

1.9.2016, Enkirch

We are on the road again! This year we want to travel to Morocco and plan is to travel down South slowly through France and Spain. There are always projects to do on the car, but for now we declare our preparations to be finalized. The most important requests for change and improvements, which we brought back from our Iceland trip, are implemented.



Our first travel destination however is „Willy’s Fernreisemobiltreffen“ in Enkirch, a gathering of expedition mobiles, world travellers and mobile homes. After a lot of traffic jam we finally arrive quite late. Driving on a German Autobahn is currently no fun with so many construction sites ongoing – but this is a different topic...

Enkirch is a sleepy little village with hardly anything on offer, but enough space for almost 1000 big expedition vehicles.



This is the 38th Willy’s gathering and we wanted to have joined for a long time. At this event you meet many other fellow travelers and to be able to see all these fancy cars alone is worth the trip.



Throughout these three days we hear and see presentations of some (crazy) travel adventures on two or four wheels. The travel bug is now biting even harder... We hear that Iran is up and coming as the latest travel destination.

4.9.2016 Bernkastel-Kues, Saarlouis

We had some interesting talks, discovered new vehicles every day, but now it is time to hit the road. We drive along the river Moselle along huge wineries covering the hills.



In Bernkastel the main street through the village is blocked because of a wine festival. Since there is no getting through, we make the best out of it and join the party.



Hhhmmm, we enjoy very fresh sweet Federweisser... Can't remember anymore how many refills we got...

In the evening we reach Saarlouis as planned. From here it is not far to the French border which we want to cross over tomorrow morning.

5.9.2016 Luneville

In the morning we hear a bell which sounded quite strange, but didn't pay too much attention to it. However, we should have. Only later we find out from our camping app, that at this campsite the local bakery makes a stop with their mobile fresh-breadrolls-service.

Soon we are in France and have to get used to the local traffic. Many little cars driving rather fast, especially through the millions of roundabouts. They shoot in and out, in Germany the cars would near a round-about much slower and more cautiously.

In Luneville we stop for the day on a parking place for car sharing commuters. Not very romantic, especially not the train rails right behind us, but this is the best we could find. Everything is so narrow and tiny here, there is no place to park easily.



It is funny, the Unimog seems to be much more spacious than during our Iceland trip. Maybe because we don't have all the thick coats hanging in the way, the big shoes standing in the way and so many clothes to wear?

6.9.2016 Cuiseaux

We manage to drive almost 300km South today until we reach Cuiseaux. On the way we had to manage a road closure with many police guarding and making sure no-one gets through. Why this happened, we'll never find out, but it took us a big detour to get to Cuiseaux. We are forced to drive through tiny and less tiny villages, one is called 'Busy'. At parts we just follow another truck in front of us assuming that he also wants to get back on the main road and where he gets through we can follow... Our stupid Tomtom navigation system is continuously guiding us back to the blocked road.

The last task of the day is to find the camp site in Cuiseaux, at first we drive past it. How could we know that we are supposed to just park in front of the municipal building yard. After deciding that this must be the place we find a little sign in the corner: This place even made it into the ADAC Camping Guide. Although being a quite minimalistic place we still get water at the site and the workers who arrive in the morning are very friendly



We explore the town and decide for a sundowner. Well, time to gather all the French we have ever learned so we can order what we want to drink... Radler = panache!



All the towns and villages we pass through are tres charmantes, but all seem to be somehow a bit deserted and empty. However, the smallest village may not have a supermarket, but a beauty salon.

7.9.2016 Montelimar

Besancon, Lons-le-Saunier, so many pretty sites on our way and we would love to stop for some sightseeing. But with the Unimog it is too much of a challenge. We still

try it in Bourg-en-Bresse, but today is market day, and parking space is even more scarce as on normal days. No chance, we cruise through the city and continue our trip. After our experience we even don't dare to stop in Lyon. Driving around the city is already stressing enough.

Even on the main road we get stuck. Behind the city of Vienne there is no way through. A tiny little village is so narrow, we have to turn around and take the highway. As we drive back, we realize, that something is wrong with the clutch, it seems to slip through when driving uphill. We have to watch this!

On the highway we are naturally much faster and reach our planned camp for the night in Montelimar easily.



Everywhere are little booths selling fresh fruit and veggies directly from the farmers. We see interesting ,antique' tomatoes and they even do taste like tomatoes.

The campsite in Montelimar is a bit difficult to find, one access road is closed for camper vans... But the self-service pay machine is broken, so we can just drive through. Well, can you spot us?



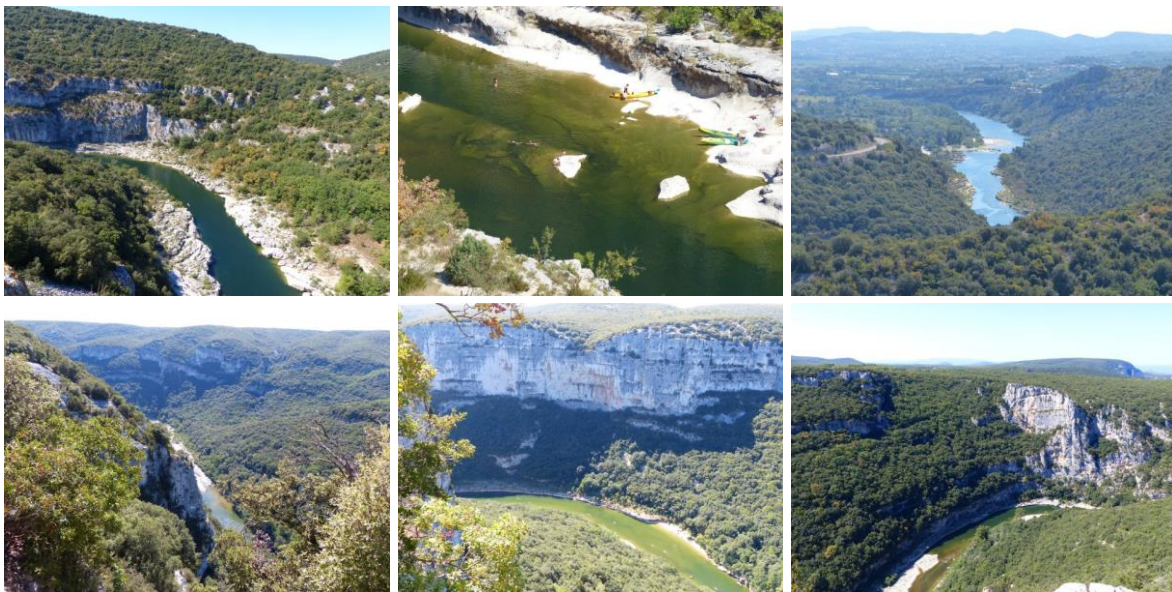
Montelimar also makes a deserted impression and the old city center is pretty run down. The few bars still existing are starting to close down in the early evening.

Suddenly, we hear that there is still something going on. People are joining an outdoor fitness class and the music is blasting very loud.



8.9.2016 Ardeche Tal, Ales

Montelimar is an access point to the Ardeche gorge. We have heard a lot about this part of France and finally get a chance to visit ourselves. On the map we see that at the end of the road there is a height restriction of 3,5m... But we decide to try anyways, worst case we have to turn around and drive back.



Many canoes are on the river Ardeche, the water is calm and inviting. So inviting, that we decide to go for a swim at the Pont d'Arc, a natural stone bridge. It is 34C hot!



At the end of the gorge are some low hanging rocks, but luckily we are not stopped by a real height restriction of 3.50m and can continue our way.



Late afternoon we reach our camping spot in Ales at the river Gardon. The parking is rather small and quite full already, we find a last spot next to some hippie campers.

On the other side of the river are a few restaurants, but again many are closed. We think, also in Ales everything is empty and deserted... After a yummy meal at the Vietnamese place we realize though, that the other restaurants are now open. And packed! We still have to get used to it that all happens much later here and restaurants even open only at 8pm.



9.9.2016 Sete, Trois Digue

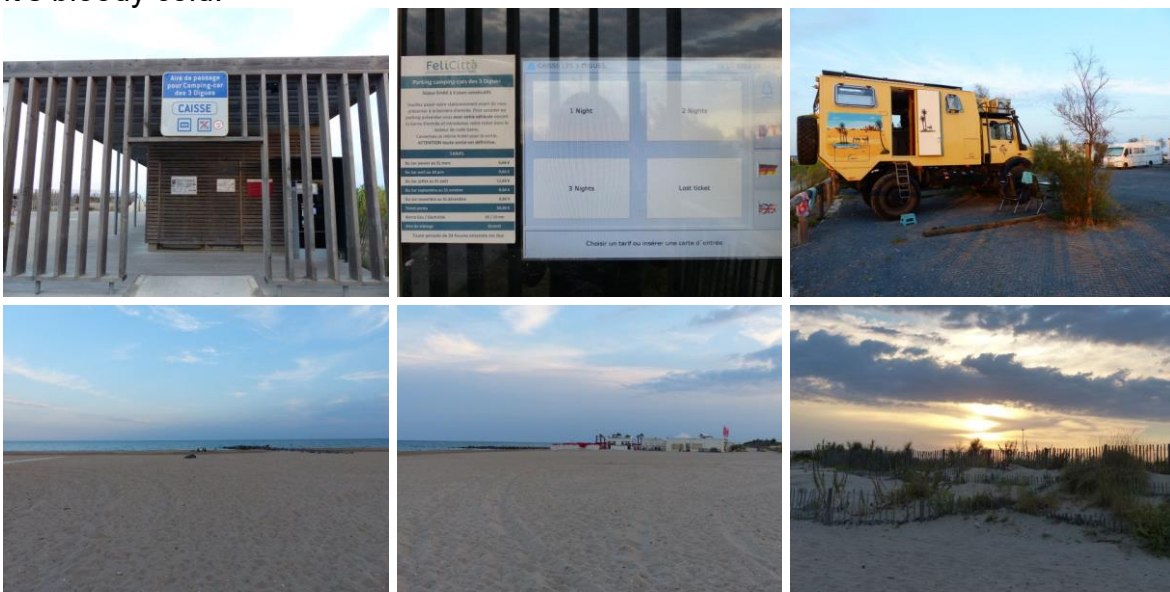
What a short night! Our hippie neighbours were watching a wild movie until 1 a.m., in which slaves were being whipped... It was too loud to fall asleep, but we were also too curious to know what movie this was...

Today we had to fight our way through Montpellier, experienced our first traffic jam and finally reached the sea near Sete. The Mediterranean Sea! Sete is really pretty, a lot of channels where you can ride your boat into town. All the street cafes we were looking for are here... However, unfortunately no parking available for mobile homes

and often campervans where not even allowed to enter certain streets... So we can only cruise through the city and continue our way.



We take the first available camping spot behind Sete which is Trois Digue. It's located directly at the beach and costs 9,66Eur per night. There is a self-service pay station and one can stay max. three nights in a row. We take a first dip in the sea and it's bloody cold.



During a steeper incline today we noticed, that our clutch is indeed not working properly. Quite worried we decide to call our garage service at home and the

workshop supervisor can give us some hints on the phone. At next opportunity Werner has to check this out.

10.9.2016 Agde, Leucate

Shortly after Sete is Agde and we give it another try to reach the Centre Ville. This time we are lucky, the parking of the local cinema complex is big enough for us and we can do some sightseeing.



After a filling lunch of 'Moules et Frites' we continue our way. On the road we see a lot of wine-growers bringing in their harvest. Our slightly elevated seating position allow us to peek into the trailers.



In Leucate we call it a day, enough of melting away in the heat inside the car, the thermometer shows 36C. The camp site is again located directly at the sea, although with no facilities at all... For 13.80 EUR this is actually just an expensive parking lot. However, we learn from our fellow campers who have been coming here for years, that we are allowed to use the facilities of the 'real' camp site next door.



It is interesting how many people approach us and want to know more about our car. A good way of getting to know people.

It is even more interesting; how many fellow campers are traveling with dogs. But not only one dog, often they travel with three or even four dogs! And not only tiny "lap dogs", but we see Dalmatians, German Shepherds... really full-grown dogs... We wonder, how they all fit into such a campervan (and how it must smell) on a rainy day...