

Norwegian E31 West Coast tour 2015



While planning this tour we had these goals: See the west coast of Norway ,fjords and mountains , visit some of the old historical hotels , bring together good friends , the 8 series itself , good food, socializing and having a good time together.

Also having a main purpose, being not to get from A to B as fast as possible but using most of the day on the road as that is a good part of the total experience where we stop and checked out what's interesting on the way.

First part was to determine the route and hotels to get a general idea of the planing , then following up with Hotels and blocking enough rooms for a group of 20 -25 cars maximum.

When all this was set then the prospect was released and invitations sent out, as this was a relatively expensive tour, being a week long, we did not know how it would be welcomed. But we quickly became 20 cars and 36 persons from Switzerland, Germany, Nederland, Sweden, Denmark and Norway.

Start point was Stavanger Monday morning 07.00 where we met several of the participants coming with Ferry from Denmark, then driving to Voss and Fleishers Hotel part of the Norwegian Historical Hotels.

Second day driving to Balestrand and its beautiful hotel Kviknes, also part of the Norwegian Historical Hotels and a very nice building with a lot of artwork and old furniture's inside.

The third day went to famous Geirangerfjord at Union Hotel before driving Trollstigen and the Atlantic road ending up at Haaholmen. Ragnar Thorseth the "modern Viking" have built up a spectacular Classic hotel using the old fisherman buildings that where there.

Here we did stay for two days so that we could go fishing in a copy of a Vikingship.

The route became about 1000km drive with small winding roads up and down hills seeing mountains, fjords , Glaciers and the Atlantic sea.



Day one:

Meeting the “European’s” at the ferry starting the tour too Voss and Fleisher’s Hotel.

First line up as we are waiting to get onboard the first ferry, still missing a few car but will meet up all at Fleischer’s Hotel and there we will be 16 x 8er 2 x Aston Martin (I know but they are 8er owners and have the precious cars home saving them) and two coming in their other BMW’s as their 8er for various reasons could not come.



On the way we stopped at Laatefoss and also crossing Hardanger Bridge with a suspension of 1310meters



Then ending up at Voss after 9h on the road, lining up in front of the Hotel. Here we finally were 20 cars for a short while before one of the Astons had to be shipped home to Switzerland for repair.



Historical Fleisher's Hotel is located in Voss and was built in Swiss style. Today's building dating from 1889 is owned and run by the family Fleisher's who started already back in 1864 with hotel business.

The hotel also have a Ghost called Magdalena, she was the ground hostess and is regularly visiting and watching over the guests , specially rom 407 is known to have her visiting despite she being dead for almost 100 years.

Day two:

After a good breakfast we started 10.00 heading for Stalheimskleiva. One of the steepest roads in Northern Europe, built during 1842-1846.

The road has 13 hairpin bends and has a nice view to two Waterfalls at 146 meters.



Next on the route were Flaam and the famous railway up to the mountain:

Flaamsbana is a spectacular train journey that offers a panoramic view of some of the wildest and most magnificent nature in the Norwegian fjord landscape.

Flaamsbana is one of the steepest trainlines in the world on normal tracks, where almost 80% of the journey has a gradient of 5.5%.

The train takes you from the ocean level at Sognefjord in Flaam, to the mountain top at Myrdal mountain station on Hardangervidda, 863 meters over the ocean.

National Geographic Traveler Magazine has named the Flaam Railway as one of the top 10 train journeys in Europe and Lonely Planet named it the best train journey in the world in 2014.



Then drive over the mountain “Vikafjellet” before arriving at Balestrand and Kviknes Hotell:
The next lineup of course in front of the hotel , where the Germans now started worrying if we were allowed to park wherever we liked in Norway (of course we had this already arranged with the hotel 😊)



Kviknes Hotel - the jewel of the Sognefjord

In Balestrand, beautifully located beside the Sognefjord, lies Kviknes Hotel. The Kvikne family have been the hosts here since 1877. The hotel was built in the “Swiss” style and the hotel is graced with an extensive collection of artworks and antiques, which give it its special style.

Day three starts early as well, no time to sleep through the morning here, new kilometers waiting for the 8ers to enjoy.

Today there will be several fjords on the route, Glacier museum and passing a glacier as well as several viewpoints before coming to Hotel Union in Geirangerfjord.

Erik and his new friend at the Glacier museum.



Dalsnibba viewpoint looking down at Geirangerfjord from 1500m.



Dalsnibba offers a very good view and is therefore a very popular [tourist destination](#). Dalsnibba is often covered by [snow](#) even in the summer. It was completed in 1939 and built just for tourists and the viewpoint where the hotels had their own cars bringing them up , several of these cars are now in the basement of Hotel Union.

On the way down to Geiranger we also stopped at Flydalsjuvet, where you can go out and view the Fjord and 200meter of free fall under yourself.

As this is easy accessible only 50 meters from the road it would suit any 8er driver.



Hotel Union have their own car collection, so what better place to spend the night. These cars where used to take tourist up to Dalsnibba from the ships visiting and going all the way up 1500m several times a day



Day four heading for the sea and the Atlantic road .

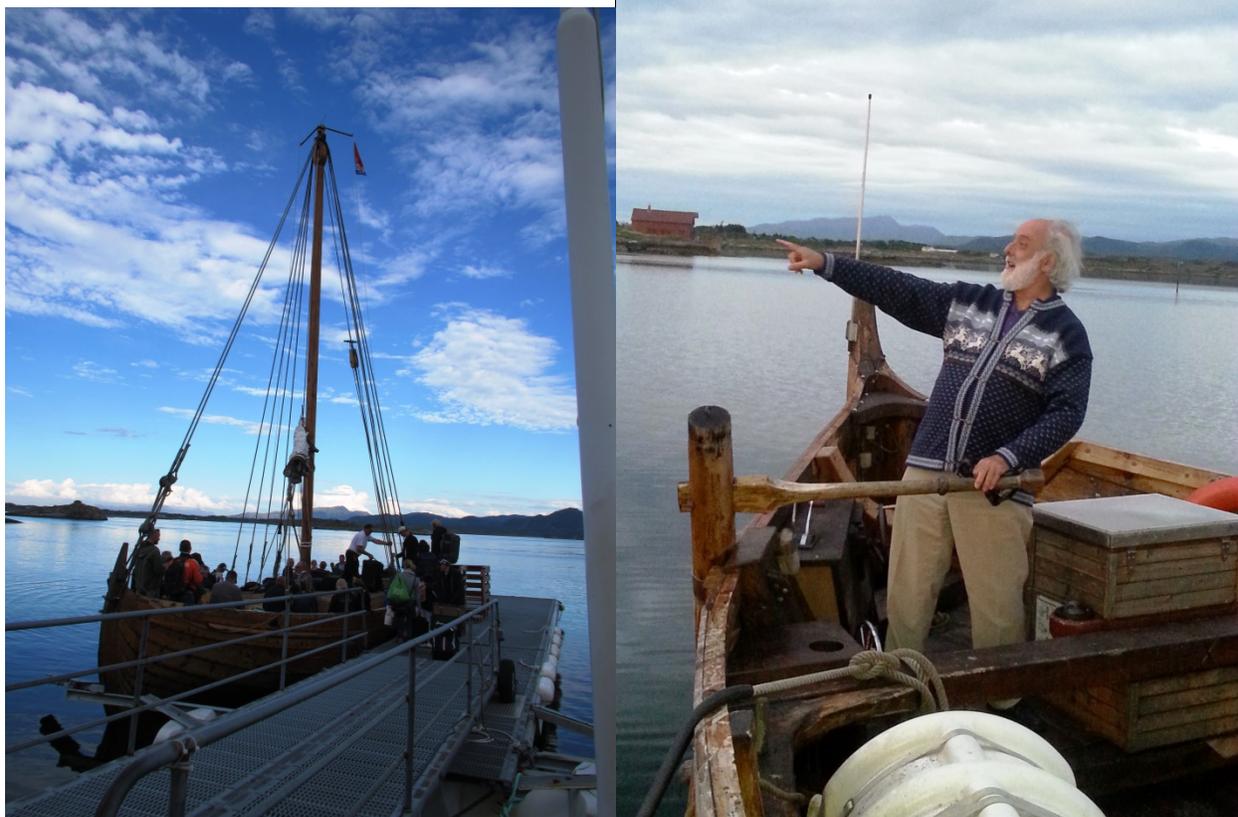
But before coming there we have many experiences coming on the road one being Trollstigen: The drive along Trollstigen is undoubtedly more dramatic than most people are used to, but what is special about driving in Norway is that in fact people live just about everywhere. Even on the narrowest mountain ledge or small crag there will be a house. We are bound to the landscape and the natural surroundings through settlements that have offered us a livelihood throughout history.

For several centuries the road was an important transport artery between Valldal and Åndalsnes, first as a path and then as a bridleway, until construction of the Trollstigvegen road started up in 1916. Parts of the original pack horse track are still visible and passable on foot.



Finally we arrived at Haaholmen after driving the Atlantic road.

We were picked up by a modern Vikingship to get to Haaholmen, and here we have Armin steering the Vikingship while pretending to discover America again. Guess you all know that America was discovered by Vikings in year 1000 by Leif Erikson meaning 500 years before Christopher Columbus



Here we stayed for two days while spending some time fishing in a copy of an authentic Vikingship, socializing and enjoying good food and drinks. They also showed us a movie about two of the Viking ships, Saga Siglar and Oseberg. These are true copies of the old Viking ship.



A little bit of wrenching was also necessary as two of the cars during the tour decided that running on 11 Cylinders was sufficient enough. in this case a spark plug decided to die, while earlier we had an ignition wire failure on another car but no problem as several of us had brought used spareparts we had in case 😊 The 8eres made it back home in one piece still working fine running on all 12.



Afterword:

While driving up these roads in convoy with other 8ers I fully understood what the 8er does best, running in a herd bringing people together and having a good time. I don't think BMW would have expected that to happen as the 8series usually was a alone creature rarely seen and they still are, but now if seen they are outnumbering the others 😊 And what a sight it is having only 8ers driving in a long line on these beautiful roads and for sure we got attention wherever we came.

Links to Films and photos

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?t=1&v=-VjcoZqAJfw>

Pictures.

ftp://admin_124:h1Hirxs84Y3X3bR6@www.8er.org