



# BEACH'S CLASSIC ALPINE ADVENTURE

Cherie and Jack Paisley · RA 39365



**W**hat a motorcycle adventure! Back tired? Eh, who cares! Not when there are so many magnificent scenic vistas of the Alps and the Dolomites - which are divine beauty made of carbonite rock. One can't help but fall in love with the mountains in Europe. Come on! Let's head for some more twisty 180 degree turns!

Before the tour even started, we made friends with other members of our tour group and took a train ride to Munich to visit the BMW Museum, the famous Glockenspiel clock, and had dinner at Hofbrauhaus - famous for their large steins of German beer and pretzels as big as our heads.



Each night after a scrumptious meal, desert included, Rob would give an informative background of where we were going next, which route to choose in our GPS, riding tips, and historic sights to see as the names of the towns eloquently rolled off his tongue. It was like an history lesson each night and we were to pick which route we

wanted to take. Rob was determined to complete all our wish lists, including my desire to see castles and dragons.

Rob and Gretchen took us to a military cemetery for 35,000 soldiers that were killed in battle in Asiago, Italy. It reminded us of Arlington on a smaller scale.

It took three days of riding twisties before we found an "official" hairpin, according to Rob wearing a teasing, mustachioed grin. Following Rob and Gretchen was like watching eloquence in motion. They rode together in perfect rhythm. The videos she posted allow us to re-live the trip over and over again.

Rob took us down narrow cobble-

stone streets (he called them "Rob roads") free from traffic and through so many old-world villages with a cow or two wandering down the side of the road with a large bell around its neck.

I asked Rob if "there be dragons" and he took us to a wood carving museum and school with a twelve foot intricately-carved green wooden dragon standing guard and plenty more in-



side. Lucky for Jack they were student projects and not for sale.

There were so many castles standing like stone sentinels on top of hills, with plenty of challenging corners and medieval towns along the way, and valley after valley with mountain ranges on either side, leaning into hairpins, the Beemer's engine growling for more. We rode through the Black



Forest interwoven with dense trees. Right, left, right, left, finally straight for a few feet...a fluid dance orchestrated between rider and passenger.

Rob would say "Yahoo!" before taking off for another adventurous day. We experienced sunshine, rain, sleet and snow in late June and early July. We passed many glacial turquoise lakes; Interlaken, Switzerland was my favor-





ite. We discovered St. Gotthard Pass, a road built of paving stones. Jack and I thought the road would be slippery, but Rob assured him there was plenty of grip. There were many steep roads with snow sheds. One tunnel even had a decreasing radius turn.

We were in for a real treat when Henri invited Jack, Richard, and me to tour a glacier. We literally walked inside of one, surrounded by ice walls of luminous blue and a resounding drip, drip. Narrow, wooden plank walkways led to spacious rooms carved out by chainsaws, tiny bubbles trapped in the ice. Jack was busy taking pictures while Henri, our hilarious upbeat tour guide from the Netherlands, stuck his tongue out on an ice wall reminiscent of an old Christmas movie. No, we didn't have to rip his tongue off the ice.



The Furka Pass was full of serpentine twists and turns and steep cliffs. We climbed the Grimsel Pass after leaving the Rhone Glacier because the other side of the mountain was socked-in with heavy fog. Then we followed Rob up the southern ramp of Austria's highest mountain, the Grossglockner. As we ascended, it got colder, the skies grew grayer (are those snow clouds?) and snowflakes began to fall. The further we climbed, the harder the snow fell, turning the narrow mountain road into slippery slush. Thankfully, my husband had ridden in this white stuff in his dirt bike days, so he kept the bike upright. The pass was closed, but our hotel was only four kilometers away! Jack and Rob threw snowballs at each other while Gretchen arranged for us to be taken to the hotel. The guys rode in as soon as the sun came out and the roads were clear, and a gorgeous sunset set against the snowy, cerulean mountain made me thank God for his awesome creations and the time to revel in it.

Switzerland has villages filled with gingerbread-design houses and wooden flower boxes overflowing with blooms as we rumbled through

after coming down from some pretty impressive altitudes.

Riding the forty-eight switchbacks of the Stelvio Pass was a boyhood dream of Jack's and it is challenging, steep and twisty – everything a motorcyclist dreams about riding. When he reached the top, Jack said he felt like he had won the Indianapolis 500.

The last day of our tour we explored the outside of Ludwig's Castle and went to BMW Motorrad Days in Garmisch, the world's largest BMW rally.

The two and a half week, 2,000 mile tour ended with Rob, Gretchen, Stanley, Debbie, Eric, Bonnie, Jim, Shelley, Richard, Dave, Frank, John, Paul, Dan and Henri in our tour group. The trip ended with our last five-star dinner, a certificate of accomplishment with a firm handshake, and a genuine hug between Jack and Rob that Gretchen caught on video to cherish for all time.

Thanks to Gretchen for loaning us a belt with two handles to wrap around Jack's waist so that I could hold on with one hand and snap pictures with the other. It made me more comfortable in some of those tight turns that sometimes had no guardrails. The Beachs love what they do and it shows. Rob and Gretchen were accommodating tour guides that made us feel like instant friends the minute we met them. Rob Beach knows Europe like the back of his hand. He spent a lot of time over here as a child following in his father's footsteps when his dad began Beach's Tours. We don't think anyone else could have shown us a better tour. Thank you, Rob and Gretchen for making our dreams come true!

*[Editor's Note: Cherie and Jack Paisley won the Beach's Motorcycle Tours' Classic Alpine Adventure at the 2017 BMW RA National Rally in Petoskey, Michigan, and Beach's will be offering a spot on one of their European tours (up to \$10,995 in value) to a lucky attendee of the Set My Soul Free rally in September.]*





