

B45 LIFE ALONG THE MOSEL RIVER  
PROJECT: EUROPE 2011  
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On our way to Germany we passed through the Luxembourg Duchy's village of Vianden, a traditional storybook town. It is located right near the German border and was crawling with tourists when we stopped. Perhaps being Saturday had something to do with it.



The first thing that caught our eye was a large schloss (castle) that sits high atop the picturesque town. Fortunately the Duchy's highway department provided a place to pull off to take the perfect photo.



The windy road quickly drops down to the main street where we met tourists on foot, climbing steadily as if on a pilgrimage to the gasthaus at the top of the hill.



We stopped to take a photo to share with you and, once again, became the target of camera toting pilgrims. The usual question asked is, "You are from California? How did you get the car here?" If they are over fifty with good English skills I usually answer, "We drove. The car has fluid drive." After a moment of incredulity they usually laugh, especially if they remember the fluid drive transmission of '50's Chrysler products. This little joke does not work well on anyone under fifty.



It was just a short trip to the hill overlooking the village of Piesport along the Mosel River. From this tremendous overlook we phoned Marlies and Benny Brown for directions. With an eagle's eye vantage point, I was able to trace his instructions with my finger. It was like using a giant Google map only it didn't move...my finger did.

The road down to river level wound back and forth through row upon row of wine grapes, all neatly plowed and weed free. Even though busy following hairpin turns I managed to wonder how they did that. When we pulled up behind the narrowest tractor I'd ever seen the question was answered. Next question; "how do they keep the damn things from tipping over?" The answer is, "They just do."



"Marlies and Benny were waiting for us at their favorite haunt, the Spater-Weit Winery, right next door to their house. Benny is a former AFNer but served about 15 years after our time. He met Marlies after she and her family fled East Germany shortly before the building of the Berlin wall. They married in Benny's home state of

Kansas to avoid military complications of a GI marrying someone from the Russian occupied territory. The result of all this clandestine action is a grown son, Marcus, who works as an EMT in Frankfurt.



Benny stayed in Europe after his enlistment was up and, over the years, has worked in many and different places. For the past six years he has been an English language disc jockey on Radio Luxembourg pulling the 8 to 11 PM shift. We began e-mail correspondence after I mentioned our MG-TF in an AFN posting. Benny had owned a TF decades ago and it's an experience that's hard to put behind. We found him at home because he was on a mandatory two month vacation and it was driving him crazy...meaning he was spending more time than ever at his neighbor's winegarten.



The owners, Sylvia and Heinz Welter were not only neighbors but friends as well. Their winery sits right on the banks of the Mosel River and the pleasant winegarten is the perfect place to study barge traffic and the occasional river cruise boats.

Louise made it a personal crusade to wave at every barge that crossed under the bridge and to tell me what cargo they were carrying. Coal and gravel were the big winners.



Hotel Landasthof was our home away from home during our time in Piesport. It sits right next to the bridge that crosses to the newer part of the village.



The hotel/cafe/bar is super clean and efficiently run by Maria who is very adept at sign language when her minimal English runs dry. She then turns to her niece, Monica, who loves to exercise her high school English. The only real downside to our stay was a lack of WiFi on the premises.





Benny says it is a real trick to get satellite service into their area but, fortunately, the God of all spectrums has shone on his house and I was able to sit at their dining room table and send this blog to the world.



A Sunday treat was watching the Formula One German Grand Prix running at the Nurburging race track. "Driving that track is something I'd like to do someday," I caught myself saying wistfully. "How 'bout tomorrow?" Benny chimed in. "The 'Ring' is just up the road and the track will be open to amateurs after 1 PM. Go ahead and do it." After an extended visit to the winegarten I went back to our hotel with a bug in my head (and elsewhere) and made some quiet plans for Monday.

Louise and Ray