

The previous edition of *Serious Pleasure* included the report of the first part of the Quiche Lorraine Tour, with Linssen Grand Sturdy 29.9 Delfin sailing from Saarbrücken to Saverne. An impressive voyage taking in picturesque places, locks, tunnels and inclined planes. The second part begins in Xouaxange, in north-east France.



The Quiche Lorraine Tour with Delfin (part 2)

Two canals, two rivers and three countries

TEXT AND PHOTOS ANETTE LEISTENSCHNEIDER AND RALF DEIMEL

The skipper set out to explore the village and returned with a beaming smile. He had reserved a table for dinner at the cosy local inn. But that was not all, there was a shop next to the inn for stocking up on supplies. He had ordered a baguette and brioches from the innkeeper for the next morning. In the evening, we ate a delicious entrecôte and drank superb



“...Enjoying sun and scenery...”

Alsace wine before returning very contented to the boat.

There was heavy rain during the night and we prepared for a chilly day. After having sailed several kilometres along the Marne-Rhine canal towards Nancy, the sun broke through the clouds and we put our fleece jumpers back in the forward cabin. Today, we would be passing through the extremely deep lock at Réchicourt, which also goes by the macabre name of ‘the grave’.

The lock bridges a height difference of sixteen metres, which makes it the largest lock in that respect in the French waterway network. We were immediately very impressed by the lock’s structure. On entering, the lock keeper not only handed over a remote control for the following canal locks, he signalled us to move to one of the front bollards. *“C’est plus doucement ici, Madame!”*, or *“This is a more*

pleasant position, madam!” Our short stay in this imposing structure was a remarkable experience, and we looked up higher and higher as the giant lock doors closed. This is how Tutankhamen must have felt in his tomb. Delfin’s engine was turning over gently in neutral and we even found it a bit of a shame when the lock doors opened and we had to continue our canal voyage.

We sailed towards Nancy using the remote control to prepare the locks a few hundred metres in advance. We rarely needed to wait until the lock lights turned to green and the doors opened to allow us to enter the lock. If the skipper could not reach the operating lever on the quay from the boat, he had to disembark in the lock to set the process in motion by operating the level manually. His one and only deckhand was always glad when he embarked again.

Our imagination knew no bounds

We were heading for Parroy, but on this particular Saturday evening the local harbour was closed to transient boaters due to a canoe race. We therefore opted to continue to Crevic where we berthed around 7 p.m., tired but content. We secured Delfin and decided to go in search of a restaurant in the village. Except for a simple café, there was little on offer and so we decided to prepare our meal in our boat’s galley. Our imagination knew no bounds. Because after the first snack comprising a few delicious olives, a second amuse bouche followed consisting of enticing blocks of French salami, which were a perfect treat. We then enjoyed a very individual pasta creation and an improvised cheese board. After an exhausting voyage of almost nine hours, the skipper was treated by his deckhand to a filling meal. And he enjoyed it to the full! He was very enthusiastic about the improvised menu. In these idyllic surroundings it tasted as if it came from the kitchen of a three-star restaurant. Our gas fire gave off a pleasant heat and all these cosy elements ensured that this would be a meal to remember.

On the Sunday, we sailed past imposing business parks and crossed the canal aqueduct over the River Meurthe, which

flows in small cascades under the Marne-Rhine canal. On this hot sunny afternoon, we finally berthed in Nancy harbour. It was again clear how manoeuvrable our boat is, the Delfin glided elegantly in reverse into its mooring position. Anyone wanting to sail into Nancy on such a wonderful summer Sunday should arrive in the early afternoon, because Nancy is a very busy harbour. The city is extremely interesting. Our neighbours – an American couple whose boat had been berthed in Nancy harbour for four weeks – recommended visiting the son et lumière in the evening at Place Stanislas. And sure enough, this show was very impressive! What they projected on the wall of the hôtel de ville was really unbelievable. The combination of colour and sound, statues, baroque monuments and the Louis XIV style... we were amazed.

Glorious sunshine

On Monday, we continued our voyage in the direction of Metz in glorious sunshine. And the deckhand was also beaming because the skipper had included a rose for her in that morning's shopping, and it would continue to give her a great deal of pleasure long after the voyage. Once we had left Nancy, we raised our mast again. Our voyage was preceded by heavy rainfall, so the water level in the canal was

remarkably high. To avoid too many difficulties when passing under low canal bridges, our boat charterer had advised us to lower the mast before our voyage. But from here, our Grand Sturdy could sail proudly displaying its mast.

We reached the first locks along the Moselle which were 170 metres long, and were therefore very different to the canal locks we had been used to up until then. For some time, we had been using the locks with a large cargo vessel. The skipper's on-board radio proved to be useful too. *"Calling Frouard lock, this is motor yacht Delfin. We are at kilometre 157 in the direction of Metz. May we enter the lock, over?"* *"This is Frouard lock, use the small lock on the left-hand side!"* We waited in front of the lock chamber until a pleasure boat with children had left the lock in front of us.

Just like elsewhere, everyone was friendly in Metz harbour. The next morning, our nice Dutch neighbours helped us to fill the water tank as we did not appear to have the right adaptor, even though we had several types with us. People were helpful, tips and other information were exchanged and we were forever meeting other friendly boaters. We continued along the Moselle in our gorgeous boat. We passed huge cargo ships of 5,000 tonnes or more and shared the locks with commercial vessels and other leisure craft.



"...The evening light over Sierck-les-Bains..."



**"...Saarburg;
An amazing waterfall in the town centre..."**

And precisely on the hottest day of our holiday, we had to wait quite some time at Thionville locks. An enormous cargo vessel had to pass through that took up the entire lock. A problem arose when it tried to leave the lock. As a ship of the same size wished to enter the one-way lock from the other side, the passage was blocked. It was three hours before this vessel could be guided back into the narrow entrance canal so that the first ship could pass through and the second could finally make its way through the lock.

Another wonderful evening on board

On Tuesday evening we berthed at the jetty in Sierck-les-Bains, which were already closed. We were looking forward to having dinner in the village, but that ended in initial disappointment. All restaurants were closed on Tuesday. So we settled down on our cosy after deck where we enjoyed pasta, red wine, a splendid sunset and the view of the local château. Another wonderful evening on board.

We did not cast off next morning until about 11 a.m. Our plan was to refuel at Schwebsange harbour in Luxembourg where we would pick up a friend who would then be sailing

with us for the final two days. Gaby, an enthusiastic sailor, had travelled specially from Munich to Luxembourg to sail with us on the Moselle and the Saar.

After having to wait two hours for a new supply of diesel to be delivered to the fuelling station, we welcomed our guest on board and sailed on. We continued our voyage between the wine slopes and enjoyed the sun and the scenery. In the late afternoon we arrived in Wasserbillig, where the friendly harbour master recommended a restaurant right next to the marina where we rounded off the evening with a refreshing Luxembourg Elbling wine and a juicy steak.

The end of our voyage was approaching and we departed (with a slight sense of melancholy) and continued along the Moselle. On the way, we passed the Princesse Marie-Astrid passenger vessel on which in 1985 the Schengen Treaty was signed, as well as several wide motor cruisers and a patrol boat belonging to the water police. From Konz in Germany, the last stretch of our voyage began along the River Saar. On the penultimate day, we arrived in Saarburg, a pretty wine town with an historic centre that is certainly worth a visit. We berthed next to DELFIN's 'big sister'. A Linssen Grand Sturdy 430 Mark II was already moored at the transient boaters jetty in Saarburg marina. It was an absolutely majestic boat. The other marina visitors were full of admiration for the two sisters.

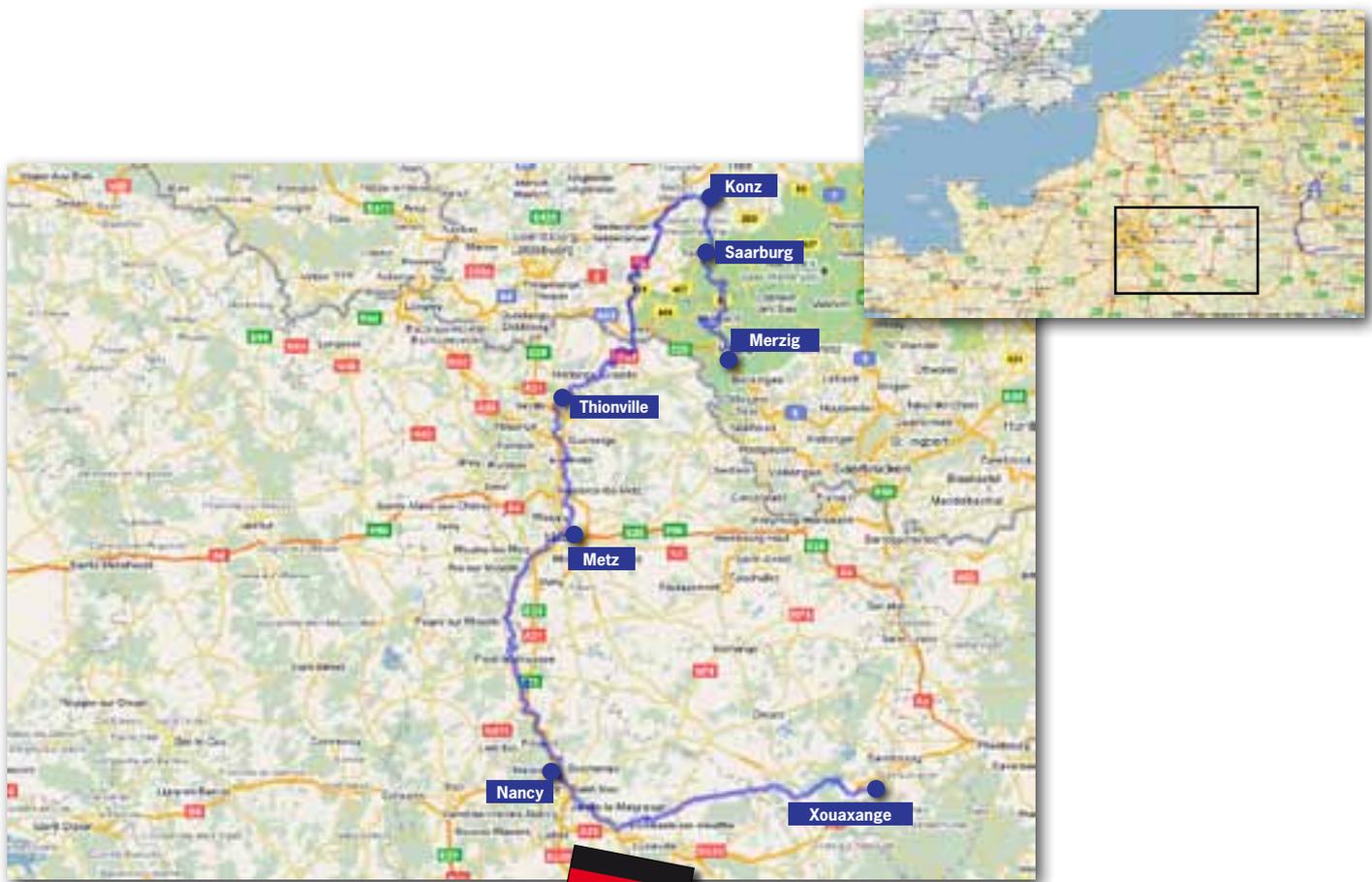
A waterfall in the town centre

After preparing our boat for a trouble-free departure for the final time, we took a thirty-minute stroll to the town centre where we found an amazing waterfall. The water cascades and is diverted onto three water wheels that drive an old mill. We spent the evening of this hot summer day on the market square where we enjoyed a simple meal and a good local wine. Once we returned to the yacht, we sat on the aft deck for quite some time looking back on our voyage.

Our final day would bring us back to Merzig, DELFIN's home port. We wanted to pick up a number of guests, after passing through Mettlach lock, who we had invited for the last ten kilometres of our voyage. But for the second time during our holiday, we had to wait longer than expected in front of a lock. We were only able to enter the lock after two large pleasure craft had passed through the lock at intervals of thirty minutes. We had previously had to wait almost an hour along the quayside. The skipper of a sport boat behind us passed through this lock frequently and knew how long it sometimes takes. He uses the waiting time profitably to take a stroll on land.

Our new guests really enjoyed the voyage through the Saarschleife, a famous meander in the Saar around a foothill of the Taunus low mountain range. Several heads of state, such as Prussian King Frederick William IV, Konrad Adenauer, Jacques Chirac and Angela Merkel have visited the Cloef panorama to enjoy the view of the magnificent landscape.

In Merzig, we berthed for the last time before enjoying a farewell meal with our guests on the aft deck. Under a magnificent starry sky, we said we hoped to make another voyage with a Linssen in the not to distant future. Two fantastic weeks that we would remember for a long time had come to an end. 



Anette Leistenschneider, a stage director, and Ralf Deimel, a business engineer, went on their first cruise together in a Linssen 29.9 in the summer of 2009, taking the Quiche Lorraine Tour. The trip was Ralf Deimel's second cruise and he was very happy to do it on board a Linssen. Ralf and Anette were both bitten by the Linssen bug and plan further cruises together.

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