

## Trip to Switzerland & France– July 2022

This would be my fourth trip to Switzerland and Steve's second. My first visit was in 1977 while backpacking Europe with two girlfriends after college. I visited again in 1990 and then both Steve & I had a short visit in 2015 during our *Tour du Mont Blanc* hike when we hiked from Italy through a small slice of Switzerland before hiking back into France. Both of us have been to France a few times, both separately and together.

### Geneva, Switzerland (3 nights)

European heat dome or not, Steve and I were determined to explore Geneva before joining up with our Mountain Travel Sobek group for a 10-day *Alps Village to Village Hiking* trip. The average maximum temperature in July in Geneva is about 74 degrees ... so why should an actual temperature of 101 the day of our arrival interfere with our plans? It shouldn't and it didn't! Over 3 days we walked well over 20 miles and ...

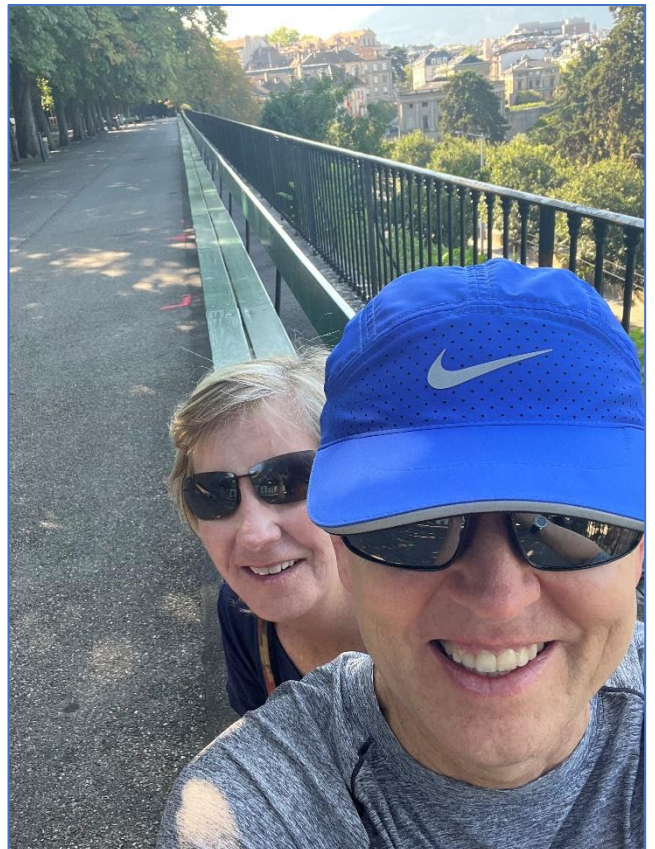
- Explored Lake Geneva's shoreline, its waterways via foot, and multiple boat rides and were always impressed by its 140-meter tall (459 feet) *Jet d'eau* – especially as the setting sun created rainbows in its arching waterflow.
- Cruised around town on an e-bike tour exploring the *United Nations Square*, the *Botanical Gardens*, *Old Town*, and more. It was our first time on e-bikes and I loved their "boost" up Geneva's hills!
- OD'd on Swiss chocolate (never thought I'd say that) by taking a *Chocolate Tour* where we learned a bit about the history of chocolate, the history of Swiss chocolate making, the types of chocolate, etc. all while sampling chocolate at several of the seemingly endless artisan chocolate shops in town. Our guide was a delightful young Russian woman who is in Geneva studying to become a simultaneous translator for Russian into English and/or French.



*Admiring the Jet d'eau*



*Geneva's Flower Clock, L'horloge fleurie-- created in 1955 as a symbol of the city's watchmakers, and a dedication to nature. Its second hand is the longest in the world at 8.2 feet.*



*Sitting on the world's longest bench at nearly 394 feet, the Marronnier de la Treille, near Old Town*

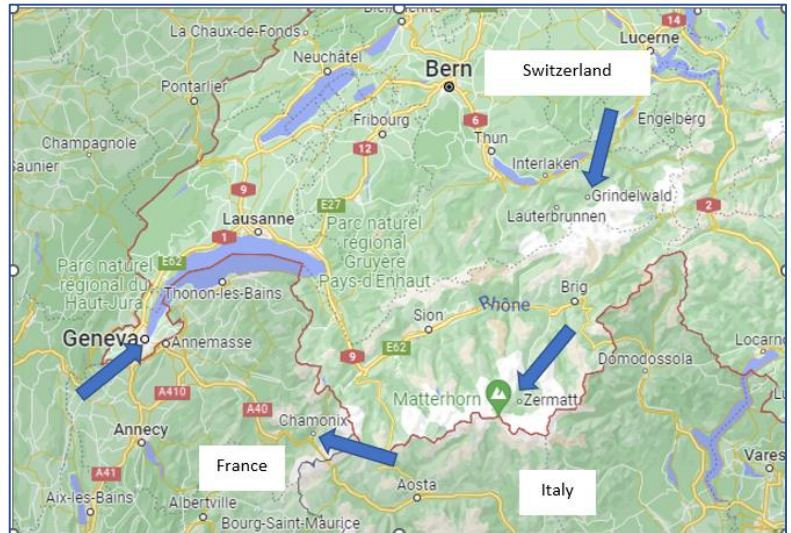
- Visited the *Old Town* area including climbing the 157 steps of both the North & South belltowers of the *St. Pierre Cathedral*.
- Marveled and window shopped at the abundant high-end Swiss watch stores and took a deep dive into 16<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> century Genevan, Swiss and European horology (the art of making watches/clocks) at the *Patek Philippe Museum*, which is home to hundreds of amazingly beautiful enameled and bejeweled watches. We learned that John Calvin and his teachings were a catalyst to Swiss watch making – who knew?
- Enjoyed lots of people watching, as Geneva's population is only about 60% Swiss, with inhabitants from around the world making up the other 40% as organizations such as the UN, the Red Cross, and CERN attract a very international population.
- While enjoying cocktail hour at a lakeside bistro, we discovered a new favorite "spritz" drink -- a *Hugo* made with St. Germain elderflower liqueur, Prosecco, soda and muddled fresh mint. We spent the rest of the trip alternating happy hours between having a *Hugo Spritz* and an *Aperol Spritz*, another refreshing beverage introduced to us during a previous trip to Europe.



Atop St. Pierre Cathedral's South Belltower

### **MT Sobek Alps Village to Village Hiking Trip**

Our time in Geneva had been planned to see the sights and have a chance to get over the 8-hour time difference between Denver and Western Europe. A very worthwhile endeavor from all perspectives. It was now time for the next phase of our trip: a MT Sobek led 10-day *Alps Village to Village Hiking* trip where we would spend time in Grindelwald, Switzerland, then move onto Zermatt, Switzerland before ending the trip in Chamonix, France.



### **Grindelwald, Switzerland (3 nights)**

Thus, after seeing and tasting some of the delights of Geneva, we met up with several members of the MT Sobek group at the Geneva airport for about a 3-hour private bus transport to Grindelwald (3,392'), a village in the Bernese Alps northeast of Geneva. The Bernese Alps are a mountain range of the Alps located in Western Switzerland and includes such well-known peaks such as the Wetterhorn (12,165'), the Eiger (13,015') and the Jungfrau (13,668'). After settling into the charming family run *Hotel Kirchbuehl*, we met up with our MT Sobek guides and group for an initial briefing followed by dinner.

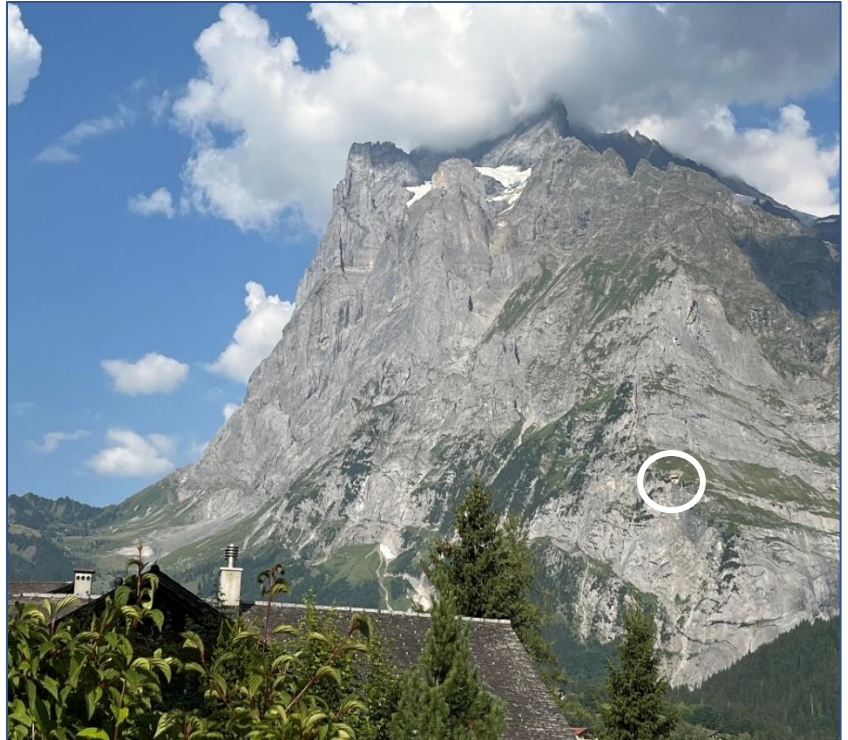
Besides Steve and myself, the makeup of our MT Sobek group was ...

- *Seb*, our lead guide and an engaging, knowledgeable and experienced mountain guide and a native and current resident of Chamonix, France.



View from our Hotel Kirchbuehl room

- *Virginie*, our assistant guide and also a delightful, knowledgeable and experienced mountain guide, and a native/current resident of Chamonix. Longtime friends, this was the first time Seb and Virginie had guided a trip together.
- *Cynthia & Geoff*, a retired couple from Bend, OR.
- *Barbara & David*, a retired couple from Santa Fe, NM.
- *Patty & Tim*, a semi-retired couple from Sarasota, FL.
- *Vanessa & Vincent*, a retired couple from Novato, CA.
- *Laurie & Patrick*, a couple from Eugene, OR (traveling with friends Lisa & Murray).
- *Lisa & Murray*, a couple from Eugene, OR (unfortunately, Lisa contracted COVID a day or so before arriving in Grindelwald so we didn't see much of her as she was quarantined for most of the trip).
- *Bonnie & Danielle*, mother (Stamford, CT) and daughter (Arlington, VA) – trip was Danielle's chosen 30<sup>th</sup> birthday present. Needless to say, we gave Danielle a bit of grief about choosing to spend so much time with a group of older folks!



*Notice the improbably placed mountain hut on the Wetterhorn – certainly wouldn't have wanted to be part of that building crew*



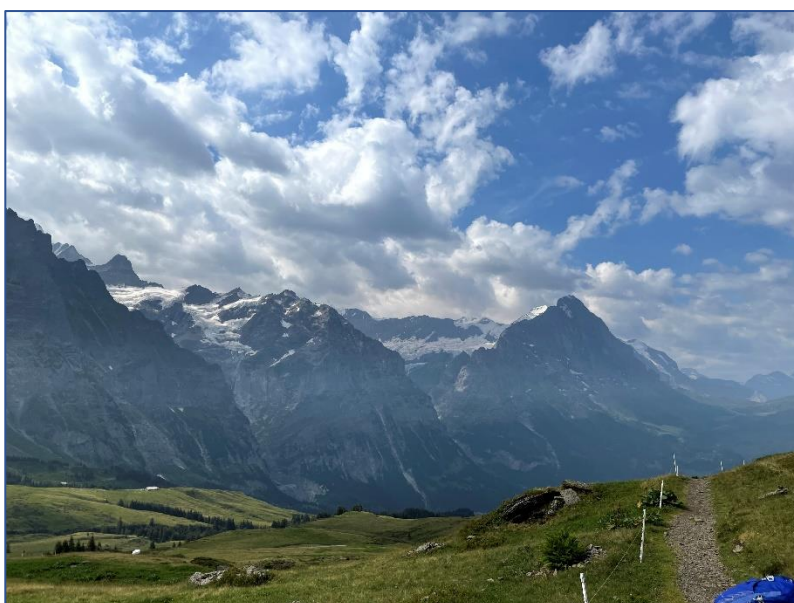
*Photo taken with the Mont Blanc massif, Chamonix, France, in the background*

*Standing: Virginie, Bonnie, Danielle, Murray, Lisa, Vanessa, Vincent, Geoff, Cynthia, Steve, Melissa, David, Barbara, Patrick, Laurie  
Kneeling: Tim, Patty, and Seb*



*Panoramic shot was taken from a hillside in Grindelwald near sunset – the Wetterhorn is on the left and North Face of the Eiger on the right*

**Grindelwald Hike 1:** A local bus took us to the *Grosse Scheidegg* (6,437'), a mountain pass at the east end of the Grindelwald valley. From the pass, we hiked along a series of trails opposite the impressive mountains which rim the valley, enjoyed the hardy and colorful wildflowers of the meadows, and heard & saw various creatures including cows (and their ever-clinking cow bells), mountain goats, and marmots. At one point we first



*View of First gondola station's viewing platform*

heard (with the sound echoing across the valley), then turned around to see a piece of the Wetterhorn's hanging glacier breaking off and noisily tumbling down its rocky face. It was only the first of multiple glacier breakages we saw/heard on the trip and when near enough to them, the sound of the glaciers melting was ever-present. A bio break at the top of the *First* gondola (7,113') -- yes, we could have just ridden up -- had us briefing mixing with the tourist hoards before we continued hiking on to *Bachess Lake* (7,470') where we enjoyed our picnic lunch. From there it was basically all downhill, including some steep single track, to the village of *Bort* (5,151') where we caught a gondola ride down back to Grindelwald. Along the way, Virginie spotted some wild blueberry bushes with ripe berries on them – definitely early in the summer for blueberries but they were wonderfully sweet.



*Along the trail up to Klein Scheidegg under bluebird skies*

*Taking in the views with a few of our bovine friends at Klein Scheidegg*

A well-earned spritz and delicious dinner at the hotel capped off the day. The hotel's "butter machine" spit out heart-shaped fresh butter pats mixed with fresh herbs ... the perfect accompaniment for multiple kinds of freshly-baked bread (which equals no chance of losing any weight on this trip). Today's Totals: 2,120' Vertical Gain, 10 miles.

**Grindelwald Hike 2:** Today we took the local bus going in the opposite direction to the Grindelwald terminal as catch the *Mannlichen* gondola up to Holenstein (5,340'). From there, we hiked up to *Klein Scheidegg* (6,762'), a mountain pass situated below and between the Eiger and Lauberhorn (8,110') peaks. A lazy picnic lunch supplemented with cold Coke Zeros (purchased from one of the many huts atop the pass) gave us ample opportunity to enjoy the views.



*Panoramic from Klein Scheidegg with the Eiger (13,015) on the left, Monch (13,484) in the middle and Jungfrau (13,668) on the right*



Back in the summer of 1990, I took the *Jungfrau* cog railroad that runs from Grindelwald up to Klein Scheidegg and then up into the rock of the Eiger via a railway tunnel (where viewing-windows carved into the rock allow views out) before arriving at *Jungfrauoch* (11,362), the highest railway station in Europe. Back in those days, you could actually “summer ski” at the *Jungfrauoch Snow Park* which I did (a small rope tow serviced the slope).



August 1990 – enjoying the  
*Janfrauoch Snow Park*



Back to 2022 ... after lunch, we hiked below and along the north face of the Eiger – along with the Matterhorn and Mont Blanc part of the *Alpine Trilogy* of rock climbs. We could spot the viewing windows of the railway tunnel high above us. While the Eiger was first summited in 1858, its notorious north face was not successfully climbed until 1938. As the “season” for climbing the north face of the Eiger was well past, we didn’t spot any climbers on its steep, crumbly rock walls.



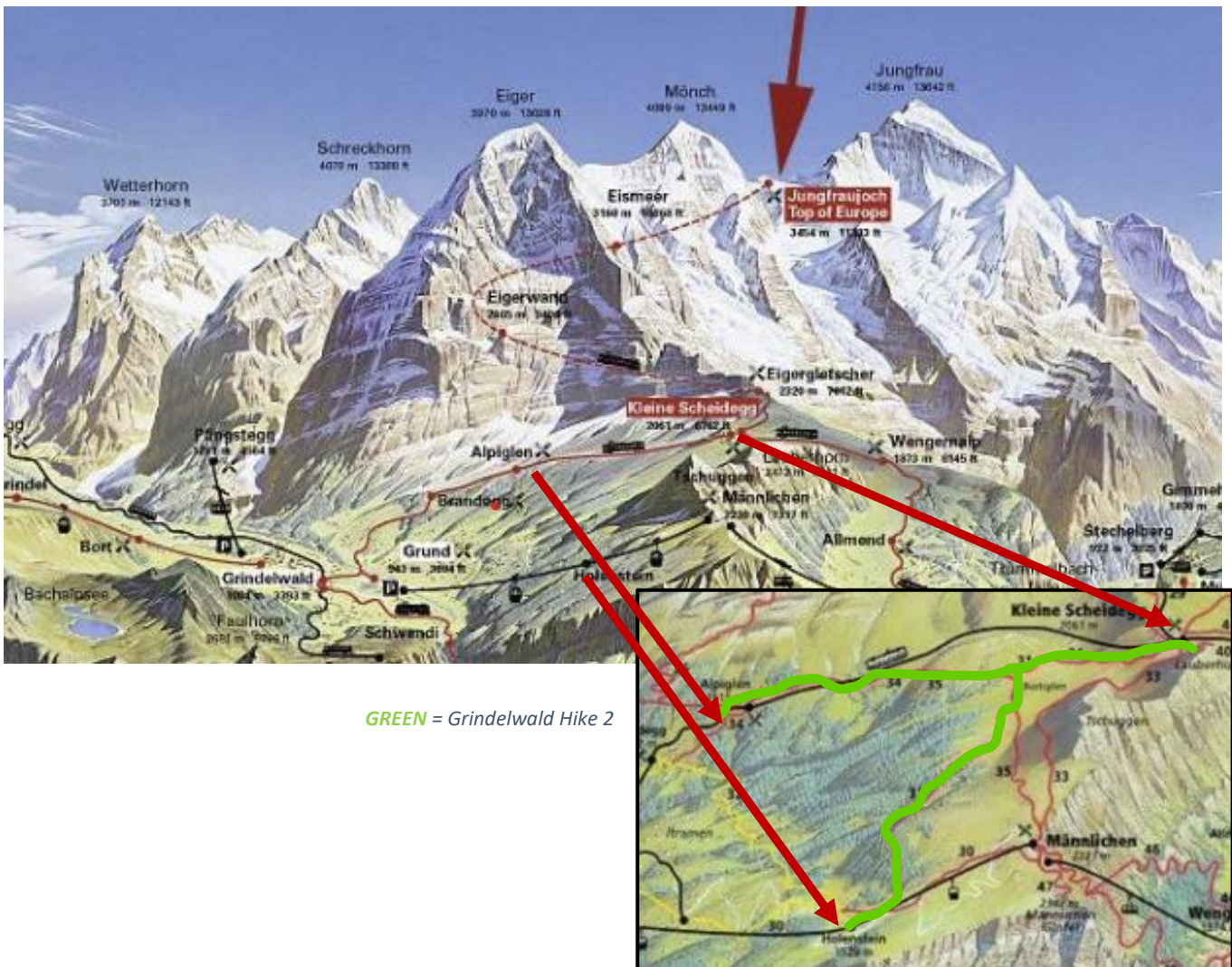
*Cheese refrigerator alongside trail down to Alpiglen – just leave money in box (lower right) and take some cheese!*

At *Alpiglen* (5,295’) we caught the cog railroad for the remainder of the trip back down to Grindelwald. We joined several fellow hikers for a tasty dinner at *Barry’s* in Grindelwald.  
Today’s Totals: 1,730’  
Vertical, 7.5 Miles.



*Steve on the cog railroad from Alpiglen down to Grindelwald*

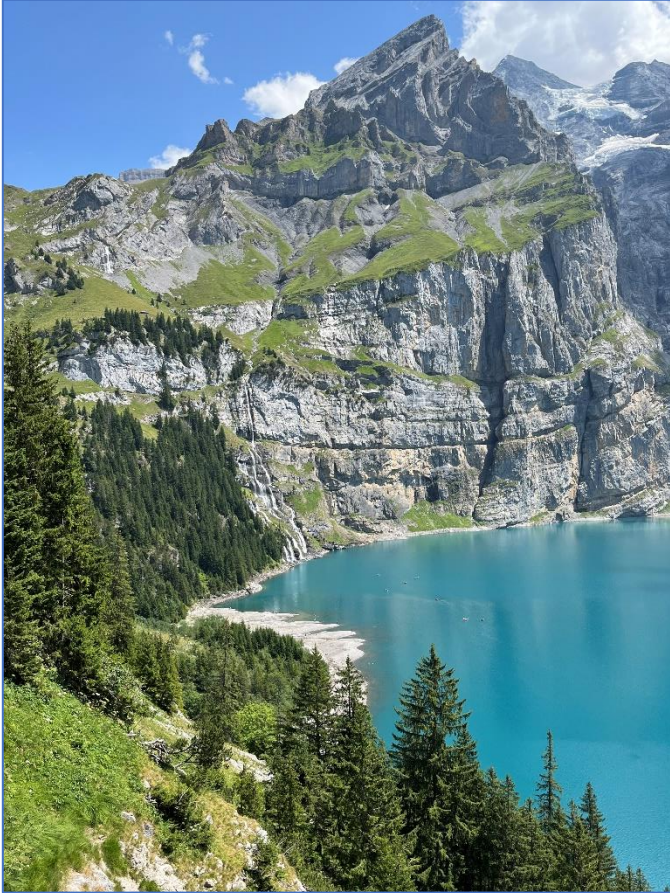
BLUE = Grindelwald Hike 1



GREEN = Grindelwald Hike 2

## Zermatt, Switzerland (3 nights)

**Enroute from Grindelwald to Zermatt – Kandersteg Hike:** We bid farewell to Grindelwald as our group, in two vans driven by our guides Seb and Virginie, headed southwest towards our next destination, Zermatt. Along the way, we stopped in the *Kandersteg* area. There we took the gondola up to its top near *Lake Oeschinensee* (5,177), a lovely glacier lake set at the foot of the *Bluemlisalp* massif (part of the Bernese Alps). On a very warm day, we had a fairly steep hike up to a balcony trail overlooking the lake's gorgeous teal and turquoise waters before hiking down a bit to have our picnic lunch, kept company by several young and inquisitive cows.



*Lake Oeschinensee near Kandersteg, Switzerland*

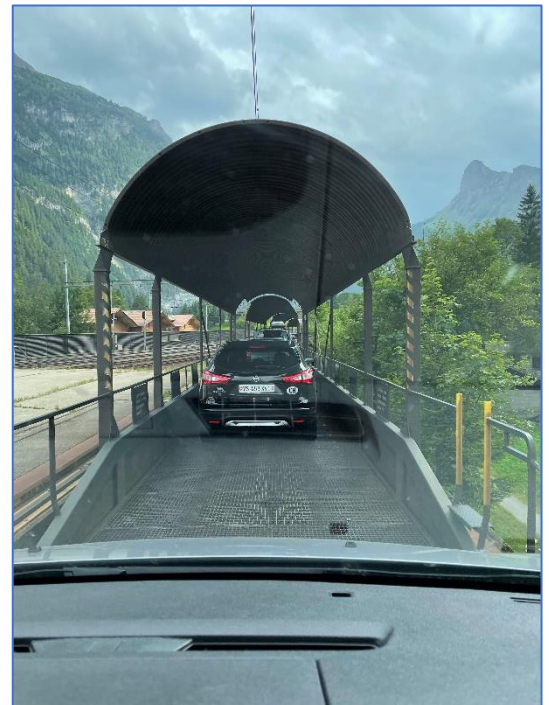
As we returned to the gondola station, we encountered a steady stream of tourists making the short hike from the station to the lake. Danielle, the youngest member of our group, was often asked to provide us a “price check” as we passed various tourists sporting obviously expensive shoes, purses, etc.

Danielle, well informed (and

sometimes with Google’s help) gladly shared the usually ridiculous price tag amounts associated with the various designer-labeled goods. Such “price checking” continued throughout the rest of the trip.

After some fortifying cold beverages, we piled back into the vans to continue our journey to Zermatt. A short drive away from, we got into line for the *Lotcschberg* “car train” – yep, you drive your car right up onto a covered but open area rail car. The trip through the 14km tunnel under the alps only takes about 15 minutes (the wait to board the train on busy summer day was considerably longer). The car train ride saves hours off the trip compared to the long way around via roads.

Once off the train, now in the *Valais* canton of Switzerland (cantons are sort of like states), the drive continues via a steep road descent (which has some amazing engineering) into *Visp* in the upper *Rhone Valley*. This area is known as the “sun terrace” of Switzerland as it gets over 300 days of sun a year (sounds just like Colorado!). Vineyards and apricot orchards are everywhere. From Visp we continued south/southwest to the small town



*Aboard the Lotcschberg Car Train from Kandersteg to Goppenstein*

of *Tasch*, where the vans would stay parked until our stay in Zermatt was concluded. A private shuttle took us and our luggage from Tasch to Zermatt's transportation center. In Zermatt, the use of combustible engine vehicles (aka cars/trucks) has been banned since 1966. A small electric-powered cart (think extended golf cart) was used to transfer our luggage to our hotel from the transportation center, the very charming *Hotel Bella Vista*. We had a short walk to the hotel located away from the hustle & bustle of the main street. We were treated to views of the famed *Matterhorn* in the process – with its summit partially obscured by clouds as is often the case. A tasty dinner of green salad, raclette (melted cheese) with potatoes, and dessert at the hotel completed the long day. Today's Totals: 1,700' Vertical, 7 Miles.

A note on my previous visits to Zermatt – first in 1977 and then again in 1990: the small village I recall as Zermatt has exploded into a bursting-at-the-seams small town, albeit one still without cars, fortunately!

**Zermatt Hike 1:** A delicious breakfast of made to order eggs, freshly baked breads and pastries, plus so much more fortified us for today's hike. From our hotel, we hiked up through Zermatt's "downtown" area (not very busy at 9am) to the meadows above passing by several of the houses of early Zermatt inhabitants dating back 200 to 300 years.



Early houses in Zermatt. The animals lived on the ground level with people living above. The rock discs separating the two levels prevented rats from gaining access to stored foods.



The meadows above Zermatt were filled with alpine wildflowers – we even spotted some Edelweiss! Along with all the wildflowers, we were treated to lots of butterflies doing what they do best – pollinating the flowers and at the same time putting on a bit of an art show with their beautifully colored and patterned wings and bodies.

*Seb making friends with some Heren cows. The breed is known as "Queen of the Cows" and comes only from the Valais canton. They are known for their sparing abilities and tournaments are held in the spring to declare a "Queen of the Queens" winner – a large cow bell on a leather collar is the awarded "prize."*

Part of our hike took us along a balcony trail opposite the famed Matterhorn, first summited in 1865. Due to unsafe conditions caused the extreme heat this summer (thawing permafrost causes unstable rock), the peak was virtually closed to climbing while we were there (huts were not open and local guide services were not operating on it). A similar situation was also happening at Mont Blanc in Chamonix, France.



*Left photo – Matterhorn in August 1990 Right Photo – Matterhorn in July 2022. There is considerably more snow on the peak in 1990 although photo was taken a month later in the summer.*

Our hike continued to the tiny hamlet of *Zmutt* with its tiny village chapel dedicated to Saint Catherine of Alexandria, patroness of the Valais. From there it was down to the hamlet of *Blatten* for a delicious lunch of Swiss *Rosti* – a dish made of grated potatoes and fried in a pan (think hash browns) and often served with egg, cheese, sausage, etc.



*The hamlet of Blatten just above Zermatt*



*Getting ready for a Rosti lunch in Blatten  
David, Patty, Tim, Steve, Melissa, Geoff, Cynthia*

Our afternoon stroll back to Zermatt took us through the gorgeous *Gornerschlucht Gorge* created by the waters of the Gornervispe. Access to tourists was initially created back in 1886-87 and its series of wooden walkways and staircases have been maintained/upgraded ever since. The gorge's rock, greenish serpentinite, is about 220 million years old.



*The Gorner Gorge*

Back in Zermatt, a local Alphorn group was entertaining tourists in the main street. Following a spritz of choice on our hotel's veranda overlooking the Matterhorn, we joined our group for a nearby Italian dinner. Today's Totals: 2,000' Vertical, 7.5 Miles.

**Zermatt Hike 2:** After a short walk from the hotel, we caught the *Gornergrat* cog railroad (Europe's highest open-air cog railway) which tops out at over 10,100'). This being a hiking trip, we, of course, didn't take it to the top but instead departed the train at *Rieffelalp* (7,300) and hiked up. It was a glorious day for a hike and we enjoyed the fresh air and



*Not a photo we took - reflection of the Matterhorn in Rieffelsee Lake*

views as the trail eventually deposited us at *Rieffelsee Lake* (9,120').

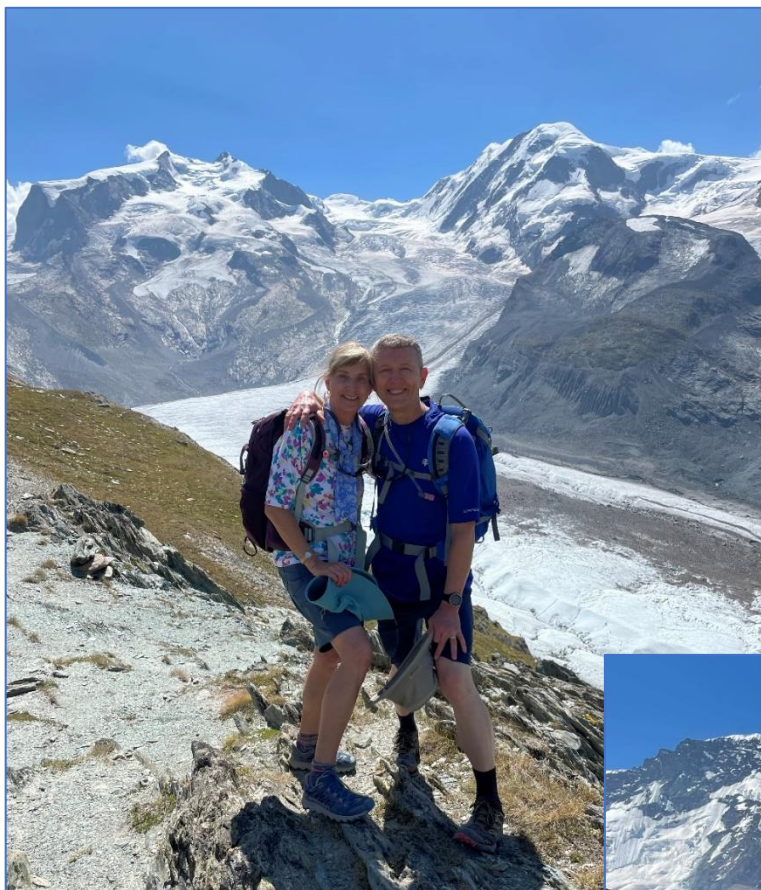
When conditions are right, the Matterhorn is perfectly reflected in the lake. Unfortunately, conditions weren't quite right for us but continuing our hike a bit farther we were treated to some magnificent views of the Monte Rosa massif ...



*Alphorn concert in downtown Zermatt. Alphorns are over 11 feet in length*

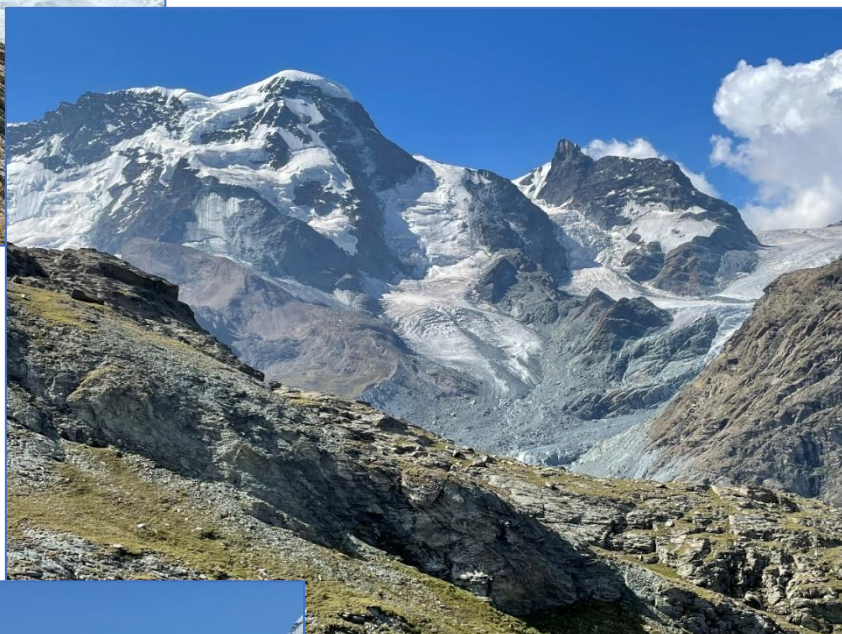


*Top of the Matterhorn peeking out from behind us*



*The stunning Monte Rosa Massif area*

*Italy is just on the other side of the peak to the right below*



*Unfortunately, the amazing glaciers in the Alps have been melting at unprecedented levels. We heard ice falling multiple times and the constant sound of melting snow and ice.*

We ate a lunch of fresh bakery sandwiches (picked up on the way to the cog rail train that morning) while basking in the beauty all around us – what a treat to see. Our hike back down to the railway station at *Rieffelalp* included some alpine rock gardens, complete with blooming Edelweiss and other wildflowers, many in shades of purple from lavender to royal to periwinkle.

Tonight's dinner was on our own so Steve and I went to the crepe stand for a couple of freshly made custom crepes followed by some creamy gelato ... we enjoyed our dinner alfresco in the middle of Zermatt doing lots of people watching. Today's Totals: 2,000' Vertical, 8 Miles.



BLUE line is Zermatt Hike 1 - GREEN line is Zermatt Hike 2

## Chamonix, France (3 nights)

**Chamonix Hike 1:** Before being able to hike in Chamonix, we had to first get there ... we departed Zermatt in reverse of our arrival -- walk to transportation center then private taxi ride to Tasch, where we loaded ourselves and luggage into 2 vans driven by Seb and Virginie. Our drive took us back down into the Upper Rhone Valley with its picturesque terraced vineyards, hillside villages, apricot orchards and the occasional old castle. We could see the Bovine area we hiked on Day 9 of our Tour du Mont Blanc hike in 2015 and went right past the *Hotel du Col de La Forclazwe* where we stayed that evening (we most remember the place as having a very stingy breakfast offering). Soon thereafter, we cross the border from Switzerland into France. From the hamlet of *Vallorcine* we took a “blah blah trail” (a term introduced to us by our guides, meaning “a nice wide, easy- going trail”), first along-side a railroad, then through a camping area, and eventually down to a hamlet near *Argentiere* (we did part of this trail back in 2015, as well). There, we had a very enjoyable alfresco lunch of quiche, salad and fresh apricot tart for dessert. We then continued our stroll a short-ways to where the vans were parked for the remaining drive into Chamonix proper and our hotel. That evening, we had a group dinner at *Café*

*Josephine* in downtown Chamonix – a French bistro known for using local ingredients (my beefsteak tomato with fresh burrata and pesto was enormous and delicious). Today's Totals: 800' Vertical, 6 Miles.



*Our first glimpse this trip of the Mont Blanc massif*



*Colorful garden near our lunch place*

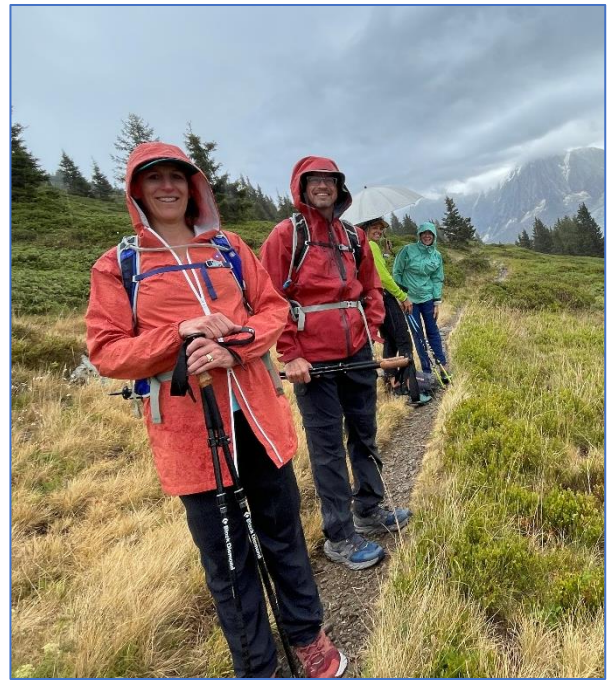


*Hungry hikers: (from left) Tim, Patty, Geoff, Cynthia, Bonnie, Patrick, Laurie, Murray, Lisa, Danielle, Vanessa, Vincent, Melissa, Seb, Steve, Barbara, David*



*Chamonix at dusk with Mont Blanc looming in background*

**Chamonix Hike 2:** As the weather forecast had predicted, we woke up to rain and overcast skies. Several of the group had already decided to have a free day in town, but the rest of us set off in the vans with Seb and Virginie to the nearby area of *Les Houches*. Fortunately, most of the rain held off for the majority of our hike up to a balcony trail, but arrive it did along with a low cloud ceiling. Needless to say, the planned panoramas of the Mont Blanc massif didn't materialize, nor did our planned picnic lunch in the alpine meadows of *Chailloux*. Instead, the group made the 2,100' climb up in 2 hours and then hoofed it back to the vans in another hour. We were all looking like drowned rats, except for Seb and Virginie, who stayed remarkably dry as they hiked with umbrellas (we have since purchased a couple of ultra-light hiking umbrellas).



*Laurie, Patrick, Virginie and Danielle on a rainy day*

Instead of picnicking in a very wet conditions (or in the vans), we returned to the hotel after our 3-hour hike to warm up and get out of our wet clothes. Steve and I ended up having our picnic sitting in bed, staying warm under the covers while using towels as our "picnic blanket"! That afternoon while I enjoyed a massage at the hotel spa, Steve checked out the myriad of outdoor clothing shops in town (Arc'teryx, Patagonia, Naronna, Mammut, North Face, and Helly Hansen to name just a few) as the rain had finally stopped. Chamonix, while also being a very tourist-heavy area has a much more laid-back vibe than did Zermatt, with its array of high-end watch and designer clothing stores.



*Not much of a view of Mont Blanc as it is hidden in the clouds*

We were on our own for dinner, so we enjoyed a walk around town and its requisite people watching before having a casual dinner at *Cool Cats*, a place serving artisanal smothered "hot dogs" (locally smoked pork sausages). A scoop of gelato, from the one of many, many gelato places in Chamonix, concluded the evening with just the right note of sweetness! Today's Totals: 2,100' Vertical, 6 Miles.



*My "hot dog" choice ...*

**BIG APPLE €9.50**

Fromage bleu, pommes fraîches,  
BBQ sauce, rucola & onions grillés  
Blue cheese, fresh apples, BBQ sauce,  
rucola & grilled onions

*Steve's choice ...*

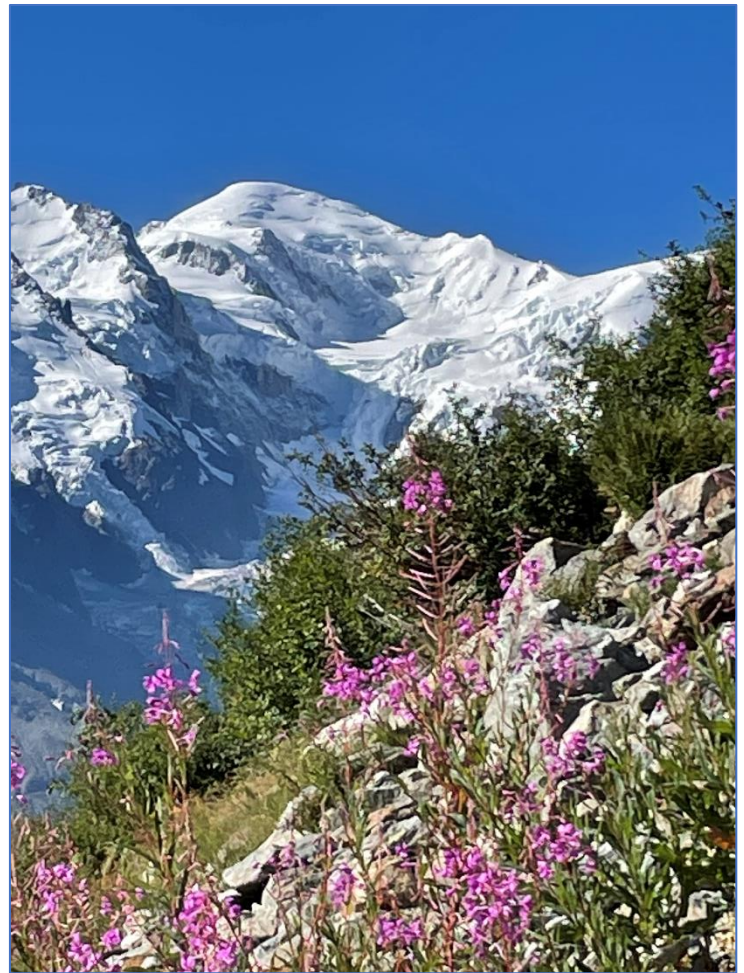
**MR INTERNATIONAL €8.00**

Ketchup / mayo / moutarde, persil, onion grillée  
Ketchup / mayo / mustard, parsley, grilled onions.

**Chamonix Hike 3:** Sunshine, blue skies and a fresh coating of snow atop Mont Blanc (at 15,777', it is Western Europe's highest point) greeted us this morning ... a very welcome sight after the previous day's rain and overcast skies. Due to a tragic accident a couple of days before in the *Montenvers* area, the plans to take the famous red cog train up the slopes and then hike along the north balcony trail were not possible (fortunately, we saw these areas in 2015). Instead, our group boarded a local bus for the short ride to the *Flegere* gondola. There, we rode up to an elevation of 6,158' and then hiked along the south balcony trail ... all the while enjoying the sights of the Mont Blanc massif, with its new white snowy layer, glistening in the sun. The temperatures had dropped after yesterday's rain and the need for a jacket was a welcome change.



*One of many parasailers we saw*



*Mont Blanc with a fresh layer of snow*

As we neared the top of the *Planpraz* gondola (6,562') we were treated to the sight of multiple parasailers riding the currents, as the area is a popular launching-off spot. Seb and Virginie supplemented our lunch sandwiches with a tasting of local cheeses, sausages, terrine, and bread as we took in the

expansive views. After enjoying our tasty repast, we took the *Planpraz* gondola back down into town so that the afternoon could be spent as desired. Today's Totals: 1,200' Vertical, 5 Miles.

**Aiguille du Midi:** Our plan, shared by others in the group, was to take the *Aiguille du Midi* which translates to "Needle of the Mid-day") cable car from its base in Chamonix (3,389') up to its many viewing platforms at over 12,300' to enjoy the panoramic views found there. The Aiguille du Midi is the closest one can get to the summit of Mont Blanc without hiking/climbing. It being a weekend day at the end of July, our plans were shared by lots of other tourists from around the world. Fortunately, they have a system by which you purchase tickets for the next available group #/departure time. We ended up with a wait time of about an hour and a quarter, as did Barbara and David in our group, so we took ourselves



*Lunch and tastings with a fantastic view!*

off to a nearby bistro for some refreshing drinks to pass the time. It should be noted that before heading to the cable car station we did a quick stop at our hotel to change into long pants and pick up jackets, hats, etc. as the temperature up top would be quite a bit cooler.

The ride up to the *Aiguille du Midi* involves 2 cable car rides and holds the world record for the highest vertical ascent (9,209'). The first cable car takes you from Chamonix to the *Plan de l'Aiguille* (7,579') where the north balcony trail (aka Grand Balcon Nord) leads up to *Montenvers*. With the trail closed, we immediately switched over to the second cable car for the remainder of the trip – this part of the trip travels over 5,800' on cables completely suspended between the two stations – there are no in-between support towers. As you can see from the picture to the right, as we approached the *Aiguille du Midi* station we ascended into the clouds.



*Leaving Plan de l' Aiguille station, headed for Aiguille du Midi station*

The station has two basic levels – the main station at 12,392' is reached by the cable car and then its top level at 12,605' is reached by an elevator which takes you right up through the rock to a viewing area just below the TV/radio tower (the elevator has a glass ceiling window so you can watch the journey up through the rock).



*The Aiguille du Midi station is literally cut into the rock*



*At left the main Aiguille du Midi station – At right its top terrace below the TV/Radio tower (photo not taken by us)*

It is at the top terrace that you can “Step into the Void” – a cantilevered glass walkway followed by a glass cube with the summit of Mont Blanc as its backdrop. You need to don felt slippers to enter the cube so as to not scratch the glass. Fortunately, the clouds partially cleared as we stepped into the void – quite the experience! As Steve said, he’s climbed hundreds of peaks and wall routes in the rock gym, yet this experience was rather unnerving for him. After testing our nerves, we explored the upper terrace and its views before descending the elevator back down to the main station area. There, we explored its many areas and terraces (including “The Pipe”) and were constantly amazed at the engineering involved as well as the stunning vistas. A definite “don’t miss” if you’re in Chamonix!

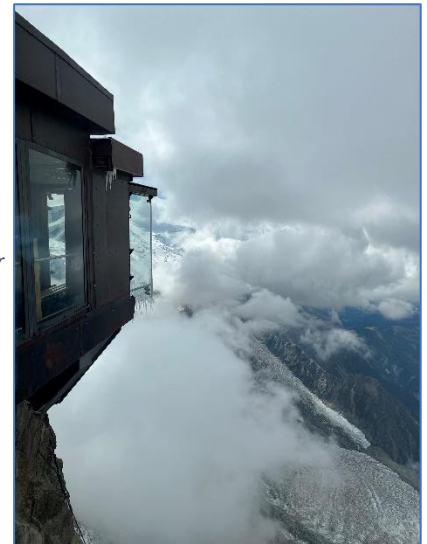


*We "Stepped into the Void" with our felt slippers*



*On the main terrace of the Aiguille du Midi with Mont Blanc behind us*

*The cube sticking out over the void*



*The view below us in the cube – nothing but air then rock*



*Barbara, Virginie, Steve, Seb and Vanessa at our final group dinner*

After the various “highs” of the Aiguille du Midi, we took the 2 cable car ride back down to Chamonix and reality. It was the last night of our trip. As a group, we gathered for a delicious end-of-trip dinner at the *CapHorn* restaurant. It had been a congenial group with wonderful guides, amazing scenery in both the Swiss and French Alps, and memories galore.

The next morning, we boarded our private bus for the ride back to the Geneva airport and the two-flight journey back home to Colorado. Other than a bit of a maintenance-related delay on our Munich to Denver flight, it all went smoothly. It is always good to be home but never too early to get more travel plans in the works!



*Taking in the impressive Mont Blanc massif*