



**Dolomites Plus Zurich, Innsbruck and Cortina Trip Notes**  
**July 31 – August 15, 2019**

***“The world is a book and those who do not travel read only one page”.***

By Saint Augustine

**Highlights**

- A return to some favorite locations. See past trip notes at the end.
- Glorious hotels with the Cortina room being among our all-time favorites\*.
- The most dramatic craggy mountains we’ve ever seen.
- Not many miles on the feet but . . . .
- Many calories. Who can resist dark Italian olive bread. Who can resist Swiss rosti.
- Really mountain roads with major curves and more curves.

**Miscellaneous**

Airline passengers do the strangest things

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/travel/airline-passengers-do-the-strangest-things/2019/08/01/8be11ff4-a8a9-11e9-9214-246e594de5d5\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/travel/airline-passengers-do-the-strangest-things/2019/08/01/8be11ff4-a8a9-11e9-9214-246e594de5d5_story.html)

I haven’t seen quite as bad as described here but I have seen pajamas on sorts that should not, and pajamas on a beautiful model of some significance who carried it off well. I have seen kids throwing tantrums and kids tossing stuff over the back of the seat. I have zero understanding why anybody would care if another person goes barefoot -- so what if they step in pee while in the WC – but it’s a pet peeve of airline attendants.

**\*All time favorite hotels**

We were trying to remember and rate them, but maybe: Little Nell’s presidential suite in Aspen; Hotel Negresco on Nice’s Promenade des Anglais; The Luxury Apartment in Paris’s Palais Royal; Hotel Jerome top floor suite in Aspen; Hotel ? in Bilbao Spain with three floors and a bathroom larger than a hotel room; Duke’s Palace in Brugge; Hotel Cristina? on the water front in San Sebastian Spain; The House in Avignon France; The Apartment in Barcelona; The Apartment in Lake Como Italy; The Presidential Suite in The Four Seasons Shanghai. More? It does sound like we are either easy to please or travel a lot and spoil ourselves or maybe it’s just that we like to brag. The spoiling ourselves is what I like to believe, as we do spend plenty of time in our rooms.

Now – from our notes home written during the trip:

**Off we go again - part 1**

Off we go - again? No joke but maybe it should be.

“The world is a book and those who do not travel read only one page”. Per Saint Augustine and a birthday missive. Amen.



Where are we going? It is all a renewal of places we have enjoyed many times in the past. First it is Zürich for three days, then to Innsbruck for another three days, followed by seven days in Cortina in the Italian dolomites. Aren't we lucky!

I'm not sure we're starting out in the best mode. Here is my message from United Airlines: "Storm update: sometimes bad things happen to good travel. We love when the skies are blue, but unfortunately, they're looking stormy tomorrow (July 31st). We know this storm was not part of your travel plans, so we're going to do our very best to get you where you need to go safely. Be sure to give yourself extra time getting to and from the airport, and if your travel plans are flexible, you may want to consider flying on a different day or connecting in a different city. The good news is that we'll waive all the change fees through August 3rd, so visit the United app or [united.com](https://www.united.com) to check out our alternate options." Crap.

Sure enough the monsoons came just as we were leaving home and with flight delay notices of 2:41 hours. As we were getting out of the car at Newark, the dark clouds opened up still again. Meaning flight delays. It was OK as I was looking forward to many glasses of Prisoner Wine in the Polaris Lounge. Before the Wine, I hit pay dirt and got myself a new Tumi backpack and then rushed over to get a couple bottles of Johnny Walker at duty-free and then to the Prisoner wine.

Why do I gain weight when I travel? Ha ha. Today is a good example. I had an early full breakfast, a good healthy lunch, and then by 4 PM I was eating off both the buffet and the menu at the United Polaris club and still looking forward to eating on the plane. United will give me a lovely dinner plus a breakfast before we land and all of that within a long day. I gain 3 or 4 pounds on a trip and go home and lose 2 or 3 and that math just doesn't add up. Clearly it is bad news.

While in the plane to Zürich, and after a near 3-hour delay with much of it on the runway, we learned we were the last plane to leave for some time. The rest in line to take off had been canceled. Landing and passport control in Zürich were easy if you discount the train and all the miles just to get to the train to Zürich main station.

We were pooped but glad to get an early morning room to plop down in. Sheraton offered a comfortable top floor suite in a setting close to old town. After sitting on the wrap around terrace in perfect weather, and a bit of lake view, we again broke our rule and napped. Again — life is good. It's also good to not feel obliged to check out all the tourist sites.

Zürich coming up.



At the United Polaris Club.

Now in Zürich. Nothing exciting about the room but it's nice and large with the big wraparound terrace and a giant bathroom with a huge wall of a window. The shower and tub work without faucets. All electronic.



From our terrace to the lake.

First off, where did we go? To the little kiosk near to the opera house where the students go for the best of wurst. Or as Tom says, the first wurst. We would eat it standing up lake side.

So ask Tom about his worst wurst. It was in Budapest at Christmas market and it made him sick for a couple days. Then ask him about his best wurst which I thought was in Zürich but he now tells me it was in Vail at the stand of an old Australian guy.

### **Our three days in Zürich - part 2**

Our priorities were wandering the streets of old town, strolling along the river and stopping often for wine, eating the best wurst at a little kiosk where the river and lake meet, and eating the famous Swiss Rosti (something like a thick pancake of hash browns) and riding the Lake Zürich tour boat. We managed all and some more than once and despite a wee bit of grumbling, Tom kept up with about 5 miles a day.

The near perfect weather helped and the white wispy clouds made for good viewing and photos. Only once did some rain fall but the predictions suggest the rain is coming as we drive towards Innsbruck on Sunday.

On arrival in Zürich it was their National Day and basically it is treated like our Independence Day. Flags and revelers and fireworks which we watched from a park bench lakeside. August 1 - <https://www.zuerich.com/en/visit/swiss-national-day-0>

What's so special about Zürich? From the web: "Zurich is an upmarket banking city and the financial capital of Switzerland. It, therefore, comes as no surprise that it's often labelled as the most expensive city in the world. Zurich is famous for luxurious lifestyles, high-end shopping, and fancy chocolates. ... And all this at the foot of the Alps. However, despite its expense and extravagance, it is also ranked as one of the best cities to live in the world. Boasting highly urbanized districts that sit amidst historical and cultural areas, Zurich is also the biggest city in Switzerland. It is also extremely well situated. It sits right on Lake Zurich and has the waters of the River Limmat running right through it."

We find it the most clean and comfortable city ever. Easy to get around. Water everywhere. Folks are kind and helpful and we couldn't care that they are known to be inclusive and private. They look good too. Public transportation is famously efficient and prolific. (It's a good thing since taxis are so pricey.) it sits on a river that runs through the huge Lake Zürich with mountains all around.

Yet it is pricey and takes some effort to not break the bank. From an \$8 ice cream to a \$55 entree, or a \$12 glass of wine, a few stops at a grocery store for snacks and breakfast items and \$9 stand-up wurst-dinners help.

7 reasons to visit Zürich - <https://www.travelanddestinations.com/7-reasons-to-visit-zurich/>

History and stats if you are interested - <https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Z%C3%BCrich>

We can only hope to return but the rest of 2019 is booked up as is 3/4 of 2020 so it'll be awhile.



Church steeples and bridges everywhere.  
Swiss chocolates are well known and the shops are always decorative.  
Fireworks for their August 1 Independence Day.



We always enjoy the specialty cars but we'd never seen a gold one.  
Lots of head scarves.  
This is the "castle" that's out our terrace and lakeside.



A few years ago Switzerland (and also France) tried to reduce water bottle pollution by installing lots of unique water fountains. Good for them! Until they charge for a carafe of tap water and some do.

PS I might add a part 3 about food.

**Zürich Eats - part 3**



Darn but I lost all my picture descriptions and now I barely remember where I was! At the wurst stand, then a famous chocolate shop that looks more like a flower shop. We tried to eat at this noted place with a balcony hanging over the river but without reservations, no way. So we ate on their patio and watched the strollers go by while eating from the same kitchen.



The hotel sent us to one of the oldest restaurants known in the area and it was by far Tom's favorite. It should have been as it was a big deal. But it gave us our first rosti.



Signs are enjoyed by even those who can now read. A big open lip for trash in front of the ice cream shop.



Their little macarons are about half the size of those in France.

### **Onto Innsbruck**

We will miss the Zürich hotel as we are going to a super simple one in Innsbruck.

We left a pleasant stay at the Sheraton Zurich Neues Schloss Hotel:

<https://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/zrhsi-sheraton-zurich-neues-schloss-hotel/?scid=bb1a189a-fec3-4d19-a255-54ba596febe2> - "A 14-minute walk from Zürich Selnau train station, this modern hotel in a business district is a block from Lake Zurich and 1 km from Kunsthaus art museum. The warm, unfussy rooms feature flat-screen TVs, minibars and coffeemakers, as well as Wi-Fi (fee). Suites add balconies and sitting areas. Some quarters provide lake views. There's casual Mediterranean restaurant and a bar."

We didn't indulge in their breakfast at \$34 each! We did indulge in enough of other Zürich delights to make up for it.

The highway system in Europe seem to be far superior to our country. Maybe it helps that they have paid for infrastructure and also have very hefty tolls. In many countries such as Switzerland and Austria one buys a windshield sticker for 9 days (or one year) driving. Austria was €10. A single Potty stop? 1€. Each. Smile.

Our 3-hour anticipated drive turned into at least 4 1/2. Add a bit over an hour with a rental car snafu that finally turned out OK. Between the car pick up, the drive and a walk-in old town with a lovely dinner meant that Tom had no nap. I later had to wonder how I was going to carry him home.

Our hotel for 3 nights: AC Hotel Innsbruck - From <https://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/innac-ac-hotel-innsbruck/> - This contemporary hotel in a high-rise building is a 5-minute walk from Innsbruck Hbf train station, 10 minutes on foot from the Goldenes Dachl museum and 2 km from Bergiselschanze ski jump. Featuring mountain views, the modern rooms have Wi-Fi (fee), flat-screen TVs and minibars. Luxe suites add living rooms, and some offer whirlpool tubs. Room service is available. Amenities include a steakhouse and a cozy cocktail bar. There's also an exercise room and a sauna. Parking and breakfast are available for a fee.

We got it for a pittance and then got upgraded with breakfast tossed in.



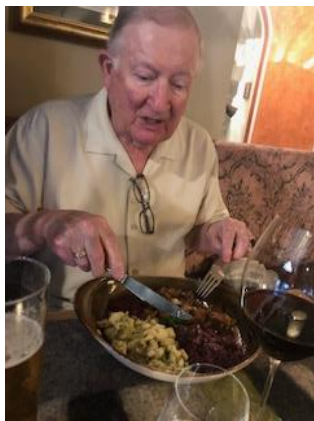
From the web, a picture of our Zürich hotel room with quite the view on three sides. Our ride for the ten days, a sweet little new edition Mercedes called an A Class. Tom said it handled well. Mountains surround Zürich and we drove into a new range.



Once in and settled, it called for a walk into old town. This arch is at the corner of our hotel facing the pedestrian street leading us to the heart of old town. We enjoyed the old-time signs intended for those who couldn't read but enjoyed by all now. Amusing to see the McDonald's sign interspersed with the old ones. Lovely to see the mountains in the background.







We headed to an old favorite which is one of the oldest hotels in the area called the Goldener Adler. It has now become a Best Western Plus. The food remained as good.



Again, we pretty much had a view from three sides — from our 10th floor room

### **Leaving Innsbruck - Part 5**

Eat and more eat. I feel stuffed. I look stuffed. But how can you not indulge in their wonderful breads, pretzels, sausages, rosti, dumplings, etc. The local wine is not all that tempting but my body is now used to alcohol so I indulge there too. What else are you gonna do when you sit and rest and people-watch but drink.

Schnitzel in Austria - a tradition — [http://www.bbc.com/travel/story/20190805-does-this-schnitzel-define-vienna?ocid=global\\_travel\\_rss&ocid=global\\_bbcom\\_email\\_06082019\\_travel](http://www.bbc.com/travel/story/20190805-does-this-schnitzel-define-vienna?ocid=global_travel_rss&ocid=global_bbcom_email_06082019_travel)

Our best meal in Innsbruck: the Goldener Adler restaurant - a repeat from last trip — <http://restaurant.goldeneradler.com/en/restaurant.html>

Switzerland vs Austria vs Italy. We've always found Switzerland extremely clean, rich and so very perfect. Italy? Not so much so but maybe since it's not our country, we can love it for what it is. Laid back, easy going, great art, and luscious food. We used to joke that going from Monaco into Italy was like a black cloud came down at the Italian border. Austria we again think is somewhere in between. Their German blood helps keep it neat and tidy plus operating efficiently.

Yet the world-is-flat prevails and the countries have mixed blood now days. Especially with the influx of tourists — we see the Chinese as a cast of zillions so of course they influence. We found ourselves in a Swarovski crystal shop with a bus load of Asians talking/shouting all at once and pressing to purchase any and everything as fast as they could. They stand in line outside of Louis Vuitton (or any high dollar designer) and come out with bags of goodies.

The mountains are the attraction for many of us. Dramatically beautiful. They will get more craggy as we enter the Dolomites and leave the Tyrolean Alps. Yet the mountains hit the papers every once in awhile:

Deadly Swiss Mountains [https://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/deadly-falls\\_four-people-die-in-swiss-mountains/45140374](https://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/deadly-falls_four-people-die-in-swiss-mountains/45140374)

Last full day in Innsbruck- we had learned of the perfect medieval town just 20 minutes outside of Innsbruck. We'd gone to Hallstatt while staying in Salzburg last time and knew Hall in Tyrol to be another salt mine town. Nice experience. Nice day. Soon to be on UNESCO list, well preserved, with a limited number of tourists.

Hall in Tyrol - great blog by a tourist who clearly enjoyed Hall and saw lots more than we did. She probably didn't indulge in a two hour lunch - <https://www.blog.tirol/en/2017/03/a-town-steeped-in-history-a-day-in-hall-in-tirol/amp/>

[https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attractions-g190444-Activities-Hall\\_in\\_Tirol\\_Tirol\\_Austrian\\_Alps.html](https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attractions-g190444-Activities-Hall_in_Tirol_Tirol_Austrian_Alps.html)

Lots of pictures on my iCloud shared drive and here's a few select ones:



Across from our Innsbruck hotel.

Puts new meaning to the phrase "walking the dog".

Crystal and Asians everywhere! (Sorry, I lost a few pictures. No idea why.)



From our room.

### **On a day trip to Hall in Tyrol.**

In Hall in Tyrol. Tyrol is the region so I can only guess there are other towns named Hall in Austria. This was a 12th century church. Obviously added on and updated very richly.



Hall in Tyrol had sponsored park benches throughout. Like Chicago's cows

Tomorrow we head to Cortina Italy.

### **Innsbruck to Cortina - Part 6**

Jet lag continues. Damn but I thought we'd outgrow it. Four o'clock syndrome prevails. Maybe it's not just 6-hours but shortly before this trip I was westerly in Wyoming. A weak excuse?

As much as I'm not too happy with mountain drives, this one is not only beautiful but it reminds us of the Swiss mountains where everything looks like moss. We don't know why but this is the only part of the world where we see the lush green the same way. We drive through or by Kitsbuhl, Dobiacco, Garmisch and Bressanone/Brixen, all areas where Tom has skied in the long ago past and where I hiked and Tom visited more recently. We didn't go this time but Lichtenstein the tiny country was nearby.

Road trips? Not for me but .... the scenery sure is uniquely dramatic. I was just in Wyoming's Grand Tetons where there are three peaks. Here you could probably never see them all. I remember our last trip seeing a map of the dolomites and realizing that in our extensive 2 1/2 weeks of travel we only saw a tiny portion of it.

The 2 1/2 hour drive, as usual, ended up more like four hours. I will sort of hope that there is an auto route to get out of here because we have 6 1/2 hours to return to Zürich.

Arriving in Cortina d'Ampezzo was just as beautiful as we remember. It is surrounded by the craggy mountains and the rich green mossy valleys.

It is also a very rich vacation land. I had found a Marriott Friends bargain which turned out to be a very expensive choice when Tom didn't want the simple room. Sorry Alayna, you better be saving money because we are working on spending it.

We are in an upgraded room with a view for a week. Cristallo Resort and Spa by Marriott – From <https://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/bzolc-cristallo-a-luxury-collection-resort-and-spa-cortina-dampezzo/> - Set 2 km from the Faloria cable car, this lavish hotel at the foot of Mount Faloria is also 2 km from the Mario Rimoldi Modern Art Museum. Elegant rooms feature flat-screen TVs, free Wi-Fi and marble bathrooms, plus minibars. Upgraded rooms add balconies and mountain views. Suites offer living areas and/or whirlpool tubs. Room service is available. A breakfast buffet is complimentary. Other amenities include 4 restaurants, a lounge and a bar. There's also a spa, a heated indoor pool, a hot tub and a fitness center, as well as ski storage and event space. End.



Our first glimpse of the Dolomites  
Along the river are often castles. Some used in medieval days as lookouts.



A new copper roof glowed.  
A Viper with quite the rumble. We see many specialty cars in this part of the world.  
Our first room, an upgrade to our upgrade. It would get even better the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> night.



From the bar where we took a simple dinner — if you can call a \$25 hamburger simple.



Our morning view out our room.



Window double view!



**In Cortina for a week.**

We were 7 nights in a beautiful five-star high-on-the-hill hotel. It has a magnificent view and quite the reputation. Since about 1908 it has been the top in the area and the home for many big named not the least of which was the filming of the pink panther movie.

Our first two nights were in a paid upgraded room and upgraded still again with my Marriott status.

We had given up Marriott employee rate in order to ensure a larger room with a view. After two days and an interesting air conditioning problem, we were moved to what might be their largest and most dramatic suite with a double balcony, high cathedral ceilings, and an upstairs loft. Top floor, two balconies, called Suite Tolstoy in honor of his having stayed there.

Apparently when the hotel was built in the early 1900s and for many years owned by “luxury hotels of the world” air conditioning was never needed in Cortina. They do have cooled floors as air conditioning (you might remember heated floors and this is a similar type of method). Cooled floors not being enough, and needing to close the drapes to keep the evening cool in, caused me to

complain to the front desk. First we got a fan and then later we got another upgrade with the hope that wide open balcony doors create more breeze.

They have my sympathy: the historical status means they can't install outside cooling units and to add modern air conditioning requires closing for months and pulling out walls.

It is quite the place and the experience for us unlike much of any others excepting The Little Nell in Aspen where we got the presidential suite. Yet I find it all rather pretentious. To give one piece of evidence to my point I will tell you that the menu for the ladies had no prices and the menu for the men did. You bet I told them it was a mistake.

Then after the food came Tom decided it was "all show and no go". Maybe he shouldn't have ordered the quail. They were certainly much smaller than Pandora (and I am used to seeing her all wet after a shower). This must've been a baby quail. A couple hundred bucks later and maybe we learned our lesson and will go down to town to eat.

More unnecessary opulence included a multi jetted Jacuzzi and a steam shower with all kinds of high-tech buttons and jets including AM and FM radio. I did a double take before getting in and will probably never figure it all out.

Five days in Cortina <http://www.koalatravelstheworld.com/2017/09/cortina-dampezzo/>

Via Ferranta in Cortina <https://www.dolomitemountains.com/en/resources/resources148.htm>

More Via Ferratas in Cortina [https://www.tripadvisor.com/AttractionProductReview-g194745-d17516210-Via\\_Ferratas\\_in\\_Cortina\\_d\\_Ampezzo-Cortina\\_d\\_Ampezzo\\_Province\\_of\\_Belluno\\_Veneto.html](https://www.tripadvisor.com/AttractionProductReview-g194745-d17516210-Via_Ferratas_in_Cortina_d_Ampezzo-Cortina_d_Ampezzo_Province_of_Belluno_Veneto.html)

Driving notes - Why Should You Turn Off the GPS When You Travel - <https://www.thediscoverer.com/blog/why-should-you-turn-off-the-gps-when-you-travel/>

An observation from an astute arm chair traveler friend: Well, I had to look the Dolomites up online. They seem so tall, but really range in the 10,000's in elevation. They just look so much taller to me. But then I believe northern Italy is only about average 1500 elevation, so the mountains rise up so far, which makes them look taller. They are beautiful and these pics are incredible. End.

Yes, this is quite correct and they seem much more dramatic than even Colorado's 14ers. They are stark, they are high, and they go up from nothing. The craggy look is what I find to be particularly unique. They are like nowhere else we know — but we only know a small part of Europe and a small part of the dolomites. Apparently, the Dolomites are part of the alps range.

Relating to my past comment about the Asian infestation (awful word!) another friend wrote: And those Chinese are like a plague. We had a guide in Estonia who said she refused to take them because she was embarrassed by their rudeness. We concluded after our trip to Cambodia and Vietnam that the 2 biggest problems in the world are plastic and the Chinese. But I do like Chinese food! End

Dogs and more dogs. The only place I've ever seen so many dogs was in Minneapolis St. Paul and we thought it was because the residents needed the warmth. Or maybe it was the security. Here the dogs are everywhere because they're allowed in the stores, in the restaurants, and they are under foot a lot.

At one of our favorite restaurants, it really became clear how different life is with dogs. A huge boxer came in and pretty much sniffed at everybody. I am usually hesitant of dogs but here don't really mind and think it's really OK. Except it was rainy and the dog was wet and you know what wet dog smell like. Tom does not like even big dogs even if they are dry in a restaurant.

I prefer a trip report being truthful. Therefore I will admit that about four days is sufficient in Cortina if you are not a hiker. Besides the fact that we have been here before all of which made it a very restful and lovely stay.



On a past trip we stayed downtown in this Hotel La Poste. The little tourist train is a common method of touring the pedestrian streets. This one took us up into the hills also and past old Olympic areas. They are very proud to be hosting the 2026 Olympics, sharing the event with Milan.



Up a gondola to the high peaks but not as high as you can go.



**The last of the Dolomites trip.**

From Tom: Cortina is just as delightful and beautiful as we remembered and I'm so glad we included it in this trip's travel plan. In past trips we hadn't landed on any one restaurant as favorite but this time we did. A little place just off the beaten path. Owned by an entrepreneur but cheffed (is that a word) by a sweet/pretty/young little French gal, maybe in her 30s. Excellent cook and the first time (of three) that we ate there we had the best quiche I've ever tasted (and that's saying a lot!). The next time was lasagna and it too was above average. Then last night, quiche, but if the first one was a 10, last night's was an 8. Mighty delicious too though. Best meal yet was a full 10 in a fancy (spelled expensive) place recommended by our hotel in Zurich. And speaking of hotels - we've really been fortunate to have chosen well. The one here in Cortina d'Ampezzo ranks with our best ever (Cristallo Resort and Spa).

Hotel Cristallo history <https://www.marriott.com/hotels/hotel-information/details-1/bzolg-cristallo-a-luxury-collection-resort-and-spa-cortina-dampezzo/>

Cortina Italy is wonderful but it is not rated as high (by us) as Grindelwald Switzerland for a number of reasons:

- Italians are friendlier but we aren't looking for friends.
- Italy is less cared for but you've got to admire their laid-back attitude. And remember that they've been through many wars, were only a bunch of separate 'communes' until recently, live with political corruption, and are in perpetual financial trouble.
- There are plenty of ski and hiking areas in Cortina but real rough compared to the zillion of years the Swiss have been building, in peace, and living with the mountains. The Swiss trails are most plentiful, signage is perfect, and gondolas are near if needed.



- Italian mess is their mess and doesn't trouble us like ours would — but Switzerland is lined with gold in comparison. Not to mention the Swiss blankets of moss encompassing their mountains that still amaze us.
- Getting around in Italy can be a challenge with single lane roads, traffic jams, and limited signage for both roads and trails.

All of which doesn't say that we are not happy with our trip and are returning to Italy because in fact we come back in November to Rome for three days and then a week in Florence, followed by a week in Torino. (In between we are off to Lake Placid, Montreal, and me to Spain for more Camino.) But Switzerland that we know is by far tops.

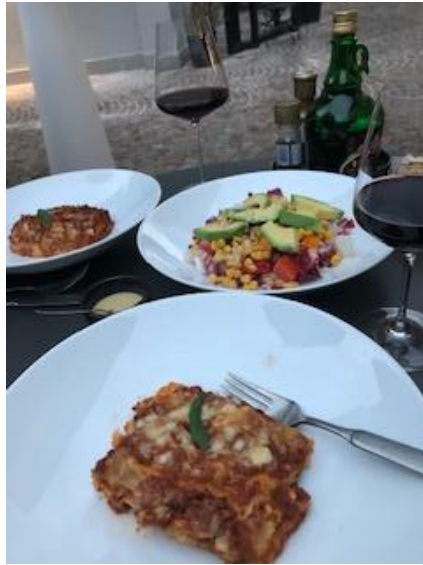
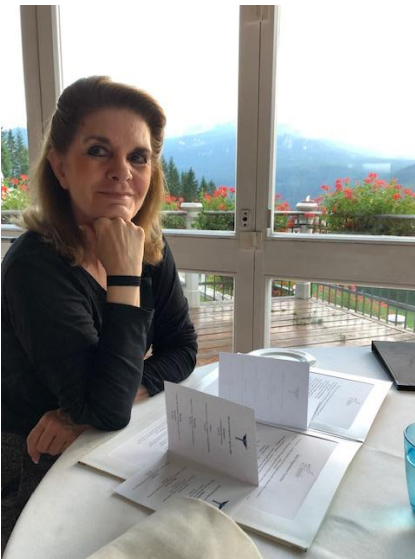
Was it a holiday? Tuesday and Wednesday both days were heavy with traffic and the streets of Cortina was full and then the roadways going to Zürich were clogged.

The End — We ended our big Zürich to Innsbruck to Dolomites and Cortina and back to Zürich at the Hilton hotel at the Zürich airport. I was tired and Tom should have been and it was late but he saw the famous Swiss recipe of Veal Zürichoise on the menu so we spent a late night having a zillion calories to end the trip. I can't disagree as how can I skip a rosti in Switzerland.

Call it My Last Supper: a little disgusted with myself but I couldn't resist a last meal so I joined Tom and ordered a rosti with egg on top. Tooooo much! Both and calories in the ridiculous price. PS - unfortunately I said the same thing in Italy about not resisting their wonderful olive bread and hard aged Parmesan cheese. Jeff, please forgive me. You advise me well and I know this is yo-yo dieting but I couldn't help myself and again will fix it. Smile.



At one of the top Cortina restaurants. In our hotel and called rightly so El Gazebo. This was called something like a salad nicoise. If it was French it must've been nouvelle cuisine. Tom called it "all show – no go" and he was not any happy with his plate of quail. This was my main course and was some beautiful little tortellini's set in a bouquet.

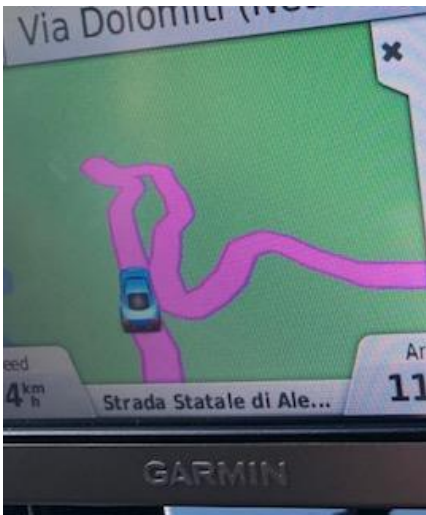


But our best was a little place in an alleyway off the pedestrian route and called Alexander's. Twice we had a special quiche and salad and one time we had their lasagna. It is mostly a wine bar with bits of snacks and one main meal a day.

In an earlier trip we ate at this restaurant and had to go again to have their wild boar with wide pasta. It is family run, and their produce and meats are noted to come from the family farm. We ate here twice. We had the wild boar pasta twice - after a stuffed mushroom for one of us and grilled vegetables for the other.



Two times dinner here, then a picture of our breakfast view.



On our drive from Cortina back to Zürich on our last full day, we were again amazed at both all the lumber and also could not avoid the twisty roads.



With more time it would've been fun to stop and talk to this caravan of old French Deux Cheval i.e. Little old French tin cans of 2hp. It is no wonder there are very few remaining.

The last supper. God forgive me. I ate it all.

The flight home was easy but adjusting to jet lag was not. Yet we are home now until September 9. (Note: its 1 ½ week later and I'm still waking up at 4am!)

P.S. For Fun! I do NOT believe folks when they insist their vacation was fabulous and absolutely the best ever. Yet I get some push back when I tell negatives as well as positives. Therefore, I found the following article most amusing. Maybe too much negative!

Seven Wonders of the World: The best 1-star reviews!

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/travel/tips/best-star-reviews-seven-wonders-world/>

Then – I skipped a lot of pictures and commentary knowing we were in the same area in 2014. Therefore, follows is that report, and following that, our 2019 current itinerary.



## The Dolomites Hiking plus Tyrol and Black Forest Trip Notes June 24 – July 8, 2014

This was another [www.CountryWalkers.com](http://www.CountryWalkers.com) hike, as was last month to Provence. Tom and I will go with them again in September to The Lakes of Italy and I'm considering Mendoza and Patagonia in November. I go on all possible domestic hikes with [www.ParksPlusHiking.com](http://www.ParksPlusHiking.com) and have four more domestic hikes booked for this year.

### **Highlights:**

- Marie visited for five days just prior so it was rush-rush to get packed and out. I'd only returned from Portugal the day she arrived.
- We had three days prior to the hike for Kitzbuhel, Dobbiaco and Bressanone. All were new locations for me, but the first two were where Tom learned to ski in the early 70s.
- The Dolomites seem far away more dramatic than the Alps and that's not only because their weather can change from heat to hail within a couple hours. They are more rugged.
- It rained a lot. I gave up hiking two of the six days, one as much because of residual soreness from a fall.
- The food and drink was top notch and far too much, as usual. I came home with too much residual.
- The hotels had been upgraded by Tom to lovely suites and always with a view. Every one was an experience.
- The hiking itinerary, miles, times, elevation gain and loss, etc. are all covered in the itinerary at the end.
- The added three days in Innsbruck at the end was a favorite, but maybe the last day in Munich at the Hofbrauhaus in city center was the headline.
- Within two weeks we only had one near-miss and the lost luggage was found, turned in, and was intact with valuables, cash and goodies. Harrah for the Tyroleans!
- Much of the following are from notes sent home to friends.
- The full hiking description is at the end with the itinerary. It's full of too-long too-many-vowels of Italian words.



There will be a photo show at [www.TomsKoi.com](http://www.TomsKoi.com). I'll save room here by waiting for his show of the tourist photos but will add a few shots from the hiking.

One of the hikers, Alan, sent us his link of wonderful photos. A real professional. The window shot above is his. Here's the link:

<http://alanmckeeon.smugmug.com/Travel/2014-Dolomites-Picks-Top-40/i-sW9dz6b/0/D/Dolomites-0341-D.jpg>



I panicked every time I came to an ice field and some of the leaders and guys would placate me by tramping down the ice somewhat. I still went super slow. And yes, we were in the clouds oftentimes and sometimes only had the peaks peeking out of the clouds. It reminded me of Machu Picchu.



Yes, still ANOTHER ice field! Just like in Switzerland we encountered cows plenty often. Were the ice fields or the cows more plentiful? Depends on my emotional state at the time but most of the time I thought there were far too many ice fields. I suspect however that I was one of the only ones who wanted to avoid them.



Still in the clouds, and then leaving our luncheon hut and climbing into the never-never-lands. In the rain as you can see by the ponchos.



Was the cow posing for me? I believe this lovely lake spot was at the end of a long day's hike where it was perilous (to my mind) and I never fell until we were done: it was on the flats, and I found a root which totally captured me, as did the rocks in the knee that even broke through the pants leg. The shoes line up? On the way down a cable ride. Everyone wanted a pair of my Dirty Girl Gaiters. I left my purple paisley ones with leader Claudia.



At Five Towers where the scenery just kept getting more and more dramatic. We asked: are we really traversing over these rocks? Yep! And it was worth it. At least it wasn't snow.



I said it was worth it? For the fields of wild flowers and the backdrops of craggy mountains, yes, but then we found another ice field. I had no choice but continue and fortunately it worked and I didn't slide miles down the hillside like I was envisioning. The reward was a meal on the top of the mountain, with a 360 degree panorama, in a restaurant that only WE who hiked deserved. It was said to be in the top spot of the Michelin-type ratings of mountain huts for good food. We all agreed. Some had truffled pasta, some steak tartar, most had wine, and all were happy.



This hiker brought his ferret along for the ride. My menu of choice in the huts was always a rosti with egg and speck (like thick bacon.) It brings back many fond memories of rosti in Switzerland and though different, similar enough. We would say goodbye the next day to our wonderful guides: Keegan (in training), Alex (a veteran and loved by all), Luigi (our driver, marathoner, and who everyone wanted to hug goodbye), and our hero Claudia who never let the boys get ahead of her (she's mountain trained and U.S. educated.)

### ***Kitzbuhel – first night out from landing in Munich***

<http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kitzb%25C3%25BChel> We are at our first stop of this journey. Kitzbuhel is about two hours south of the Munich airport going through part of the Black Forest. We did this in a surprise rental car because it was a giant and luxurious Volkswagen SUV called the Touareg. I first thought it was a gas guzzler but as a diesel it turned out to be fine. Besides, should I care? It reminds me of the story of the wife of a major financial tycoon who lives on the Navesink River and parks her Mercedes 500 SL because it uses too much gas.

If you care to see what Kitzbuhel looks like, please check out the above link and the panorama view. That is basically the view we get from our hotel which is a converted 1300s castle which was added on in the 60s. It didn't look like much from the outside but is rather gloriously deserving of its five-star category once inside. Our room looks out to the forest after a large patio and grassy area. (Would a bear walk into our open door room at night . . .?)

We walked to the medieval village, a walk down hill about 20 to 25 minutes. It didn't take Tom very long to find out that the hotel offers a shuttle for going up the hill; our timing was good since we got the last shuttle of the day. The little village has been well preserved and made a good setting for the first ski resort of the area.

I have never been here before but this was where Tom came in the early 70s for his first ever ski trip. (We had spent quite a bit of time in the Black Forest during the 70s.) Kitzbuhel is known for many firsts, such as the first ski area, and surprisingly was not damaged during WW I or II.

Both Tom and I suffered the effects of the lack of sleep on the airplane and thus we resorted to the forbidden afternoon nap. All of which just makes one groggy thereafter and interferes with a good night's sleep. But we have time and we are next off to the little town of Dobbiaco where Tom also went skiing in the 70s.

Since this is my second effort making a short trip report, I'll send it off before I lose it like I lost the first one.

Tom's email: Diana bought us a special bottle of JW Platinum. Why? I think because it's Wednesday.



He also sent to his Italian friend: We are now in Kitzbuhl, Austria and will move along to northern Italy over the next couple of days. Tough life. Friend Bob replied: NOOOOO - DON'T GO TO ITALY - TOO MANY ITALIANS. LOCK THE CAR DOORS AND WINDOWS HOLD ON TO YOUR PANTS, WALLET, AND DIANA.

We would later have a wonderful story about the honest Italians who turned in a lost piece of luggage.

### ***Dobbiaco – our second night out***



Our hotel, the view from our balcony, the old town square, and a typical building with art work which generally surrounded windows and/or borders.

<http://www.three-peaks.info/alto-adige/dobbiaco.html> - I lost a full long trip report once again through a flaw in the iPhone system. If you use your iPhone do not let it time out or it erases everything. Maybe my report was too long anyway.

This is again a place that I have never been and it is again the place where Tom is having a refresher course. He came here in the early 70s for skiing. We are in the southern portion of the Tyrol region and just on the edge of the Dolomites.

Our drive from Kitzbuhel was to be about two hours but it was lengthened by both stops and also by road construction. It was also confused by the fact that Ms. Garmin didn't know some of the new roads so when Tom returns home he will update Ms. Garmin so that we are up to date for our September Italian lakes trip.

We don't usually make quick fly over trips and stay only one night in a hotel but in this case it cut our travel time to about 2 to 3 hours per leg. Tomorrow we will be in Bressanone also known as Brixen which will be the start of my hiking trip. (Why cities have two names is beyond me. But that is the case pretty much around the world. We are in Dobbiaco but it is also known as Toblach. Apparently it's using both the Italian and the German names since the area has changed countries.)



If you are interested, please look at the above link as there is a video showing the Dolomites and in particular Dobbiaco (also called Toblach) highlighted by the three peaks. We see those three peaks out the balcony of our hotel room.

Tom has done well choosing our hotel once again as we have a small suite with a balcony with a wonderful view. It is quiet but the entire town is quiet.

Driving across the border from Austria to Italy reminds me of when we lived in the French Riviera for one month. We would drive across the border into Italy and declare that the black drape went down when entering Italy. In Austria everything is so precise and perfect. In Italy the roads are not kept up, the pastures are not as clean, there are not the lovely little white farmhouses full of window boxes all blooming, and life is just much easier and looser in Italy. But you can't fault the Italians. They are very kind and helpful as evidenced by our hotelier who wanted to translate the menu on our behalf. Tom tested his patience with asking for a Swiss recipe (veal zurichoise) and the hotelier was true to his kindness and was willing to make his best effort.

Okay, for fear of losing this, my second report, I am going to send it without proofing.



The restaurant on the top floor with a view of mountains on three sides.

### ***Bressanone aka Brixen – our third night and first of the hike***



Our hotel as we saw it from across the river via what looked like a pedestrian bridge. I ran across, asked the hotel, who sent a 'boy' (their words) who must have been 40 years old, to guide us across the wee little bridge where we gladly gave him the car to go park it. That's the view from one of our windows – we'd later see one of the races/runners cross the bridge; it was a women-only race the night before the marathon. No – no temptation. The marathon for Saturday would be a very steep climb of a few thousand feet of elevation gain and loss on mountain trails.

The hotel has a history of at least 500 years and is the first known hotel in the area. Fortunately it's been modernized.



In our lovely little suite with a view of the river, the mountains, and at the edge of old town.



The center of the city is where of course their glorious old Duomo sits. We'd walk every inch of the village and watch the set up for the marathon before parking ourselves on the cobbled streets at a lovely little café attached to our hotel to enjoy an Aperol Spritz. We learned about them in Portofino last summer at the start of another hike (through Cinque Terre.)

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brixen>

I can guess that these cities have two names in part because they were owned by the Austrians until the early 1900s and now owned by Italy. German is the more common language.

The town is in an attractive setting, in a broad valley beneath the mountains. With a medieval quarter and a Plaza de Duomo, it's easy to find one's way. It's also easy to be reminded that the city is one of the oldest in the area and the Duomo dates a thousand years. We walked through the Cloister, ancient and still colourful with frescoes. The chapel was open through a door of the cloister so we glared at the gold and old works of art and continued to wonder how so much money flows into the church. The Bishop's Palace has a moat, is huge, and now home to the Diocesan Museum which houses sacred relics of Medieval, Renaissance and Baroque art. There you can see the cathedral treasury, the Bishop's apartment and the furnishings of the Imperial apartment, with some frescoes, and interesting examples of Venetian silk upholstery. Again, where do these Bishops get the money?

The Pharmacy Museum next to our hotel gave me the chance to see the medicines and treatments that were applied in years gone by, in and through a series of period re-created rooms. Another

museum, less for the squeamish, contains various instruments of medieval torture that the locals endured for three centuries until the end of the 18th century.

Tom took pictures of the Town Hall after we had a delightful outdoor meal next to one of their many churches (are they really worshiped in or are they for tourists?) and in between thousand year old olive trees. I was bent on missing dinner as there will be six or seven huge dinners coming up, on top of lunches, luxurious breakfasts, and a concern that I'll never work off all those calories.

The weather has cooperated with heavy rain happening at night and bright sunshine with fluffy clouds during the day, only sometimes threatening and never raining on us yet. But the prediction of rain continues.

Sent to Harvey of [www.RunQuestTravel.com](http://www.RunQuestTravel.com) who took me to Portugal in June and is exploring a tour around Mont Blanc currently: Hey there – check it out!

<http://www.brixenmarathon.com/en/press/5th-brixenbressanone-dolomites-marathon-four-weeks-until-start/> Not only is there a marathon with zillions of feet of elevation in these mountains of Dolomites but I found they have a high alpine Alta Via d'Europa 340 km long trail. Huts. Villages. Astounding scenery. Idea? It connects to the Tyrolean high alpine trail of 130 km if that isn't enough. Brixen is also known as Bressanone where there is the only known medieval cathedral city at the foot of a 2500 meter high trekking paradise. For when you are done with Mont Blanc. Smile.



Photo is the town square and start of the marathon on Saturday night. Friday night was a Women's Only run. No temptation but a big thank you to Marathon Woman Kathrine Switzer for starting women running.

From Tom: A fabulous, picturesque drive today and the "saw tooth" Dolomites are spectacular. Another short drive tomorrow to Bressanone where Diana meets up with her hiking group and starts hiking on Saturday. So far, hotels I arranged are great and weather wonderful (rain was expected all days but just started about a half hour ago). The bottle -- wounded but not dead. (From Diana: it was hard to abandon this empty bottle as it was a Baccarat type chunk of glass.)

### ***Monday from the Monte Sella Hotel***

<http://www.monte-sella.com/en/ie1/> - We are here two nights staying in the two floor suite but not indulging in their spa services. We leave Tuesday to Cortina where Tom went skiing in the 70s. It will be new to me. Our next hotel is in center village in the pedestrian center so I have little hope of the same luxury or square footage. Direct to our suite pics: <http://www.monte-sella.com/en/owm/rooms/suites.html>

Our current hotel, Monte Sella, is rightly known for its dinner restaurant. I had more opportunity to see it today because I avoided the hike. It sounded like much too much downhill for the predicted rain. It is okay to me that the rain never came because we enjoyed the village here plus a hike along the river bank.

Tom loves driving on these windy narrow little roads. I do too when my stomach cooperates.

I am reading a book called "Iceman" about the 5000 year old man found in 1991 by a couple who were hiking along the Alpine glaciers. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%96tzi>

I wonder if we hiked over some of those glaciers where Otzi was found? They spooked me because I felt so out of control. Fortunately they were not too long in length. There aren't many switch backs but many steep routes. (This hike was billed as "strenuous" and sometimes it is.)



A highlight yesterday was stopping at a little hut and being fed a rosti with egg. And sort of drying out. The grappa didn't hurt any either. The scene would have been spectacular had we not been first fogged in and then rained out. My poncho saved the day and I thank Steve and Nola (my favorite hiking leaders) for the suggestion. Most everyone was soaked as was their backpacks.

Some of you will probably be surprised that I skipped a hiking day. Me too. Not so long ago I would have not been able to do so. I have figured out that there is much too much to do in my life and I will never see it all. So I did the logical and spent the day with Tom. We walked, we explored the village, we drove the canyons, we sat around and enjoyed the surprising sunshine, and we luxuriated in our suite. (We also shopped with a gal who lost her suitcase with Alitalia who is known for losing about 30% of them.)

The Dolomites are pretty surprising and I wonder if Tom is still thinking Switzerland is number one.

To Sister Beverly: You are correct that this is a [www.CountryWalkers.com](http://www.CountryWalkers.com) hike. They really do everything in a glorious manner and they give us a local guide so we learn so much. But we eat too much. (Darned price is double to triple that of my favorite [www.ParksPlusHiking.com](http://www.ParksPlusHiking.com).)

I gave up today's hike because yesterday's, though wonderful, by afternoon it poured rain on us and I was so miserable. The prediction was rain this afternoon so I gave it up. The reality was it was beautiful sunshine. It turned out to be quite fine because I spent the day with Tom and a new friend (lovely gal named Lorette who seriously converted to being a Mormon) and we shopped and drove and hiked a bit ourselves.

As to language, you might be surprised to know that there are three languages in our current area. Not one is English, however most people speak a bit of English. German, Italian, and a language I had never heard of called Ladin.

We are in the Tyrolean region where the 5000 year old man was found. They called him the Iceman and there is a book by that name that I am working on.



### **Wednesday - From Cortina**

We are in the Hotel de la Post in Cortina. Cortina was probably one of the early ski resorts and now thought to be one of the more elegant ones such as Aspen and Vail would be for Colorado.

I sent some videos around about a wonderful hiking day yesterday. What I didn't tell was at the end of the day after getting on the flats and being all done and just scurrying a bit too fast to the toilets, I fell. Rock in the knee and torn pants. Bent glasses. Arm and shoulder will be very colorful once the bruising shows.

Today I thought I was just fine after a little nursing by Dr. Burton and some ice on my knee. So I got up and did the five flights of stairs a couple times and decided I was able to hike so I went to start at which time I learned that it was hundred percent chance of rain all day. You will not be surprised to learn that that was a good excuse to stay in Cortina for the day with Tom. So here is my 55 second video of the center Cortina which is surrounded by a mountain range that is absolutely amazing but which is mostly covered in either fog or snow or both.

Typical of the Dolomites, yesterday we had strong sunshine requiring hiking in shorts and short sleeve shirt, and then we had rain, and then we had hail, requiring hiking in every layer we owned. Rick Steves suggests that the Dolomites would be more famous than the Alps were it not so difficult to predict weather. Weather is extremely changeable here.



Our dinner last night was a pure delight even for those of us who claim they don't like food all that much. The restaurant grows their own food in the case of meat and vegetables. My favorite dish was the homemade thick or wide pasta (papadella?) with wild-boar. I left the dinner early both because I had so much of the first few courses and also because I wanted to ice my knee again.

**Cortina hotel – space age?** Only the shower. We never indulged in the whirlpool tub in our huge bathroom but we did giggle about all the features of the J-dream shower/steam room stall.



Or as Maryanne said: Beam Diane and Tom up Scottie! The breakfast room had a glorious view and was more traditional.

As we often say, and as we continue to feel, life is good. Back to hiking:



Too many ice fields which really spooked me, but some lovely forested areas. I never fell where one might expect to fall – only at the end on the flats.



As Tom says, not a tiptoe-through-the-tulips hike, but ultimately worth it when you find the glaciers, the wildflowers, the lunch spots and eventually some sunshine on the Dolomites.

**Tom from Cortina on last day:** I went up the Faloria lift this morning for spectacular vistas of the mountains and the town. This is probably the one you took as well (suggested by the tourist office). I'll do the opposite side cable to Cima Tofamo tomorrow. The gal at the info office suggested I drive up to Misurina Passo Tre Croci (on the north of the map at about 12 o'clock) (Cristallo and Larieto are up there as well). Or he thought that would be his last day. More needed on that story!

### ***Last hiking day – at Five Toros***



**Cortina further info:** [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cortina\\_d'Ampezzo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cortina_d'Ampezzo) - Located in the heart of the Dolomites in an alpine valley, it is a popular winter sport resort known for its ski-ranges, scenery, accommodations, shops and après-ski scene. After the scheduled 1944 Winter Olympics had been cancelled because of the Second World War, it hosted the 1956 Winter Olympics as well as various world cup events and motion pictures. Much of 1963 classic *The Pink Panther*, the progenitor of the series, was filmed in Cortina. One of the memorable James Bond stunt sequences in 1981's *For Your Eyes Only*, gunners on spike-wheeled motorcycles chasing Roger Moore on skis, was filmed on its slopes, as were several scenes in the film *Cliffhanger*. It is also known for its jet set and European aristocracy crowd.

### ***Innsbruck next for three days***

Two lovely fellow hikers needed a ride to Innsbruck and we had a big car so we all climbed in, visited the highest cable car peak in the Dolomites on the way, and had a lovely day. Meal and conversation and view and all.

### ***Lost luggage?***

As we unpacked the car there was the sudden realization that Tom's carry-on was missing. Lots of calls, panic, listing of the valuables in the bag (really a lot!) and finally giving up and realizing that life goes on and that at least the passports and house key weren't in the bag. The next day there was the thought of checking again with the concierge who agreed to inquire of the police department and VOILA, it was there.

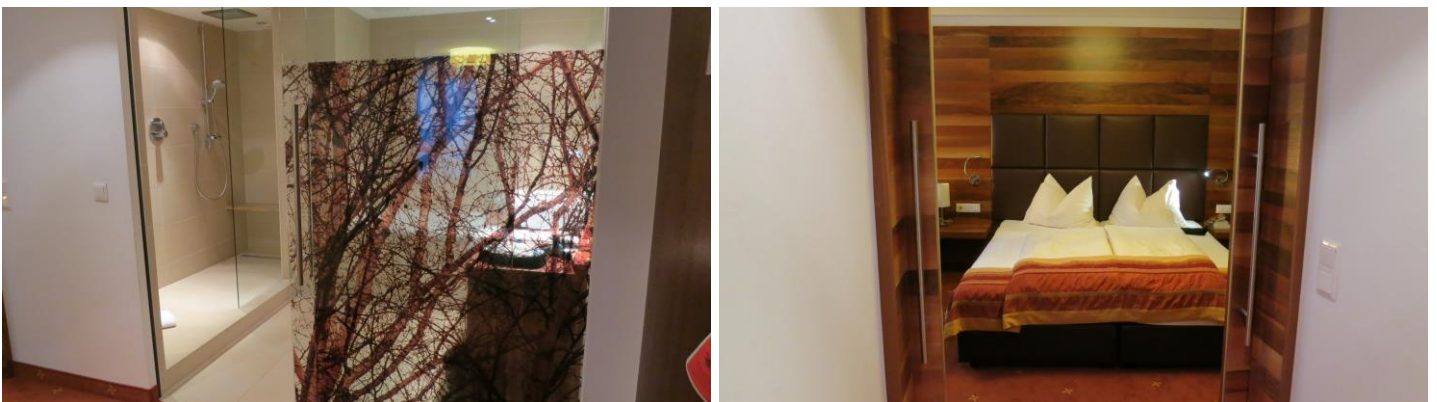
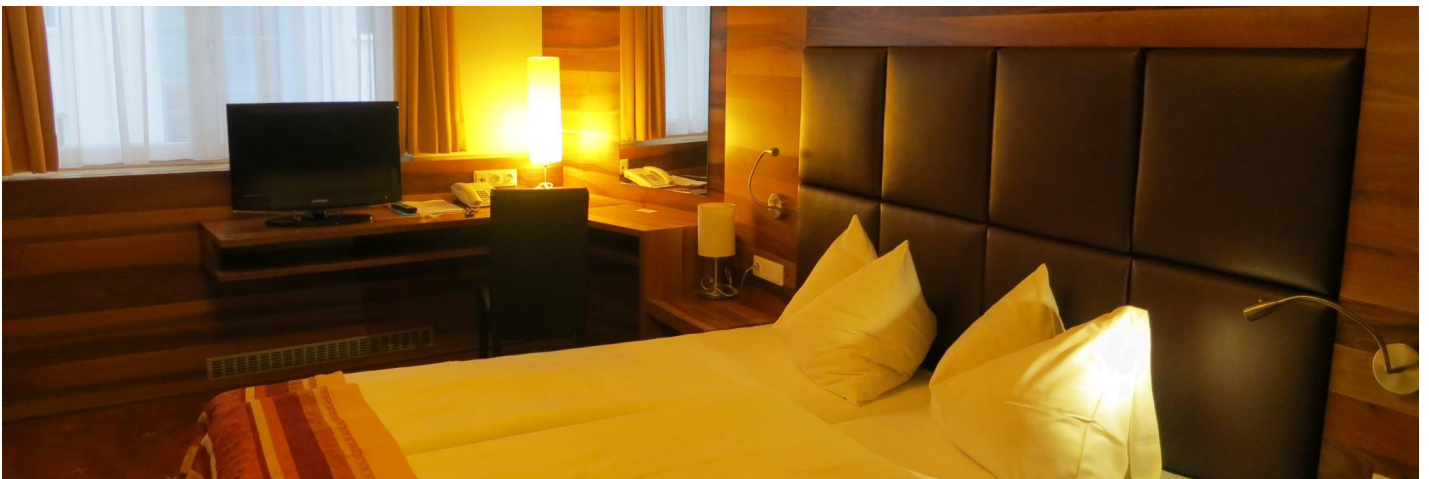
Listen to this: All cash, and there was a stunning amount, was all there. Love those Tyroleans. The concierge must have thought he died and went to heaven for the reward Tom gave to him.

### ***Our accommodations***

Tom sent these pictures with the headline "We're still toughing it out in Europe" – ha.



A view from one of our windows. But more glass than I like: I'm not too hot on bathroom glass doors even if it's frosted glass. See the sliding glass doors with tree limbs? Then see the view into the separate bedroom.



The wood was lovely and rich. The room was uniquely modern for the old town and building it occupied. The breakfast was in a glassed room with views to gardens and up to the mountains almost making one forget all the lush food choices. I could have spent the day eating off the breakfast buffet.

**Tom to Pat about Innsbruck:** We're in Innsbruck, Austria staying in a lovely modern hotel that I'd found, right in the middle of things and few steps from old town. We're just up and going to the huge buffet breakfast then off to be tourists. Great town and lots of history. The suite we're in has a great view of one of the surrounding mountains and speaking of mountains -- the difference between the Dolomites and the Alps? Dolomites are very saw-toothed whereas the Alps are a bit less so - both fabulous in their own way of course. Rick Steves says the Dolomites would be more popular if the weather were more predictable. I'm really glad we came to see again and Diana's hiking, though



strenuous, was very dramatic and enjoyable for her. And I really enjoyed driving the curvy roads and see the great sites and sights all around me.

### ***Giant Panorama and museum***

<http://www.austria.info/us/vacation-in-austria/museum-tirol-panorama-1551730.html>

There are very few 360s left in the world and we'd seen a similar one in Lucerne. The museum was well done, next to the Olympic ski run, and connected to a military museum.

***Other touring*** – While Tom drove the 3-hours (each way) to retrieve his bag, I visited museums, took a guided walking tour, and an overview bus tour. The next day we did an overview hop-on/hop-off bus tour but gave it up early for it wasn't very well done. It did however get us to some additional sites. We went twice to the cathedral with the trompe l'oeil amazing work, toured the folk museum to enjoy the costumes and the recreated rooms from different periods, and the royalty church attached.

### ***Munich – the last harrah!***

After three days in Innsbruck, on a whim, Tom suggested that we go into Munich city center. We went through Garmisch and didn't remember a single thing from our visits in the 70s. Getting Into the center of Munich was an adventure that only Tom would tackle in a big SUV. But he had in mind seeing if the old original and favorite Hofbrauhaus still existed. It was found, right in city center, next to the Mandarin Oriental Hotel. It was chaotic, colorful, interesting, and amazingly the food was good. I sent around a video of our wurst sausages, German potato salad, sauerkraut and red cabbage and of course the requisite huge steins of beer. In the background of this famous and historic home of the Oktoberfest and outdoor gardens was an oompa band playing. So there's still some more kid in both of us.

### ***IF you want pics and info on these "wondrous" and unique mountains.***

<http://www.dolomitimountains.com> - They offer a dance of colors. They offer something different which some find as spectacular as the Alps.

Also it's a UNESCO site - <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1237>

### ***Or more than you want – stunning! Via Ferrata: Climbing the Iron Paths of the Dolomites***

One of the greatest thrills a hiker can have is to walk or climb a via ferrata, the "iron paths" of the Dolomites in Italy. <http://www.dolomitimountains.com/en/resources/resources148.htm>

Traveling on a via ferrata is a different way of enjoying the sheer magnificence of the Dolomites, providing access to places normally reserved for rock climbers and mountaineers. In this awesome mountain environment, you will be stopped in your tracks by amazing views, from a perspective that few have the opportunity to experience. A via ferrata, iron path in English, klettersteig in German, is quite literally a route with fixed "protection" that aids travelers in moving safely through the mountains. Hikers can connect otherwise isolated trail systems together to create longer hikes. You can even spend several days hiking rifugio-to-rifugio, facilitating traverses of large sections of the Dolomites at high altitudes. Via ferrata also provide greater access to the incredible scenery the Dolomites has to offer than hiking trails alone.

### ***Hot Spots of Italy's Dolomite Mountains*** from Travel + Leisure

<http://www.travelandleisure.com/articles/hot-spots-of-italys-dolomites-mountains>

Unique location. Known for its unpredictable weather which we've experienced in full bloom. The same day can bring the need for short sleeves and snow all at once. One day I wore skimpy shirt and shorts at one point and at I was shivering in two shirts, jacket, headgear BUFF, gloves, Tilley hat, and belted down poncho overall. Had I not been trying to speed up to get warm, I'd have added the black garbage bag.

## ***Difference between the Alps and the Dolomites?***

<http://www.walksofitaly.com/blog/alps/italian-alps-dolomites>

I kept hearing about the difference between the Alps and the Dolomites to include its geography and weather. Even the age. But now that I read more, it appears that the Dolomites are part of the Alps. Surprise.

***A book review on Tyrolean culture*** -- thanks Nola: There are regions here that are like no other. There is a language of their own. They've been owned by different countries and yet held on to their tradition. "The Hidden Life of Tirol" also known as the Tyrolean people to us: Split between the modern nations of Austria and Italy, the "Holy Land of Tirol" sits in the heart of the spectacular Alps, astride the mountain passes that link the edges of Europe. Tirol has some of the most accessible and integrated social traditions in the world. But the deeper meanings of life in the region remain hidden. Here, then, is an anthropological guidebook. The goal is to make sense of and explain how the history, geography, politics and the rootedness of community life fit together. The conventional categories of an ethnography are all here: religion, subsistence, marriage, land tenure, ethnicity, agro-pastoralism, folklore, and inheritance. But the viewpoint is unconventional: the anthropologist is a fellow-traveler, taking readers on a tour in imagination to a region often visited but rarely understood or studied. The study of European folk life and cohesive communal societies such as this have particular relevance today. In a world where ethnic groups and class tensions dominate the news, *The Hidden Life of Tirol* is a story of how people worked out these differences.

From the author, Martha Ward: "The foundation of *The Hidden Life of Tirol* is traditional ethnography. It tells how people of these high mountains put meaning into their collective lives and how they organize the "whole house"--the social structure of mountain survival. But beyond an ethnography about a culture area in the heart of Europe, I added several other pertinent themes. Through time Tiroleans have suffered and solved major ethnic problems. In a world rife with such tensions, it is instructive to see how they accomplished this. Moreover, this Alpine region has wedded economic development to ecological sensitivity. Their remarkable achievements are an international model. I have also used Tirol as a case study about traveling, culture shock, trips as rites of passage and the anthropology of tourism. Readers will find many of their own experiences of travel included as examples. Tirol is one of the most highly visited and highly visible culture areas in Europe. Tirol often feels familiar to us; we know about ski resorts, holiday customs and souvenir kitsch. At the same time, the cohesive and communal society forged in high mountain life is largely hidden from our understanding. My purpose is to illuminate these covert patterns of culture in one of the most fascinating and dramatic regions of the world."

***The End?*** I hope not. My Sister Beverly just sent this picture from a trip many years ago when I took grandson and nephew to Gray Rocks. Tom had also taken them on a ski trip another year. I invited them to a hike, any hike, and so far only the nephew has committed. I've tried before too!

We go home for a week before I start a hike to Yellowstone/Grand Tetons out of Jackson Hole. I did it in 2008 and want to see if I can still manage the strenuous hiking. August takes me hiking to Colorado for 11 days, then to Lassen Volcano National Park. September is High Sierra and Yosemite before Tom and I leave to The Lakes of Italy. I'm home two days before going to London for the Royal Parks Marathon where I'll stay for ten days. Later October to meet Beverly in Chicago to watch Ice Skating competition. November should take me to NYC to be a spectator for the NYC marathon and then I have an empty month. Panic! December is a trip to Atlanta for the Jeff Galloway inaugural 13.1 marathon before Marie arrives for our Christmas trip to Barcelona.





## ***Itinerary for 2019***

### **Wed Jul 31**

6:35pm Depart Newark EWR via UA#134

### **Thu Aug 1**

8:30am Arrive Zurich ZRH

Best way from airport to hotel: Taxi for approx. 65 CHF – 7.5 miles or Train is faster

Hotel Sheraton Zurich Neues Schloss Hotel – 3 nights  
Stockerstrasse 17, Zurich 8002 Switzerland Tele +41 44 286 9400

Web: <https://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/zrhsi-sheraton-zurich-neues-schloss-hotel/?scid=bb1a189a-fec3-4d19-a255-54ba596febe2>

*A 14-minute walk from Zürich Selnau train station, this modern hotel in a business district is a block from Lake Zurich and 1 km from Kunsthaus art museum. The warm, unfussy rooms feature flat-screen TVs, minibars and coffeemakers, as well as Wi-Fi (fee). Suites add balconies and sitting areas, and upgraded suites provide separate living rooms. Some quarters provide lake views. There's casual Mediterranean restaurant and a bar. Parking and meeting space are available, as is a breakfast buffet for a surcharge.*

### **Sun Aug 4**

Pick up rental car at train station – Hertz Zurich Railway, Zollstrasse 42, 8005 Zurich  
Tele: 0041 43 444 70 00 –1.2 miles from hotel – local pick up point closed on Sunday

10:00am Rental Car – Hertz  
Drive 3:10 to 4:00 hours or 292 to 335 km from Zurich to Innsbruck

Hotel AC Hotel Innsbruck – 3 nights  
Salnestrasse 15, Innsbruck, 6020 Austria Tele 43 51 25 9950

From <https://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/innac-ac-hotel-innsbruck/>

*This contemporary hotel in a high-rise building is a 5-minute walk from Innsbruck Hbf train station, 10 minutes on foot from the Goldenes Dachl museum and 2 km from Bergiselschanze ski jump. Featuring mountain views, the modern rooms have Wi-Fi (fee), flat-screen TVs and minibars. Luxe suites add living rooms, and some offer whirlpool tubs. Room service is available. Amenities include a steakhouse and a cozy cocktail bar. There's also an exercise room and a sauna. Parking and breakfast are available for a fee.*

From Innsbruck, 20 minutes to Hallin in Tirol, a medieval town

### **Wed Aug 7**

Drive 2:30 hours or 165 km from Innsbruck to Cortina Italy

Hotel Cristallo Resort and Spa by Marriott – 7 nights  
Via Rinaldo Menardi, 42, 32043 Cortina d'Ampezzo (BL)  
Dolomites, Italy Tele: 39 0436 88 11 11

From <https://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/bzolc-cristallo-a-luxury-collection-resort-and-spa-cortina-dampezzo/>

Set 2 km from the Faloria cable car, this lavish hotel at the foot of Mount Faloria is also 2 km from the Mario Rimoldi Modern Art Museum. Elegant rooms feature flat-screen TVs, free Wi-Fi and marble bathrooms, plus minibars. Upgraded rooms add balconies and mountain views. Suites offer living areas and/or whirlpool tubs. Room service is available. A breakfast buffet is complimentary. Other amenities include 4 restaurants, a lounge and a bar. There's also a spa, a heated indoor pool, a hot tub and a fitness center, as well as ski storage and event space.

**Wed Aug 14**

Drive 5:30 to 6:30 hours or 444 to 488 km from Cortina Italy to Zurich Switzerland

5:00pm Turn in rental car at Zurich airport

Hotel Hilton Zurich Airport – 1 night  
Hohenbuehlstrasse 10, 8152 Opfikon, Switzerland Tele: 41 44 8250050

From <https://www3.hilton.com/en/hotels/switzerland/hilton-zurich-airport-ZRHHITW/index.html>

*This down-to-earth hotel is 2 km from Zürich Airport and 11 km from the ornate, 19th-century Zürich Opera House. Featuring floor-to-ceiling windows, the casual rooms offer free Wi-Fi and flat-screen TVs, as well as minibars, and tea and coffeemaking facilities; some have sofas and whirlpool baths. Upgraded rooms include club lounge access, and breakfast and refreshments. Suites add separate working and living areas. There's an informal restaurant and an airy lobby bar, plus a ballroom, 25 meeting rooms and a business center. Additional amenities include rental bikes, an airport shuttle (fee), and a fitness room with a sauna and a jogging track.*

**Thu Aug 15**

10:10am Depart Zurich ZRH via UA#135  
1:05pm Arrive Newark EWR

Use Uber

**Emergency numbers:**

Registered with STEP at <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel.html>

Carl Greeson, brother in law, on STEP records, 573 999 2119

Sue Ann Martinez	732 236 7651	Has Pandora
Randy Fritts	732 671 5510	Neighbor to the west – has key
Adam Basile	732 673 2582	Helper – knows house and pond
Kathy/Gary Kestler	732 671 5311	Neighbor to the east – has key

More numbers on kitchen counter.

***Emergency Assistance*** Plus Program – 24/7 – card in file and in Diana's wallet

United Mileage Plus member #0186014

Tele: 866 816 2073 or 60 328 1752 collect

***American Consulate in Zurich***

Dufourstrasse 101, 8008 Zürich, Switzerland Tele: +41 31 357 70 11

***US Embassy in Vienna***

Boltzmannngasse 16, 1090 Wien, Austria Tele: +43 1 313390

***US Consul General in Milan***

Via Principe Amedeo, 2/10, 20121 Milano MI, Italy Tele: +39 02 290351