

How My Husband Convinced Me to Add a Porsche to Our Household or, The Seduction of Driving a Porsche in Europe

By Karen Trevey

My husband, Bill, is a wonderful man. He has many, many sterling qualities. He is thorough and particular. He is also sneaky.

So I wasn't surprised in the past when I would occasionally find him engrossed in the Porsche website. How typical, I thought; he's interested in so many things. But my suspicions rose when we started going on outings that somehow ended in places where we could (for fun) test drive Porsches — Nashville, Birmingham, Atlanta, even Columbus, Ohio, and, of course, Huntsville. Still he remained silently noncommittal about his intentions. I began to ask how much such cars cost. "Oh, they're expensive" was the only answer I'd get.

In the midst of what I later learned was his "silent campaign," Bill casually mentioned that he'd found a luxury driving tour in Germany (a favorite country of mine) and, oh by the way, the trip included driving a Porsche. He thought we should go. He'd found my weak spot. The temptation was great for each of us and for different reasons. And so, we embarked on what turned out to be a fabulous adventure — with a lasting Porsche impact.

While the tour is definitely a Porsche-focused tour, it is not one of the official tours that are Porsche-sponsored. [Autobahn Adventures](#) is run by a Porsche-loving couple who chafed at some of the aspects of driving tours they'd taken in the past. Confident that they could orchestrate Porsche driving tours in Europe that would please everyone, they launched what has become a very successful enterprise. There are multiple tours each year and the routes/itineraries change; all are wonderful. We were so enthralled with the experience that we returned twice for a total of three tours with them.

Members find their own transportation to the first destination. In our case, that was Frankfurt, although it can change from year to year. Our initial lodging was in a lovely hotel which was a former hunting lodge and somewhat on the outskirts of the city. There, there was a charming, cobblestone courtyard in the shade of huge, ancient trees. It was to that picturesque spot that the Porsches were delivered, all 21 of them of assorted, current-year models. They were artfully parked for best display. The order in which each couple/individual registered for the tour became

the order in which a car could be selected. The person that signed up first was the person who had first pick of the cars, and so on. The body language and prowling of those who would be choosing was interesting, as was the fact that they all seemed to hide their selection-order number sheets from each other. A bit of game playing was going on — all in fun.

The cars were equipped with GPS, already programmed for each of the upcoming destinations. The tour is quite flexible in that everyone can choose the manner in which they want to travel. If caravanning is desired, there is always someone to shepherd according to a civilized schedule. If sleeping in is preferred, the GPS will get you to the next destination on your own schedule. If you choose to take in some different sights along the way, that GPS will get to where you should be at the end of the day.

Each destination always afforded a spectacular accommodation, sometimes including a castle stay and once at the Ritz-Carlton in Berlin. All the hotels are amazing, many with incredible spas. Some are in posh areas within big cities; some are tucked away in the countryside and some with beautiful mountain views. One was so elegant that, when you drove your Porsche into the designated reception area for indoor parking the first impression was that you'd made a terrible mistake and were in the wrong place. That auto reception area is easily mistaken for the primary lobby. It featured soft lighting, glowing wood, large vases of fresh flowers, etc. A smiling attendant managed the artful parking and we were whisked to the wonders of the hotel (Hotel Interlpen) where I almost overlooked the pretty red rose I was given because of the jaw-dropping mountain views and the grandeur of Old Europe surrounding us.

On most nights, the group would ultimately gather for dinner in a private dining room in the hotel and there would be joyful exchanges of the day's experiences. Beer, wine, etc., flowed and the atmosphere was universally casual and congenial. Our fellow travelers shared a love for all things Porsche and were energized by the wonderful things we were seeing and doing. In our three tours, we found no "stinkers" in the groups and we have, in fact, made some lasting friendships with fellow travelers. The food was always incredible; the parking was always specially arranged; the European spas were definitely an adventure.

Within our three tours with Autobahn Adventures, we marveled at so many things in Frankfurt (International Auto Show and more), Stuttgart (including the factory tour, the Porsche museum, and the huge Porsche dealership, all in the Porscheplatz), Dresden, Berlin, Munich, Baden-Baden, Lake Constance, Lake Lucerne in Switzerland, Tremezzo on Lake Como in Italy, the Bavarian countryside, the Austrian Alps. We also were able to drive to the RUF Automobile company in Germany and not only tour the facility but meet the man himself, Mr. Alois Ruf, Jr. We participated in an Oktoberfest celebration and were able to tour the Leipzig facility even though it was just prior to introducing the Panamera, which they were making there at the time. Those are just some of the highlights; there were many other, magical side trips that we made as well.

The cars provided no end of thrills. Since our first tour was before we'd purchased our own Porsche, the European miles were somewhat of a new experience for me. The autobahns are so impressive and, once we figured out the speed-limit signs, we found opportunities to "fly." At one point, Bill had us going 176 mph (283 kms) and it was so exhilarating! I didn't even feel ill at ease — until much later that night when it dawned on me just how fast we'd been going and in the midst of other traffic. We marveled as we drove those high, mountain passes in the Alps. (Check out Stelvio Pass for one.) Bill had a healthy dose of time behind the wheel to help him decide what he wanted to buy. My husband cleverly wined me and dined me and thrilled me on the roads.

Shortly after returning from our first Adventure, Bill deemed the time to be ripe for his sales pitch. I love the man's approach — factual information peppered with enough of the emotional aspect — to win me over. I'm sure I wasn't as excited as he was when our car was finally delivered — but I bet I was close.

I don't know if Bill's "sales" technique would work for every couple but I do know that it is a great way to have extraordinary Porsche fun while being treated like royalty and reveling in a European adventure.