

Travel log for the Swiss Adventure of Bob & Sharon, August 2007

This adventure was so deeply moving with unmatched beauty and seeing Sharon's son Dan & Sylvie and her dear family in Geneva and seeing Bob's daughter Erin in London was delightful. The pictures are in time order and cover from the first friend we made on the train to the last waves on the beautiful Thunersee on the way to the airport. We will definitely return to Switzerland. (Some pics are "Stereo". Look at the center of the pair and slowly cross your eyes until the two overlap and become 3D. You may need to rotate your head slightly).

19 Aug 07 – 21 Aug 2007

Flight was smooth and uneventful – nice. The train to Luzerne was very smooth. As always seems to happen in trains, we met Elana who is a Chocolatetier student in Switzerland and very nice. Arrived in Luzerne and wandered the lovely old town with many small shops and flowers everywhere. Up on the hill is the Gutsch hotel where Q Victoria stayed for a month. Saw many museums and walked miles and miles taking in the shops and the delicious baked goods. We took a two hour boat ride on the lake stopping at Vitznau for lunch and exploring. Luzerne is quite touristy and not our favorite place of the visit.

22 Aug

The train ride to Geneva was very nice with beautiful Wisconsin-like countryside as we glided along the northern part of the country up to Olten then through Neuchatel, Lausanne and onto Geneva. We met Dan and he guided us to the "Mandarin Oriental" which was very lovely. The room was very nice with windows that open over the river and Dan got us a fabulous discount on the room!

We explored the "Old Village" with Dan and found Geneva a very interesting city with every race and creed mixed together. Excellent street musicians and interesting shops. Dinner was at Sylvie's parent's home: The Pellet's. Such a nice family. Jo is English and Pierre is French, living in Geneva. Their son Geome is very bright and interesting and sister Jenny outgoing and sweet. The conversation was endless into the late evening learning when Switzerland became a neutral country. Our first night in that lovely hotel was a dream with the windows open over the river.

23 Aug

Dan took us to a park in town where we sat and talked and walked miles. We enjoyed a nice art fair on the square. Lunch at an Italian restaurant with delicious Pizza. Dinner was in France with Dan and Sylvie which was very nice. Food here is just excellent.

24 Aug

Flew to London to meet Erin at Gatwick. Visited for several hours at the Airport Hilton and just munched on food and talked and talked. It was so good to see her again and the visit was perfect.... Return flight was uneventful and again, we slept like logs.



25 Aug

Dan took us to the Red Cross museum and the Ariana Ceramics Museum. Also saw the UN and many other international organizations there. Was a day of walking and enjoying the city. We relaxed in a lovely park on Lake Geneva in the embassy district. We also went past the Woodrow Wilson Hotel – the former League of Nations building.

Dinner was at a lovely Fish restaurant on Lake Geneva where we had lake perch with the Pellet family. Was again an evening of endless conversation and fun.

26 Aug

Trained through Bern to Wengen. OMG – beauty like nothing we have ever seen. The Hotel (Beausite Park Hotel) is very nice with delightful proprietors and we met many of interesting people. Out our balcony, we looked up at the Jungfrau – an amazingly beautiful mass of mountain and snow. There is no road to Wengen – only trains, so the only cars are occasional taxi's and small work vehicles. Most carts are electric. Dan and Sylvie drove up and met us there and we enjoyed the first of seven spectacular meals at the Beausite Park Hotel. We enjoyed the wine Jo and Pierre Pellet gave us (Chateau Kirwan, Grand Cru Closse' Margaux 1996 – yum!). It was such a pleasant day and evening.. we slept so well with the windows WIDE open and the mountain air flowing over us like a river.

27 Aug

Woke to sunshine, clanging cow-bells and a fabulous breakfast at the Beausite. Dan and Sylvie hiked to the Kleine Scheidegg and we took the cog-wheel train up. We hiked the stark, beautiful terrain looking back down to Wengen from above. We met Dan and Sylvie who treated us to a wonderful fondue lunch in the breeze and sunshine. The goats live among the people there and are delightful to see wandering about... After more hiking and visiting, we trained back down and enjoyed the swimming pool, hot tub and Natural pool. The five course dinner with Dan and Sylvie at the Beausite was delicious. We bid the kids good-bye as they were leaving the next day for Geneva. Another perfect day.

28 Aug

We trained to the bottom of the valley to cable-car back up to Murren. We were surprised to find Dan and Sylvie on the Train too! Wengen has no roads to it, so is only accessible by train and they had parked in Lauterbrunnen where we were headed. Was nice to see them again. The cable car ride up the cliff was amazing and wonderful. Then we trained to Murren and just walked and relaxed there. Is an isolate town – the highest inhabited village in Switzerland. Lunch there was wonderful with home made Schweinbratten and Russti like nothing we had before. Returning to the valley town of Lauterbrunnen we visited the Trummelbach falls which is inside a cliff with tunnels to see it winding inside the granite. Unbelievable power making the solid stone quiver. We returned in pouring rain and enjoyed the slow walk back to the hotel under our umbrellas. By the time we reached the hotel, the fog was so thick we could hardly see the building. The pool and hot tub were very refreshing and again dinner was superb.

29 Aug

Was a rainy day, so spent the day in town visiting the tiny shops. Switzerland it a safe place to shop – there is nothing to buy! But fun to look anyway. Small waterfalls were torrents in the rain.. Walked up into the woodland hillsides and just enjoyed the fresh air and solitude. Walking under an umbrella in the woods is like being under a mobile tent. Delightful.

30 Aug

Another rainy day, so we trained to Interlaken and took a long boat ride on the Brienzersee. Was a nice ride with many beautiful little villages along the way. We got off at Brienz and found the most amazing wood carvers there. Shop after shop with everything from kitschy trinkets to extremely fine inlay work

and wooden statuary. We enjoyed a delicious lunch on a terrace overlooking the lake. We returned and relaxed, swam and read until dinner.

31 Aug

Foggy morning, but clearing, so we trained all the way up to the "Top of Europe"; The Jungfrau. This tunnel was dug in 1906 and takes you through the mountain to the top where a restaurant and observation areas offer breathtaking views and places to go out and enjoy the winter paradise.

Snowballs in August. The beauty is indescribable. Met many nice people on the train including Elsie & Lyle. Wandering back to the hotel, the sun was softly shining on the endless gardens of Wengen. We both shot many flower pictures this day, with the most stunning being taken by Sharon (All pics of Sharon's have an "(S)" after the name. Dinner was again fabulous at the Beausite. We joined Dennis and Erwin for wine and conversation then Howard Hunt joined us and we talked until the wee hours.

1 Sep

Took the cable car up to Mannlichen. Sharon does not like being suspended by a wire, but the vehicle we were in was large enough to hold many people, so it didn't feel like we were hanging in space. The views were amazing as we whizzed up the mountain as Wengen shrank away from us. Mannlichen is above the tree line so is all grass which makes the cows very happy. We walked about up there for some time in awe as we shot pictures of the surrounding mountains. Then we climbed on the "Gondola" – a tiny two person capsule suspended on wires back down the other side of the mountain to Grindelwald. It was much longer ride than coming up and every time it went past a tower, the little car bobbed and rocked with a worried squeal from Sharon. The view was amazing – sometimes not very far above the trees, it felt like we were birds gliding down the mountain.

Grindelwald is an amazingly beautiful little town. Has cars and motorbikes, but still very pedestrian. The village sits surrounded by huge snow-capped mountains in every direction. Like being in the palm of a giant's hand. The shops were cute and the food wonderful at an outdoors café with spectacular views.

We trained back to Wengen through the steep gorge cut by the glacier's runoff past tiny, unpronounceable towns and back up to our wonderful Wengen. Took a late afternoon walk several miles up into the woodlands above Wengen. The forest is deep and all rocks covered with ancient moss. In this wilderness, many of the trees have little signs next to them telling the name of the plant. A botanical delight. The air in the forest was so fresh it was almost intoxicating.

Dinner was delicious again and conversation with our new friends, Howard Hunt, and Erwin Mayer & Didier Moritz again went on into the evening. Howard is a British screen-writer who wrote for "Friends" and "Will and Grace" among many others. He acted on Broadway as well, once with Glenn Close. Erwin & Didier were restaurateurs in Cleveland and Florida. They were delightful conversationalists with endless humor about any and all human situations. The five of us could talk and laugh for hours.

2 Sep

Sadly said goodbye to Wengen and trained to Zurich. Stayed at the Hilton near the airport which was pleasant.

3 Sep

Flew home and slept so well in our own bed. We already look forward to returning to that magical country.