



STORY & IMAGES

Keith Harrison

Suncamper Sovereign Prestige Owner

A Motorhome Swap with Europe

A few years ago I contacted the CMCA to advertise in European magazines that I was interested in a motorhome swap. I owned a Suncamper Sovereign Prestige, which is 7m long and designed for two people but can accommodate four.

We received 10-12 emails showing interest from motorhome owners in Europe and the UK. We narrowed it down to one couple from Belgium who seemed like-minded, had a suitable motorhome and wanted to travel around the same time of year. They had also done this type of thing in New Zealand.

The couple came to Australia first. They met at our house where we showed them how to use our motorhome. They were familiar with many of the systems and appliances already. We took them sightseeing around Sydney for a couple of days then they took our motorhome for five weeks, driving up to Cairns and back.

A couple of weeks after their departure, we flew over to Frankfurt, Germany where they picked us up from the airport. Their motorhome was a very similar in size and features to ours. We took it from there and headed South through Austria and into

Slovenia and Croatia.

We were taken by Slovenia and Croatia's natural beauty and diversity. We ended up spending most of our time here. We were travelling in February so Lake Bled was still and completely frozen



TOP

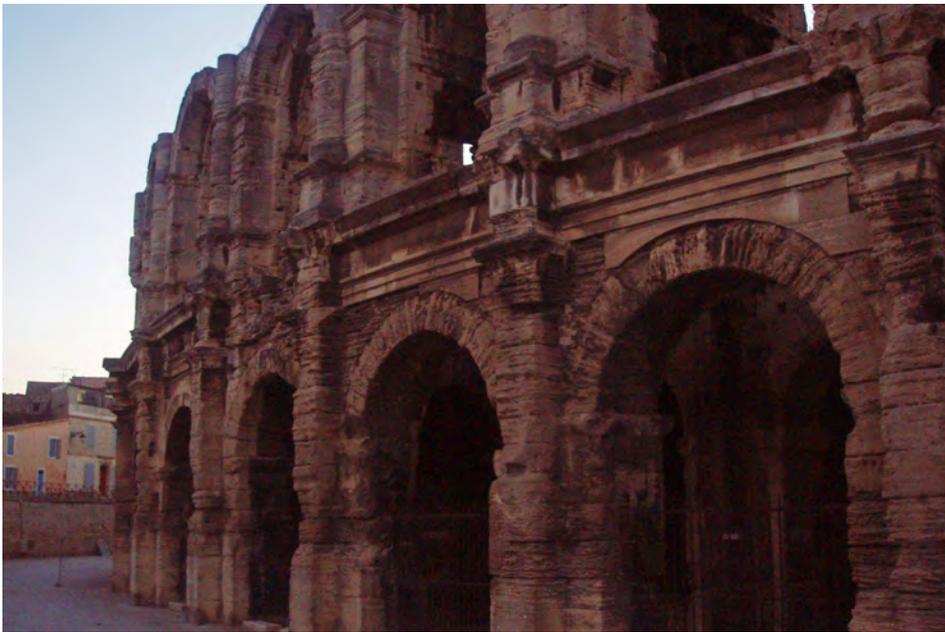
A cliff-top castle

LEFT

Freezing outside, around -15°C

ABOVE

Driving in the snow in Slovenia



“We were fascinated with Eastern Europe and how people were recovering post war”

over. Snow graced the mountain tops.

We drove down as far as Dubrovnik weaving in and out of the mountain road and coastal road. We were fascinated with the recent history of Eastern Europe and how people were recovering post war. The locals were friendly and helpful. We took the coastal road heading back up.

It was cold in parts, down to -15°C. Our motorhome was equipped with a gas water heater and had an internal diesel heater. Inside, the van remained at a constant temperature of around 22°C. We took a lot of back roads, occasionally using the toll ways and autobahns.

We had a rough plan but spent more time in Slovenia and Croatia.

The only commitment was meeting my children in Spain. Many caravan parks were closed in February but commonly you would see a few motorhomes parked out the front of the gates and we would stay alongside them.

We travelled across Northern Italy and spent time with friends in Trieste. Then went to Venice and drove to Monaco. After, we followed the Azure Coast through the South of France all the way to Barcelona where we met two of my children who were travelling there at the time. We spent almost a week with them around the South of Spain before heading up to Madrid and San Sebastian, where the locals were relaxed and much friendlier.



TOP

Ancient Ruins in the North of Italy

ABOVE

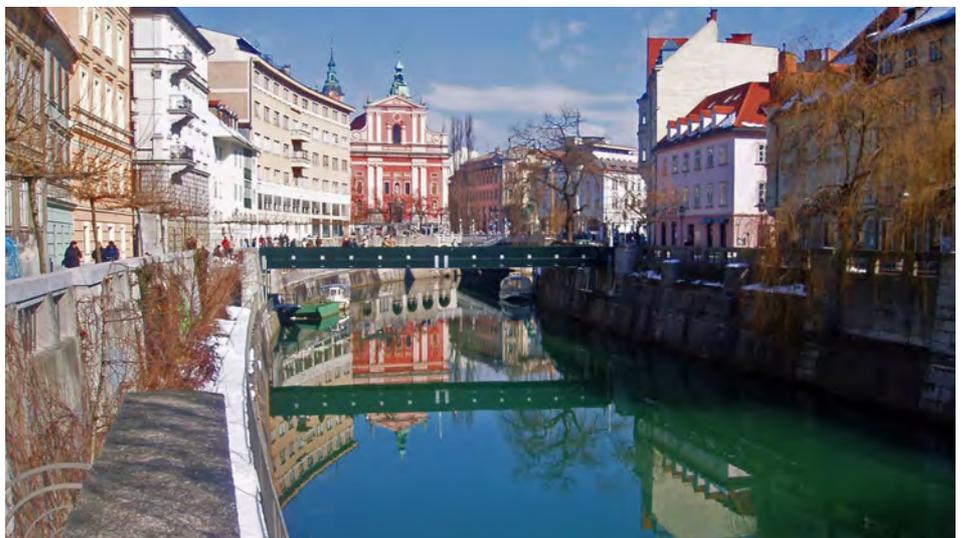
Monaco Casino and Superyacht Marina

ABOVE RIGHT

Dinner with Friends in Trieste, Italy

RIGHT

Canals in Ljubljana, Slovenia



From Spain we travelled France's Northern countryside, through Biarritz and staying in Paris for several days. We then made our way to Belgium to meet the couple

at their home in Bruges where we stayed for a few days. They took us sightseeing before driving us back to Frankfurt where we flew out.

We stayed in fairly central areas, having a view of the Eiffel Tower in Paris and parking at the base of La Rumbra in Barcelona. In Monaco we stayed in an



undercover bus parking and motorhome area just beneath the centre of the city and casino. Sometimes when we went to see a show or live music we would pull up at the venue in the afternoon, get ready and stay there that night.

We flew over and back on Frequent Flyer Points and swapped the motorhome for five weeks in total. We free camped everywhere except South Spain because I had read an article in the Sydney Morning Herald advising against it. Our only costs were food, diesel, tourist attractions and the occasional toll road. All in all, because of the swap, it was a very cheap and comfortable way to see Europe. ■



ABOVE

A bull fight in Valencia

LEFT

Papier Mâché sculptures that are set ablaze in The Festival of Fire

BELOW

A relaxing lunch in sunny San Sebastian

