

After a good twenty years sailing on Lake Constance, we now want to get to know Europe via its numerous waterways. After a test sailing on the inland waterways in and around Berlin and a visit to the Maasbracht boatyard, which impressed us with its modern production technologies, in 2003 we decided to place an order for the construction of a new Linssen Dutch Sturdy 320 AC. This yacht is suitable for the conditions on Lake Constance and for more extended sailing trips throughout Europe.



Lake Constance — Vienna — Paris (Part 1)

We know Europe from the motorway. Now we're exploring it from the water.

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHS SABINE AND WOLFGANG RÖSEL

Its dimensions allow us to find a mooring in most marinas. Its draft allows us to sail on most canals and its shortened mast, which provides a clearance of 3.45 m, allows us to pass under almost all French canal bridges, a few exceptions aside. And what's more, it's a very beautiful boat! For two summers we tested out our Linssen (which we named ZINFANDEL) on Lake Constance. We arranged for the expert and experienced Linssen boatyard owned by Monika and Fredy Blust (with whom we've since become good friends) in the town of Romanshorn in Switzerland to make a few technical adjustments to make the yacht properly fit for inland waterways. The rest of the time we spent engrossed

Grand Canal d'Alsace/Imperial Cathedrals

In 2006, the Wednesday after Easter, our ZINFANDEL was transported to Basel on the Rhine by low loader. Crane weight 12 tonnes. It took us three days to prepare for the trip, stock up on provisions, etc.

From km 170 on the Rhine, we sailed via the Grand Canal d'Alsace first to Breisach and then via the Colmar Canal to Colmar, the capital of the département of Haut-Rhin and after that via the Grand Canal d'Alsace and from Rhinau via the Canal du Rhône au Rhin Nord to Strasbourg. We sailed back to Germany from km 352 on the Upper Rhine.

Speyer, Worms and Mainz, the three cities with German Imperial Cathedrals (Kaiserdome) on the Upper Rhine. The history of Worms is marked by a heavy bombing raid in February 1945, a few weeks before the end of the Second World War. This bombing raid devastated almost the whole city. After Worms, the journey continued through the green river landscape. We then passed through the busy industrial area of Mannheim and Ludwigshafen until we again reached the quiet reed beds of the old branches of the Rhine, where we found pleasant moorings. We moored for a few days in Rüdesheim harbour at km 525 on the Rhine. We then continued upstream at a speed of approximately 8 km per hour. Our boat, a displacement yacht, has an engine speed of about 2,200 rpm and travels at a speed of 13.5 km per hour against the current. However, we had reached a speed of 20 km per hour when travelling downstream.

High water/Götz von Berlichingen

We continued towards the river Neckar. We made a stopover in the Lampertheimer Altrhein nature reserve and then went on to the Neckar. In Heidelberg we were greeted by castle illuminations and fireworks. The impressive castle



"...Picturesque view: Sulzfeld am Main..."

in the Rhine Atlas, innumerable travel guides and navigation charts.

with its castle garden was once an important meeting place for Europe's rulers. However, the castle and its gardens were destroyed by General Mélac in 1689 on the orders of Louis XIV. Now all that remains is a few romantic ruins.

We continued upstream to Zwingenberg. Rain, wind, cold. We were driven along by the fast rising water. The high water was getting ever closer. The water level on the Neckar exceeded the 2.6 m limit. Out of sheer necessity, we sought a mooring just above the Rockenau lock. All shipping on the Neckar was stopped because of the high water. A few Rhine barges were moored beside us. When the ban on shipping was lifted, we were sailing against a maximum 7 km current (very rare, it's normally only 1 km/hr) upstream to Hassmersheim, the historic "bargees' village" on the Neckar. The shipping museum contains a lot of information on the history of shipping on the Neckar. We paid a visit to the town of Homburg mentioned in Goethe's historical play *Götz von Berlichingen*.

On to Heilbronn, once one of the most important trading ports along the Neckar from Mannheim. The old town was completely destroyed by allied bombing during the last months of the war in 1944. Marbach, the birthplace of Friedrich Schiller, contains the new museum of modern art. At Plochingen, km 201.5, we reached the end of the

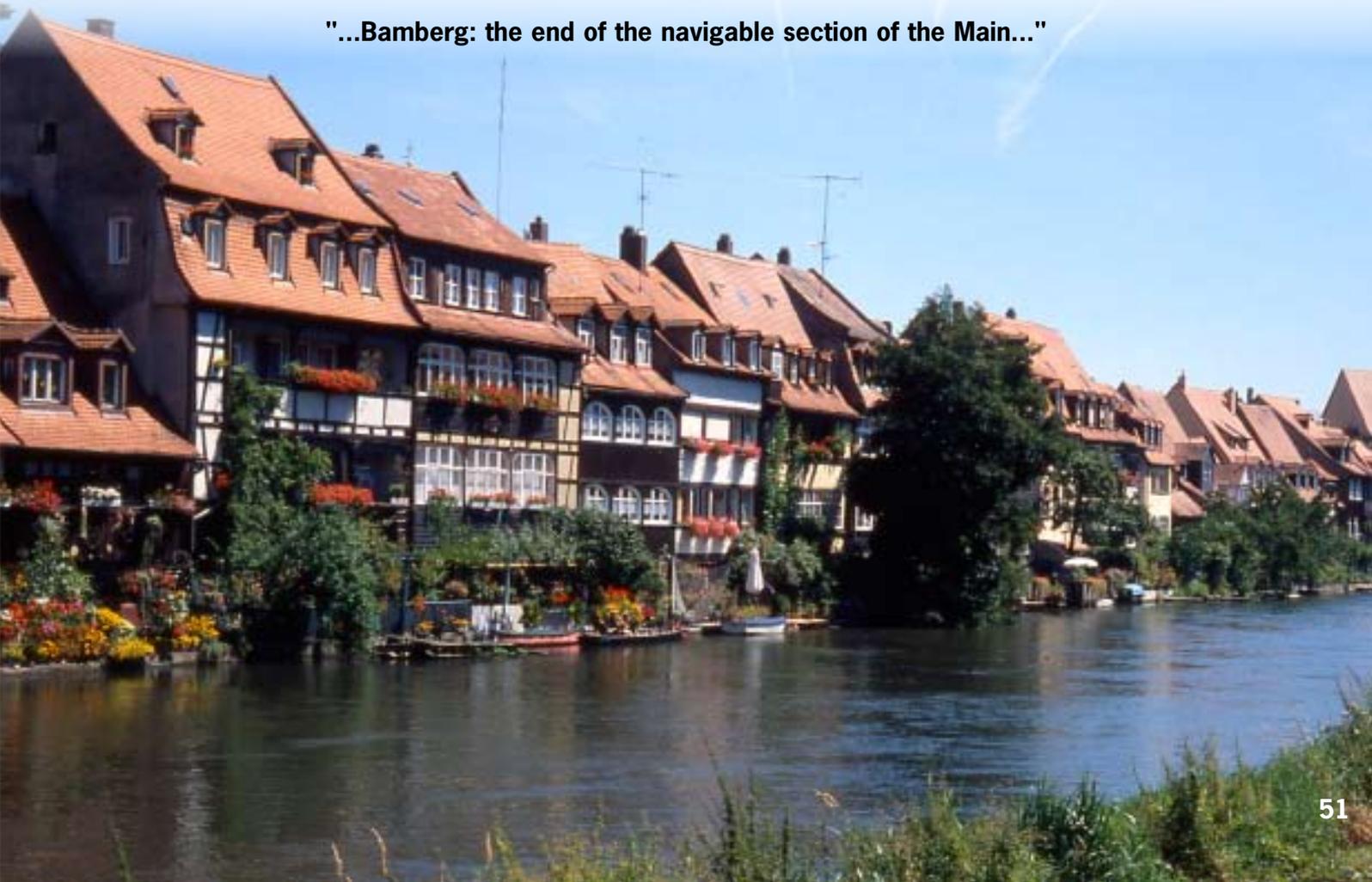
navigable part of the Neckar. We reached this point on 10 June 2006. We gave a salute: the cork of a bottle of Sekt from Geldermann in Breisach, which until that moment had spent the journey cooling down below, popped and shot into the air.

The journey then continued downstream to Mannheim and then upstream again on the Rhine and, opposite Mainz at the Mainspitz, we entered the River Main. We headed for the marina of the Miltenberg Yacht Club, where we had reserved a mooring. The yacht club has a brand new club house, which has protection against flooding. In addition, the technical service was excellent and the marina provided a fantastic view of the old town and castle. We stayed there for four weeks. During our stay there was a tremendous storm one July evening. The fall winds that blew from Odenwald into the Main valley were so strong that it created white-crested waves against the current.

After Lohr and Würzburg, we reached the end of the navigable section of the Main at Bamberg.

All the towns in the Main valley that we visited for longer or shorter periods provided a rich diversity of valuable culture. Mediaeval town walls with imposing towers, Baroque churches, Gothic chapels, impressive town halls, magnificent country estates, extensive parks and Mediaeval

"...Bamberg: the end of the navigable section of the Main..."



half-timbered houses. Innumerable other monuments and museums showed that this region has a troubled but, at the same time, prosperous past. Many places had beautiful art collections to be admired.

Main-Danube Canal/Ludwig-Danube-Main Canal/Fossa Carolina

The above canals are three hydraulic engineering structures built to create a navigable connection between the Rhine and the Danube. We sailed on to the Main-Danube Canal at Bamberg. This is suitable for vessels up to 2,500 tonnes. Until this canal was constructed, the Ludwig-Danube-Main Canal linked the two European rivers from 1846 until 1950, but it was only suitable for vessels up to 127 tonnes. In some places, the remains of this canal can still be seen. A masterpiece of hydraulic engineering from the Middle Ages is the Fossa Carolina (also known as Karlsgraben) near Weissenburg. This is where, in 970, Charlemagne attempted to build a ship canal between the two rivers by linking Altmühl and Rezat, something which was ultimately never achieved.

In Forchheim and Nuremberg we stayed a little longer to

"...Römertor Carnuntum..."



get a picture of the way these two towns developed. Since 1846, the two towns have had a shipping link and as a result have undergone substantial industrial development. After Nuremberg, the present Main-Danube Canal leaves the route of its predecessor and only resumes it again from Berching, where it flows into the picturesque valley of the river Altmühl at Dietfurt and from there onwards to Kelheim. We made a stop in Berching and in Beilngries and cycled through the fields in the beautiful sunshine. Of course, we paused for regular gastronomic breaks, as after all we were in Bavaria – beer country.

In Kehlheim, where the Danube and Altmühl meet, we celebrated the end of the first year of our Euro-tour in Bavaria's oldest Weissbier (a type of wheat beer) brewery. The ZINFANDEL spent the winter in the winter lay-up facilities at the Saal marina on the Danube.

2006 Tour

<i>Towns and cities:</i>	<i>Basel, Breisach, Colmar, Strasbourg, Heidelberg, Esslingen, Rüdesheim, Wiesbaden-Schierstein, Miltenberg, Würzburg, Bamberg, Saal</i>
<i>Number of days on board:</i>	<i>148</i>
<i>Number of km travelled:</i>	<i>1,843</i>
<i>Number of hours travelled:</i>	<i>266</i>
<i>Number of locks:</i>	<i>148</i>
<i>Number of marinas/moorings:</i>	<i>50</i>
<i>Quantity of diesel:</i>	<i>1,162 litres</i>

2007: Castra Regina/Castra Batava/Vindobona

Between Regensburg ("Castra Regina") and Deggendorf there is not a single marina for a stretch of about 90 km. We therefore spent the night at the waiting place for pleasure boats above the Straubling lock. Our journey took us past Deggendorf and Passau ("Castra Batava"), where we spent some time making excursions on shore. We then sailed on to Schlögen in Upper Austria, where the Danube winds its way through the countryside. We followed our route to Grein in the Strudengau region against a strong headwind and persistent rain. Grein castle contains a shipping museum. Because the Danube is currently controlled by weirs, the once dreaded narrow passages with the treacherous whirlpools and rocks in this bend in the Danube, have lost their danger.

We passed through the Nibelungengau and moored in the marina at Luberegg/Emmersdorf. From there we cycled to ☞

“...Cochem on the Moselle...”



Stift Melk, the famous Benedictine monastery which is situated on the other side on the steep banks of the Danube. Before us was Wachau, which reminded us of the Middle Rhine Valley. This region has been granted 'UNESCO' world heritage status. On the way to Krems, Sabine noted that the journey between km 2035 and 2005 on the Danube had taken us precisely 88 minutes, despite the strong headwind. The ZINFANDEL operates at between 7.2 and 7.6 knots at 2,200 rpm, in sometimes very strong wave action in narrow and winding passages. But the Sturdy and its crew were not thrown off-balance.

After Krems and a short stay in Tulln, which was built on the site where the Roman castle "Comagenis" once stood, we found a berth in the Kuchelau marina near Vienna. We found ourselves in the foothills of the Austrian Limestone Alps, at the foot of the Leopoldberg mountain.

Vienna – Bratislava – Vienna/Carnuntum

Having soaked up the culture of Vienna ("Vindobona" in Celtic), capital of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire on the Danube, we proceeded to Bratislava, the historic city where Danube monarchs were crowned and the current capital of Slovakia.



"...Forchheim on the Main-Danube Canal..."

Bratislava's old town, at least the part of it that wasn't destroyed by various wars or the construction of infrastructure and housing blocks during the communist period, is a tourist attraction that draws in visitors from all over the world. We found a mooring in basin 4 at "Milan", the marina operator which is famous throughout Europe. We enjoyed "Nabucco" in the historic opera house and "Orfeo ed Euridice" in the old Philharmonia. Because of the strong current (9.13 km per hour), our return to Vienna took two

days and our diesel consumption doubled. Despite this, we were happy with the pace as the ZINFANDEL travelled steadily upstream with the Volvo engine purring quietly, occasionally overtaken by the hydrofoils that ply between Vienna and Bratislava. There was little cargo traffic and only a few sightseeing boats. We made a stopover near Orth in the flood plains of the Danube, where the wheel of a reconstructed historic Danube ship mill was turning.

We continued against the current to Vienna, where we moored in Vienna's new marina, not far from the Prater. We took the S-Bahn (suburban railway) to Carnuntum, a Roman castle near Petronell – once the largest and most important Roman army camp on the Danube. From there we sailed on up the Danube towards Krems. There, on a rise against the steep banks of the Danube, was the Benedictine monastery of Göttweg. This monastery is interesting because of the role it had during the Middle Ages.

Our 30 km trip upstream through Wachau to Melk took 5 hours. The same stretch only took us an hour and a half downstream. Speed: 6.03 km per hour. Passing via Grein and Au, we reached Linz, where we enjoyed not only the culture but also the famous Linzer Torte. It was high water, which made us decide to wait in the marina until the highest point was past. Using the current water levels on the Internet, it is easy to predict when the peak discharge will develop. While under way we saw a large tree, complete with roots, in the brown river water. Attached to the trunk by a chain was a half-submerged flatboat. It's this kind of floating debris that makes high water dangerous.

Muskatzenen/One-metre bratwurst/Constantine the Great

We arrived back in the Main via the Main-Danube Canal (this time heading north).

The Wipfeld marina served as our base for a cycle trip to the "Maria in Vineyard" church and to Volkach. From Mainstockheim we cycled to Dettelbach, where the famous "Muskatzenen" biscuits are baked. We also stopped off in the Mediaeval wine village of Sulzfeld as we didn't want to miss out on the famed "one-metre bratwurst". From Ochsenfurt we made a detour to the historic burial site in Mainbernheim. Culture days in Würzburg. Shipping museum in Würth. Back to the Rhine.

After a stop in Rüdeshheim, the journey continued across the Rhine: through the "Binger Loch" whirlpool, along the Loreley to St Goar and from there into the Lahn valley at Lahnstein. First to Bad Ems, where the Roman limes crossed the Lahn. There, on the border between the Taunus region and the Westerwald, the coolness of autumn was already perceptible. The thermal water of the former "Imperial and

Princely Spa” warmed us up again. We then continued on the Rhine to Ehrenbreitstein. There, at the foot of the imposing fortress, was the very interesting Rhine Museum, which provided a lot of information on the history of shipping on the Rhine. In Koblenz (the Romans called it “Confluentes”) we visited the Middle Rhine Museum.

We sailed round the “German Corner” (Deutsches Eck) and up the Moselle. After Brodenbach, Senheim, Traben-Trarbach and Bernkastel-Kues we reached Neumagen, which has been considered the oldest wine town in Germany since the discovery of the famous Roman gravestone showing a wine ship. Finally, we sailed into Schweich marina close to Trier. It was there that we brought the ZINFANDEL ashore to spend the winter with Linssen representative Kreuzsch. But not until we paid a visit to the German city of culture, Trier, which was built on the Roman foundations of “Augusta Treverorum”. The fantastic exhibition on “Constantine the Great” was the worthy conclusion of our second Euro-tour year. And again it was a day to be grateful.

(To be continued)

2007 Tour

Towns and cities: Saal, Passau, Vienna, Bratislava, Vienna, Deggendorf, Nuremberg, Frankfurt, St Goar, Koblenz, Bad Ems, Trier

<i>Number of days on board:</i>	168
<i>Number of km travelled:</i>	2,052
<i>Number of hours travelled:</i>	257
<i>Number of locks:</i>	111
<i>Number of marinas/moorings:</i>	57
<i>Quantity of diesel:</i>	1,603 litres



Sabine and Wolfgang Rösel. Both architects, have lived on the water during the summer since 2006. With their Linssen Dutch Sturdy 320 AC “ZINFANDEL”, they are making a Euro-tour to investigate evidence of cultural, social and technical developments on the rivers and canals of Europe.

Wolfgang Rösel is writing a book about the tour and the knowledge they acquired.

Over three years on the Lake Constance – Vienna – Paris route, they spent 417 days on board and covered 5,000 km. The engine ran for 766 hours and consumed 3,330 litres of diesel. They made for 150 marinas or moorings and passed through 692 locks.

Details of the rest of the route are to follow.

