



Scratch that bucket list now

Do Europe with Edelweiss Bike Tours

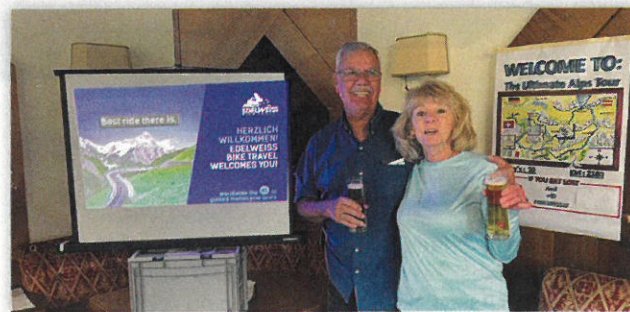
By Janet Hyver

My husband, Brian, and I just returned from an experience of a lifetime — a bucket-list “ride.” If time is not a problem, *you should do it now!* If cost is a problem, shoot for 2023 or just as soon as possible. This experience was so incredible that we still talk about it every day and we returned home months ago. We can’t get it out of our minds. I want to do the exact same trip again. Even though Edelweiss offers tons of destinations worldwide, both scheduled and customized, my heart is set on 2023.

The tour we took was the Ultimate Alps Tour offered by Edelweiss Bike Tours, which runs through Austria, Switzerland and Italy. (They do point out this tour is not for people with limited mobility, so do not wait.) We were on *beautiful* mountain passes *every day!* We only think we have mountains in the States and Canada. Brian and I have traveled the entire United States and all the provinces of Canada on our Gold Wing, and nothing is as breathtaking as the Alps of Europe ... especially as displayed from a motorcycle. You’ve got to pursue this.

We flew into Innsbruck via Vienna and spent two days there enjoying the beautiful city. It also gave us time to acclimate to the time zone, which is no small feat and is highly recommended to prepare your body and mind for what lies ahead. Who eats gelato for breakfast? See what I mean?

The excitement was mounting as we learned that our first day of the tour was going to be Stelvio Pass. This is the pass known as the “King of the Alps,” which has been on Brian’s bucket list since he was 58. It has 47 switchbacks on the way up and 38 switchbacks on the



way down. The excitement, challenge and thrill of those mountain roads was created for motorcycles, although we had to share some with bicyclists and sports adventurers. If you Google it, there are pictures that will make you want to book the tour today. Do it!

We all met at our first hotel in Mieming, Austria (home of Edelweiss), the day before the tour started and were greeted by our tour guides. Each person was then introduced to their motorcycle of choice and given the keys and some general information about each bike. Brian had selected a R1250RT BMW, but there were also Ducatis, Yamahas, Harleys and Hondas (but no Gold Wings!) My understanding is that you can get pretty much any bike you desire. We had been told to leave our luggage in the lobby and later found that they had been delivered to our rooms. Before dinner we had a general meeting where the tour guides mapped out our route for the next day and then after a delicious dinner, everyone headed to their rooms with much anticipation and excitement. The schedule I just described was basically the same for each day. In the mornings, all we had to do was bring our luggage down to the lobby and the guides made sure they were placed in the support van for us. And at the end of the day, they had our luggage in or outside of our rooms for us! What a convenient way to travel!

Speaking of tour guides, it turned out that they were so much more than tour guides; they became our friends. We could request just about anything from them and we never heard any grunts or dismay. They were so friendly and happy and accommodating *and patient*. A secret — anyone who lives in that part of the world cannot help but be a happy and friendly person It is the most beautiful, friendly, clean, healthy, *happy*, place in the world — in our opinion, anyway. You know those childhood storybook pictures with all the adorable wooden houses with vibrant, colorful flowers in their window boxes, with snow-capped mountains in the background? That’s what they live, see and ride every day. And to boot, we were all riding on the most exciting, exhilarating, challenging, beautiful roads that any motorcycle rider could have ever dreamed of. What a thrill!

The rest of the days were just as exciting and beautiful, with nine days of mountains, passes, storybook scenery, delicious foods, desserts, and friendly people, all the while being taken care of by our two wonderful guides. There was time for points of interest each day, and there was one day where we walked through a glacier — the Rhone glacier. Talk about an experience.

Also, there were two days where some of the more aggressive riders in our group requested the route from our tour guide so they could do a more “spirited” ride. This is not a problem with Edelweiss. Of course, Brian decided that he just had to do that, but since I



was enjoying the scenery and picture taking (798) so much, I did not want to make the ride end any faster than was already happening, so I hitched a ride with our tour guide. How great is that!

The hotels are all top quality, clean and spacious, usually with great views, and the food at each was exceptional — all fresh, plentiful, healthy, with incredible variety. The cost of the trip included breakfast and dinner each day. The only additional food expense was lunch, which usually ended up as a coffee stop with espresso, cappuccinos, frappuccinos, etc., and apple strudel of so many varieties that it was impossible to try each one, but we tried. What an experience for motorcycle lovers.

Edelweiss has been in business for a very long time. They are now second generation. They know what they are doing but the best part is that they have created such an exceptional experience for us! They don't just talk the talk, they ride the ride. They have thought of *everything*. The personnel are "conciierge oriented" from the office staff to the tour guides to the owner himself, who thought enough of us to remain at work to greet us and get "our" opinion when we returned the motorcycles to their warehouse that last day of the trip! It wasn't just a "hi" and "bye"! He was with us until our taxi (who they had hired to bring us back to our originating hotel) had had enough and was threatening to leave. Investigate now. This tour that I have described is listed as a ride "for the most experienced riders," but there are so many tours in so many countries that you'll have to start eliminating. Go to their website and see some of the rides available. Send them an email and request their 2022-2023 catalog. It's like getting the Sears Christmas catalog. You'll be fighting for it. Enjoy your trip. 