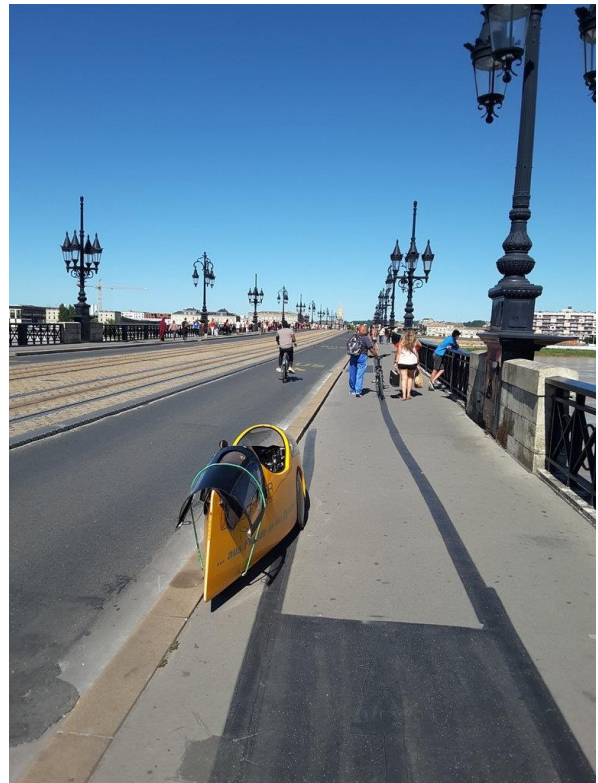
Angoulême, 22.8.17

The day started quite nicely in Biscarosse. I followed the coast in order to see the largest dunes in Europe, the dunes of Pyla. They were quite impressive but not suitable for my EVO-R. My original plan was to follow the coast up to Royan and then turn eastward to Angoulême. This would have been a nice ride along the coast and would have included two ferries. But already on the first ferry they refused my velomobile. They said it's too big. How unfair.

Well, I changed my plan and rode to Bordeaux and as it was only 4 o'clock, I carried on in the general direction of Angoulême. That was easier said than done. The motorway A10 was not a viable solution. I tried it but the honking of the cars got on my nerves. So I left the A10 and started zigzagging through the country side. It would have been a wonderful ride, if the sun wouldn't have been approaching the western horizon so fast.



The sand dunes of Pyla



Pont de Pierre, Bordeaux

How stupid I was to leave Bordeaux. Certainly I would have found a hotel and I would be sitting now happily in front of a glass Bordeaux wine. Instead I was following small country roads where there was not the faintest hope of getting an accommodation. It really looked as if I had to sleep "à la belle étoile". After about two hours I had reached a small village with the name Cavignac. All the villages here have the ending "nac" like Bellac, Vibrac or Cognac, which is also in this area. There was a noble looking house with a small sign, I couldn't read. Well, let's stop and see what it says. And really it was a sign that promised "chambres d'hôtes". With not too much hope I asked, whether they had a room. The answer was "no", as I had expected. It was already beyond 8 o'clock. The landlady called a few other guest houses but all were full.

Just as I was ready to leave, the landlady came back and explained that one guest won't show up and that she could give me the best room. I should put my stuff upstairs and join them for a drink. They invited me also for the evening meal and we had the most interesting evening. At midnight we decided that it is time to sleep.



Chambres d'hôtes in Cavignac

The next day I didn't start too early but I made it to Angoulême, a town with a very nice medieval town centre.

27 Talking to a horse

So langsam kommt Dynamik doch noch in die Gänge. Heute und gestern zusammengekommen haben wir tatsächlich 400 km abgespult mit einer mittleren Geschwindigkeit von 24 km/h.

Nevers, 24.8.17

Yesterday I set off in Angoulême and followed small country roads in the general direction of the "Parc Naturel Régional de la Brenne". The weather was fine and the scenery very idyllic. In a narrow lane an unusual problem: Two horses with their respective riders came from the other side. I knew that horses have some difficulties with recumbent bicycles and even more with a velomobile, so I stopped. I didn't want to see the horses running off in panic. The riders dismounted and one horse passed by. But the second horse was absolutely unwilling to go close to this dangerous yellow thing. What can be done? As I didn't want to wait any longer, I started to talk to the horse and explained him what this funny looking thing was. To my own surprise the horse came slowly nearer, looked into my little car and then passed by. One has to talk to each other and things go much smoother.

I reached the "Parc Naturel Régional de la Brenne" towards evening. It is a wonderful area. In the middle of the park there is a town called "Le Blanc". The only disadvantage of it was that it had absolutely no hotels. This time I didn't carry on with my three-wheeler but got myself a beer and did let the barkeeper search for an accommodation. That was quite effective. He found me a room in an old "manoir" in Chalais, about 25 km away in the middle of the forest. Towards 9 o'clock, after 200 km in the legs, I got my room in an old tower and also an excellent evening meal.



The pigeon tower of the old manoir



My room in the pigeon tower

Next morning I drove out of the forest and from then on the landscape was rather flat and dull. And it was getting hot. Towards lunchtime I stopped at a road side restaurant and as I didn't want to sit in the noisy eating hall I had my lunch in the back garden. Luckily the waitress came with a big parasol which offered some shade. It was good enough that the chicken was roasted. I didn't want to get roasted myself. The waitress was really interested in my velomobile. She had been in bicycling herself. She owned a very expensive racing bicycle her uncle had given to her. They had planned a big tour through Europe but had always postponed it. Eventually her uncle died before they had done it. And now the expensive bicycle is still hanging on the wall like a painting.

After lunch I took the road to Nevers, a medieval town towering over the Loire River. 40 years ago I have been here together with a school friend on a Loire expedition with a kayak. As I remember, rowing on the Loire was quite a bit more demanding than riding a velomobile.

28 Lunch where Mitterand used to eat

Die Berge machen sich wieder bemerkbar. 100 km mit einem Schnitt von 16 km/h sind ja nicht gerade überragend. Gemeinerweise war eine schöne Abfahrt gar nicht geteert, nur loser Splitt. Ob das den Reifen wohl gut tut. Die sind ja dünner als Handschuhleder. Vielleicht sollte Dynamik für die nächste Tour quer durch Europa doch etwas Wähnschafteres aufziehen. Den Tagesschnitt wird es wohl nicht stark drücken.

Autun, 25.8.17

Starting in Nevers this morning was quite wet but it didn't take long and the sun dried all the clouds. I was heading towards "Parc National du Morvan". High up on a mountain top I saw a castle. No, the road won't go there, I thought. But it did. I was quit exhausted when I had reached the village Château Chinon in the middle of the Parc National at an elevation of some 600 m.

An elderly man who had been an aerodynamics engineer wanted to know everything about my velomobile. This man might be helpful for my crosswind problem, I thought. But all he could advise me was to cut my hair very short to make my racing machine run faster. How helpful. At least he knew where to get the best meal in the town. It's the "Au Vieux Morvan", where Mitterand used to dine. And it was really excellent the lunch I had.



Lunch in Château Chillon

The road kept climbing and reached an elevation of 674 m. But then I was rewarded by a wonderful downhill run almost until Autun. I had plenty of time to study the crosswind problem. It has nothing to do with my hair. It's just the law of Bernoulli that says that with an air foil the uplift forces increase with the second power of the wind velocity. And uplift means in my specific case side forces due to changing wind direction. Maybe I should install flaps in order to disturb the laminar flow.



Historic centre of Autun

Autun is a charming medieval town with an unspoilt historic centre. A huge cathedral, lots of stone buildings and everywhere cobblestone. I found a very nice place to sleep at the Ursulines. It had been a monastery but now it has been converted into a hotel. Probably this new line of business is more promising.



At the Ursulines in Autun

29 Little Horse is winning

Frisch gepumpt starten wir so ca. um 10 Uhr. Dynamik muss das jeden Morgen machen, seit wir modern sind und tubeless fahren. D.h. am Anfang der Reise genügte Pumpen alle vier Tage. Jetzt nach knapp 4000 km genügt das offensichtlich nicht mehr. Vor einer Woche hat er sogar noch eine Werkstattpumpe gekauft, weil das Pumpen mit der Notfallpumpe nicht so lustig ist.

Champagnole, 26.8.17

Breakfast at the Ursulines was a dream. Everything was perfect. Service, atmosphere, view. What else do you want? But already the first few kilometres on the road took me back to reality. A steep uphill for more than an hour. But the landscape was great and towards midday I had reached Châlon sur Saône. The historic centre is very nice, the faubourgs a bit boring and way too large.



*In the historic centre of
Chalon sur Saone*

The next 60 km were a dream for a velomobile. It was really flat. Not the slightest sign of a hill until Lans-le-Saunier. On these stretches you know why you are riding a velomobile and not a classic bicycle. In Lans the speedometer showed already 120 km and it was only 4.30. So I decided to push it a little bit further to reach Champagnole.

But now I had to climb the first range of the Jura Mountains. Signs promising "scenic views" and "waterfalls" are a good indication that it is going to be tough. Once an emergency stop for water was needed. That is, all water was used up and I had to hunt for a fountain with drinking water. But I made it to Champagnole where they had "Route barrée" for the town centre. That certainly doesn't count for velomobiles. I squeezed through and ended at a improvised racing circuit with the most beautiful racing cars. At the moment "Little Horse" was in the lead. Too bad that I wasn't allowed to partake. The cars must all be made by its owner.



"Little Horse" in the lead

The race has been organized by the FFCVP (Fédération Française des Clubs de Voiture à Pédales). In spite of the name this has nothing to do with velomobiles. Actually the spokesman didn't even know what a velomobile is.

30 Homeward bound

Wir haben es geschafft. 4000 km ohne irgendwelche Zwischenfälle. Zweimal ist mir die Luft ausgegangen. Aber ich glaube Dynamik ist das viel öfters passiert. Am Berg oder so. Ein paar Kleinigkeiten müsse man bei mir noch modifizieren, meint er. Aber das wird er dann selber beschreiben.

Montalchez, 27.8.17

From Champagnole to Montalchez it's only 90 km, according to Google Maps. That shouldn't be too difficult, I thought. The landscape was gorgeous but steep. The Jura Mountains are not really velomobile friendly. At midday I finally reached Pontarlier. I have been here with my Scorpion trike some 7 years ago. The old town centre made then a somewhat deserted impression. It still does today.



Between Champagnole and Pontarlier

I passed the château de Joux and then the big climb began. To Fourgs and later on to the Col de l'Etoile with an altitude of 1153 m. From there on it was a very pleasant ride with a marvellous view over the lake of Neuchâtel and the Orbe plain. This area is also known as the "Balcon du Jura". On clear days you can see all the famous peaks of the Alps, starting with the Eiger in the East to the Mont Blanc in the West.

Just before 6 o'clock, after 15 days of pedalling from Galicia back to Switzerland, I reached our cottage in Montalchez. It was a wonderful journey. Doing this journey with a velomobile gives you a new feeling for distances. It gives you also the possibility to really see the country you are driving through and to meet so many interesting people. When I set off to this journey of 4000 km on a velomobile, I was not quite convinced that it can be done. But it can be done. Just keep the wheels rolling.



Back home after 4000 km



Our journey to Spain on a map

31 Rückblick auf 4000 km mit dem EVO-R

4000 km sind eine grosse Distanz. Ob das ohne Zwischenfälle abgeht. Das war die grosse Frage am Anfang der Reise. Ich hatte so meine Zweifel. Deshalb hatte ich eine Abmachung mit meiner lieben Gattin (in der Schweiz) und mit meiner ältesten Tochter (in Gallizien): Solange ich in Frankreich bin, werde ich von meiner Gattin gerettet, auf spanischem Boden wird meine Tochter die Rettungskolonnen losschicken. Beide fahren einen Wagen, in dem das EVO Platz hat. Mit dieser Zusicherung konnte ich recht unbeschwert losfahren.

Zweimal zwei Wochen Velomobil-Ferien sind eine tolle Sache. 1000 km pro Woche sind locker zu schaffen. Man hat keinen Stress und genügend Zeit, die Reise so richtig zu geniessen. Ich würde für eine Ferienreise keine ehrgeizigeren Ziele setzen.

Das EVO-R hat sich bestens bewährt. Nicht der geringste Zwischenfall ist aufgetreten. Man sitzt bequem, auch noch nach 14 Tagen. Stauraum ist etwas knapp, aber so nimmt man nicht zu viel mit. An sich reicht ja Kreditkarte und Zahnbürste.

Die neuen Vorderräder mit Kühltürmchen sind super. Die Naben werden viel weniger schnell heiss. Auch die vielgeschmähte Hinterradbremse hat bestens funktioniert. So kann man doch beim Bergabfahren die Bremswärme auf drei Räder verteilen. Dazu hat man ein redundantes Bremssystem.

Was werde ich das nächste Mal anders machen? Ich werde das Hardtop zu Hause lassen. Offen fährt sich's viel besser. Ich werde mir eine Notfall-Regenabdeckung basteln. Tubeless-Reifen scheinen mir nicht unbedingt ideal zu sein für Ferienreisen. Sie funktionierten zwar perfekt, aber das Nachpumpen geht doch etwas auf die Nerven. Und dann noch die Verschmutzung des Radkastens, wenn mal Dichtmilch austritt. Zwei Stunden lang habe ich mich mit Aceton und Putzlappen abgemüht.

Der Schlumpf MD hat sich an sich bestens bewährt, doch die im Direktgang auftretenden Reibgeräusche strapazieren die Nerven. Wenn man ein paarmal hin- und herschaltet

verschwinden die Reibgeräusche aber beim nächsten Mal Schlumpfen und wieder zurück in den Direktgang sind sie wieder da.

Das einzige ernsthafte Problem war die Querwind-Anfälligkeit des EVO-R. Da strampelt man im Schweisse seines Angesichtes den Berg hoch und dann muss man beim Bergabfahren bremsen, damit man ja nicht schneller wird als 50 km/h. Denn über 50 km/h wird es gefährlich. Dieses Problem muss ich vor der nächsten Reise noch lösen.

Und da sind wir ja auch schon beim nächsten Problem: Wohin geht die nächste Reise? Das wissen nur die Götter, aber die verraten es nicht.